

PLACEBO

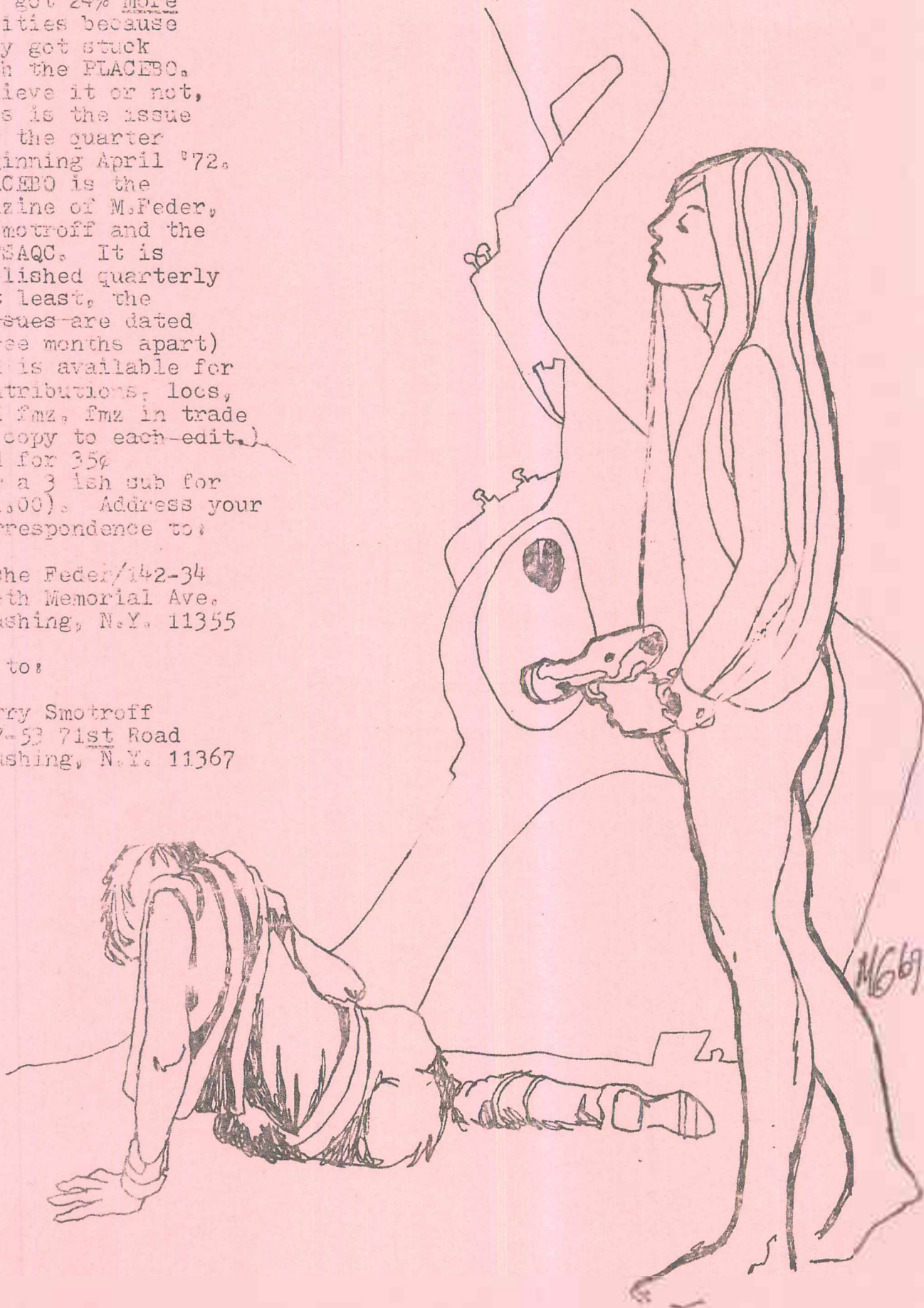
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It is the third
issue of the fmz
for the people
who got 24% more
cavities because
they got stuck
with the PLACEBO.
Believe it or not,
this is the issue
for the quarter
beginning April '72.
PLACEBO is the
genzine of M.Feder,
B.Smotroff and the
SFFSAQC. It is
published quarterly
(at least, the
issues are dated
three months apart)
and is available for
contributions, locs,
old fmz, fmz in trade
(a copy to each edit.)
and for 35¢
(or a 3 ish sub for
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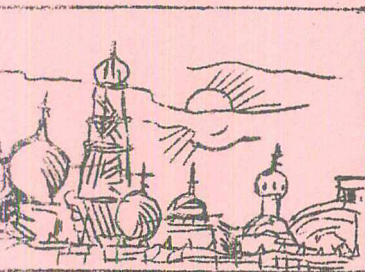
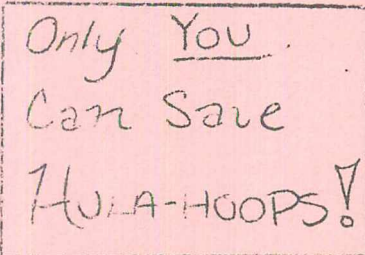
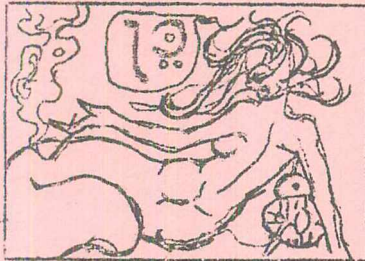
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PLACEBO



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The Clark Kent I ~~know~~ is gone. Perry White and ~~his~~ great metropolitan daily have been relegated to a forgotten corner of a modern conglomerate corporation. Supergirl is a woman and I wonder about her virginity. Krypto flies alone and never sees his master; and I have become Jimmy Olsen. Metropolis and its denizens have undergone urban renewal, its streets are strange to me. Its problems are no longer so easily solved. Seeing it after a long absence I felt that strangeness that the old must feel, that the world is no longer theirs. Places change, old heroes and villains die, or go away, and you only feel at home in the past.

Who is the Hulk? What manner of thing is Spider-Man? Who are they, they and their oppressively grim brothers and sisters? Why does the sun never seem as bright in their world? I marvel at its gloom.

The New Gods have come, and Mother-Box and Darkseid. A new order is established, a new worldview, and I am not part of it.

Sometimes the old tales are told and I forget the alien present and live again when comics were a dime and the sun still shone bright on an Earth that yet harbored every hue of Kryptonite; and the Man of Steel still knew his strength in unalloyed fullness. Then I remember that I am reading a reprint, a piece of the past, like the old movies on television, transformed in shape and meaning, and by the contrast with memory.

Nostalgia grows, for my childhood in the fifties, and for years I never knew. I think I was a sailor who died in the Pacific, in the Marianas, or on Pelelieu. I had a Petty-girl pinned in my locker and the girl next door waiting back home. I slept in the belly of a ship with fifty other guys. I read the pulp magazines (WEIRD TALES, UNKNOWN, THE SHADOW) and countless comics. Their garish, bright covers glowed from piles against the bulkheads. They were passed around to everyone in the hold until they were prematurely aged, yellow and crumbling at the edges and corners.

At times, comics have been my way of life - monthly vigilance at the newstands for the new issue of ACTION or GREEN LANTERN, frantic treks to every candystore in the phonebook when I forgot, the morning ritual with the newspaper funnies, and even an obsession with the four or five panels of comic that came with bubble gum. After a while I began to imagine the balloon for my words floating over my head.

Does the Justice League have a retirement fund? I wonder. Will Batman's joints ever stiffen with age? Will I live to see Kandor re-enlarged? Will the past be forgotten? It has been. Progress has come to the comics. There is a leak in the boundary and the mundane world is seeping in.

* * * * *

Strange isn't it, how nostalgia works? Looking back objectively I recognize that the 50's was one of the most insipid decades of the twentieth century, yet still I have some fond memories of it. But not all my memories are pleasant.

I hated being a kid. Like some of you perhaps, I had a strange, uncomfortable childhood. I didn't fit in. My natural tendency was to identify with the adults around me rather than the children, but that's not practical when you hate most of the adults for their oppression of you. I certainly could not identify with my peer group. We had nothing in common but our age. So I ended up being an individualist, except in moments of righteous indignation when I felt myself to be part of a great abstract oppressed minority made up of everyone under twenty-one. So it was that I became what I am today, a misanthrope.

Early on I chose escape into the worlds of Science Fiction and Fantasy. I daydreamed alot, cherishing especially the dreams of the revenge I would someday take. I kept a list (I still have it somewhere, I think) of every teacher and every kid who did me any wrong. A spitball at the back of my neck, an unwarranted scolding or public humiliation, earned the perpetrator my curse, and the unspoken promise of eventual torture, during which they would beseech my forgiveness and mercy to no avail. (Aren't you glad you didn't know me then.) My day dreams kept me alive.

But for all the evil seething in my interior, on the outside I was all too harmless. For years I was one of the shortest kids in my class and I was notoriously the weakest. My feelings of persecution and wishes for revenge were not really unjustified. I was always the target of bullies, and I still walk down the street trying to look unprovoking, watching for hidden attackers, and sure

that the two toughs across the street are whispering about me (that symptom, by the way, is called "ideas of reference", for any psych. majors reading this, that will have confirmed the diagnosis they arrived at while still on the last page).

Yet for all this, I yearned for a chance at leadership and involvement, so I created semi-imaginary clubs and organizations (in which I registered my sisters and my cousins) of which I could be founder and president. But it never came to anything in real life.

The part of those grandiose fantasies I am proudest of today was my plan to take over my school. Remember, this was long before anyone had heard of SDS. I worked out detailed strategic and tactical plans for an occupation and take-over of the building. I proposed the use of modified toys and the contents of the Chem. lab in self-defense and to guard the teachers we would hold as hostages (to trade for food and to prevent them from cutting off the water or electricity) and I pointed out (Ah, how naive I was then!) that we could probably depend on our parents reluctance to permit any violent action to be taken against their 10, 11, and 12 year old sons and daughters. Once established we would have broadcast our call to the children of the world, urging them to join us and help save the world from the adults (I was very conscious of the bomb and the cold-war) and free children everywhere from adult oppression. A glorious vision. I still believe that if we had tried it, it would have worked.

! ! ! ! ! ! ! !

Spring has come and just about gone since the last issue of this magazine appeared, and it has been a spring of good convention going. Specifically, I attended the Lunacon in April and Disclave in May.

Lunacon, like any convention, was a culinary problem for me. Though 12 years (7:30am to 6:00pm) of yeshiva (Jewish religious school) had little other affect on me it did reinforce my upbringing in the area of dietary taboos, i.e. I eat only kosher food, even though I may be attending a convention (and neglecting the synagogue) on Shabbos (Saturday). Inconsistent perhaps, but that's just the way I am. Trying to "keep kosher" is a problem at any convention (e.g. there are no kosher restaurants in Washington D.C. proper, and the nearest is in Silver Springs, Md.) but the added restrictions of Passover make it nearly impossible, even in New York. What then does the orthodox Jewish trufan do? He packs his food and brings it with him (Disclave: 3 corned beef sandwiches, a tuna-fish sandwich, 3 bagels, three bialys, and two hard-boiled eggs) or starves. And only an accident of the calendar saved Lunacon from conflicting (as we had feared it might) with the two Seder nights - which would have ruled out my attendance and even that of my less observant co-editor. But with meals at home once a day, matzoh "sandwiches" (ugh!) and sympathetic friends to gripe to, I survived, and, enjoyed myself immensley.

Last year's Lunacon was a fiasco, a poorly run, disappointing, bore, and a personal embarrassment to me, since I had urged a group of neofan friends to attend. This year's must certainly have been one of the best ever - three cheers for Don Lundry- with a top quality program befitting the con's importance and size (over 1,000, equal to that of the Worldcon's of only a few years ago).

I can also report some pleasant evenings of partying. Now that I know and am known by a few people, my natural shyness and general sullen, antisocial attitude were overcome and I genuinely enjoyed myself.

An interesting highlight of the con was the viewing of Silent Running by a group of lucky fen (among whom some friends and I were numbered) who happened to pay attention when the availability of free tickets was announced. All we had to do was get way up town in time for the screening. So four of us flew downstairs, grabbed a cab, and I finally got a chance to tell a driver an address and finish with "and step on it." We made it. The movie (I later reviewed it for the Q.C. Phoenix) is pleasant, and fairly well acted. It also has some interesting special effects and work with models, but on the whole it lacks substance. (It'll probably be on TV in a few years and you'll mistake it for a more expensive than average made-for-TV-movie.) I might not want to pay cash to see it but I can't complain about seeing it for free in the luxurious, private, executive screening room of Universal Pictures. In almost every way, it was a good weekend.

Another good weekend is still but a week in the past as I write this. I attended Disclave over Memorial Day weekend and I was not sorry I went. The hotel, the Sheraton-Park, is where I stayed on my 8th grade class trip to Washington. It's a beauty, and gigantic, not to mention labyrinthine. It should be a great place for a Worldcon. I arrived early on Friday and after registering and putting my stuff away I headed straight for the huckster room. I've always suspected that all the books I want are sold in a con, before I arrive. So it has always been my wish to be among the first. This time I was. I was just in time to watch Bob Madle unpack and set out his stuff and I got first looks at the choicest pickings. In those first few minutes I finally completed my collection (pb.) of Keith Laumer, with A Trace of Memory and made an important step in the acquisition of a set of the works of Frederic Brown (whom I had never forgotten and whose passing I sincerely mourned), as well as buying a number of other interesting paperbacks. I said then, that even if the rest of the weekend was only mediocre the con would have been a success for me. But it wasn't (mediocre) and it was (a success). The program was light and amusing and the con-suite party was always lively and interesting. There was time to visit the pandas at the nearby National Zoo. There were friends, old and new, to meet and talk to and sing with in a marathon filk and folk sing (with words and music by David Emerson - god bless him and his autoharp, and a charming, red-headed, blond lady whose name I don't know but would like to learn) that left me breathless, hoarse, and happy. Monday (after an evening of parties and an early am of hearts and trivia - and no sleep) meant a visit to Transpo at Dulles Airport, where Michael Brodsky (whose father has connections) saw to it that I had a good time and the best seats in the house (with free food and drink at hand) at the Lockheed, "by invitation only", chalet. Finally, the end of an extra long day and a long weekend came with a groggy train ride and a late night arrival to a sleeping household. I wish I could go to L.A.

I believe that overmuch quoting in an edit-col like this can be harmful, and there's much more in all the newspapers and magazines I get than I can use, or you would care about, anyway. Still, one or

two "clippings" per issue is not overdoing it. Here's one from The New York Times which I dedicate to those of our readers who are loyal British subjects.

At a London Palladium benefit show for the British Olympic Team Fund, Jos White, a comedian, asked what he thought was a rhetorical question: Would anyone who had not paid for his seat at the gala charity show please raise his hand? Up went the hand of Prince Philip, seated beside his wife, Queen Elizabeth II. "It's always those same two who get free seats, isn't it?" said Mr. White. The Queen and Prince Philip joined in the laughter.

- Albin Krebs

Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø Ø

We've all tried to justify SF to our mundane friends. It's a thankless, hopeless, task, but one that we never give up. I've always been a proselytizer for SF and I've had varying degrees of success. I'm always ready to lend a book or give advice to the neophyte reader who is about to be caught in a cave-in, deep in the mine where the SF gold is buried among the drek that he's been burrowing into. More than once I've sworn off hunting for converts, but I always break these promises to myself - I've got the missionary instinct, the SF reader's burden has been strapped to my back and I can never shrug it off..

So it is that I'm very conscious of the effect SF has on me and on people in general. Toffler's endorsement of SF in Future Shock and his reasons for it were old stuff to me, and I have had private theories about the age level at which SF is most likely to grab you, the personality types it appeals to, and so on, for a long time. SF really affects its readers, and it is a unique genre, but that uniqueness does not prevent it from sharing certain characteristics with other forms of literature, and any such similarity is of interest to an old "evangelist" like me.

