

PREHENSILE ELEVEN

+A SCIENCE FICTION FANZINE+

50¢



SF & genre disease
'73 worldcon report
SF book & movie reviews

PREHENSILE -- the science fiction fanzine edited by Mike Glyer on a psuedo-quarterly basis, from 14974 Osceola St. Sylmar CA 91342 -- THE ELEVENTH ISSUE OF SAME, Winner of the coveted Bow-Wow Award! (Thanks Sheryl). Available for 50¢ an issue, contributions of words or art, big loans or assiduous begging, trades, and the editorial whim. Fanzine Control Board Number LA:2-001-2574. This issue is dedicated (after the recent fannish fad) to Uncle Fred, Henry Louis Mencken, Milt Stevens, Pat Morrow and Jim Shull.

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H.G. WELLS

REPREHENSIBLE



editorial MIKE GLYER

Now that I've gone offset I've had to start looking for respectable departments to steal from the successful fanzines -- THE ALIEN CRITIC, ALGOL, IS and so on. Call it research. I decided, for one, to adopt (ie, rip off) The Archives from TAC: I wanted to get a whole stack of free review books. Wasn't going to call it The Archives, of course. Perhaps call it The Uselessives -- have to, with the new Federal regulations about truth in advertising. (Just like the government to make a law about two contradictory things, truth and advertising.) Anyway I did up a little cover letter to send with PRE to all the publishers, and waited to see the results.

Apparently one publisher actually read the copy I'd sent ...and found that I was a charter member of the Science Fiction Hoaxters of America. Either that or I've begun to receive mail from an alternate universe. For the first review book I got was from Doublecross, with a handout that read:

"THE GUNS OF ABBEY RENTS -- the NEW! novel by
Rajah C. Amazeen, author of NINE FENCES IN THE
SLAMMER, six time winner of the Hogu and Nebula."

It sounded interesting enough. The blurb went on to explain the novel's background, of Corrupt of Slammer (The State Penitentiary for Men at Emerald City) who had been deprived of the throne by his brother, and had to wander through Shadow recruiting support to help retake his rightful seat. Shadow was the myriad alternate unrealities to the one true Slammer.

Corrupt had a bunch of other fantastical things at his disposal as well, mentioned by this novel excerpt in the hand-out:

"I was fast on the trail of the Chundering Herd, trying to catch them before they reached the Kansas border and disappeared into Shadow, when my horse turned up lame. It was a shame -- I was only twenty minutes behind them, and they had to be warned that the Chairman of the Concom had suspended Australia and its fandom for being ultra vires. They'd be plain ultra violent when they heard.

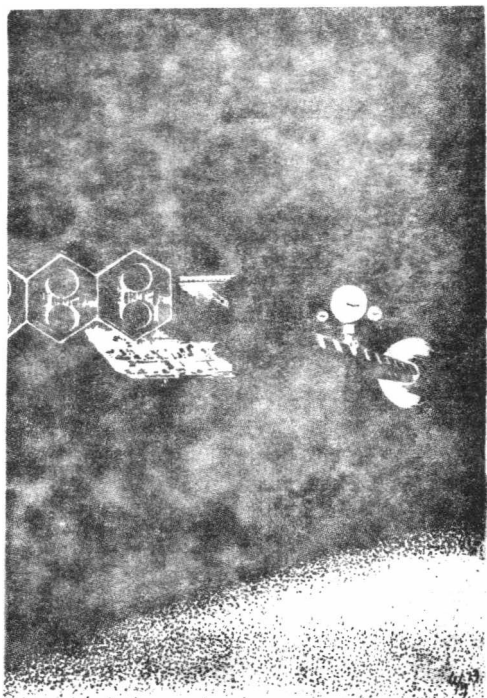
"Regretfully I reined in and dismounted. Concentrating on cool meadows of tall grass I walked the horse out of the Shadow of my hellride, away from bookstores full of BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS, then clapped it on the rump in dismissal. The chase was up. So I walked a ways, altering the scenery a bit at each turn in the road, til finally I made Sheepsdip Crossing and The Sign of A Well Known Gafiate.

"There was a crowd at the Inn, nobody I knew. The sign-board with the fugurehead (no typo) Gafiate was pegged over the open door, leering significantly in the direction of Los Angeles. A whole lot of other people were leering as well -- but at the comely serving wenches. I took a vacant corner bench for my seat, and the innkeeper brought me a tankard of bheer. With the Chundering Herd escaped, well I needed the refreshment. Not to relieve my sorrows, but to build my courage to contact one of my brothers and get them after the Aus-sies.

"I pulled out the pack of cards used to contact my family. Actually it wasn't a deck anymore -- I simply had a stack of their IOUs covering poker losses, and these were enough. But who should I call? Not Zarathustra or Throckmorton -- they were helping Hezekiah guard the throne of Slammer. Not Gomer, who was out to kill me. Nor Erasmus, who was being tickled to death in a New Orleans brothel. Maynard was on vacation. Rudy was hiding from his creditors in Nairobi. Unfortunately that left only one Prince of Slammer -- Ronald. I concentrated hard on his IOU and his image appeared to me.

"'Hollo, Corrupt,' he said when he felt my stare on the back of his neck. He was a happy-looking fellow in whiteface, an orange-red wig flaring out around his ears, and bright red lips and bulbous nose. I had always taken to him, but had to be careful not to annoy him -- because Ronald was no hamburger.

"'Hello, Ron' I returned. 'Hey, listen. I've got a favor I need you to do for me. It's vital--'



"It was impossible for Ronald to frown since he'd had the plastic surgery, but his voice was menacing. 'You think I'm your errand boy, or something, creep? Go to blazes! I've got my own business to tend to. You think I don't hear things? Like from Gomer -- he told me what a selfish bum you're getting to be. Matter of fact, I said I'd take care of you --'

"A hand holding a claymore erupted through the IOU quickly joined by the rest of Ronald. Despite his sword in hand nobody seemed to be paying attention so I quickly produced my own blade, Constantinopleitanicherdudelsakpfeiffer (how it got its name is a story in itself; hell, the name is a story in itself!) Parrying Ron's blows I fought out of the corner into clear floor and we went at it. It was hectic, for everybody feared Ronald, the best fencer in Slammer.

"However, I was the best swordsman. Ronald could pass stolen jewels in a jiffy, but it was the limit of his skill..."

That fragment was enough to convince me Rajah C. Amazeen will, somewhere, soon be up for his seventh Hugu or Nebula.

2. A CITY THAT IS SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HID?

One of the intriguing things about being a Los Angeles resident is the extra dimension it places in your television watching. Just as once all westerns had a reinforcing authenticity because 85% had some or all scenes shot in the badlands

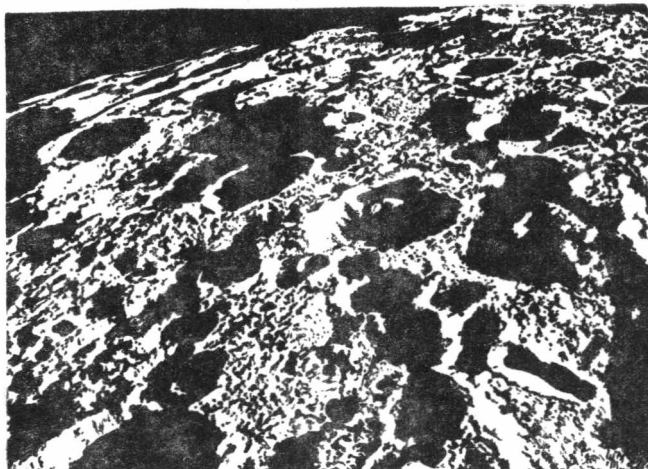
of Chatsworth (north of LA), now all the cityscapes of cops-and-robbers series or made-for-TV movies seem to be somewhere within the city limits -- or nearly.