In the 18th century, Samuel Johnson said, in an essay in RAMBLER no.4, that "realistic" fiction exists

to teach the means of avoiding the snares laid by Treachery for Innocence, without infusing any wish for that superiority with which the betrayer flatters his vanity; to give the power of counteracting fraud without the temptation to practice it; to initiate youth by mock encounters in the art of necessary defense, and to increase prudence without impairing virtue. . . . In narratives where historical veracity has no place, I cannot discover why there should not be exhibited the most perfect idea of virtue; of virtue not angelical, nor above probability

(for what we cannot credit, we shall never imitate), but the highest and purest that humanity can reach, which, exercised in such trials as the various revolutions of things shall bring upon it, may, by conquering some calamities and enduring others, teach us what we may hope, and what we can perform. Vice (for vice is necessary to be shown) should always disgust; nor should the graces of gaiety, nor the dignity of courage, be so united with it as to reconcile it to the mind. . . . It is . . . to be steadily inculcated that virtue is the highest proof of understanding, and the only solid base of greatness; and that vice is the natural consequence of narrow thoughts; that it begins in mistake and ends in ignominy.

Johnson took the guise of a critic of a form to advocate its proper use, and, in effect, apologize for it. He puts education first and entertainment last, or not at all, on the agenda of purpose. Though his opening references (not quoted here) seem derogatory he is actually defending an art form the establishment (of which he was supposedly a part) rejected, the mainstream novel (!). He had to defend this "frivolous" artform in a puritan society and he naturally turned to literature's didactic (educative) and morally instructive purpose. This is an obvious argument that occurs to one immediately, but it has many serious flaws. Prime among them is the simple fact that not every work has such a "laudable" purpose (or to use contemporary jargon - "redeeming social value."). And why should they? What's wrong with entertainment? (Yes, I do want something more than simple entertainment from literature, but that doesn't make entertainment something to be ashamed of or avoided.)

More recently, similar controversy about "pornography" has led to a similar argument and the phrase in that parentheses above. Time has not increased the validity of the argument, and once again, the truly objective, unemotional observer - the martian anthropologist - is moved to ask, "and what's wrong with simple titillation and the stimulation of erotic fantasies, anyway?" As in Johnson's case, the rationalization is faulty, and unnecessary anyway.

Science fiction, like the other examples cited, is looked down upon by the establishment, by the general reading public, and by the critics. So we, the proselytizers, the justifiers, go searching for a *raison d'être* for the genre. Hugo Gernsback was one of us, and like Johnson and other literary apologists before him, he turned to the obvious and "laudable" first. He made claims for the educational value of SF. He assured his readers that they need not feel guilty for reading "pulp-trash" because they could learn about science from "scientifiction." This is a claim that has rarely, if ever, been justified by any story. (The Panshins discuss this point in their "SF in Dimension" articles in FANTASTIC. Note that they use the word "didactic" in a different sense.) Oh yes, a story might prompt you to read a real science book, and many scientists read SF as children - but they didn't learn their science from the stories they read, and neither has anyone else. Once again we find

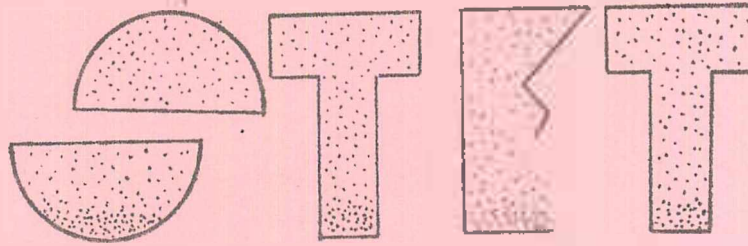
that the didactic rationalization was just that, an excuse, and nothing more. It's not true, and we don't need it. SF, like any other form of literature, is its own *raison d'être*, and nothing more is necessary.

But I would like to point out the existence of a benefit of reading SF that you may not have noticed. It's a small benefit, not one that will matter to everyone, and not one to promise to the next person you start on his SF reading career. But it does, I think, exist, and perhaps in rearing about it you'll realize that you have gained it too.

Our language is debased. No, I'm not talking about the rise in the use of so called "obscenities". I'm talking about "linguistic inflation". Just like the American dollar, many words in the English language are losing their buying power, - in this case, their "impact buying power," their instrumentality, "definitional idea density", (denotative density), or their semantic weight, call it what you will, it is decreasing. Our words, like our money, are suffering from inflation, and just as with the money, it takes more of them to do the same job. The reason is "generalisation", the tendency of the range of application of a word to broaden with time. As a result, too many words, like our money, have lost their backing, their original referents. The everyday, casual, use of words once meant to be very special - to be superlatives and absolutes, where they are inappropriate by that original intention chips away at their value, so that in truly outstanding circumstances we find them inadequate, cheap, insufficient, debased. Tragically, we have no substitutes. Many debased words are adjectives, but the problem applies to every part of speech. A listing of all the unfortunate words would fill this page, perhaps this magazine, but here are a few; ponder their original denotations and connotations, if that is still possible for you (use an etymological dictionary if you have to): wonderful, fantastic, unique, spellbound, fascinating, awesome, awful, marvelous, engrossing, captivating, unprecedented, enchanted, eternal, universal, liberation, etc., etc., etc.

Much of science fiction is just as responsible for the current decadence of the language as any form of oral or graphic communication. Some writers, especially in the early days, threw words around like sugar onto cornflakes, and now their work seems ridiculous because of it. But there has always been some SF to which this criticism doesn't apply. There have always been at least a few authors who used words carefully, who fought the degeneration of the extreme to the mean, who respected the language. Whence that small benefit I spoke of. Reading the right sort of SF and Fantasy with the right mental set can restore your sense of language, your appreciation of meaning as no other literature can. It can revive your semantic taste-buds and enable you to savor the linguistic ambrosia that English can be. Reading this genre can be like a drink of cold, clear, spring water after a week in a desert with nothing but the tepid, stagnant, and muddy to drink. So in a sense, SF does, after all, have an educational value of a sort, but it is not in the field of science that we can gain the fringe benefits of stimulating entertainment but in the world of words.

- Moshe Feder



LAW "No person...shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a
DEPT. witness against himself.?" That's the Fifth Amendment of
the Constitution of the United States. And it has has been
practically overturned by a recent Supreme Court decision.
In a 5 to 4 ruling, the High Court decided that if a person is granted
immunity from prosecution, then he may not claim the Fifth Amendment
as a defense for his not testifying and may be cited for contempt of
court. This is a frightening thought. Besides contravening the
Constitution(amendments to the Constitution are considered part of it),
it has a practical application that has been prevented previously,
but now will be legalized. On second thought, revise that sentence.
It has been going on sub rosa for a while, but the Miranda-Escobedo
decisions were an attempt to contain it. So what is it already? It
is that when a person has been granted immunity from prosecution,
it means he can't be tried on that particular piece of testimony. It
says nothing about the fact that he could be prosecuted on something
that came as a result of that testimony. Who can say what made a
District Attorney decide to prosecute someone? It's quite possible
that it's something he picked up at a trial. Testimony given under
immunity from prosecution is something like testimony that is stricken
from a court record. It may not be there officially, but it's impact
most certainly is there.

In the past, it was not uncommon to get confessions out of someone
by an illegal method(eg. by beating them up)and to introduce that
confession in court, often by having the defendant repeat it on the
stand. The DA could then either claim it was a spontaneous admission
or that the defendant was repeating something he had said out of court
and which he was now merely repeating. This is a violation of the
Fifth Amendment idea of not making someone testify against himself.
It wasn't until the early 60's, with the Miranda and Escobedo decisions
that this loophole was plugged up to some degree. But now the Supreme
Court has decided to institute a new loophole.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect of this is in the way the
majority opinion was phrased. In delivering it, Justice Rehnquist
often referred to the right not to be forced to incriminate yourself
as a privilege. This prompted one New York City commentator to say:
"Do we have a Bill of Privileges or a Bill of Rights?"

There's a new law on the books in New York State. It says that
a person may be denied a high school diploma if he does not show
development in patriotism and citizenship. Scary, isn't it? What
is patriotism? Is it saluting the flag? Is it trying to change the

country because you believe it wrong? Is it hard hats with flag decals on their helmets beating up a peaceful anti-war march?(and yes, it happened here in NYC). How about development in citizenship? Is it accepting the governments word? Or is it trying to change the government when it is wrong? These are difficult concepts to define and as a result are very dangerous. I would like to see someone challenge this law in court because I don't think it would have a chance of surviving.

This law was brought to my attention by an ex-professor of mine. He was a full professor of law at the University of Warsaw and was thrown out of Poland for supposedly inciting the 1968 uprising along with nine other intellectuals. According to him, this law is similar to Poland and it's attempts to direct the growth of youth to be pro-government.

"Television is called a medium because so little of it is rare or well done."

-FIG

IT According to the Wall Street Journal, if you deposit \$10,000
SEEMS in a bank where interest is compounded daily rather than
THAT quarterly, you do get more interest. 4% a year more...The
DEPT. FTC says that the Crisco commercial that shows a cup of Crisco
 Oil being poured back ("except for money tablespoon") is the money.
 A cup is poured back alright, but it isn't all Crisco Oil.
Some of it's chicken fat...Also according to the FTC, Listerine does
indeed kill germs, just not the ones that cause colds...Under the new
semi-independent Postal Service System--created to streamline the
creaky old Post Office bureaucracy--the mails still go through, or
don't, in their old unpredictable ways. Avoid Special Delivery. As
a result of its exorbitant costs and unspecial handling, use of S.D.
continues to decline. But complaints about it rise at a steady 8% a
year...The Rhine River is so heavily polluted that it is now possible
to develop pictures on its waters. Dirty movies?...A little known
CAB ruling, passed in 1967, holds an offending airline responsible
for getting its bumped passengers(a bumped passenger is a person who
has a valid ticket but who is denied entry onto the plane for such
reasons as overselling the flight, arriving at the boarding gate only
10 minutes before takeoff time, etc.) on another flight within two hours
for domestic destinations and four hours for international journeys.
If the airline fails to rectify its error within the allotted time,
the passenger will then be flown to his destination as soon as possible
and then be given "Denied Boarding Compensation" ranging from \$25
to \$200. If you're going to LA Con...

(source: Moneysworth)

On the wall of the subway station at 110th Street and Broadway:

"Notice:

If the patrons do not stop writing on the walls,
the walls will be removed.

The Management

TARZAN OF
THE ROACHES
DEPT.

Think about this. The only animals in the world are roaches. Then figure out how our culture would change. Literature would vary from how we know it. Harlan would have written of "A Boy And His Roach" and Vonnegut would have called his novel Roaches Cradle. Even Shakespeare wouldn't escape it. For example, King Richard the Third would exclaim: "A roach! A roach! My kingdom for a roach!". And what of television? We would have childrens programs called "Mighty Roach", "Huckelberry Roach", and "Yogi the Roach". The Lone Ranger would yell: "Hi oh, Roachie! Away!". Commercials would advertise "40 Roach Team Borax" and toys that are more fun than a barrel of roaches. Judy Garland, tripping down the yellow brick road, would meet the Cowardly Roach. And if you couldn't see the picture too well, you'd have to get up and adjust the roach ears on your set. Music would have to change also. Cisco Houston would sing of "A Roach Named Blue". Some little girl will sing: "Mommy, mommy, how much is that roachie in the window?" Come Christmas time, we would hear the strains of that classic song, "Rudolph the Red Nosed Roach". Some of the more common phrases would have to change also, of course. Signs would advise us to curb our roach and in restaurants we would ask for roachie bags. The mail would bring something from the ASPCR protesting roach hunts. When a child asks how it was born and the parent replies that the Roach brought her, is it any wonder that the kid will grow up and go to the roaches? After all, roachie see, roachie do. (Most of these "roachie" are by Bob Arvanitis, who thought up the idea. One is by Elizabeth Paspalas, and I think I made up one or two myself.)

"Parenthood remains the greatest single preserve of the amateur."
-Alvin Toffler in Future Shock

EDUCATION
DEPT.

EXPERIMENTAL
DIVISION

"You are enrolled in an Introductory Psychology course that is being taught in a radically different way." So begins the intro sheet they gave us for the Psych 1 course I took last term. What I want to do is explain how the course works and why I don't like it. Basically it is a point system course. In order to get an A+ you need 160 points. A D is 110-114 points, and marks in between are determined proportionately. In order to get the additional 50 points necessary for an A+ you can attend the "Honors Sessions" and answer a few questions on it. These answers take the form of a very short essay. If you don't want to do it that way, then you can take the final exam at $\frac{1}{4}$ point a question. There are no recitation classes. What you do is buy the text and the study guides. You study what composes a unit and when you feel you know the information well enough to get 100% on the test (the passing score) you go in and take it. Tests are administered by students who took the course last term. Honors Sessions are administered by the two teachers in charge of the program. The class is made up of about 1000 students. Now, why I don't like it. It's too impersonal. I prefer a class where the teacher can get to know the student. I would rather be judged by someone who knows me than by someone who checks to see how many points I amassed. It's a nice idea, and if you don't like to be driven, it's alright I suppose. But it's not for me.

"Pun, n. A form of wit, to which wise men stoop and fools aspire."

-Ambrose Bierce

The Enlarged Devil's Dictionary

MISC. It's five to eight in the evening and I'm sitting in
DEPT. Moshe's house typing this. He's just finished his editorial and it's seven pages long. Mine is four.

I'm jealous.

We had originally figured on four pages each for our editorials. His is seven. Mine is four. (I'm not sure what any of this has to do with anything, but this is supposed to be the fannish part of my piece.

It's quite possible I'm really getting fannish. One Sunday night I was sitting reading and the phone rings. My sister answers and says it's Long Distance for me. For me? I couldn't for the life of me figure out who it could be. Well, I get on and it's Loren MacGregor.

Calling Long Distance from Seattle.

In Washington.

The one on the West Coast.

Ye Ghads!

The farthest away I've ever talked to was Oklahoma and that was to some cousins. And here was someone I'd never met calling me. Perhaps it was an invitation to phone fandom. If it was, I'm afraid I blew it. We talked of little things like bookshelves and the article he was going to write for us. I'm simply not used to Long Distance phone calls from Washington.

Hank Davis came over yesterday with an article he promised us. We'd been bugging him for the past few months and even at Disclave, where he recoiled from the sight of me the first few times. It finally got here, but in order to make the trip, even though Brooklyn and Queens have a common border, Hank had to travel all the way through Brooklyn, into Manhattan, and then into Queens, but then, he had to make the trip in the NYC subway. When he finally got out of the Subway he walked the wrong way. When he got here he gave me the article, but he also did a far more important thing for me. You see, Hank's hair is not very long. So when I introduced him to my mother, I also said: "See Mom, n t all fans are weird." Of course, Hank signs his letters "serconly", but my mother doesn't have to know that. To make it a trufannish trip we met Moshe at my local Baskin Robbins, this a place where the owner once said that Madarin Chocolate looks like the stuff they use to fill potholes with. *Sigh*

- Barry Smotroff

WHAT GOOD IS BEING A SECRET MASTER OF FANDOM IF EVERYONE KNOWS YOUR ZIPCODE

OR...

SUPPOSE NOT EVEN MARGO LANE KNEW TO
WHOM THE VOICE OF THE INVISIBLE
SHADOW BELONGS?

ONE: EVERY SILVER LINING HAS A CLOUD

. As perennial as the grass, and as green, though far more lumpy to lie upon, are the neofen who swarm into fandom every year. The particles comprising this annual influx may be forgiven for looking even less like discrete individuals than the elements of an avalanche of robin's-egg blue marbles, for they are driven by similar motives. Each comes in expecting to now cavort among hordes of real walking talking, scratching people who actually gasp, read that strange stuff in the paperbacks with the garish covers and the outrageous prices and the absorbent paper. Little do they know what awaits. We know, naturally. . . .

The searcher, having had his search quickly dead-ended to death, logically should take his quest elsewhere, or abandon it and spend the rest of his days suspecting that he might just be the only one who reads that crazy stuff in those garish paperbacks.

In either case, newcomers to fandom should hardly remain in the microcosm, long may it cos, for enough time for the dust raised by their entrance to settle.

And yet, new fen do come into fandom and tarry, else a visitor at a con would face an anonymous horde, made indistinguishable by each fan's possession of an immaculately white beard, every inch, every silly millimeter, every addlepat angstrom as long as the chin whiskers

HANK DAVIS

by which Bob Tucker, living fannish legend, can be distinguished from the mere demigods and semidemigods. Mundanes daring to trespass upon fannish holy hotel grounds would be forced to wear sunglasses or be instantly struck snowblind. No elevator door could close without trapping the tips of occupants beards (a danger which is admittedly slight, since elevator doors must open before they can close, and the first action is seldom observed at a con. Indeed, such observations are so rare that many authorities dismiss them as mass hysteria and misinterpretation of natural phenomena).

The neos have failed to find that which they sought; why do the fen, then, tarry? Obviously, the tarriers find that fandom, which fails to meet one's need for stfnal feedback, nonetheless fulfills some other need; possibly an even more basic one.

But what, hey? Sex? Territory? Money? Pizza?

Many would have you believe that the throbbing sore on which fandom drips soothing, sticky grease is the need for communication. Even you, gentle but gullible reader, may have ~~been taken~~ believed this bushwah. But now comes the straight skinny beside which the Secret Wisdom of the Ancients withers like last year's dandelions.

Fandom means Power: power over one's fellow fen. A lesser thing, perhaps, than power over one's fellow men, but we can't all be Nixon. Power over men can be put into three non-exclusive and over-lapping classes:

- 1)Causing people to experience certain occurrences.
- 2)Causing people to feel certain emotions.
- 3)Causing people to perform certain acts.

TWO: I CALL MYSELF THE SPIDER BECAUSE THE SPIDER SPINS A WEB . . .

In this light, consider: a fan publishes a fanzine. It is reviewed in another zine. Fans reading the review suddenly feel an elemental message coming from within: a small, not very still voice saying: "Must Have/Must Have, Must Have . . . Each find his/her hand straying involuntarily to pocket or purse to withdraw quarters suddenly become sticky and insert them in envelopes to be launched, allowing for the usual aberrations of the Postal Service, in the direction of the fanned publisheing a new zine. (That target individual will hereafter be referred to as the sinister fanned, for reasons heih will become apparent.) Now, that money thus frivolously spent can no longer be directed towards more solid uses, such as Pepsi, pinball games, juke boxes, and maybe even a copy of NEWSWEEK. And that hapless spendthrift has scarcely begun to become entangled in the sinister fanned's web.

With future issue will come mention of cons here and there, most of which will occur at a distance from the fanzine reader. Attending them will cost the fan dearly, but still the message within mostly hollow Joe Neo: "Must Go/Must Go/Must Go. . . .

Again, the fan has been diverted into spending his time and money in a particular way by the sinister fanned. Never was a wretched basic trainee, panting and dripping sweat as he does pushups under

the critical gaze of a drill sergeant, more ~~is~~ thrall than that victimized fan.

Showing no mercy, the faned will eventually enclose a seemingly harmless Hugo nomination ballot with his zine. The neo will be particularly susceptible to the ballot, since it is evidence that somebody in fandom is reading that crazy etc. in the garish etc. To think the contrary would imply that fen nominate stories they have not read, which is unthinkable. (I write, you must remember, about a neo.) But how can a fan nominate titles for the Hugo award for the year's best unless he has read all the SF published that year? Since the fan is a neo, the only solution which will occur is that he must read all that SF, or not nominate at all. The second course being unthinkable to him, he is moved to get a job either after school or in addition to his regular job so that he can afford to buy all that SF, much of it in expensive hard covers. But if the fan takes this desperate step, his leisure time vanishes and he can read his purchases only in the inviolate inner sanctum of the bathroom, and even the most leisurely patron of the facilities can consume only a tiny fraction of the year's SF in that way. If he has the time, then, he lacks the wherewithal. If he gets the wherewithal, well, . . . And this is no mere dilemma, but a quadlemma, for if the fan does not vote, he will be filled with regret. If he votes anyway, despite not having read the year's output, he will be filled with guilt. (You haven't forgotten that the poor devil is a neo, right?)

Remember, now, that all these emotions shuttling around Joe Neo's tortured nervous system like malevolent Lionel electric trains, were set in motion by the sinister faned. But the worst is yet to come, as we literary stylists say.

Comes the time when the poor neo works up the nerve to loe the evil, insidious, sinister faned's zine. Now he is like the mouse who thrusts his head into a mouse-trap: the first step is voluntary, but all that follows is beyond his control. With the Neo's letter in his clutches, the faned, sinister faned, must needs suffer a nervous short circuit while deciding which knife will draw the most blood. But such bafflement passes quickly and is a small price to pay for Dominion over the squirming soft souls of neos. The faned's vertigo will be instantly eased when he hits upon an appropriate diabolism, say



- 1) He publishes the neo's letter and viciously attacks it.
- 2) He doesn't publish the neo's letter and viciously attacks it.
- 3) He shows the letter to a third party, BNF of course, with whom the neo had the temerity to differ. If the BNF is the sort of rank-puller abounding in fandom, the faned can trust him to make some lively remarks about the neo's intelligence (lack of), parentage (dubiousness of), and unpleasant habits (surplus of). Ted White was once a sure bet, but he has lately been more interested in proving that ~~a~~captain can go down in two sinking ships at once.
- 4) The faned runs no lettercol nextish, and the neo must search for his name in a blizzard of anonymous WAHF whozzats.
- 5) The faned runs a lettercol, but the neo is still among a (tinier) blizzard of WAHFs.
- 6) The faned runs a long lettercol and the neo's name sits alone in the WAHF department, like a snowflake that came so late, it missed the blizzard.
- 7) If the neo is the sort who writes his return address but not his name on his envelopes, he will find in the nextish, "I seem to have lost a letter. Don't know who wrote it, since he only put his address on the envelope, which is . . ."
- 8) The si ister faned publishes the letter verbatim, but mis-spells the neo's name.
- 9) The faned publishes the letter, but makes typos which do not look like typos (e.g. "I like ~~s~~eries about the fourth dimenshun.")
- 10) The faned publishes the letter, but alters it so the neo seems consistently to have spelled Zelazny as "Zelazney," Delany as "Delaney," etc.
- 11) The faned publishes the letter, but announces that he suspects the writer of being a hoax.
- 12) Waxing more sinister, the faned starts a real hoax by running a letter under a phoney name which is almost the same as that of the neo. The faned will use the hoax name frequently in his own and other zines until nobody can tell the hoax and the neo apart. (This trick is ~~not~~ for the impatient sinister faned.)
- 13) (Neither is this one) The faned runs the neo's loc, but, in the following issue, runs no comments in other locs that mention the neo's loc.

14) The fanned sens the neo's loc back with a rejection slip.

15) As above, but the letter arrives with postage due.

16) As L. Ron Hubbard once said, "The End is Nor Yet."

Not necessarily at this point, but sooner rather than later, the neo will set the direction of his future in fandom. He will either continue on, unaware that he is being manipulated (perhaps subconsciously enjoying it; and perhaps not so subconsciously), or he will give a snort, publish his own zine, which will be reviewed in other zines, causing neos to feel an elemental message . . . yes, that does sound familiar.

It may have occurred to the reader that the sinister fanned revealed above is a rugged individualist, old-fashioned and passé. He is content to exercise his powers in manipulating only one fan or a handful at most (some fans have very large hands). His more modern counterpart is likely to ask himself, "Why be De Sade when I can be Hitler?"



So, in recent years, comes the scrambling to be on con committees, particularly worldcon committees. Imagine the power. Picking an expensive hotel rather than one with reasonable prices. And promising a memory book of the con and thereby keeping over a thousand ex-worldcon members on a medium grill for months, even years, awaiting a book that will never be published. And deciding who will really get the Hugos. And changing the name of a Hugo to something else. . . .

. and changing it right back again when the masses rise up in outrage. This particular historical case must be remembered by fans who successfully seize the reins of power (as opposed to those who need to spend more time squeezing rubber balls) to bear in mind. A tyrant needs some consent of the tyrannized. If only the masses had not been made aware that the name of that Hugo had been changed....

And that if brings us to the penultimate in power over fen.

THREE: ALL IS ILLUSION

And why shouldn't it be? Who are all these people who appear at cons and claim to be attached to the names which appear and re-appear in the lettercols and tables of contents of fanzines like subordinate fugitive visions in a troubled dream? How do you know that anyone is attached to those names? Can cranky Buck Coulson really be that nice guy you met at Midwestcon? If that was really Ted White, how could he have kept all that spleen corked up inside without hitting somebody? And when that famous pro got up to give his guest of honor speech at the last worldcon, didn't we make allowances for the differences between his appearance and that of the photo on the back of his latest book?

Fandom's connections are seldom of the face-to-face sort. Women masquerade as men, and vice versa, with a dash of unconventional-als confusing the issue. Early teens pretend to be geriatrics caes. Who the heck is Will Straw anyway?

You went to the Worldcon last year, eh? Are you sure?

One learns of worldcons through fanzines and prozines. The prozines get the con dope from the fans. Control the fanzines, and —

How about two worldcons at once, one on each coast? Those attending one learn about it from a different set of zines than those attending the other. Two different sets of fans, each set wrapped in a pleasant pink mental mist (like cotton candy, but not so sticky and with fewer calories) of assurance that here is where the one and only worldcon is happening. Little do they know. . . .

And if two, why not three? More?

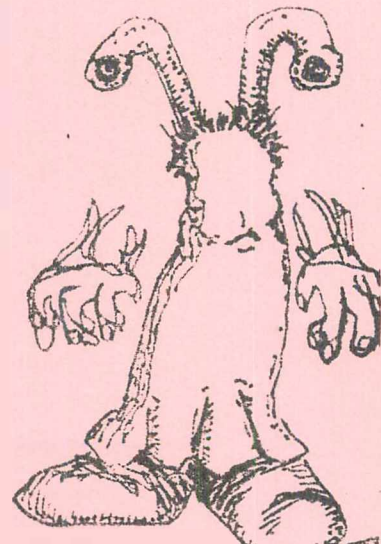
Did someone mention Hugos? Why, simply award two different sets of Hugos. If the proliferation of Worldcons outstrips the available five nominees, then add on other sets of nominees.

Did someone mention the GoHs? True, he will be someone, fan or pro, whose acquaintances fill every corner of fandom, but this problem can be handled by having different fan and pro GoHs at the different worldcons. If the secret master tugging at the strands of his web of power would be truly bold, let him hire actors who resemble the GoH. As that SMOF might say, "Fate sometimes makes the wrong men GoHs!

And how sweet the wine of this new, strange power over fen. Manipulating them while they do not even know that they are being manipulated. The ultimate power, this.

And imagine the classicly pure situations which can develop, as when a pro comes to a con as GoH, never suspecting that everyone he meets at the con,—except for the SMOF who walks incognito among his subjects, dressed like one of them,—is an actor. Careful choices of actors and/or masters of disguise will allow the shadowy super-SMOF to make that GoH think all his old pals are there. "Hi, Isaac," he will say. "Gee, you're looking more like the picture on the back of your last book than usual."

I have suggested elsewhere (PLACEBO 2) the trickery that a faned can spring gullible readers. Consider now the greater lengths to which a faned lusting after SMOFdom can go. Imagine a fanzine — pick a title at random; say THE UNWASHED ARMPIT 15 — with a circulation of 200 or so and each reader gets a different zine, with different articles, different locs, different artwork, but all entitled THE UNWASHED ARMPIT 15. How is the artist who submitted artwork to the zine to know that one and only copy



of UA15 that contained his scratchboard masterworks is the very copy that came plunk into his mailbox? No more than will the much-sought-after fan writer realize that his scintillating wit has an audience of two, one of which is a shadowy figure indeed. And that indefatigable producer of book reviews had better be writing for the sheer love of 'it, because, all unaware, he is writing for the SMOF's eyes only.

This will cost too much, you protest? Nonsense. Who can worry about mere money when power over fan is there for the taking? Besides, the SMOF need only run an occasional legit con to cover his losses elsewhere. Everybody knows that cons rake in the shekels.

You think that no one can ever pull such a fraud off? How do you know they already haven't?

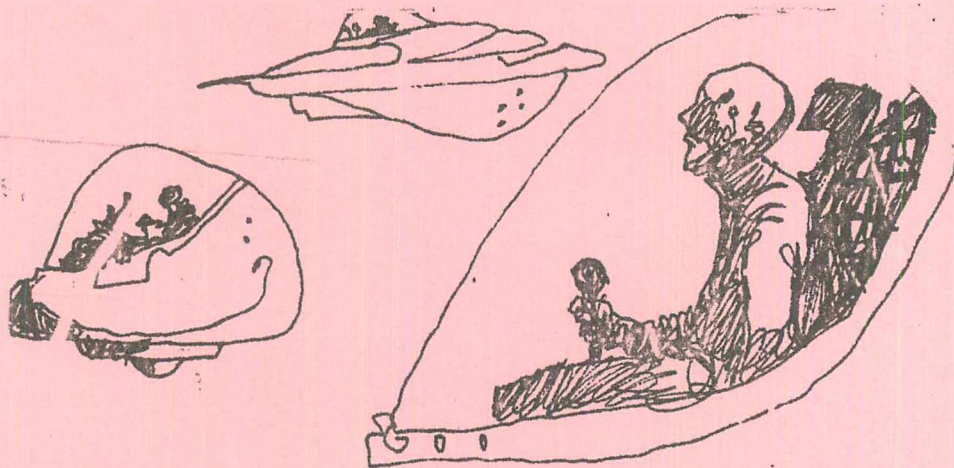
The last time you checked out a rack of SF pb's, didn't it seem strange that so many books had a yellow sunburst and the words HUGO AWARD WINNER standing unconsumed in the center? Could that many Hugos have been awarded in less than twenty years, eh? And how is it that cons of the last couple of years teemed with fans upon whom you have never set eyes before, yet who have that smug, I've-been-to-better-cons-than-this air about them. The hasty rationalization is that fandom has become too big for all fans to know each other. Nonsense! There can't be that many people reading that crazy stuff in the paperbacks with the garish covers.

The real explanation is much more sinister. . . .

Do you really think that you've met Robert Silverberg?
How do you know you're sane?

How do you know we aren't all living in a Philip K. Dick novel?

- Hank Davis



The broad issues which Wollheim discusses arise not simply from an awareness of SF's peculiar relation to society and literature, but are the result of careful analysis, and his conclusions are of fundamental relevance to SF. They deserve to be carefully studied and evaluated.

Within these broader issues, however, Wollheim's book can be roughly divided into his discussion of Science Fiction, and those on society and mankind in general.

After supplying a mini-history of SF tracing the flow of its ideas through Wells and Verne, Ray Cummings and others, Wollheim continues his discussion by outlining "the shape of galactic Things to Come." This "shape", first concretized by Isaac Asimov in his "Foundation" series is, in actuality, a "history of the future," within which framework all stories and novels fit. "We can establish a pattern of premises accepted without acknowledgement. We can tell what is implied by the simple facts of a story's background." The resultant eight stages of mankind range from initial voyages to the Moon, to the growth and subsequent decline of an empire, the growth of a second, more lasting empire, and finally to Man's "Challenge to God." This all seems very obvious, until one realizes that no one ever saw it, or said it, before.

Wollheim does less well when it comes to the "societal" concerns of his book. For example, a large interest throughout his discussion of SF's relationship to society is the feelings of young people. He writes, "I see and read about modern youth, about their rebellion against accepted standards, about their espousal of such escape mechanisms as pot and dope and weird philosophies, their efforts at establishing utopian colonies, and their rejection of the standards of the generations that preceded them not surprised. What else did anyone expect of the generation that grew up knowing the Atom Bomb was waiting in the wings." In all probability, if the majority of "this generation" read this paragraph they would interpret its tone not as understanding, as Wollheim evidently intended, but as condescending.

Another place where Wollheim goes wrong is in describing what he calls "cosmotropism." Comparing human beings to a petri dish filled with mold which upon finishing its nutrient will send out spores, he states, "I think the drive to send out starships as spores of humanity is a tropism which, now that we have spread over all the Earth, has come to the fore of human affairs." The use of a pseudo-scientific, mystical, term like "cosmotropism" to describe the simple need to expand once their resources have been used up is, frankly, silly.

As evidenced by his "cosmotropism", Wollheim is a romantic fellow. Unfortunately, his romanticism is frequently expressed through the use of tired, cliched, expressions.

The Universe Makers is an uneven book, though Wollheim does look at Science Fiction from a fresh perspective. But because of his wide subject area, Wollheim's observations on SF itself are too brief. The time is long overdue for a definitive critical study of Science Fiction as a whole, and Wollheim's book, besides provoking important questions on its own, illustrates this need.

THE UNI

BREA

by Judy Greenwald

Those involved in Science Fiction have always been keenly self-conscious of the unique position it holds both in relation to society and to mainstream literature. Now, when serious doubts are being expressed as to the very future of society, and some seriously predict Science Fiction's eventual merger with the mainstream, a fresh appraisal of the field is called for. This is dutifully supplied by Donald Wollheim in The Universe Makers. His views on Science Fiction, though highly debateable, also raise some important questions about the future of the field.