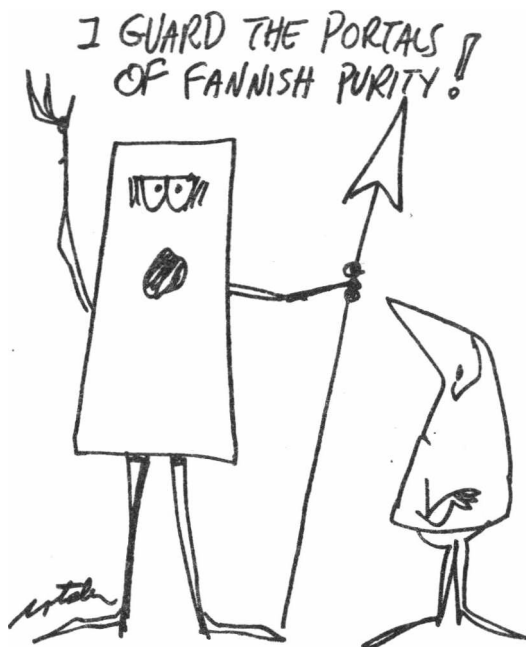
This means nothing, I suppose, to a viewer in Nebraska who sees the long, establishing shots made on location in New York or Washington or San Francisco, and assumes the close-ups spliced between are also there. The whole thing is unfamiliar. When he sees "Skins and Shirts", a movie of madcap professional men in Manhattan caught up in their own rivalry, he doesn't perceive that the closing scenes take place in the Pasadena (Ca.) Art Museum. When he sees "Shaft", a hard-bitten detective show rooted in deepest Harlem, the white on blue "5th St." sign in the background of one scene doesn't trigger instant recognition that the scene is downtown LA.

But for the Angeleno, there is a point of decreasing return in the attempt to pass LA off as other towns. Hard up enough this summer to watch a rerun of the FBI, I saw a kidnap and fraud case located in Detroit. Now it didn't bother me that early city scenes were upstaged by the dark pavement native to Hollywood. That might be the way sidewalks look in Detroit, what do I know? And towards the end, a rooftop chase of the suspect with lots of footage of the city below and the verdant foothills a few miles beyond (hills, in Detroit?) was adequately disguised. That is until the shooting began and you find a close-in shot of the suspect crouched behind a vent housing, with the Capitol Record Building hazy over his shoulder. The Capitol Record Building?

Besides that, Detroit has a skyline, which could not be simulated from the top of the Holiday Inn in Hollywood which is about the tallest thing in the area, and it also has a river running through the middle; even Santa Monica Boulevard in flood stage couldn't simulate that.

It really puts a dent in your sense of wonder.





3. I WAS AN I*D*E*A*L*I*S*T FOR THE FBI

Well, it's that time of year. (Aw shit! Hugos again! as Marse Lou Stathis would say before he was converted to the moral precepts of Herbangelism.) And in wondering how to tackle my list of nominations in a non-yawn-provoking manner the obvious idea (as usual, a la Geis) was to ask all of PRE's reviewers to send in their lists for publication. But with all due respect I doubt more than two of them have read enough SF in 1973 to compile a fair list, and I doubt any of them would be pretentious enough to try. The fan categories are certainly my own limit.

Instead I hit on the idea of asking various fans for their lists in the fan departments. Had I gotten it done, the list would include the picks of Peggy Swenson, Sam Moskowitz, Jack Harness (BNF, Ret.), Laurits Frey (former OE of APA H), Aljo Svoboda, George Wells, George Senda, A Well-Known Gafiate (Apa Manager of TAPS, waitlister of the Cult), Elst Weinstein (head of the Church of Herbangelism), Lisa Deutsch (whose qualifications are obvious), Mike Glicksohn, rich brown, Doug Leingang (FIAWOL, Ret.), Ned Brooks, and the Reverend William Bowers.

Regrettably, the only one I got around to asking was Mike Glicksohn, whom Father William has dubbed "the aging Boy Wonder." But his answer, substantially different from my own list of nominees, included artists for the late ENERGUMEN, alleged fanwriters, and an upstart fanzine. Just what I

wanted. The Boy Wonder's cadres include:

"FAN ARTIST: Canfield, Rotsler, McLeod, Healy, Shull
"FANZINE: Prehensile (aw, shucks), SFC, Outworlds,
The Alien Critic, Starling
"FAN WRITER: Susan Glicksohn, Dick Geis, Ted White,
Arnie Katz, Angus Taylor

"Had there been room for six nominees for Fan Writer, Mike Glycer would have made it, too."

Ikindiggit (circa 1959) but a list that doesn't already include Milt Stevens really shouldn't be putting me in number 6. As for Ted White, if he has done much fanwriting this year I didn't see it. There's been his ALGOL column, written by Ted White, editor of AMAZING and FANTASTIC, about writers' agents and SFWA. There've been his letters to OUTWORLDS, written as editor of the Ultimate zines in explanation of Sol Cohen. But unless you count Ted's letters in PASSING PARADE I haven't seen any fanwriting by him this year.

Glicksohn made an omission, on the other hand, that I applaud, and that is Kirk under fanartist. I know several fans preparing to nominate Tim yet again, but looking back over the past year I recall only a few things from Kirk, in LOCUS, UNICORN, and on fliers for The Change of Hobbitt bookstore. Unless you just go into orgasm every time you see a crying dragon this is not a year for sending Kirk after his fourth Hugo.

My personal slate looks this way:

FANARTIST	FANWRITER	FANZINE
Grant Canfield	Susan Glicksohn	Algol (?)
Jim Shull	Milt Stevens	The Alien Critic
Bill Rotsler	Aljo Svoboda	Kwalahioqua
Terry Austin	George Turner	Outworlds
Steve Fabian	Paul Walker	Science Fiction Commentary

The last two are in alphabetical order, not expressing the real order I'd put them in, because I haven't decided.

The fanwriting competition was stiff, and I could have joined Glicksohn in nominating Geis, Katz, or Angus Taylor, or even gone on to Bangsund, Burbee, Locke, Lord Jim Khennedy (APAH's finest), Sandra Miesel, Ed Cagle or Cy Chauvin. Except for Susan Glicksohn my list is made up of people who I want others to seriously consider, and who might not make it from the amount or type of exposure they've received. Stevens in PASSING PARADE and AWRY has produced a solid body of fan-nish writing, and some entertaining controversy too. Aljo is a choice absurdist, reportedly all of fifteen years old. George Turner is likely the best fan critic writing, who in the past year brilliantly showed Stanislaw Lem to the door, and in the year's final SFC did great work in dissecting the stories of a Silverberg anthology. Paul Walker is a fine critic, but is more than that a fannish reader who shares his observations, musings, and discoveries in good but infrequent articles. Susan Glicksohn, of course, has been a star in ENER-GUMEN, OUTWORLDS and XENIUM, doing criticism and fannish muttering with equal dexterity.

Among fanartists, Canfield, Shull and Rotsler obviously lead the stampede (though the number of excellent fanartists I'm aware of seems to grow each time the day's mail comes). Then, subjectively, comes Terry Austin whose comic strips in the final NERG knocked me over, and Steve Fabian, who designed an issue (or two?) of OUTWORLDS, and has been on the cover of ALGOL

In fanzines, nothing surprises except KWALAHIOQUA, which does almost nothing except surprise, first with the insanity of Ed Cagle, the resurrected critic Delap, a platoon of fine Aussie writers led by John Bangsund, then with eleven issues of the most consistently well-written American fanzine. SCIENCE FICTION COMMENTARY perhaps fills that spot internationally, though THE ALIEN CRITIC is also very good if decreasingly aware of fandom (much less fannish). OUTWORLDS has returned to Hugo quality by continued excellence in packaging and newfound dynamite in the Ultimate controversy. ALGOL, always well-packaged, is running to stay in the money with a lively catalog of pro names and good letters. I do have reservations about it, though.

I am not convinced that ALGOL deserves to compete for the Hugo as an amateur fanzine. True, it may not make a profit (something I never claimed to be able to prove, despite one faned's sudden fit of illiteracy while reading my loc to him). Actually (as you who remember what I said about LOCUS know) fanzines that might make money give me no qualms. That a number of people are willing to pay money for an fmz simply confirms its quality in my mind. I don't consider a fanzine non-amateur simply because it does better than break even.

What I do find unacceptable is admitting to competition a zine that pays for material. I've been told Porter pays Lupoff for his book reviews, and according to the abovementioned illiterate, Porter says as much himself.

Yet the issue is not clear-cut, since the same source reports that Lupoff's material is the only material paid for. Now it may turn out that Porter will correct my statements, denying that he pays for anything, or announcing that he pays for everything. But this argument will return sometime, and for the sake of argument, we have a mess.

You think maybe Porter is the only faned who ever bought an item and also published it? What about previous nominees (and, I believe, winners) who bought artwork for their collections, and also ran it on the cover or as an inside illo. Lupoff's reviews might not look well matted and framed on the living room wall, but what is the ethical difference between the two purchases?