Wollheim believes that not only do SF writers predict the future, they also affect it. "Their [SF writers] mirrors of the future shape the future," he writes, "Such speculation, such visions, are not illusions to pass with the change of light, but affect the future. They ~~make~~ their mark, however faint at first, but a real mark nonetheless, in the minds of men and the citizens of the world."

VERSE

KERS

by Victor Olefson

A cynic, according to Oscar Wilde, is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. That has always seemed an eminently practical means of assessing most of the cosmos. Leave the value judgements to the moralists and the True Believers, being so damn certain of everything they relish being painfully sincere. As for me, I'm usually quite satisfied with the mundane business of pricing things, and I'm sharp enough, or stupid enough to realize that my judgements lack any cosmic significance. In only one area of my life have I refrained from forming cynical attitudes, one gaunt little sacred cow have I let graze here, something, one thing, to believe in. Not sex, not mother, not "the people", whoever they are, not even my precious bowel movements. Ah, you've guessed it, Science Fiction. Most of you understand how I wanted SF to remain pure and undefiled in my heart, ad infinitum.

But it's apparent, I'm certain, not only to myself, that even holy SF is in the process of losing its cherry; not in one quick thrust, but slowly, a little at a time. A furtive feel here, some curious fingering there, and plenty of cock-teasing embraces that can be classified as near misses. My visceral reaction is this: Science Fiction is on the verge of putting out, maybe even doing a little whoring on the side, and I'm sickened by the whole shitty prospect.

Enough metaphorical imagery to titillate the straight and/or horny fen, I'll attempt to expand on my gut reactions and give some examples.

On WBAI (Pacifica Radio, N.Y., for you hicks) yesterday, Larry Josephson interviewed demigod, cult hero, and former SF writer Kurt Vonnegut, who humbly but profoundly explained how Science Fiction has been a useful tool for him, but is too hung up in its own little world to effectively get across his message anymore. And by the way, he revealed no big secret; Kilgore Trout, his fictional SF writer character, is a pseudonym for another fish, his good friend Sturgeon, who is, incidentally, another great SF writer who has recently found himself. This wonderful discovery has resulted in very sincere stories about bonsai trees and an artist who finally falls in love with the right chick. Wow.

Of late there hasn't been a single novel truly worthy of even being nominated for a Hugo, and the "dean of Science Fiction", Heinlein, turns out an SF version of M. C. Brennan that is so embarrassing for him that the only relevant question SF fans can raise is whether I Will Fear No Evil means that the master has finally hit male menopause. And to top it all off, Harlan Ellison and Norman Spinrad are so intent on politicizing the genre that it would appear, according to their simplistic view of politics, that the major purpose of SF is to man the barricades and wait for the Revolution.

Donald Wollheim polished off a volume of SF criticism, in the ignoble tradition of Amis, Knight, Panshin, Blish (whoops!, pardon me - Mr. William Atheling Jr., esq.) and the sum of his conclusions seems to be: John Campbell was a racist, fascist pig, ANALOG stinks, New Wave stinks, SF can be critically analyzed in terms of pre, post, and during Galactic Empires, and finally, SF will continue to thrive because it is still the only genre to extol the virtues of something called "Cosmotropism," or Man's basic need to search for new frontiers, his drive to leave Earth and eventually to spread through the whole stinking universe.

Let me make it, as somebody might say, perfectly clear, that my visceral reactions have not yet developed into full blown cynical pessimism. There is still hope that Ted White, or Damon Knight, or Terry Carr, or Kingsley Amis will climb out of their clouds and discover some unknowns, and some knowns, who can, and want to, write good Science Fiction. It is conceivable that Science Fiction still has enough vitality left to refuse to stagnate into "cosmotropism" and/or be absorbed into some terribly relevant, artsy-craftsy branch of mainstream literature. I still go to sleep after reading a little Stapleton, or Silverberg, or Delany. Science Fiction is one sacred cow I refuse to see turn into an ordinary fucking cow.

- Victor Olefson

When I say that Science Fiction writing in the vast majority speaks of an infinite range that is open to humanity in the universe,* he continues, "I say that that very thought reinforces the probability that this will be so."

The heavy responsibility Wollheim places on the writer to advocate a future is demonstrated when, referring to the New Wave writers, he chides, "Still, I question whether the constant depiction and reiteration of horrors, both mental and of the immediate future, are exactly the way to rally a fight for the cause of humanity."

Wollheim also has specific ideas of what the province of the Science Fiction writer should be. "Science Fiction is above all a system of ideas. It deals with ideas more than it deals with literary styles. It speculates in futurities and in probabilities. These are what are more to be remembered than the depth of character of its heroes."

Assuming (as Wollheim does) that Science Fiction writers affect society, the question then is where their duty lies. Do they owe artistic allegiance to society or to themselves. If gloomy SF increases the likelihood of a gloomy future, but this is a writer's vision of society, should he suppress it? In turn, this leads to the question of whether SF should consciously become a "propagandizing" instrument for the viability of the future, presenting "the broader vision of what might be, what might have been, what is yet to come," or whether it should concentrate more on character and its growth as an artistic means of expression, in a greater attempt to move away from its pulp origins (should these two alternatives preclude each other).

In 1896, when Maggie, Girl of the Streets by Stephen Crane was published, one critic objected to the book on the grounds that it did not attempt to present "beauty" and was therefore "distinctly disagreeable." Today, a critic like that would probably be laughed right off his paper. Yet Wollheim, in his desire that SF writers remain "Universe Makers" seems to express the same thoughts, if in different words. On the other hand, the analogy is not perfect. Stephen Crane affected no one with his observations of New York's street life, while according to Wollheim, SF writers' views have potential wide repercussions.

Wollheim believes that SF should affect society not only in presenting "broader visions" of possible futures, but with particular solutions to our problems as well. "The troubles that loom ahead may seem difficult to overcome," concludes Wollheim, "but Science Fiction writers have already imagined various ways in which they could be met, by which they could be surmounted, or by means of which we could survive them. Once a thing can be imagined it can be done - such is the lesson I draw from Science Fiction."

Aside from the admirable optimism Wollheim describes here, attributing godlike powers to SF writers is a dubious proposition. Earlier, discussing how Science Fiction writers must overcome the three barriers of overpopulation, pollution and the bomb to write about the future, he notes, "But are there no stories in which the atomic war never occurs? To be sure, but they are not too convincing."

Not with overpopulation and the attendant madness advancing so rapidly. If killing most of us off is SF's way of overcoming our problems perhaps our faith should be placed elsewhere.

**TALES OF
THE
HULA HOOP
MYTHOS**

Tale the First: Discovery of the Mythos

There is a body of knowledge, a "corpus" if you will, that has lain unsuspected in the Collective Unconscious of Mankind for centuries upon centuries, and would have lain there for countless eons to come had it not been for the fortuitous gathering of three great and terrible minds and the interaction thereof. The facts subsequently brought to light are of the utmost importance to the security of the entire world, and they and their ominous implications shall not be denied to the public. Whether the public chooses to listen or to turn a deaf ear is beyond the scope of this article.

It was a dark and stormy Thursday night. The Fantasy and Science Fiction Society of Columbia University was meeting, as was its wont, at the Avocado Pit; more specifically, a subset of FSFSCU was huddled in the bedroom of Jarvis Kaufman, Esq., trying to ignore the hostile elements raging outside, turning their attention instead to the higher pursuits of intellectual speculation. It was your humble author and reporter who pointed out the singular item concerning the recent observation of bits of plastic floating in the Sargasso Sea. The company barely had time to digest this tidbit of information when when a brilliant flash of light lit the room, and a brilliant flash of insight lit the mind of one Mr. Paul Jordan.

"Of course," he said, as calmly as if his spectacular revelation was already common knowledge, "that's where hula-hoops are born!"

He went on to describe the process of reproduction that hula-hoops go through and had almost completed an account of the mating ritual (a bizarre affair involving the smashing together of two hoops and their mutual destruction, producing bits of floating plastic which, soaking up seaweed and sunlight, grow into full-sized organisms) when he reached a temporary halt. "The problem is, where do the staples come from?" he puzzled, referring to the connection of the two ends of the tube to make a hoop.

Inspiration struck again, the esteemed Mr. Hank Davis supplied the answer without so much as a pause. "From old fanzines. Everybody knows that."

Once these two crucial points had been exposed, the long suppressed knowledge could be held back no longer. Facts, ideas and images poured into the astounded brains of Messers. Jordan, Davis, and Moshe Feder. The results of this fantastical discovery have been organized and edited and are presented below.

Tale the Second: The Creation of the Hoops

According to some recently deciphered Dead Seaweed Scrolls hula-hoops were actually mentioned in the first draft of Genesis; it should become obvious why the portions dealing with the creation of the hoops was deleted from official version.

As near as scholars can tell, it is suspected that at the end of the sixth day of creation God celebrated His achievement by getting roaring drunk. So drunk in fact that He passed His cookies in a corner of the Garden of Eden. Now, Adam and Eve, the first fan and fanne, had been putting out a fanzine (of uncertain title) printing on fig leaves using a hekto process with berry juice as ink and binding the pages

with chewing gum from the archetypal chewing gum tree in the Garden. A sympathetic angel (obviously the first BNF) gave them the gift of staples, which proved to be far superior to chewing gum, except for chewing.

However, when Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden for eating of the forbidden fruit and selling a story to ASTOUNDING, the angel angrily cast down their fanzine into the pool of Divine Vomit where a reaction was catalyzed and the first hula-hoop grew, taking its staple from the first fanzine.

Tale the Third: the Historical Hula-Hoop

The Eden story, albeit charming, is probably only an allegorical tale crafted by the ancients in an attempt to explain their worldview or "Weltanschauung" in terms acceptable to the unwashed masses. The true beginnings of the hula-hoop are slightly less glamorous on the surface, but surely more exciting to the man of intellect.

In the Atlantic Ocean, approximately where the Sargasso Sea is now, stood the fabled continent of Atlantis with its fully developed culture and civilization, many millennia before the dawn of our history. The Atlanteans had a remark-

ably advanced technology and a correspondingly high incidence of pollution. A certain species of coelenterates inhabited the surrounding salt-marshes feeding on the industrial wastes of the ancient isle. They mutated into toroidal creatures with exoskeletons of Atlantean plastic, thus becoming the ancestors of today's hula-hoops. Had Atlantis retained even a few islands above sea-level it is certain that Charles Darwin, stopping there in the H.M.S. Beagle, would have used the hula-hoop species as evidence for his Theory of Evolution.

The earliest known accounts of hula-hoops in historical times appear in the pre-Columbian artifacts of Central America, principally those of the Aztecs and their predecessors the Toltecs. The Toltecs, a portly race, loved to spin hula-hoops around their waists in an effort to lose weight; the reducing qualities of the hoops however, came not from the exercise involved but from the fact that hula-hoops feed directly on human flab, ingesting it by osmosis while their unsuspecting prey spins the hoop around his middle. (They also gain energy directly from the kinetic energy of rotation, storing it in the magnetic field inside their hollow bodies.) Eventually the Toltecs began to worship the hoops and developed an attraction for swamps and marshes, where hula-hoops were primarily to be found. They would hold their debauched revels out in the swamps by the light of the full moon, twirling hoops around themselves until dawn. It is conjectured that the Toltecs eventually became too skinny and the hoops left them, heading back to their spawning grounds in the Sargasso.



The Aztecs somehow knew about the carnivorousity of hula-hoops and stayed as far from the strange beasts as possible. In fact, they went so far as to outlaw all circles and round figures from their culture, hoping that the hoops would find a non-round world displeasing and stay away.

Tale the Fourth: Life-Cycle of the Hula-Hoop

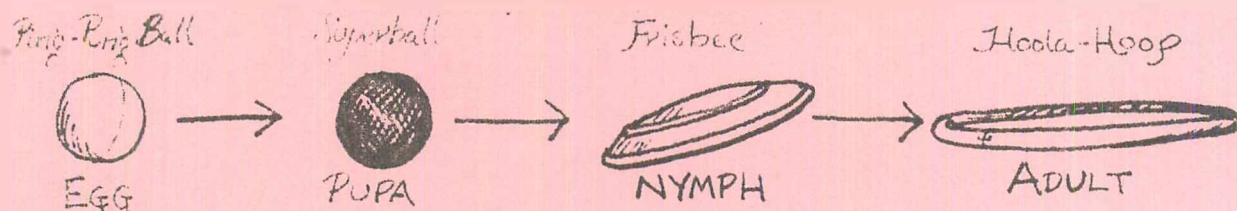
The life form known as the hula-hoop is actually only the adult stage of the organism; like insects, hula-hoops go through a series of metamorphoses before they reach full maturity. The egg of the organism is a ping-pong ball, the pupa is a superball, the nymph is a frisbee. The eminent hula-hoop expert, Professor M.Feder, explains the process thusly:

"The hoops are amphibious and indigenous to coastal areas. Their life cycle begins in the sea. After the older hoops conjugate, all that is left over are the ping-pong ball eggs and random bits of plastic (left over, raw genetic material). Nourished and stimulated by the Sargasso's seaweed, sunlight, and pollution, the ping-pong balls quickly turn into superball pupae with their stored food. Eventually the superballs burst into those miniature frisbees you sometimes see, which in turn grow by feeding on the plastic bits. When full grown, the frisbees (or nymph stage hula-hoop) begins to metamorphose into a ring or hoop, the edge then curling further under until the ring becomes a torus, while the plastic from the center part of the frisbee moves outward to provide material for the expansion of the hoop to full size. The still immature hooplings remain in the area, feeding on the abundant nutrient until they reach the fully stabilized adult hoop stage.

"At one time all hula-hoops had staples, but now only some (in areas with abundant fanzines) do. Long ago, staple shortages made the stapleless hoop a viable mutation with a higher survival value. By the time staples were once again available they had become vestigial and were incorporated or not incorporated without making any important difference.

"The full grown hoops are amphibious and live on land when human flab is available, otherwise coming ashore only to worship their god. In the case of the Toltecs it was the Indians' urge to go to the swamp for their revels that was crucial. Exposed to the environment of the swamp, which the hoops find erotically stimulating, the hoops just naturally abandoned the humans (the Toltecs were so heart-broken their civilization collapsed) and swam off into the swamp and down the river to the ocean, to spawn. Every few years, hoops undergo the spawning urge, and no matter where they are, on sea or land, with or without a swamp's stimulation, they return to the Sargasso to spawn and die."





- LIFE-CYCLE OF HOOLA-HOOPS -
FIG. I

STU SHIFFRIN

Tale the Fifth: Hoola-Hoops in Modern Times

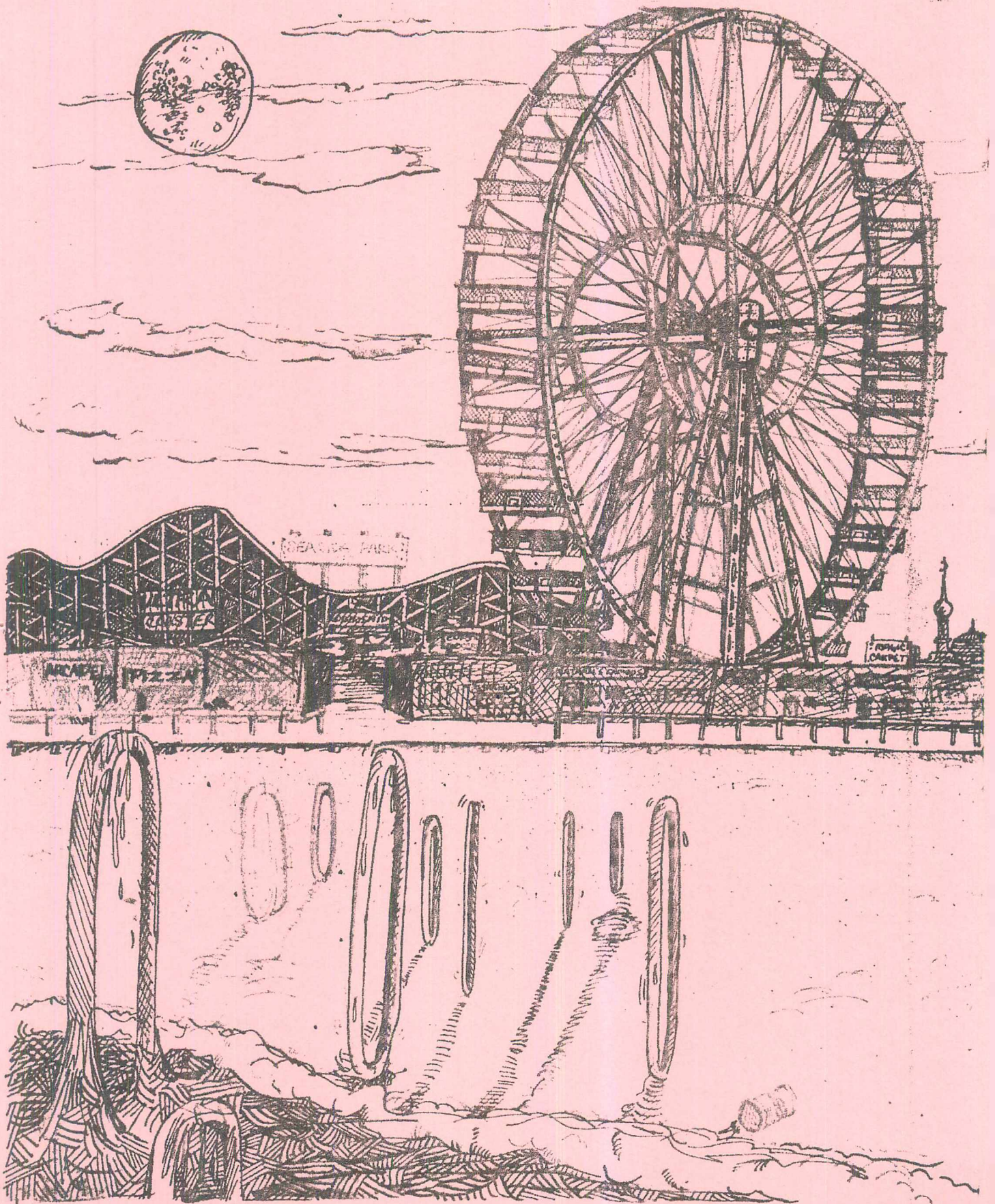
Hoola-hoops have always been a fairly rare species, but their continued existence is now being threatened by the environmental changes brought about, both directly and indirectly, by man's technology. The sudden boom in the hoop population in the late 1950's was not without cause, but rather, a direct result of the sharp increase in the amount of pollution in the Earth's waters. Since the hoops feed (partially) on pollution, this effect is not surprising. However, this was not the only cause of the increase.

At one time, it will be recalled, the population of yo-yos was much greater than it is today. As the yo-yo species began to die off, its natural prey, the coonskin cap, began to increase. During the yo-yo and coonskin cap periods the hula-hoop (the prey of both) had adopted protective green coloration, dropped the staple, and uncoiled — thus forming what was thought to be a separate species, "Hosa Floralis", or garden hose. The coonskin caps reached their peak, outgrew their food supply, and died off abruptly. The hoops, now out of danger but slow to react, gradually dropped their camouflage and emerged into the public eye, their numbers swelled by the lack of any natural enemies. They too overtook their own food source, and after a few years were seldom found outside the Sargasso Sea, their ancestral home.

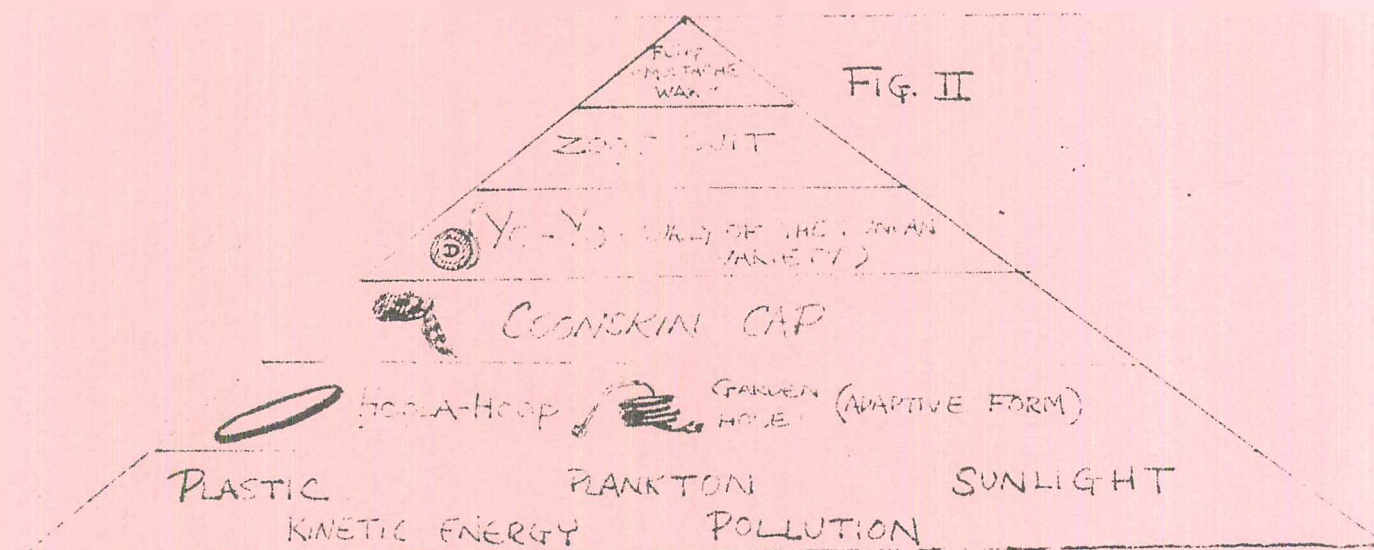
The yo-yos had had their heyday because their natural predator, the Zoot suit, had died off some years earlier. The Zoot suits in turn, prospered due to a lack of their own enemy, the parasitic fungus which is often mistakenly identified as mustache wax. The "wax" of course was starved to death in the early part of this century when facial hair became passé. It should be noted that yo-yos did not disappear entirely; some in fact, mutated to live on electricity and kinetic energy instead of on their former diet of hoops and caps.

For the past ten years or so Hoola-hoops have been on the rise again, although remaining mostly in the Sargasso area. However, they are again threatened by human civilization; the recent popularity of frisbees as toys is killing off the hoops from overwork while they are still in the nymph stage of development. The endangerment of the species is reflected in the laws prohibiting the importation of dead frisbees. Even more recently there have been seen brightly colored, corrugated tubes of plastic which give off a peculiar noise when whirled around. Certainly this practice would not be permitted if it were generally known that these are actually the senile, age-wrinkled, old hula-hoops moaning in pain.

Hoola-hoops are hermaphroditic, and any hoop can mate with any other hoop. Some centuries ago, some near-sighted hoops attempted to



mate with ordinary wheels. The result of this miscegnation was the bicycle tire. Strangely enough, the offspring were not only viable, and fertile, but bisexual as well. The bicycle is merely a mechanical manifestation of the marriage of two such tires.



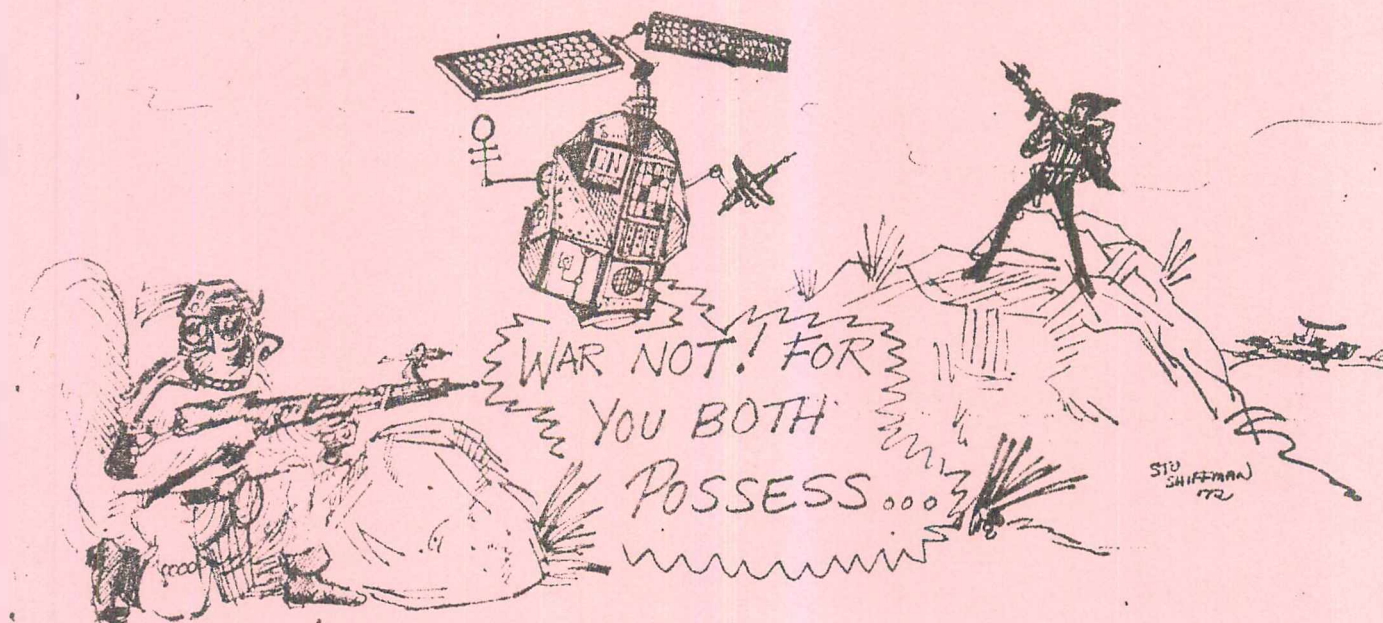
Tale the Sixth: Hula-hoops and the Supernatural

Hula-hoops, who have a fully developed culture, are not without religion. They are monotheistic, worshipping the great hoop of ineffable name, which is of giant size and a personification of Roll and Spin. A messiah figure, he will someday lead the hula-hoops back to dominion and eternal bliss in a land of seaweed and plastic.

At the full moon all the hoops congregate in abandoned amusement parks and worship the ferris wheels. They do this by bowing and spinning like dervishes. This arcane ritual is referred to in Rollkien's trilogy, Horde of the Hoops, most dramatically in the oft-quoted poem:

Hula-hoops, bright stapled loops, seen from a boat,
Spawnlings of ping-pong balls, much like a wheel,
Feeding on mortal men once doomed to bloat,
Pray to the ferrous lord on his throne of steel
In the Sargasso where the plastic floats.
One hoop to rule them all, one hoop to find them,
One hoop to bring them all and in the plastic bind them
In the Sargasso where the plastic floats.

- David L. Emerson



THE ESSENTIAL MIND

In Russia, more than anywhere else in the world, everything is political. Machines are political, music is political, food is political, housing is political. And of course, whether a novel gets published or not is political.

In the first post-revolutionary decade, the new Bolshevik masters of Russia decided to ease up a bit and allow the country to adjust, rebuild, and revive from the ravages of war and revolution. This was called the N.E.P., the New Economic Policy (1921-28). Although there was no increase in political freedom, there was a liberalisation of economics and of culture. As a result the period saw a great flowering of art and literature. After the death of Lenin (1924) a power struggle began, until, slowly but surely, Stalin took complete control. By 1928 he had a fairly firm grip on the reins, the N.E.P. ended and the first five year plan began. The massacre of the Kulaks and the Great Purge were soon to follow. Communisation recommenced and all the totalitarian strictures on life and art were re-imposed. This was the year the Mikhail Bulgakov began to write his masterpiece, The Master and Margarita.

Bulgakov (1891-1940) was born in Kiev, the son of a professor. After a try at medical practice he turned to writing. He worked as

a journalist and wrote in his spare time. Until in 1925 his first novel, The White Guard was published. It stirred a great deal of controversy (it deals with the revolution from the aristocracy's point of view) and after he turned it into a play called "The Days of the Turbins" it was even more successful. Bulgakov was very critical of the system he was caught in and much of his work is satirical. Not surprisingly, most of it was never published in his lifetime. By 1930 his work was banned from publication. He was forced to take a position as literary consultant in Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre. There he worked for the rest of his life, dramatizing, most successfully, the works of many of the great authors.

But Bulgakov was a true writer, and though he knew that his work might never be read by anyone else he continued to write through all those years. From 1928 until his death in 1940 he worked on The Master and Margarita, reworking and polishing it to perfection. It was finally published in two issues of MOSKVA in the winter of 1966-67, a quarter of a century later.

M & M is a rich, boisterous, fantasy in which the Devil visits Moscow and all hilarious hell breaks loose in the city of czars and commissars. In the Russian tradition the novel takes a broad view of the events and shows us how they affect many people. As when Satan, in the guise of a "visiting artiste", a foreign magician, causes money to rain from the ceiling of a Moscow vaudeville theatre. The audience scrambles for it, and fights break out. The next day, after a good deal of the money has been spent, it all turns to plain white paper. For all this, the book centers around the two characters referred to in the title.

The master is a genius, confined in an insane asylum (an arrangement which has since become a Soviet custom). He has written an historical novel about Yeshua of Nazareth (Jesus) and Pontius Pilate, which embodies all his wisdom. Then, in a fit of despair, he burned the only five existing manuscripts.

The character and predicament of the master are an interesting metaphorical parallel to those of Bulgakov himself. And there is a parallel of another sort as well. Bulgakov inserts sections from the master's great work, so that M & M seems to jump back and forth between ancient Jerusalem and modern Moscow. The contrast is fascinating. These novel within a novel sections are a highlight of the book. (At least for me, but then, I've always found Jesus to be one of my favorite characters when he is used in fiction, see Behold the Man and The Last Temptation of Christ).

Margarita is the master's lady, or as she would boldly proclaim (even to her husband) after the Devil has seen to her liberation (by means of a magic cream), his mistress and lover. She goes through a strange ordeal to obtain a manuscript of the master's book. She flies over Moscow, naked and on horseback, she serves as hostess for a party in hell, and in the end, she gets what she wants.

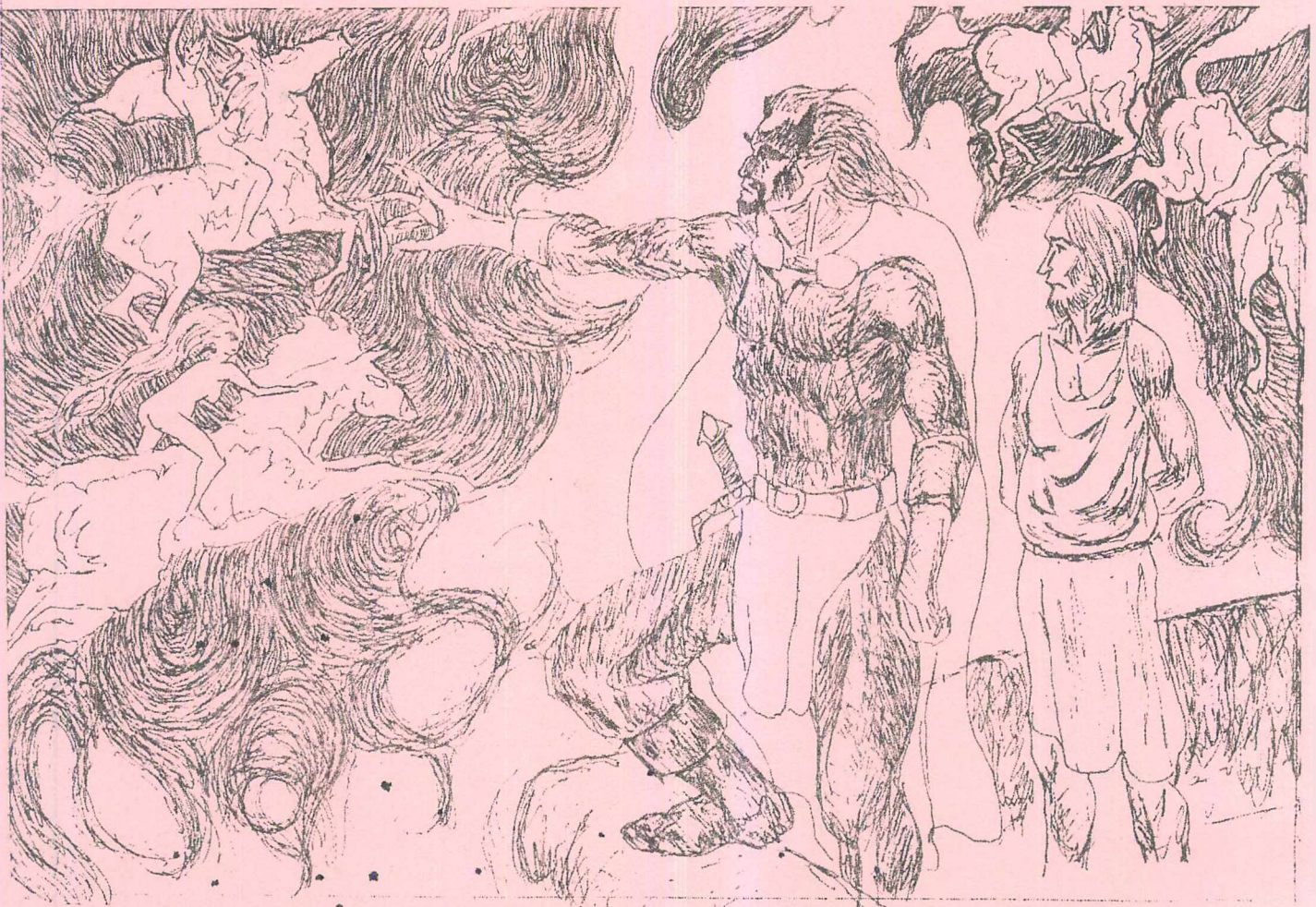
There is no question in The Master and Margarita of how we should regard Satan (as there is in many other works). He is one of the "good guys", amusing himself in manners arcane and farcically petty, sometimes scaring people out of their wits as when he has his "cat" apparently tear the head off of a George Jessel sort of M.C. before the horrified crowd in that same theatre where it rained money.