Intent seems a promising hairsplitter here -- by claiming that X's art would have been created anyway, whereas the pro would only review if commissioned -- until you perceive how this opens the way for me to next year buy up two or three Barr works for publication from the artshow. Really the matter is that I can no more publish a fan's on-sale art for free than I can get the pro's reviews without paying a word rate. So how can you let me, in that case, parade as an amateur while ejecting Porter for doing practically the same thing.

That is the trouble with trying to put a limit on what is an "amateur magazine." Precedents. Until a definition of amateur magazine is established that is both ethically consistent and can be practically enforced by Worldcon committees, anything will be accepted because no Worldcon chairman would be so arbitrary and callous as to do with ALGOL what he might have done with the NASFiC. There was no precedent to break or follow for NASFiC, but for letting by zines of inconsistent amateurness there is no lack of precedents. Who'd have thought that a zine of 240 circulation would provide the means to rout Hugo reformists?

Of course by the time I finished pompously obfuscating that hot topic, I was asking myself "Who really cares if Porter did buy the reviews?" And I could only laugh at the simplistic proposals of the faneds who acted as if all there was to it was opening a zine, checking out the print job, toting up the copy run, and then through some occult means deciding if it belonged in their newly proposed "semipro" category. I expect the next issue of one of their zines to call for an amendment of WFSFS rules that will require full financial disclosure by fanzine Hugo nominees so that they can decide whether they're genuine amateurs, or else show the need for semipro Hugos. That's the only realistic way to determine it. Otherwise you have the spectacle of Jay Haldeman calling up the nominees and asking "Is your zine amateur?" Or you keep it as is.

By now if I haven't convinced you, I've convinced myself to say to hell with the whole thing. If abuses of the category get flagrant, we might think about eliminating it, but in all practicality there's no hope of it being made any more honest than the rest of the categories. So strike the question mark from ALGOL on my list.



4. YOU TOO CAN BE A MILLIONAIRE FANEDITOR!

Some faneds have been acting like they see bookstore sales as the salvation for their bank accounts. I get second hand reports of how they hope that Geis or Porter will soon answer their requests for information about bookstores that carry fanzines.

I have no such hopes. The average reader has no use for

a zine that hasn't got a catalog of pros on its ToC. He is put off by a mimeo format, and an offset package alone is certainly no guarantee; all that does is temper his natural suspicion of the unknown. I'm sure that Mike Glycer 1969 would never have bought PREHENSILE.

Even so it has been a semi-humbling experience to have 10 copies of PRE 10 sitting on the rack (or box or wastecan; I haven't been to Long Beach to see) all fall at Fred Patten's GRAPHIC STORIES BOOKSHOP. Down in me someplace has been the naive belief that even without the cannons, something as eccentric as this might appeal to a few people. Hence the type splattered on the front. Maybe this time someone will at least have the decency to shoplift one. (STEAL THIS FMZ!)

Things were better when the Browns were reviewing zines in LOCUS -- as they will agree, with knowing smiles, each time the subject comes up. Or even RICHARD E. GEIS...

At least the Hyperion Press people are paying me a few centavos to run their ad. And everybody else in fandom, too, I see. Hope you're getting what it was worth. But it induces a sense of strangeness when I realize that paying for auto insurance has actually delayed the issuing of this PRE.

It was even stranger to see some of the reaction to the first OFFSET pre. (Hm, mixed up the caps there. Freudians have at it.) The purists in the group were horrified, and they cried out, "That fiend has gone professional. He's sold out! Whatever happened to his I*D*E*A*L*I*S*M?" PRE 10 was suspected of being a bad imitation ALGO, a high school drop-out's answer to RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY. Bruce Townley remarked "I really like this new PRE! You don't look like SFR anymore! Now you look like the ALIEN CRITIC!"

Others of you looked at the atrophied editorial and went cold, as if I'd dropped you on the beach of the New World with a road atlas marked "Terra Incognito."

To reassure those who need it, PREHENSILE remains, to borrow a phrase, "a tournament in autobiography." In general it reflects my developing interests in science fiction books and movies, criticism, writing, fantastic art, fandom, and fan-to-fan muttering. (The new offset package reflects my dislike of spending dozens of hours cranking the mimeo and collating the copies.) In specific, each contributor joins the tournament with his interests, and therefore PRE's personality is never controlled by a firm self-preconception, but is re-defined every issue.

If that appeals to a buyer in a bookstore, great. But having described the operation, you see why given the choice between shipping out extra copies to bookstores, or to semi-interested gaffiates, I take the latter (and don't you just love it, Doug!) It seems like right here I should do the Sea of Green trick, but you know how it goes...

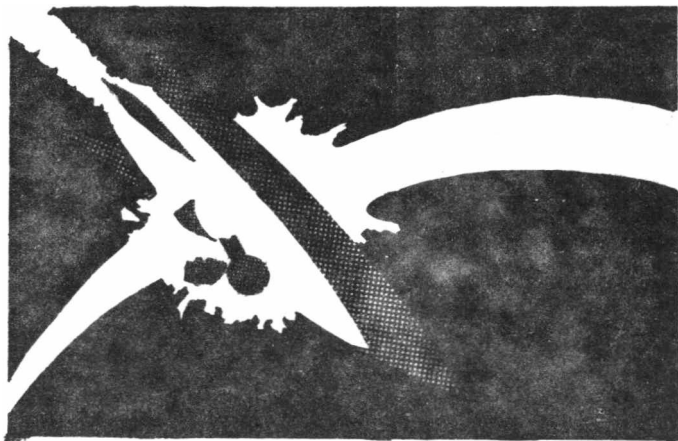
EDITORIAL QUICKIES

Any fan reviewer who may have been looking in vain for the state of objectivity in criticism which I have on several past occasions said is simply a self-deception, let me make that point again with this quote by H.L. Mencken, a critic of literature and society in the first half of the century:

"I have no superstitions about critical honor. I lean toward men I like and away from men I dislike. The calm, judicial judgement makes me laugh. It is a symptom of the delusion of infallibility. I am often wrong. My prejudices are innumerable and often idiotic. My aim is not to determine facts, but to function freely and pleasantly -- as Nietzsche used to say, to dance with arms and legs." (Letters; to Burton Rascoe, 1920)

The trouble with such a neatly phrased philosophy as penned by Mencken is that it was more true than he cared to admit -- he was, after all, a social Darwinist, a racist (a very inconsistent one), a propounder of laissez-faire economics and a lot of that other fine intellectual baggage that was held as gospel in the 1890s. But I think fan critics ought to go on down to their bookstores, or libraries, and get Mencken's *A BOOK OF PREFACES* off the shelf and turn to "Puritanism as a Literary Force." In science fiction's current fluctuating state (ie, from *ANALOG* to the proliferating anthologies) you'll find this has something to say even in so narrow a scope as fan criticism. Just as the above quote does.

"I hereby attest that I do not now and never have belonged to any organization that advocates the overthrow of the United States government by Magic."
-- Jack Harness



... THEN ABOUT 12:30 WE THREW
AL OUT THE WINDOW, WHEN IT WAS
STILL CLOSED... THEN WE PRETENDED
THE CHANDELIER WAS A PINATA, THEN
WE AUCTIONED OFF KAREN ANDERSON
AND SHE FORCED HERSELF ON THE
POOR GUY THE WE SAY AREN'T
YOU THE HOUSE DETECTIVE?



The
ORCON
texts



BY MIKE GLYER

It wasn't a morning for deep philosophical contemplation -- it was a morning for going to a World Science Fiction Convention in Toronto, and fortunately I was among the several dozen Californians who realized that.

The trip east was nothing like the one to the Westercon in San Francisco had been eight weeks before. To Westercon it had been three hundred miles through the heart of The Big Nothing in the middle of the night -- Nature's most persuasive inducement to cop those extra, lethal, Z's. If the Big Nothing -- Interstate 5's answer to Nebraska -- is deadly dull in the daylight, with its centuries of power poles swinging by like schematic Kalis, markers in the brush-covered flats and atop the goldenrod hills for two hours at a stretch, then you can imagine the total sensory cutoff at night. Close your eyes.

As I said (before I sneaked in part of my never-finished Westercon report) the trip to Toronto, though longer, was far simpler.

Around quarter til eight I walked into the Air Canada departure lounge; seated on one of the long couches was David Gerrold, reading the LA Times' article about the New Guinea cargo cults. A few minutes later Leslie Swigart and friend came in, and that was the last I saw of the lot until the pride of Air Canada, a whupped DC-8, began gorging itself with outbound passengers. At that time Gerrold came by with a gray, synthetic tribble in his hands, his eyes full of jokes about taking it through security check. I remarked, "Good thing you only have to get one of those through." Besides having written a book on them, David's Hugo-winning Star Trek episode had been repeated on Channel 13 the week before. But this not being a morning for deep philosophical contemplation, he replied: "What?"