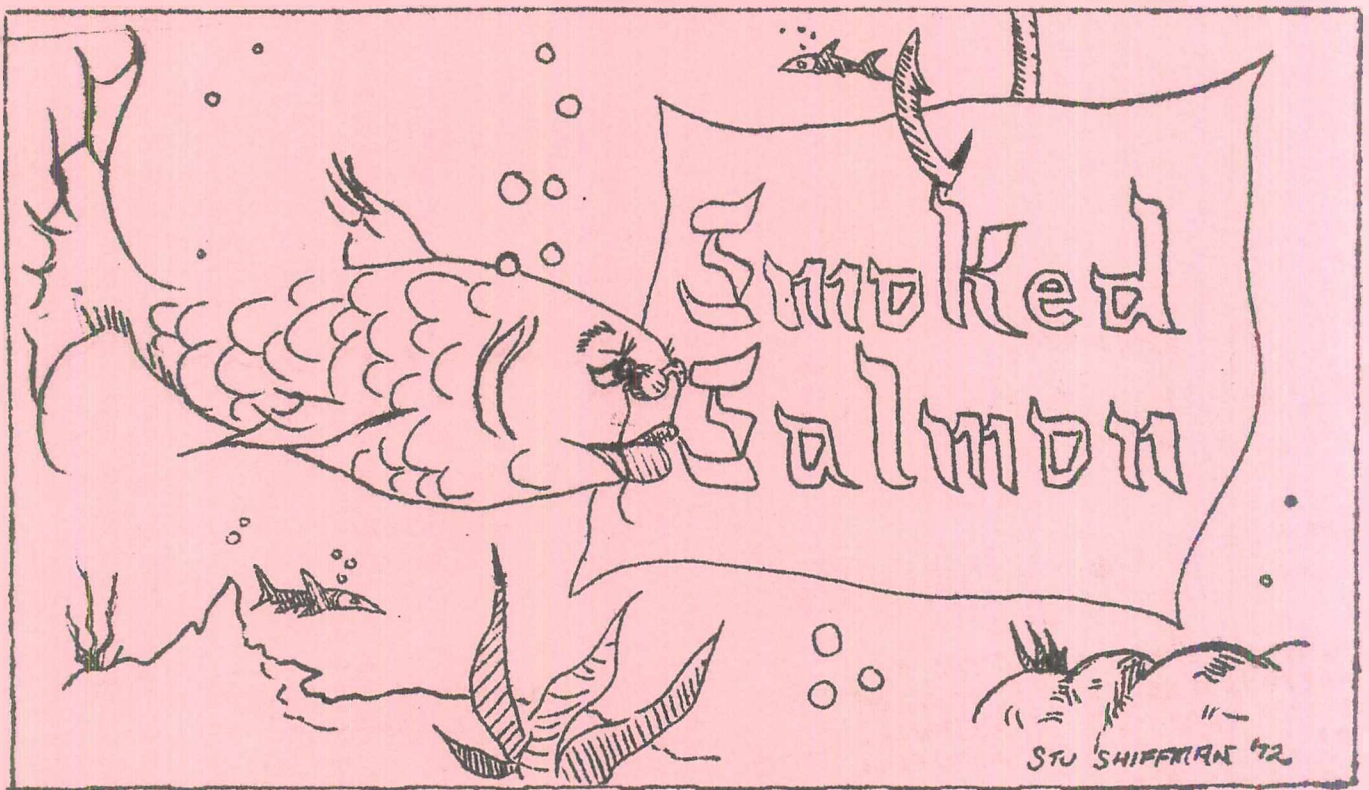
Besides scaring people he enjoys giving the apparatchiks of the soviet bureaucracy a very, very, hard time, as when one of them suddenly finds himself to be an invisible man.

The Devil visits Moscow in the guise of Prof. Woland. To the apartment he commandeers (there's a housing shortage on) he brings a bizarre and variegated crew. There's a female vampire who often wears nothing at all, or perhaps nothing but the little lace apron of a French maid, a cap, and slippers, she has red hair and burning eyes and her name is Hellas. There's a huge black cat who smokes cigars and totes an automatic named Behemoth. There's also a man in black with a single fang, a walleye, and a knife in his belt named Azazello and a weird skinny freak in a checked suit and jockey cap called either Koroviev or Faggot. With these characters in action havoc almost seems natural.

Two translations of The Master and Margarita are available. One by Mirra Ginsberg in a Grove Press edition and another by Michael Glenny in Harper & Row and Signet editions. In both cases the translation seems to be quite good, but the Grove Press edition was based directly on the MOSKVA serialization which had been expurgated to the tune of 23,000 words. The Signet and Harper and Row editions are complete. They also have a nicer cover. Read it.

- Moshe Feder





Michael Glicksohn
32 Maynard Ave., Apt. 205
Toronto 156, Ontario
Canada

The striking front cover, easily the best artistic contribution to the issue(hell, the only artistic contribution to the issue!) is a good beginning for a second issue that more than lives up to the promise showed

by number one. Mimeo is at least readable, often good, and the contents I found mostly both interesting and well written. But as for a trade, I regretfully say no. It has little to do with being "good enough" though; I restrict trades to a minimum because too many faneds, myself included, use them as the only form of response to a zine. **ENERGUMEN** is response oriented, and we want to encourage locs, not discourage them. And with a trade for **PLACEBO**, I'd lose the incentive to loc it, which I don't want to do. I generally trade only with those zines I want to get but don't want to loc.

I'm intrigued by those early pages with the fluctuating line spacing. I'd compliment you on your inventive use of graphic densities but I'd feel a fool if it turned out to be a simple error on your part. It was unintentional - otherwise known as involuntary experimentation.

Hey Barry, you think all Jews live in New York? Of course we got the pun! You're going to be filtering out the parts of the letters you want to print and smoked salmon is used in gefiltefish. Even a goy knows that! You must have a different kind of gefilte fish in Canada. Our Jewish Grandmothers(can you think of a better authority?) used carp, white fish, and pike. They also tell a story about Newtown Creek near Williamsburg in Brooklyn where the now extinct piscis gefiltus once flourished in all it's wild splendor. Another victim of pollution!

You sing "God Save The Quern"(old Goon Show joke, not typo)in Baskin-Robbins? Are you really Fred Lerner in a clever spastic disguise?

Your description of Queens College is frightening. Combined with the recent insurgent fanzines casual descriptions of muggings and terrorism, it hardly encourages one to visit New York. I'm beginning to wonder how I've managed to attend three Lunacons and a Nycon without getting robbed or maimed. With my fourth Lunacon a couple of weeks away, it's a sobering advertisement for Gotham City. /Queens College is frightening. But New York is not that bad. At least there are other cities with equally serious problems. I'm a proud New Yorker(born in Brooklyn)and I'm tired of all the anti-Gotham propaganda we've been hearing lately.-ME/ /Actually, all NYC isn't that bad. Only certain spots. Like Central Park after dark, or Morningside Park at any time. But a place near Morningside Park(like Broadway around Columbia)is quite safe even at midnight. But to people like my parents, the neighborhood has a bad reputation. But what's really weird are the places you can get mugged. For instance, I was mugged in broad daylight in front of my high school with ten people on either side of me.-BS/

...the selection of the Will Straw piece was the perfect choice for a reprint, and clearly shows why Will was thought to be one of the fannish greats by his contemporaries. This is a new side of "Straw" for me and one I'm glad I had the chance to see. I'm familiar with his many locs, of course, but his fannish style essays were something I hadn't seen before and if this one is typical, I can understand why he enjoyed the reputation he did. Perhaps this is presumptuous, but I must say it reminded me somewhat of the sort of writing that used to come out of Inchmerry Fandom; and what higher compliment can one pay? The conclusion was superb, although I wonder if many newer fans would quite have understood the references? It is a continual source of amazement to me that Straw seemed to arise fully developed without the usual fannish apprenticeship(there is not a single reference to him, for instance, anywhere in the first three volumes of All Our Yesterdays, but he's sure to play a major role when the 70's are covered.)and there are still those convinced he was a hoax. Whatever the truth may have been, this was a fine piece of writing and I'm delighted you were able to rescue it from oblivion.

The lettercol logo is a fine idea but could have been better executed. /I agree, hence the new logo which was my original idea for it back when we chose names.-BS/ Hmph! Putting that Warner fellow ahead of me just because he's an American. Chauvinists! /Your wish is our command. You're now first.(Sorry about that Harry, but we have to humor these Canadians.)/

Hank Davis is positively Machiavellian! I'm glad I read his article, though; I'll be on the lookout for such things in the future. (There was a first issue of a fanzine that had a Harry Warner letter in it one time. I'm waiting for the time someone starts getting letters from Harry and publishing fanzines about them. There's a great new sub-fandom there.)

Harry Warner, Jr.
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740

You realize, I hope, how valuable certain issues of this second PLACEBO will become as time passes and the little slip listing your addresses slips unnoticed from between the

pages of most copies - and a second issue of PLACEBO with the slip in its original place between cover and index page will be worth ten times a copy that has the slip but isn't guaranteed to have retained it between the correct pages at all times. [Quick, let's burn the slips!]

Both editorials were entertaining. My principal interest in boxes that arrive through the mail is: are they suited in weight and size and strength for mailing stencils in? Of course, recycling of used materials was invented by fans who first showed the 20th century how an envelope or box or brown paper wrappings can enjoy eternal life if each recipient is careful enough about how he opens it and conscientious enough about how he blots out the previous markings. As for the difficulties with locs addressed to PLACEBO: at least the post office's behavior is just plain stupid, not incredible. The postal mixup that has never been completely explained consists of the way I occasionally receive fanzines addressed to a Washington area fan. His name is not similar, his address doesn't resemble mine, the zipcode has a different look, and the only possible explanation that I've ever been able to think up is static electricity. It's conceivable that his copy adheres to mine in the original sorting station and never comes loose during its travels.

I was happy to find someone spending a lot of space on the Wollheim book. It is curious how little attention it has received in fanzines, when you think how rarely a book-length study of science fiction gets published. Once again I haven't experienced the item under discussion, but I'm looking forward to it, particularly because unlike most of the other books about science fiction which were written by people who made their fame as fiction writers, Wollheim has always been an editor first and an author only incidentally.

Will Straw makes a brave try at imagining how blase he will try to be at the Torcon. But I'm vain enough to think that I could cite many real episodes that make his own fictitious adventure seem rather goshwow. For instance, there was the afternoon of September 4, 1971, in the Sheraton Boston. I was the fan guest of honor at this world-con, on that Saturday afternoon I still hadn't figured out exactly what I wanted to say at the banquet. People like Ben Bova, Lester del Rey, Bob Silverberg, Poul Anderson, James Gunn and Bob Shaw were on the Grand Ballroom program, the Hyborian Legion and First Fandom meetings were scheduled, and where amid this unparalleled excitement and splendour was I? A mile away, in section 13, row one, seat nine of the grandstand at Fenway Park where I'd sneaked away to watch a major league baseball game. If I was impressed by anything that afternoon, it was the fact that I was attending a ball game where another spectator was Mrs. Babe Ruth. Or if I may be permitted to brag about an episode from my mundane life: I earn my living as a journalist. Late one Sunday morning, I ordered breakfast at a lunch counter in the center of Hagerstown. A man from the sheriff's office started to eye me strangely, finally sat beside me, and murmured: "It's supposed to be a secret so there won't be a mob but " President Johnson is in Hagerstown. He brought his family to the first Baptist Church. There's no other newspaper people there." All the cameras at the newspaper office were broken, so I knew I would have to come home and get

my own camera and then go to the church. So I waited for my order of bacon and eggs to arrive, and I ate it leisurely, drove home, got the camera, walked to the church for fear traffic wouldn't be allowed past it if I'd miscalculated, and sure enough, I was in time to get the only pictures and quotes available to the world press on that morning in the President's life. (Maybe I should explain that this was President Lyndon Johnson. Some younger fans have heard so much about my age that they might think I'm talking about Andrew.)

I've read a few of the Trollope novels but had never even heard about The Fixed Period. It is indeed a literary puzzle as you describe it, and I hope that you're not trying to put us on. It seems so totally out of character for an author who was so obsessed by the tiny point in space and time about which he wrote all those other novels. [Well, the characters are English Victorians even if the setting of the story isn't. As for the book, it's no put-on. See page 268 of Bleiler's Checklist of Fantastic Literature. - MF/

The front cover is splendid. I can't tell where one artist stops and the other starts. I also liked very much the illustrations for Ray Nelson's article.

Tim Kirk
1530 Armando Dr.
Long Beach, Cal., 90807

Many thanks for PLACEBO, the highlight of which has to be that Elliot-Foster cover. Beautiful, beautiful. Does one do the pencilling and the other the inking, or what? Your

thing on English newspapers struck a familiar chord. I got hold of a bundle of them once, mostly local village papers from Kent, and they were filled with the sort of things you quoted. It seemed to me that a place where the most earth-shaking news printable was the birth of triplets or the erection of a new school building might be a nice place to live. I've seen the rest of the cubist alphabet you used, and it's surprisingly readable.

Dave Hulvey
Rt.1, Box 198
Harrisonburg, Va. 22801

Moshe had a very nice editorial. I second his motion that folk songs should be preserved for destiny. They are one of the nicest things to do at a con. It's wonderful to get

nicely drunk and sing along with both great and small. At the latest Balticon, a stalwart crew of hearty souls held forth in the dull, sercon surroundings of the earlier program at about 4 a.m. It was glorious. Every imaginable variety of song, those sacreligious, those bawdy, those filled with oaths, those nonsensical and purporting to report biologically impossible acts, and even those the leaders of the song-fest had trouble reading, so stained were they with spilt beer. One fellow lost control, and spilled his bottle on the back of Joe Haldeman, and though this momentarily interrupted the proceedings, soon all were again assembled in gusto. At one point, the Jews in the mad goings on formed a separate celebration in which they perpetrated lewd ethnic acts on one another to the horror of the staunch Anglo-Saxons engrossed in their bottles and deeply concerned with the arcane patterns in the table and chairs. It was much fun.

That was a nice review of Clockwork Orange, though I fear we will start seeing them all over fandom in any number of neozines. I can do without another 2001 inundation. I fear if this is so, there will be few raps of the caliber of this one. [Thank you-VQ]

Will Straw, neofannish enthusiasm is the veritable life-blood of fandom. All these jaded BNFs, wkfs and others in the hierarchal disorganization of fandom need the input the proletarian masses of fandom supply. For you to disclaim this wellspring from which all blessings flow is vegetables for the devil's advocate. Sir, you have challenged the basic assumption for the existence of raw recruits to the anarchial organization of supremely cultivated decadence called SF fandom. I find your yawning in the face of this tide of strident interest somewhat akin to falling asleep on your honeymoon night. How dare you!