FROM THE SKY, WITH CHUNDER I had a tremendous view of the wing, and of the aisle, from my middle seat deep in the heart of the smoking section. Directing the seat-mounted air blower nozzle in strategic directions each time someone new lit up, I passed my aggravation with Dan Jenkins' overwritten SEMI-TOUGH, a clever football satire. One gristly pepper steak later, the clouds over Lake Michigan fell astern and the plane wound down to Toronto International over automobile wrecking yards, a drive-in movie, parking lots and vacant fields.

The weather, to put it short, was mummifying. In LA it had been overcast (like most of the "summer"). The plane had been air conditioned. Yet on the runway in Toronto at 4PM it was in the high eighties and humid enough to poach eggs. But I had to tough it out. Everybody knows that LA's a city

of adobe built over the San Andreas fault (picture a mission straddling a crack as wide as a football field is long) amid an endless desert running down to the sea (picture grizzled prospectors untying surfboards from their mules). And you can't fool anybody talking about another city's hot weather when you've got LAX tags on your baggage.

Apparently Canadian customs cared less that I carried 15 copies of PREHENSILE, 22 chunks of plywood representing the Hogu awards, and an issue of the Galactic Lens. Yet they had required Fred Patten to abandon his TAFF ballots (or pay a nickel a copy).

Out on the street David "Pathfinder" Gerrold assured Leslie and I that there was a limousine bus to the hotel. Indeed there was, and for \$2 a head we rode through rush hour traffic in a non-air-conditioned bus, and rapped about a wide range of subjects that ran the gamut from Star Trek to Gene Roddenberry

It was Thursday, but the hotel's fan population made it look like the convention had been running for a week. In the matter of a hotel room, Norm Hochberg, Lou Stathis and I had agreed to split one. Relying on our great sophistication as congoers to substitute for detailed planning, we naturally missed out. I queued up for registration at the front desk and found, sho' nuff, they had my reservation and deposit (required as part of the reduced air fare package), but Msrs. Hochberg and Stathis were already checked into another room. Swell. I got the number, and ascended into the Royal York's interior. The corridor on the eighth floor, like all floors in the hotel, and a peculiar smell of something beginning to go rotten -- of mildewed rugs, or walls too frequently cleaned, or a structure left ripening on the vine a few decades too long.

There was no answer either at their door or via phone. Heh. I figured to check around the hotel on the chance they could be found. Perhaps ask some people if they'd been seen.

I knew the one place to find Milt Stevens would have to be the bar. Strolling past a place on the main floor where candles flickered behind panes of amber glass, I saw Poul Anderson at a table with friends. Sure enough, when I walked through the door, Milt was the first person I saw, sitting at the great, rectangular bar. No, he hadn't seen them, but Milt did let me in on the latest fan gossip, including the news that Mike Glyer was a sumo wrestler.

Well, there had to be some explanation. It was an echo of the five-and-dime paranoia that had compelled one prominent fan to anticipate TORCON as a low-budget HIGH NOON, in whose final frames you could expect to see Milt Stevens, Ted White, Andy Porter, myself, Lois Newman, Chuck Crayne, Linda Bushyager, Bjo Trimble, rich brown and Don Davis chasing each other with pistols through the Royal York demanding revenge on each other. There wouldn't be enough slats in the place to carry out all the casualties. The hotel would look like a hundred and fifty reenactments of Harmon vs. Ellison's door.

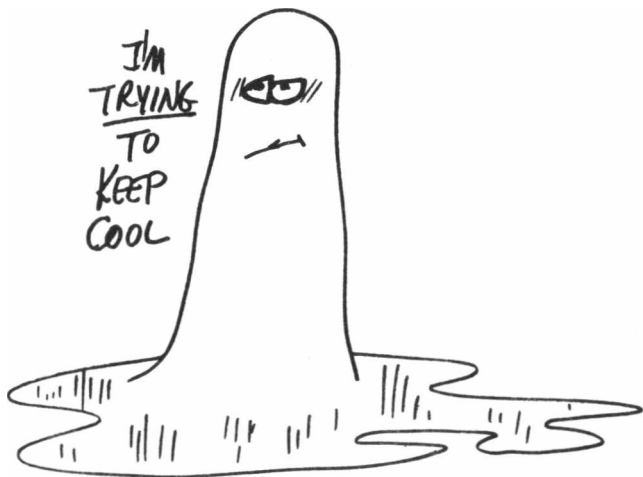
That prominent fan later sounded disappointed in acknowledging that his vision had not been fulfilled.

Still parading through the Royal York I ran into Mike Glicksohn who graciously said, "gee, I thought you said you weren't coming," and Jerry Lapidus, who handed me a TOMORROW AND... designed and stapled to resemble a mockup for the structure in "...And He Built A Crooked House." Finally surrendering to the inevitable, I claimed the reserved room and went up to unload the luggage. I tipped the bellman with a piece of Canadian money that had been burning a hole in my pocket since I received it in subscription the previous spring.

The hotel room, on the third floor, smelled slightly less mildewed than the hallways, though it did have a nice big soggy spot on the floor next to the window. The view was a prolific sampling of Victorian Bauhaus, the ruling style of Canadian architecture. And if I have to explain that to you, I've already blown the joke.

Thursday evening on the convention floor -- the great hotel traversing area carpeted by patterned red rugs, overhung by an ornate mezzanine, divided by furniture and plants -- bodies crowded together by the minute. They converged from dining spots throughout the town. I carried a stack of propaganda under one arm, and essayed over to Andy Porter with a copy. After affording myself of that rare chance to hear him discourse at high volume on things biological, I realized how much effort I had wasted for an effect already accomplished.

Don Keller came up and offered effusive greetings. It was still Monday, which is the best copout I can devise right now to excuse my welcming him as Darrell Schweitzer. Which is terrible because I've never met Schweitzer. Don corrected me, told me Schweitzer had headed out to study for the greater glory of five-cent-a-word art at Clarion, and introduced me to Judith Weiss. Hochberg and Stathis cruised by and we looked at each other like refugees from West Side Story whose walls had been stolen and were left with nothing to lean up against and affect being cool.





Noticing Buck Coulson over near the registration area, I dragged Lou Stathis over for an introduction, which Lou was loathe to do, expecting Coulson to dismember him. Buck, who pretends to be a philosophical apathist about new fans, remained as sociable as ever.

Norm passed the word; party in the Minneapolis suite at 8:00. When time came, we joined the upward surging crowd at the elevators and were off.

THE ENORMOUS ROOM PARTY In my memory all the Torcon room parties I got into have run together as one, from the time I passed inspection at the Minneapolis party door (where the secret question was "Are you really a sumo wrestler?"), until Sunday night when I retired from the Aussie victory bash. All I recall are strange conversations and happenings, on unknown nights in no discernible order.

....It was tough to move around at the Minneapolis party, and the crowding, between departing waves during which you could make a break for the refreshments and get back before retreat was closed off, left Lou Stathis, Will Straw and I sitting in a corner for about an hour and a half. A few feet away Poul Anderson was saying something intelligent, but the noise made it impossible to follow him. John Brunner showed up and another big circle of conferees queued up between us and Anderson. A couple of times the tidal motion of bodies landed someone in our laps. It was like a Sheckley novel.

....Some of the crowd had moved out and I broke for the potato chips on the other side of the room. In the background somebody wearing Fred Haskell's name badge played guitar and sang. I turned around and saw already retreat had been cut off by two middle-aged fans who engaged me in a session of mutual boredom. The saving grace was that their intellectual level seemed a relic of the 1950s middle class, and I felt a great surge of sad sentiment that these primitives would

soon pass the way of the Mandans, the Tierra del Fuegians, and the Anti-Masonites.

"Hm. Did you get to that World Convention last year? Hm, I didn't go. Wouldn't go out to Los Angeles for a visit, nor to live. Jeeze, all that smog. And too many of the wrong kind of people, if you get my meaning no offense." What killed me is that one of the fellows had a name badge marked "Chicago".

About then the other one asked, "Where's Sylmar?" In LA. Oops.