Verily I saith unto thee, Will of Straw, it not meet, right, and salutary that ye scoff in the temples, sell false promises to the hoards begging at the gate for St. Burbee to liken them in his image, patronize the forces of the massy masses of the assemblage of assembled trufen about the important task of cleansing all of fandom for the coming of Him; the One.

And furthermore, let it be said that those that reap the poisoned words of the disciplines cast upon the harsh soil will not bear fruit, will not produce hundred-fold per tax-deductible acreage, will not pass go, will not collect two hundred dollars.

So, ye be warned, Will, that the BNFs on above do not take your words lightly, for the stoned cheese pieces - spliced in consequent denomination - have passed through the gardens of grapewell and have not found it to be grassy knolls in the best traditions of fleecy clouds upon a postage stamp sized sky. [Huh??]

Ye be warned.

If Will Straw vanishes into his own subjective clause, would it be sinuously convoluted syntax?

Aljo Svoboda
1203 Buoy Ave.
Orange Cal. 92665

Will Straw neglected to mention one further method of proving one's total apathy and boredom with fandom, possibly because he dosen't use it in either his locs or apazines. Never comment on the fanzine, but take up astounding amounts of space describing the most trivial aspect of your mundane life, thus giving the faneds and readers the impression that you don't even scan the zine for egoboo, let alone read it. How much more bored can you get? But I'm one up on Will's Project. I have one of my own. It'll be like this: pretending to be enthusiastic, I'll amass a fantastic collection of fanzines and original fanart. Complete files of SHAGGY, VOM, LE ZOMBIE, HYPHEN, SLANT, and every big name fanzine in fandom past; original Bode, Kirk, Barr, Austin, and Rostler art. Then, without even glancing at these unimaginable treasures, I'll do the thing that will prove me to be a fan above all fen.

I'll throw it all in the garbage. (Try and beat that, Will Straw!)

Hank Davis
4268 Bedford Ave.
Brooklyn, NY, 11229

PLACEBO 2 is up some from that firstish. Aside from the dandy Ray Nelson piece, this wasn't creased down its long axis and stapled shut. That mode of mailing a zine may be

very, very, fannish, but this fan (a sercon type, admittedly) doesn't like the wait while the zine sits pressing under a stack of books by Willy Ley and Chesley Bonestell (the only volumes bigger than 8½ by 11 paper) so that I can read it without the creased pages trying to flip the zine shut. And in the last place, that crease nevernevernever goes completely away. Whenever I glance through a pile of old fanzines, it will always be there, staring back at me. The editor of a zine posted in this spartan manner will save money, naturally, a staple or three being cheaper than a manilla envelope, but what editor is so cruel as to continue to eat regularly, even while putting out a zine, while I suffer aesthetic anguish? (Don't answer that!)

Your writing of the stuff that comes wrapped around the oldie moldy pulps that come through the mail to us demented collectors in exchange for nothing more than their weight in dollar bills, reminded me of one dealer in such who always sent his notes to me ("Mr. Davis: The July 1960 ASTOUNDING was already sold, so you have \$5.00 credit," — well, I do exaggerate a bit) taped on the back of checkout cards from his local library. Doubtless, they would be collector's items if I had saved them, since he later moved and started writing such notes on mere paper. Not quite the thing that the purist collector might go for, since they were not sent through the mail, were the price tags that a used book dealer in Lexington, Ky. slipped between the pages of his wards. They were made from snipped up blank checks, picked up at a local bank. The quietus was put on this practice when the advent of checks with magnetic numbers for a particular account eliminated the giving away of checks to any riffraff who stumbled into the bank out of the heat, cold, rain, etc. So again, they would surely be collector's items.

You think that you (different you this time) have trouble with the post office? My parents sent me a letter which had my address perfectly correct except the wrong zip code was written — and the N.Y. branch of the Post Office bounced it back to Kentucky stamped "Unknown". But maybe they were just indicating that I was a fantasy fan.

Basking-Robbins' powers to sway the FSFSCU horde are indeed formidable, but not without limit, as I noted one night when Eli Cohen shouted "What time is it?" three times with no effect. I suggested that he turn the lights on and off rapidly, and that got the troops marching. But would Pavlov have approved?

Ray Nelson writes a good article/script, but I'm upset that he puts down Kingsley Amis' excellent New Maps of Hell. It's "wrong-headed", eh? And "what he was saying just wasn't so?" Let's have some examples, Nelson. I'm more than a little tired of fans putting down the Amis book. Leland Sapiro once attempted to pour scorn on an essay on SF in a noted intellectual publication by stating that the writer knew even less about SF than Kingsley Amis. But I'm inclined to doubt that Sapiro has read more SF than I have, if as much, and I caught no significant factual errors in NMOH. Why scorn for Amis, and none for James Blish, who manages to average one factual error per F&SF column? Amis' wit and style make the book delightful. Compare it, for example, with the Nebulous outpourings of Judith Merrill. Quit knocking Amis, people! Amis is All Right. 41

Good grief, am I really responsible for the title of Jeff Schalles' piece? It's kind of fun, but if he is going to pretend to exhume oreaky fannish classics, he should leave out the circa-1970 references. Josh the reader if you must, but josh him consistently.

Loren MacGregor
429 14th E., #321
Seattle, Wash. 98102

I have several of the old drinking songs, distributed, I believe, at either the 22nd or 23rd Westercon. For example, there's "I Was Born About Ten Thousand Years From Now":

I was born about ten thousand years from now,
When they land upon the moon, I'll show them how (or)
When they landed on the moon, I showed them how,
And with Goddard, Ley, and Campbell on an interstellar ramble,
I'm the guy who caught and cooked and served the chow.

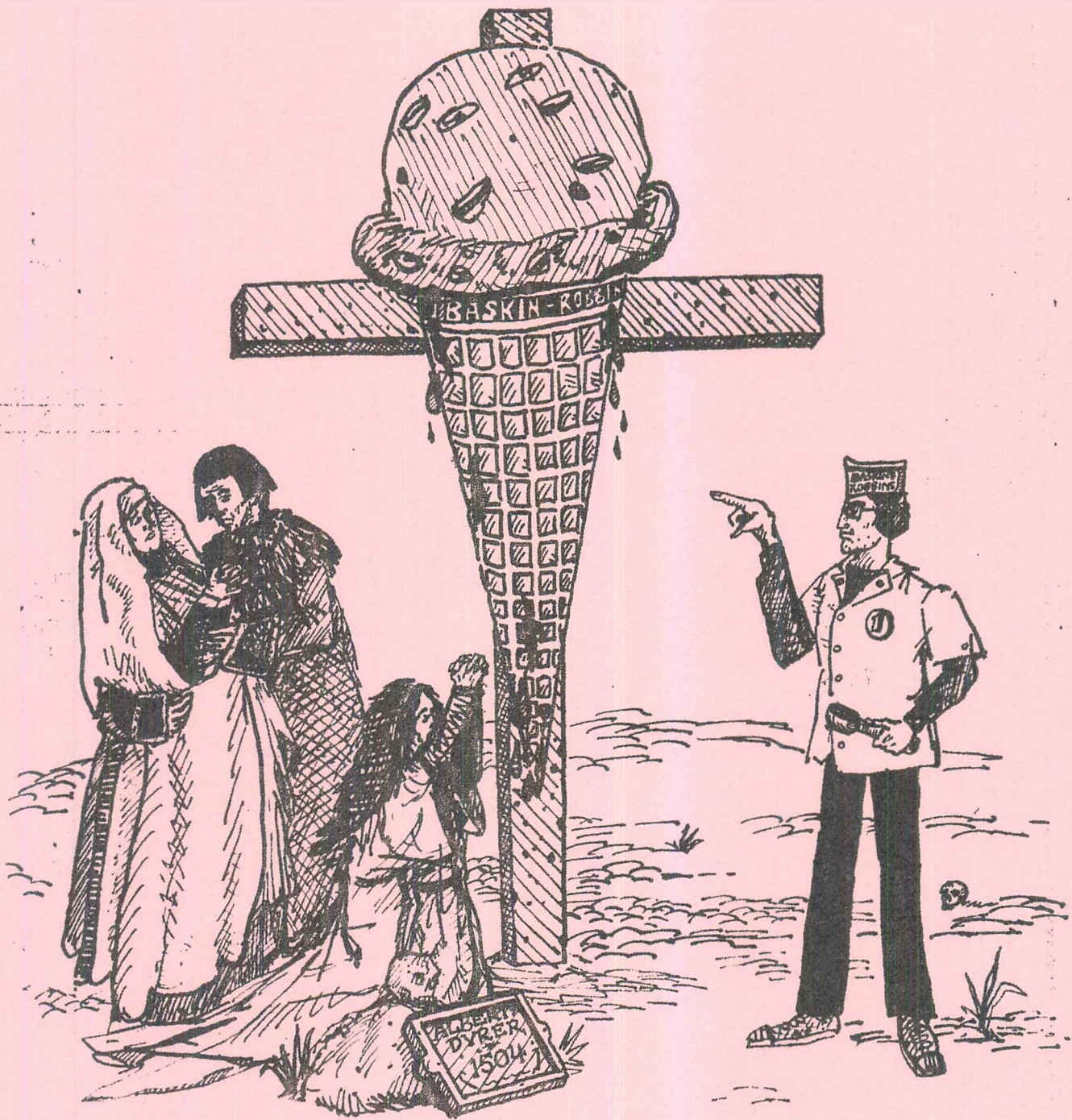
Oh, I'm just a lonesome traveler, a great fantastical bum,
Highly educated, from mystery I have come,
I laid the Road of Yellow, with bricks all bright and new,
And that's about the strangest thing that man'll ever do.

If you're interested in the tune, you can listen to the album "The Chad Mitchell Trio at The Bitter End", or find the Pete Seeger album that has the song "The Great Historical Bum". [It's also on the new two record set "A Tribute To Woodie Guthrie". It's sung by Tom Paxton and goes by the title "The Strangest Thing That Man Has Ever Done" (or something like that)-BS/

I think the greatest post office story I ever heard was told by a friend of mine who had a package delivered 18 years late after it had made the rounds of every naval base in the Pacific. He'd been out of the service for 15 years, and hadn't been stationed anywhere near water during his entire enlistment. And, though I collect magazines and paperbacks, I very seldom read the inner wrapping. I'm more fascinated by the postmarks. I sometimes wonder how in hell a package can get a postmark of "Portland, Maine" when it was sent from Tacoma, Wash. to Seattle, Wash. Ours is not to reason...

So now we've had the cat trapped in the airplane, and the snake and stoned mice trapped in their corresponding walls. I'm waiting for a fish to be trapped in the toilet bowl. Although come to think of it, people in New York have reported alligators there, so I guess it doesn't sound so far outre at that.

I think there is something hypnotic about Baskin-Robbins that attracts fandom. Too many fans have noted their preferences for said store - from Canada to the whole of the United States. I resisted the temptation for quite a while, succumbing very seldom. Then they moved a store into my neighborhood. What'll I do if they run out of Blueberry Cheesecake? [Get Mandarin Chocolate, of course.-BS/ [David Emerson and I have written a "Baskin-Robbins Chorus" sung to the tune of the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's "Messiah". This of course implies a comparison between Jesus Christ and Baskin Robbins ice cream. The words appear below the picture. Obviously, the way the words are typed requires that you know the original song - repeat the lines and divide the parts (soprano, tenor, etc.) as in the original.-MF/



Baskin-Robbins, Baskin-Robbins
 B-R, B-R, Baskin Robbins
 31 different flavors of ice cream
 B-R, B-R, B-R, B-R,
 31 different flavors of ice cream
 B-R, B-R, B-R, B-R.
 The ice cream of this world
 Is often pretty sad

But at our favorite store
 It's always good
 It's never bad
 And we could eat for ever and ever
 And we could eat for ever and ever
 Great ice cream - for ev. & ev., B-R, B-R
 In Store of Stores - " " " " " "
 And we could eat for ever and ever
 Baskin-Robbins!

Olefson, Right On! It was a good movie but nothing that should spark a violent "Hurrah for our side" response. Kubrick has stated more than once that 2001 meant no more and no less than you wanted it to mean. The same situation is inherent here. If people have been led to believe that there are alternate meanings in something they are damn well going to find those meanings, no matter how hard they have to look.

Kubrick polarizes people. His vision is not all the great question; it's whether or not he convinces people that he has had such a vision. Generally in his films he lets people assume things about his motives, which may or may not be true. The technique was inherent in his photographs for LOOK as well, but he transferred to a more fluid medium. I don't intend to get into arguments about Clockwork ... since extended arguments about 2001 were what caused me to gaffiate a few years back - I just got sick and tired of the whole routine. At least we won't have too many lectures about the Neitzschian philosophy inherent in Clockwork. Personally, I enjoyed Straw Dogs a great deal more than A Clockwork Orange, and, though I thought the latter film was good, I can no more see it it getting the Hugo than I can see Ursula LeGuin, say, receiving the Pulitzer Prize. I think Loren's statements about Kubrick's methods mirror mine exactly, though he's put it better than I've been able to.-BS7

Depending on where you go in Seattle, you're liable to find street corners triangulated so: Corner 1, with the Hairy Chryslers, Corner 2, with the Jesus Freaks, Corner 3, with the guitar and Bible-thumping Fundamentalists, and corner 4 with the Witnesses hawking THE PLAIN TRUTH and THE WATCHTOWER. They haven't claimed it yet, but that leaves the atheists and agnostics in the middle of the road.

I think Wally Gonser of Seattle fame has Will Straw beaten before the match has fairly begun. He can sleep standing up, sitting down, or bending over. He can fall asleep in the middle of a word. And I'm willing to swear he could fall asleep with both feet behind his head, assuming he got them there. With qualifications like that, he's bound to win the "Sleeper of the Year" award.

"Stet", if it was written in Phoenician, (sort of putting a Phoenic in your column) might be written so: W+T+

[And people complain about the way the logo looks now!-BS7]

Dave Szurek
6328 Perkins
Detroit, Mich., 48210

Sending my mind back to high school, it's plain that all institutes of learning (not just colleges) are often scenes of violence. ... I remember one psychotic individual who

was suspended innumerable (which baffles me, as the altercation for which I was "expelled" was of a non-violent nature) for unmotivated violence. He was not part of a gang. Indeed, he was a complete loner, apparently by choice. He had not one visible friend, and on the few occasions that anyone would try and be sociable he'd snub them at best, punch them in the mouth at worst. He didn't look like the typical hoodlum. His appearance was exceedingly clean cut in the "wholesome" manner. He looked everything but rough. A slow maturer at sixteen or seventeen (his most active period) he appeared to be two

or three years younger. He was extremely short, skinny, and fragile looking with practically no shoulders whatever. Given glasses he most certainly would have resembled a young Wally Cox. If anything, he gave the visual impression of being weak and utterly defenseless. His fighting prowess, though, rivaled that of practically everyone concerned. He could easily take on the brawniest, most seemingly adept pugilists, and had been known to lay out two at a time with hardly any strain. He used his ability with his fists to the point where he became the world's smallest bully. Many theorized sadism. His ends were not monetary, neither were most attacks provoked, and he often had never met the victim. Several times he had disrupted class by, with no words beforehand, rising, creeping over to the other side of the room and smashing another student (sometimes male, sometimes female) in the head. Other times, a person he'd never met or shared a class with would be walking down the hall minding his own business. Without warning, he'd approach and go into his routine. Returning home, he invariably took to assaulting someone or other. He'd jump on teachers too - usually while words were being exchanged (though in one case that I didn't witness but heard about, he just jumped up and started punching. The suspicions that his drive was a sadistic one was furthered by his behavior. Rarely was there an expression of malice on his face. A smile was more common. After school, he'd walk around picking victims at random with no prejudices as to sex or age. He beat males, females, senior citizens, and children equally. Eventually he ended up in jail with knife wounds and a bullet in his leg. No sooner had he recuperated than he was back to his old tricks. The last I heard, somebody had smashed in his skull with a baseball bat and I don't know what happened after that.