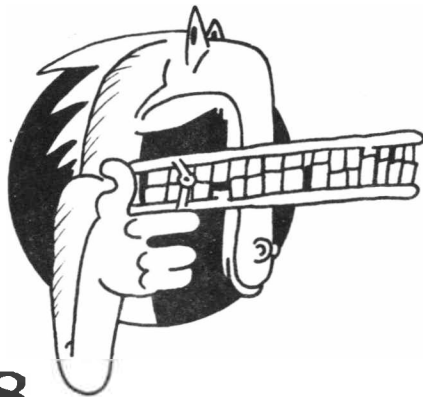
....Monty Python's Flying Circus ended, and the overflow audience from one party that ended up in our room carried us back into the celebration.

Linda Bushyager, Moshe Feder, and Norm Hochberg were on the chair and couch at my right. On my left Dena Brown was wrapped up in Larson E., the erstwhile boa constrictor. As you know, sleazy boas are the in thing in 1970s fashion. Don Ayres, Frank Balazs, and Jerry Kaufman looked on awed by her performance in handling the massive hamstervore. Mike Glicksohn -- who'd tried to prove Larson's existence to me by a photo he brought to Westercon, squatted complacently on the floor wearing the smile of one whose ravings have been vindicated.

Linda, Moshe and Norm were sharply attacking the Trimble's action in ejecting Don Davis from participation in Art Shows. A lawsuit against Trimble's interfering with Davis' ability to make a living, seemed in order to them. What kind of proof had the Trimble's (aside from their prejudices) to match against the Bonestell letter that proclaimed he saw nothing copied from him in Davis' work, they demanded. Do the Trimble's know how they have hurt Davis, they rhetorically inquired.

I hadn't taken a look at Bonestell's or Davis' paintings, nor had they, and knew little of what copying had gone on. Naturally I was inclined to defend the Trimble's as they were inclined to defend Davis -- since we each only knew one side and one participant in the fracas. And there wasn't a one of us who didn't love to argue, facts or not.

Charging up my rhetoric mill, I attacked the plausibility of the Bonestell letter: "Remember that Elmyr, one of the best forgers of modernist art, once got Van Dongen to authenticate a fake -- and Van Dongen 'remembered' it so well that he went on and on about the frantic lovemaking he and the model had engaged in." I thought that was an effective slur, but between





the three they evolved a new angle of attack.

"Davis doesn't plagiarize. Who is to say what plagiarism is?" They drove on to the conclusion that copying of style, in the mixing of thefts (copying one artist's figure onto another artist's background) was tantamount to new artistic creation, beyond mere technical proficiency. That argument was certainly a stopper at the time; I was so appalled by the spurious logic that I could only marvel how they had outdone me in the use of that traditional debater's tactic -- in the absence of specific facts, expand the discussion until it includes your area of expertise. They had transposed into the "What is art?" question, and I was undone, like a mathematician trying to resolve an exact figure for pi.

....Milt Stevens decided that we needed six cases of beer for the NASFiC bidding party. Now the railroads in Canada were on strike, and that had closed the tunnel from the Royal York directly to the Canadian Pacific depot (and gov't. liquor store) across the street.

In that stifling morning heat with made two trips, schlepping up the sidewalk with cases of Heineken's in our arms. The following morning I could hardly believe that Poul Anderson had failed to come by once.

....Between showings of AUSSIEFAN it was possible to enter and exit the Aussie suite. Not that it wasn't permitted the rest of the time, it simply wasn't possible. Eric Lindsay

dispensed cola and hooch across a table, and a stack of RATS (an Australian humor zine best described as a cross between MAD and Penthouse) was leaning against one wall for the taking.

Couldn't engage Gillespie in conversation. Discussed with Lindsay the possibility of his running for DUFF. Dispensed a copy of PRE to Paul Anderson. Met Jeff May and Laurine White.

Then, John Paul -- last seen stalking across the masquerade ramp at Westercon, screaming out a Harry Harrison imitation -- came by and subscribed to one or another of my fanzines, but had to hurry off because the Aussie had run out of his favorite elixir. By now he doesn't even remember subbing (had I but known!)

....At one in the morning Milt Stevens, who'd done his fair share to get rid of the Heineken's, rounded us up and led off down the hall singing "God Save the Queen." Seemed a novel, amusing, and jazzy thing to do at the time, so naturally somebody came by and sniffed that it was a timeworn and mundane custom in the East. We gave it up because we didn't know all the words, and continued en route to the Mercury Coffee Shop.

The Mercury was really a convenient haven, where fans could withdraw from the convention any hour of the day or night, get some relatively decent food, and talk with whomever had come along. That was where I got the news Friday evening, when the final contingent of LASFSians got into Toronto with the previous night's APA L, that my attempt to put ORGANLEGGER through had resulted in chaos. My agent thought they were for distribution, and gave half the stack of 60 away.

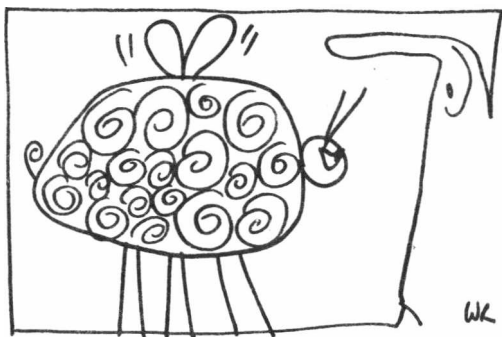
It never having been discovered in Toronto that an egg nog is not just a glass of skim milk which has had an egg dipped in it, that Sunday morning post the NASFiC party what I ended up drinking was something vaguely like an Orange Julius -- only minus the Orange and the Julius.

Little did we realize at the time that 31 hours later we would hold memberships in a Chuck Crayne convention.

LAST EDITIONS TorCon 2 had a special way of getting everything it wanted, and for the sale of sf at the convention the owner of the Bakka Bookstore set up an outlet in one of the large event rooms, with several hundred paperback titles and miscellaneous sfantasy items. Impressive.

But some of the purists wanted to see the original Bakka too. I joined Moshe Feder, Don Keller, Lou Stathis, Michael Dobson and Norm Hochberg for brunch at the Mercury, then we set out for the Bakka.

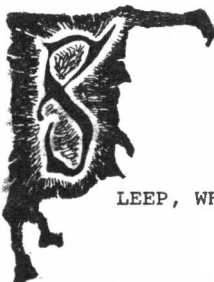
It was Friday morning, and the shadows were in our favor most of the way to the store, a two mile walk, so the heat wasn't much. The Bakka turned out to be a renovated hole in the wall, a striking white-board-and-plate-window job in a neighborhood of junk shops -- all 1910 bungalows with Player's Cigarette decals in the windows. In two average-sized rooms it crowded an international selection of English-language sf paperbacks (new and used together by author), a modest rack of collectable hardbacks, a fantasy section to match the sf, plus pulps, posters, and relics associated with both genres.



Lending the proper tone of Canadian chauvinism to the establishment was a card near the door that announced the Hugo nominees, with all Canadian entries capitalized, and with the national origins of the candidates noted in parentheses.

I found many of the Anderson books I lacked from my collection, and in fifteen minutes had bought as much as I had the whole year. Lou was looking for the English edition of Dick's *THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE* (apparently op in America for many years) but the influx of Worldcon buyers had cleared out Bakka's supply. A month later I got myself a copy from LA's *A CHANGE OF HOBBITT* bookstore, which crowds most of what was at sakka into one room, upstairs from a laundromat on Gayley in Westwood.

After an hour everybody else was still agog at the selection, and staring hypnotically at the shelves (I didn't seem to notice them buying anything). Stathis had his list of Dick books in hand. So Keller and I walked back to the Royal York, leaving the rest to commune with the lamia-like library.



LEEP, WHICH KNITS UP THE RAVEL'D SLEEVE OF CARE

In brief, I managed to completely miss the 'business' of the convention, both the bidding session, where Australia won handily, and the business meeting, where Chuck Crayne maneuvered the crowd into backing his move to reform the WSFS rules.

Saturday morning the art show had finally opened; the fabled ancilliary equipment which had been stranded Thursday night in Buffalo had now arrived and been set up to show an impressive selection of astronomicals, Ctein photos of an Apollo launch, Canfield cookie things, and Enzenbacher statuettes.

The art show auction also began, slowly, starring Jack Chalker and Mike "Snake Dancer" Glicksohn. Few minimums were met in the first hour. I don't collect art, or deal in it, so all I could reply to the auctioneer's intimation that his audience was not sufficiently appreciative of the art, nor free with its money, was that I was there for the entertainment. Either the art wasn't worth its forty and seventy-five dollar minimums, or it was, and the artists would draw the inevitable conclusion to begin peddling their work to a richer market.

Eventually Chalker called up the more saleable items. David Gerrold presented some of his "original manuscripts" (which he manufactures at will by replaying the cassettes from his IBM typewriter). He made a few dollars more from the Torcon Tribble, bought by some neo for \$7 when David assured him that it was an Original, and would be the Only One Auctioned At Torcon.

Next a brace of blue-plastic spark-shooting zap guns brought in \$13 after being introduced as those "Used by Wilson Tucker and Rusty Hevelin in a last ditch defense of the Huckster Room in which 33 neofans were deflowered and 3 left pregnant." Tucker got a lot of action at the con -- including the night he led out a platoon from the Minneapolis party to boo Robert Bloch as he introduced one of his films in the Film Program.

Finally, Bob Vardeman shot the works with a \$215 bid on Freas' cover for "The Lion Game." That put a tone of confidence into the auctioneer's voice. Now Chalker was content to open one of his cans of iced beer, and go to work in earnest. He had a much fuller audience the next day, and got the crowd in such a lather that a Bathurst illo donated



to the Strelkov fund went for upwards of 80 dollars. A loser at \$75 got a sick look after he realized how he'd gotten carried away, and skulked out after he was saved by a competitor. At the same time I got to see Sandra Miesel cruise by -- whom I've gained new appreciation of ever since one of my English professors at USC recognized her name among a list of fanwriters, and mentioned the fact in a tone of academic deference.

Saturday evening before the Masquerade Ball, Milt Stevens invited me to come along while he and a couple of fans herded along by Tom Collins tried one of the better hotel restaurants. Collins kept muttering data into his tape recorder, which got ripped off later on, otherwise he'd have had one of the best conreports ever written (in all likelihood).

Besides us three, there was a fan (Rev.?) Richardson from Texas, artist Ellen Vartanoff, and Fred Patten. It must have been a fine restaurant -- despite the fact that as we entered Dave Carldon was leaving, chewing a toothpick, wearing a pinstripe black shirt and white tie, and profusely recommending the place.

The waiter behaved as if supervising an orthodox ritual, with ill-concealed distrust of Collins' choice of wine, and cautions that milk was not a fit accompaniment to this meal (wine being ordered at the table) when one wrongheaded diner sacrilegiously ordered a glass. In fact he refused to deliver the milk when ordered. But that wasn't my problem, I was preoccupied with the attempt by Stevens and Collins to sell me a third of a bottle of wine, and then oblige me to drink it. Like the gauche teetotalers oft villified in fiction, my protestations that I don't enjoy (though sometimes drink) these finer things were sloughed away with a few innuendos. And trying to get shed of the beaujolais (go ahead and laugh, Tom -- even if it was port, chablis, or whatever) we were an hour late for the masquerade.

Judging by the finalists, though, we hadn't missed much. Even the best costumes were nothing to match the cream of the Westercon presentations (like Marjie Ellers' "Queen of Air and Darkness") though several were excellent.

Saturday night then faded into Sunday morning, and a collage of disremembered parties.



TALE OF TWO

RANQUETS It was the best of Ranquets, it was the worst of Ranquets. (Originality?

Me?) It all started in the late afternoon down on the convention floor, where a dozen fans became two dozen, and three and standing in a circle moaning to the tune of "He's Got the Whole World In His Hands." The Minneapolisf Boys' Choir



featuring Dick Tatge carried the tune, with everyone helping to invent new verses after each chorus, including Mike Wood, Andy Porter, Frank Balazs, and Denny Lien (or was it Paul Stevens? or maybe Fred Haskell? but that's the story I already told).

He's got four color ditto
 In his zine
 He's got four color ditto
 In his zine
 He's got four color ditto
 In his zine
 He's got a whole lot of crud
 in his zine...

He's got a Harry Warner letter
 He's got the wrong sized staples
 He's got hand drawn covers
 And still he got a Hugo (for his zine)

There must have been a dozen other verses about the archetypical crudzine.

While the spiritual refreshment was going on, others marked time waiting for Caryl Bucklin who -- so the word had been passed -- was running the Ranquet. I had sort of lost all creative urge in that direction after finding no McDonald's near the hotel, and since the Minneapolis group had sounded enthusiastic, let them go to it. Caryl had even gotten Ken Fletcher to do a Ranquet flier, which we had run off on the Gestetner demonstration facilities.

Five minutes past five the religious frenzy peaked and there was a mass movement for the doors. I naively assumed that because the Minneapolis Boys' Choir was in the front, that they knew where we were being led. I would have made a good lemming; or White House aide.

The exodus swept through the convention floor to the escalators and cascaded through the main floor and out into the alley. We flooded the side street and were marching up King George St. (or whoever) like something out of a Judy Garland/Mickey Rooney movie. Dick Tatge ran through the Orc's Marching Song, and while pedestrians sedately peered at us, he broke out with the Yellow Brick Road song ("We're off to see the wizard") as half a dozen fans joined arms and skipped up the boulevard and around the corner.

The avant-garde was moving so quickly that the Ranqueteers got strung out along the route. For awhile I lost Stevens and Patten back on the side street, and others who started at the hotel (the Golds, Ted Johnstone, Ned Brooks, Don Keller, Lou Stathis, Cy Chauvin, the Anthonys) either straggled as best they could or turned back.



A left turn up the Yonge Street Mall paraded us by the place that had been picked for the Ranquet (so we later learned). The Mall is a blocked-off street with tubbed trees scattered around, and a decreasing quality of restaurants, shops and theaters as you head north. Lights were strung overhead, and they went on as far as the eye could see. So did we.

The lucky coincidence that Tatge got going on "Yellow Submarine" just as he reached a submarine sandwich place was the only thing that kept us from even now marching north across Hudson's Bay and serenading the Eskimos. The procession broke for the sandwich shop and dinner was served.

Somebody had memorized passages from The Firesign Theater, and was reciting while the rest finished off their food. I waited a few minutes to set up shop for the Hugu Awards presentations (the Hugu was a small block of plywood, with a scorch mark in the middle to indicate that the rocket has just taken off, and this year did not look altogether different from the Hugos -- somebody had fouled up and not gotten the rocket part manufactured on scheduled).

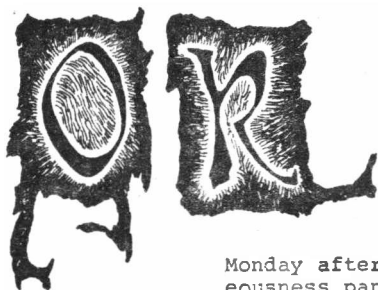
Right then word arrived that another Ranquet group was setting up down the Mall (heretics!). And unbelievably the Minneapolis cadres gathered everyone together and suddenly moved back down the Mall, singing, out of sight.

Like a defrocked Moses in the Toronto twilight, I was left with a few of the faithful. Perhaps it was more like a grunion abandoned above the high tide line? We passed around the Hogus and took turns reading the recipients then set out for the Royal York.

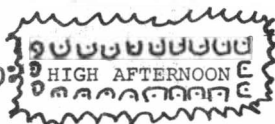
Halfway back, in the darkness with just store neons to illuminate the way, a faint refrain of filksinging wafted by, got stronger, and abruptly the Minneapolis paradewas back, demanding to know the Hogu results. From the ledge of a fountain award winners were announced, at first to tumultuous and ritualistic cheering (and then to cries of "How many more of those things are there?")

MOTHER GERNSBACK'S SON Those poor fen who had been forced to eat institutional cooking, and drink hotel wine (actually, everybody seemed to agree that it was one of the few edible Banquet meals in the history of the Worldcon) were still locked in the Provinces Room when everyone got back. Rumored reports of the second Ranquet held that Andy Porter had been acclaimed Pro GoH, a selection certainly in the grand tradition. But things shall be better organized in Washington.

The side doors opened up, so Milt Stevens and I outflanked the waiting crowds who wanted to stand along the walls and watch the awards program. I had a speech from Geis to deliver in case he won the Hugo, but was saved the trip through the aisle when Carr won the category, and gave a funnier speech...