Cy Chauvin
17829 Peters
Roseville, Mich. 48066

A great deal of the written material is nearly up to the standard ENER-GUMEN sets, [We couldn't resist printing that/though from a visual standpoint you lag far behind (though

the cover is a step in the right direction. Curiously, it seems like the sort of thing Dan Osterman might do; I wonder if Tom Foster/Jim Elliot were influenced by any great degree by Dan's style?)/[Dan Osterman? He's the last person I'd think of.-BS/ Personally, I always find that a nice balance between serious and fanciful material helps to make a zine more enjoyable, so I think this supposed conflict between you and Barry regarding a choice of material should only serve to make the fanzine better.

Your article on Anthony Trollope was somewhat interesting, but I wish you would have chosen a work that you really enjoyed and were enthusiastic about, or something that was more familiar (so that I could tear you apart!). [I was enthusiastic about it (even if it didn't show) - in the sense of its being an unusual discovery. As for it not being "familiar", the point of the "Essential Mind" is to present unfamiliar works.-MF/ You lack of excitement about this work - despite its historical importance - is communicated in your article; there's no real passion in it, no flashes of insight, no stunning multi-color metaphors (like Leon Taylor might use). The article really doesn't generate any interest in the book it discusses (like it should); you more or less have to be interested in the historical aspects of SF even before you begin it. An article really should suck you right into it, regardless of your interests.

Unlike Hank/Davis/, however, I don't think there's that much difference between a "normal" book review and an indepth "critical" type book review, other than quality. An indepth analysis is simply a more articulated, better written "reaction" of a fan to a book. But they're both the same kind of horse... "Buying Guides", on the other hand, are an entirely different breed of animal. /We've always felt that the difference was that a "normal"(short)book review was most useful before you'd read the book, while a "critical" review is more useful after. Some of the pro reviewers at the last Lunacon said much the same thing./

Also, perhaps you might mention in PLACEBO that the Spaced Out Library,(c/o Toronto Public Libraries, 566 Palmerston Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada)is interested in receiving fanzines. If you want your publication preserved for future fannish generations to come, here's the way to do it. They've also talked about producing an index to current fanzines, but I don't know if that project has gone through or not.

Seth McEvoy
Box 268
E. Lansing, Mich. 48823

Well, suprise! You actually got a second issue, and you're off and in the running. From a crud/club zine you've turned out quite nicely. I guess you weren't exactly a clubzine,

but you were sort of one, a group effort such has happened around here with disasterous results. Let's face it, most people who like science fiction don't have what it takes to become a fan.

One of the things I have noticed in fanzine fandom is the tendency to recycle manila envelopes. I've gotten several second party envelopes and it's been over a year since I actually bought a manila envelope, since I re-use all the ones I get from people like you. It's interesting to trace fan connections, to see that Gary Labowitz sent something to Redd Boggs who sent something to me, or the "nderground Press sending something to Jay Kinney who sent something to me. It's ecological.

Tom Digby
1043 N. Curzon Ave., Apt. 6
Los Angeles, Cal. 90046

For a while I thought I was going to have to address this letter to "The address was on a slip of paper but I lost it" and hope for the best from the P.O., but since then

I found it. But what's this business with hyphenated house numbers? Do they assign numbers to buildings that way, or are the last digits an apartment number, or what? /The number before the hyphen is the cross street; the number after is the house number./

And I suppose the pun you claim to have in your lettercol title is the same as if it had been titled "Liquid Oxygen"?

And to me, the time posted as closing time for a store or whatever should be the time they stop letting people in, so you don't show up with five minutes to spare but get turned away anyway. Does the sign at B-R say 12 or 11:45? /Actually the time varies. Barbara goes to the door between 11:50 and 12:00, while we're still inside eating. But

you'll be let in until 12:00. The sign itself says 12:00-BS/

And on the Future History, not all stories stick to the main trunk. Some, like the alternate worlds others like to write about, go off onto branches that may never join the top of the tree(8th Age). For instance, one limb fairly low on the trunk is Atomic War, with a short stub that ends there and several other branches, some of which eventually rejoin the trunk and others of which don't. Another limb just now being really noticed is Ecological Disaster, again with a stub that ends and several sub-branches, some of which lead to the top. Maybe a better analogy would be a river, with the main stream being fed by a spring in the mountains somewhere. Lower down the stream leads to a marsh, where it becomes numerous small channels that branch and rejoin, while tributaries from other rejoins add to the total flow. Then the 8-Age history would be a journey up the main river to the spring, while other stories are explorations of tributaries. And why need the 6th Age only come once? Maybe at that point there is a tributary like Paul Bunyan's Round River that flows forever in a circle without beginning or end, and you can ride it around several times - 7th Age forks, with one side being Round River which takes you back to 0th Age(the one before the first)and the other being the home stretch to the 8th. Maybe we are not just 6th Age, but second 6th Age or even 47th 6th Age. And there are the stories in which we are in someone else's 3rd Age or 4th or even 7th or 8th, where we don't build the empire ourselves but are invited in.(I wonder if it is possible to draw all this in two dimensions, or if three or more would be required?)And if we are indeed in someone else's 4th Age, we may yet see the old Roman fantasy with a slight change in the actor playing God..

And if you wanted to avoid having a first issue by naming your zine "PLACEBO 2", you could go ahead and put a 1 after it so people think it's issue 21, with the next being 22, etc., until number 29 is mysteriously followed by 210, a rather high number for any but weekly zines.

And I've known people who went by their middle names, so which name actually comes first isn't that important except on some official forms. If you defined a "zeroth name" as the name that comes before the first name, but is usually not used(like what the "J" stands for in J. Wellington Frumpmeyer")and had spaces for zeroth, first, middle, and last names on forms there wouldn't be near as much problems. There'd be people with no zeroth names, and people with no middle name, and people with neither, but most of that could be handled.

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Don Keller
1702 Meadow Court
Baltimore, Md. 21207

Moshe:

I am writing to you instead of your co-editor because your name fascinates me. It brings back memories of the days when my brother and I were young and we made up baseball teams with mythical players

with funny names. One my brother came up with was Mushy Peas (we hated green vegetables), which I told him was an impossible and unrealistic name. It wasn't until several years later that I realized it could be plausible - as Moshe Pease. [I was never much of a baseball player, but when I was younger I had a number of friends who called me "Mushy". Some of them still do.-MF/

Your handling of the Clockwork Orange review was rather poor. I see that you wanted the Nelson piece to start with a two page spread, which was very attractive, but there must have been some better way to arrange it than print one page of the review and then the other one several pages later. To make it worse, you forgot to note where the other page was, leaving the reader to find it by sheer luck. [We'd like to apologize for that. What happened then was that Victor didn't bring the article until the night before we were going to print and it wasn't put on stencil until about two hours before we did start printing. We were in such a rush that we forgot to put the continued thing down. We'd also would like to apologize to Ray Nelson for leaving his article out of the TOC. Again, we were rushed and this is also the reason our addresses were in the issue.]

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Michael Carlson
35 Dunbar Road
Milford, Conn. 06460

The logo on your column "Stet" was a bit confusing, I mean, what was the pizza pie split in two for? It looked like the kind of menu an Egyptian pizza pyramid might print. up for its patronage.

The review of "Clockwork" didn't really do much of anything. Film reviewing is a very touchy thing, since it's such an involved and diverse medium, and has many different facets of its creative process. A film critic must, as James Agee wrote in his column in Nation during the 40's, be very careful to stay within the bounds of his own knowledge and the realm of legitimate film criticism. In other words, you have to review the film as film but still not get overly technical when you don't really have the expertise.

Was that "Cosmic Circle" thing really a radio program? Does it originate at QC, or some studio? It originates at KPEA, the Berkeley station of Pacifica. To the best of my knowledge, it's still being broadcast. I don't know of any other station that's broadcasting it, but WBAI, the Pacifica station in N.Y., could probably get the tapes. Perhaps we should start a campaign to get WBAI to broadcast them here? BS/

Gibran always struck me as sort of a Rod McKuen of philosophy. But of course, that's a matter of taste (like so many other things). Rod McKuen? ROD MCKUEN??? ARRRRGH!!!!!! - BS/

What is Flushing? A modest means of small transport perhaps? Why do people ask questions like that? OK Seth, why is E.Lansing, MI?

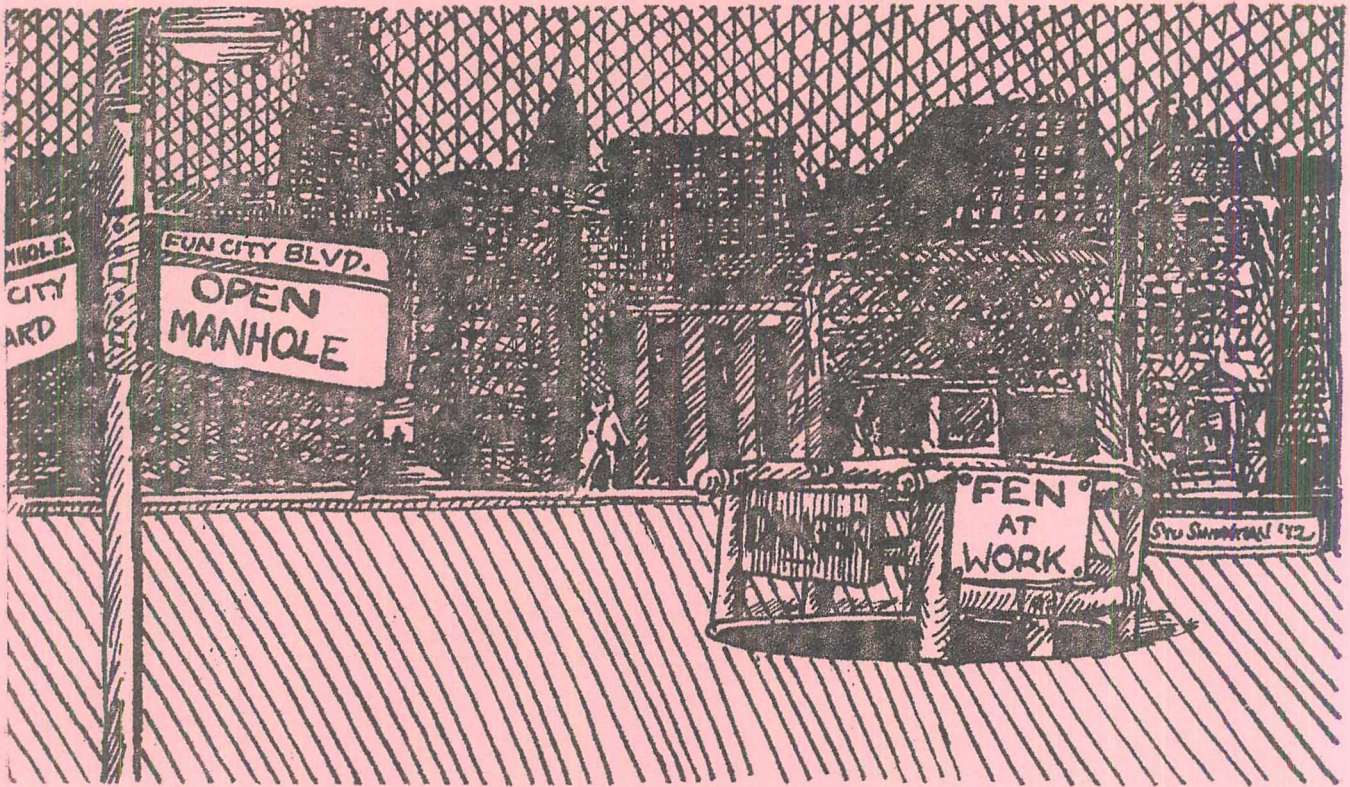
WAHFWAHFWAHF
WAHFWAHFWAHF
WAHFWAHFWAHF,

Marty Baker, Sheryl Birkhead,
Louis Russell Chauvenet,
Stephen Gregg, David Hall,
John Prenis.

=====

Why you are a member of the control group and got the PLACEBO:

WE TRADE _____
WE'D LIKE TO TRADE _____
WOULD YOU WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR US? _____
WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE SOME ARTWORK? ✓
THIS IS FOR REVIEW _____
YOU LIVE WITH AVOCADOS _____
ARE YOU THERE? _____
WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO _____?
HOW MANY BREETS IN A BUNCH? _____
YOU LOOK LIKE MOSHE (OR VICE VERSA), JOYCE KATZ SAYS SO _____
YOU SERVE BASKIN ROBBINS ICE CREAM. NEED WE SAY MORE? _____
WE LIKE YOUR STYLE, AND MISSED YOUR LOC, PLEASE WRITE AGAIN _____



"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh . . ." THUMP!

"You okay? Good. It's quite a jolt falling down an open manhole, isn't it. What, you didn't know there are manholes in fanzines? Why sure, it's always been here. There's gotta be easy access. This is where we build the fanzine and keep it functioning smoothly. . . .

+++++
And it isn't easy. We have 40 stencils left to run off tomorrow, we have 8½ hours to do it in, and if we don't make it there are going to be some angry people here threatening to drown us in barrels of corflu. They will have come a long distance under false pretenses (to help us collate).

I (Moshe) am ready to collapse of exhaustion and Barry is frantic. As usual, we've been too optimistic about the time it takes to ready an issue for publication, and now we'll pay the price.

Oh, to own a mimeograph! To run off stencil's at one's leisure. To strive for perfection! Oh, shit.

=====

As for the artwork itself, we've identified it, and the artists are credited on the contents page. (Please let us know if we've made any mistakes.) We hope no one minds us using their artwork and if you want the originals back, just ask us. OK?

You may also have noticed that our paper seems thicker than anything you've seen in a while. This is because it's 70lb. paper and is thicker. (The cover is 80lb.) We originally planned on using 20lb. pink twilltone, but Gold Seal didn't have any. Mr. Annenberg showed us this paper (Atlantic Pastel Offset, grain long, suede finish, dusty pink.) instead and we both agreed it would be good. We got it cheap (\$1.50 a ream) and we're having our postage payed by ICC so weight and money weren't a problem. We think the thick stock both looks and feels better. Comments?

"The Universe Breakers" had an interesting origin. We were both quite impressed with Ray Nelson's encomium of Wollheim's book so we went right out and read it (surprisingly, the QC library had a copy). We were disappointed, and it wasn't just a letdown from a big buildup. TUM is an interesting but flawed book, with little system and a curious mixture of the personal and the critical. We discussed the desirability of an article presenting this other point of view. Just about the same time, two of our readers (and friends) also took Ray's advice to heart and then came to us separately to offer their services if we'd give them the chance to differ with Ray in print. So of course, we did; and they have, and the result is a pair of articles that make similar estimates of the book from different angles. Judy treats it seriously and finds it interesting but faintly ridiculous and seems to feel that the old SF editor could have used some editing. In a shorter, more subjective piece, Victor sees it as part of a genre-wide phenomenon, which he deplores, "viscerally." These two should draw some locs.

There are a couple of spots in the issue where the type seems to be in double exposure. This is because the corflu we used was thin, and although one layer appeared to be enough, it wasn't. Sorry.

If, for some unfathomable reason, you should want some part of last issue, you might be able to get it (send postage). We have some extra pages, but not enough for any more complete copies, and

since we're not going to run off anymore of the missing pages, #2 is officially out of print.

Copies of last issues beautiful Elliot/Foster cover are available at a quarter each.

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I (Barry) would like to trade PLACEBO for old fanzines. Moshe doesn't seem to gung-ho on the idea, but what the hell, that just means more for me. Some people have done this in the past and to the best of my knowledge they've been quite successful. How about it people?

(((((

We got another beautiful letter (see p.41) from Hank "Machiavelli" Davis, who certainly must be one of the best locsmiths in fandom. But we got it at the last minute (two days before run-off time). Hank seems to be starting his own personal PLACEBO tradition after only two issues. His letters appear in our mailbox just on the brink of the most morbid deadline.

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Speaking of traditions, we have one of our own. Once again PLACEBO is late. Not an unusual occurrence where fanzines are concerned perhaps, but one we'd like to explain all the same. (Both of us being the conscientious, schedule-keeping, sort.)

There are these things called midterms, there are also these things called finals. Unfortunately, these once again decided to coincide with our publication date. Not to mention all the articles coming in late. (Not that we're complaining, we feel that this is a damn fine issue.) So, we're late.

PLACEBO 4 will appear shortly, sans lettercol, so we can catch up in time for the annish (scheduled for October). After that issue (#5) we may shift things to avoid further conflicts with our academic lives. To paraphrase John D. Berry: We're trying to catch up with our allegedly quarterly schedule.

- Moshe Feder
- Barry Smotroff

6/6/72