A SEQUEL
MOVIE, NAMED

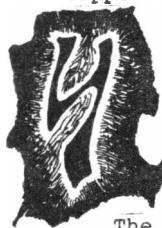


Monday afternoon was the all-star self-righteousness panel, featuring Rusty Hevelin, Linda Bushyager, Milt Stevens, Ted White, Chuck Crayne and Lester Del Rey. A month ago the panel had seemed a delightful proposition, to gather together the cream of indignation and feudery from throughout fandom. One envisioned a hot exchange, plenty of vitriol and cutting wit, a celebration in acid. That was, as it turned out, a romantic dream; by Monday, after coming from all over the country, attending five days of a Worldcon, blowing off steam at bidding sessions, the business meeting, room parties and hallway sodalities, being taken to lunch together, and then being isolated on the elevated platform behind a microphone with two hundred eyes peering at them waiting to see who'd be the first to open fire, each panelist's gut-deep fear of making an ass of his/herself stifled the whole thing.

The Provinces Room filled to a comfortable level, perhaps a hundred in the audience. Rusty Hevelin, "keynote speaker", droned on for a hell of a long time on, of all things, the brilliance of Linda Bushyager's antiprofessionalism editorial (perhaps the most popular example of uninformed dead-horse beating since Ellison vs. Pierce), against the inflationary pricing of pulp magazines by some dealers, and of the current curiosity in fandom about "dollar bills, their source and ultimate destination." It was a good five minute speech that filled twenty.

Ted White, Linda Bushyager and Milt Stevens were scribbling furiously throughout. Del Rey got up and gave his by-now familiar oration extolling fannishness and calling on conventions to exclude any pro writer who demands payment for his attendance/participation. Aside from its value in shoring up the courage of those fearing a pro-less future, or a battalion of Ellisons railing to get their X-dollars a man, Del Rey's speech dealt with things that were already accepted.

Milt Stevens and Ted White did the predictable soft-stepping around the emotional issues. Stevens compared fandom to a small town, with its characters, gossip, and self-consciousness. He further tried to connect convention rates and fannish services with the universal laws of supply and demand, but nobody (including me) was buying, for we knew how arbitrary most con membership prices were. For example, the futile attempt to stem at-the-door trade with high fees. White summarized his position on Worldcons and patted Discon on the back. Bushyager tried to cover her tracks from the Granfalloon editorial. Crayne played the conciliatory but firm politician as he does so well. All in all it was nothing. Harry Warner would have been disappointed.



€ end

The operator rang me up at five minutes after seven, and to the accompaniment of the local teletype news TV station (a marvel in the way the message sometimes failed to cycle forward for three or five minutes at a time) got set to go.

On the way out to the bus stop, I fell in with Tom Collins again. He was bursting with anecdotes, and as they flew by it seemed he had really taken care of business at TORCON. When the bus came, we loaded our baggage into the freight compartment slung under the midsection. I jettisoned two dollars of my remaining Canadian funds into the hand of the busman, and sat down with Tom to hear more about Terry Austin's artistic prowess.

It occurred to me as I boarded the plane that I was leaving with just as much Canadian money as I had come with, and thought successfully rid of. If any of you Canadians reading this has something to sell, cheap, contact me...

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GOODBYE, MR. STATHIS

by LOU STATHIS

or: HOW I BROUGHT TRUTH TO A SAVAGE TRIBE OF HEATHEN PYGMIES
-- a serious and socially redeeming article

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It all started (as have countless other tales of this sort) with a battered, grease-stained mimeograph machine. In this instance it was on the occasion of a casual remark by my mother to the effect that the local elementary school, where she worked as a lunchroom lady, was planning to dispose of a working A.B. Dick mimeograph. It seemed that they had stumbled across some unsquandered funds somewhere which they were now furiously trying to get rid of before the cash could be reclaimed by the state at the end of the fiscal year. First on their Christmas list was a spiffy new mimeo. Hearing this, I suggested to my mother that she encourage them to throw the old one out into the trunk of her car. This was accomplished with much urging (it is apparently against the New York Board of Education Rules to give anything to anybody), and after a few quick double hernias it was mine. That's when all the trouble started.





I had just enough time to stroke its dented, dull gray body and get that aching hunger down deep in my loins when I was told, sadistically, that there were strings attached. It turned out that when my mother had put in the request for the old machine, everyone wanted to know what she planned to do with it. Eagerly seizing the opportunity to blubber away about her exceptionally gifted and multi-talented son, she proceeded to give them an entire story about my yen for magazine publishing, my obsession with science fiction, and some gibberish about my undeniable forthcoming success as a writer. Wind of this garbage drifted to the ever-vigilant ears of the school's principle, who cornered my mother that afternoon for more details. The result was a deal between these two unscrupulous schemers with me as the helpless victim.

I was informed, now that I had the provocative metallic taste on my tongue, that in exchange for the mimeo I was to appear before a classful of toothless sixth-graders and give them all a talk about the wonders of science fiction. I laughed at the absurdity of the request. "You want me, a pathological kid-hater to stand up in front of thirty-three little savages and talk to them? You can't be serious."

Oh, but they were. This was such a good class, they insisted. Well-behaved, interested in learning, attentive, polite, courteous. In fact, it was to be the top class of the grade, just like the one I was in when I was a pudgy little twelve-year-old. I laughed and saw flashing before my eyes scenes from those days of fierce spitball fights, chalk wars, and sub-desk expeditions for shots of Eleanora Stubinsky's underpants. I was beginning to sweat. "Hold it," I said shakily, "you don't want someone who has wet dreams about brainless knee-high cannibals getting crushed by Mack trucks, do you? What could I say to them? That I would appreciate it if they all ran outside and stuffed themselves down the nearest sewer?"

Old Dr. Glickstern, the principal, laughed indulgently and turned to my mother. "Great sense of humor your son has. Heh,

heh, heh." My mother glared at me. There was no way out. I was trapped, snagged, pinched, bagged, or whatever you care to call it. I tried pleading, groveling, binding arbitration, even the trusted old tantrum, but nothing worked.

And so it was that at one o'clock on the appointed day I found myself climbing the stone steps of PS 154, shaking pitifully and wondering what sort of horror awaited me. The school was a hulking, brick-red eyesore smeared with soot, and sported a cornerstone that read 1926. Which was a lie, I knew, from some wild stories I had heard dealing with the last inquisition. Pulling open the door I encountered what would be the first in an endless series of sensations that would hit my war-weary memory like a blowtorch, and reawaken long-dormant flashbacks into my hideous pre-adolescent period. It was the smell, Or maybe I should say the stench. It drifted heavily from the hot lunch room on the first floor, and brutally assaulted my nose. Murky split-pea soup, government surplus peanut butter, bubbling cauldrons of brown fart-beans drowning in a vile sauce like rubber cement, pale boiled hot dogs, rusty sauerkraut, paper-wrapped squares of odd-flavored ice cream, soggy Wonder Bread and miniscule containers of congealed milk. My God! I hadn't gagged on that stink in almost ten years! I had lived with that smog six hours a day for six years, sometimes even packing the stuff down my throat, and I had completely forgotten what it smelled like. I was in a bad dream reliving my traumatic childhood, locked overnight in a musky movie theater that was showing highlights of my early years to an applauding crowd of baboons.

I walked dreamily into the office and actually looked over the counter that then seemed to be towering as the Great Wall of China. There I was given a pass to go to Room 303 where the ordeal was to occur. The stairways were as I remembered them, cages of thick steel mesh and foggy safety glass, but the red handrails had been lowered to knee level. The hallways were narrow, still painted in the institutional gray-green and echoed with the moronic bellows of cultured young mouths. On the walls were faded old prints (the same faded old prints...) of unpoluted pastoral scenes, paired with artfully slopped stick figures with huge smiles and inch-thick hairs.

Room 303 was in the corner, and with a meek knock I pushed the door open. Thirty rounded heads swiveled in my direction and registered instant bewilderment. The old monkey-faced teacher (whom I dimly remembered from my early years) hustled over to me and whispered "You're a little early and the class is having a rap session. Could you wait in the back for a few minutes until they're ready?" I nodded my head, smiled at her updated vocabulary and headed for a midget chair in one of the back corners of the room.

I sat down and checked things out. A rather nice-looking female, about 25 or so, was sitting at the front of the class with a vapid smile imprinted on her face. She was talking in a squeaky voice about "communication tools." Not exactly my field. My eyes wandered slowly over the room. There were bul-



letin boards papered with top-graded spelling tests, meticulously scrawled book reports, smudged math exams and a few examples of mongoloid artwork. Little had changed, I noted, as 9 out of 10 were by females. I scanned over towards the window and realized with a pang of nostalgia in my gut, that this classroom was the same damn hole that I was in way back in old class 6-2. The view was unmistakable as I had studied it daily for ten months. I was sick.

The rap session was proceeding nicely with fully half of the little devils stabbing the air with their skinny arms, writhingly impatient to relate some piece of gibberish that seemed terribly important to the woman leading things. Quite a few eyes were directed toward me, accompanied by some giggles and expressions plainly saying "What's that ponytailed asshole doing in our classroom?" I smiled pleasantly, in my best Fagin-like manner, and readied myself for the few deadly spitballs that I knew were being prepared. In the meantime, my armpits furiously began to lubricate themselves.

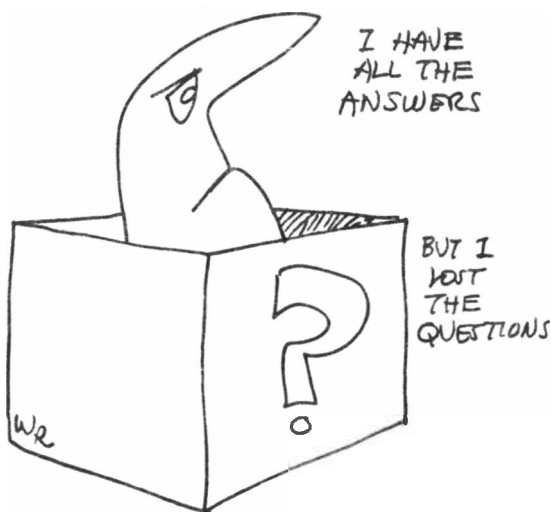
The bubbling female finished up, and the old teacher (Mrs. Daniels, by name) launched into the buildup for my act. She introduced me, with a flourish, as "Mr. Stathis" whereupon I headed up to the command position with trepidation and a bag full of "visual aids" (as we call them in the business). Lots of fidgeting and a few scattered giggles. I put my bag down on the floor, readied my notes and looked out at the crowd. They all stared at me blankly, a few were drooling and one kid toward the rear kept slapping the girl next to him on the back of her head.

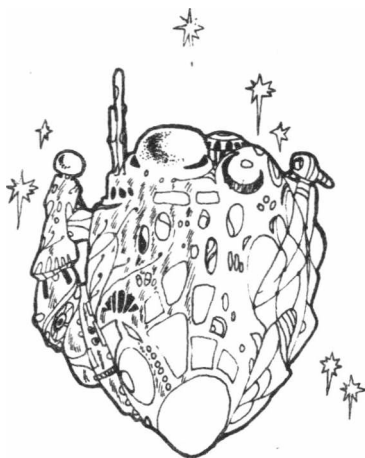
I started laconically on my prepared speech, which dealt in very boring terms with the history of science fiction. I had worked on an outline the night before, trying hard not to talk down to them, something I had always hated about my elementary school teachers. I was attempting, as much as possible, to treat them as my equals. They seemed vaguely interested so I rambled on, touching on definitions, classifications and historical developments. I asked an obvious question once in awhile and let them have their say. Usually they added nothing.

After about ten minutes of this I realized that I was losing them. Checking the class I found maybe 2 or 3 pairs of beady eyes were still watching me, and those were with baffled amusement. The rest were either fixed on the window, contemplating their desks, fiddling with their zippers, or just sleeping. I had no idea what to do. Glancing ahead at the remainder of my notes I informed myself that I was being excruciatingly boring, and would continue to be until the end if I followed my plan. I zapped back about ten years, put myself in one of those splinter-edged seats and yawningly watched the jerk drone away at the front of the room. No good. I desperately didn't want to put these pinheads to sleep. The gospel must not fall on dead ears.

I junked the trash about technology, philosophy and JJ Pierce's Eschatology, and groped for something that would bring them back to life. I passed out some of the books I had brought along, ones I'd picked for their particularly nifty covers (to me, that is, like RINGWORLD, some of the Ballantine Pohl/Kornbluth novels, a few Freas ANALOGS, and a colorful DAW or two.) To those I added a John Carter of Mars comic, a bunch of NASA space pictures that I had lying around and some Schoenherr artwork that I picked up at Noreascon. That livened things up a bit, until I told them that I was giving them an assignment. A groan. I said that I wanted an original sf story from them.

I was deluged by asinine questions like "How long do you want it?" and "Can I do two?" and "What if my finger hurts?" and "Can I go out to take a wheez?" and "How old are you?" and inevitably, "What if I don't want to do it?" I added quickly, "If you can't write, then draw me a picture or something." Saved. The scramble for the paper closet started with a few kids getting trampled under a cascade of sneakers.





TH13-

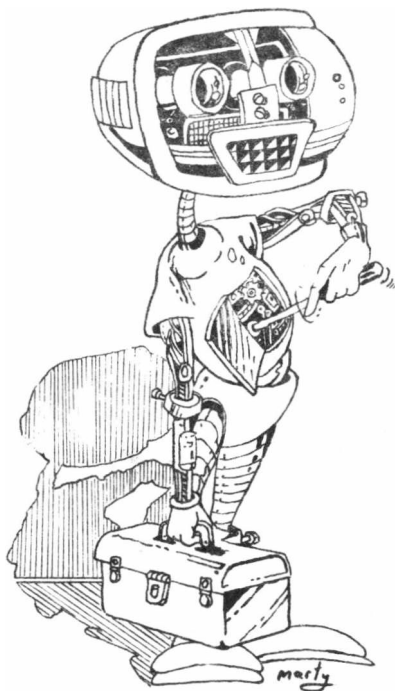
"HOLD IT!" I yelled. "I'm giving you a week to do this. I want you all to go home and think about it. Come back next Friday with something good. Got it?" I then put a list of topics on the blackboard in case their feeble minds couldn't come up with anything. Next to that I scribbled my "Recommended Reading List" of Heinlein, Asimov, del Rey, Burroughs, and Ursula LeGuin (National Book Award winners hold a hell of a lot of water with mousey old elementary school teachers.)

That concluded my guestshot at PS 154. Slowly I recovered the books from the floor at the back of the room and wrested the artwork from some rather determined pairs of grimy hands. As I left and said congenially, "So long, kids" a few muffled replies of "Goodbye, Mr. Stathis" came back along with the usual supply of thoughtful giggles.

I consider the whole mess a flop, mainly because I don't think I did anything for those kids. I'm still not sure how to relate to sixth graders, and what to say in order to get through to them. I'm positive my lecture was a waste, and I'd bet that not one of them remembers a word I said. I wouldn't blame them, either. Hell, if I was sitting there with them I probably would have been the first to hit the desk with my forehead. So what do I do, friends? How does one get through to a pack of neanderthal midgets? I really want to know. In spite of all my condescension there exists deep within me this unexplainable nauseating desire to convey to these helpless kids some of the magic and excitement that I've discovered. Science fiction has probably been the greatest thing to happen to me, so why can't I make it even better by getting some unblemished young brains hooked on it and stretching their minds irreparably? So how does one do it, hah? Tell me, because it bothers the hell out of me. And none of this traditional crap either, because I went that route years ago. And I know only too well how I turned out.

Science Fiction and the GENRE DISEASE

DARRELL SCHWEITZER



In January 1960, Robert Lowndes said in a SCIENCE FICTION STORIES editorial:

"Suggestion 2: A work of literature which is also science fiction most probably will not be conceived by the author as 'science fiction' primarily, is not likely to be produced by an author whose name is well-known in the field, nor is it likely to be recognized as science fiction by most enthusiasts.

"Suggestion 3: Such a work probably will not be liked by most science fiction enthusiasts."

The editorial dealt with the differences between pulp fiction and "literature", and tried to give reasons for the fail-

ure of science fiction to gain critical recognition at the time. It's a little dated now, since it was written before science fiction courses began on American college campuses. We may certainly discard Lowndes' last suggestion, "So we might as well stop worrying about literary recognition," because this recognition has already been achieved. However, those two statements above deserve some thought, since they are concerned with genre science fiction, which is still very much with us today.

Genre science fiction writers are those whose primary concern is whether or not their work is science fiction. Genre readers want to be sure they are reading the genuine article. Hence they like labels and definitions. There have been so many attempts to define science fiction in ten thousand words or less that it should be possible to compile an anthology entitled BEST SF DEFINITIONS which would no doubt be the first volume in a long series.

In the tenth issue of this august journal we are confronted with the spectacle of Cy Chauvin trying for pages and pages of itty bitty print to define science fiction. His conclusions are vague and unsatisfying, and his futile attempts at pigeonholing SF probably won't discourage anyone else, which is a shame.

I say stop trying to figure out what SF is. Don't attempt to define, categorize, bend, fold, spindle or otherwise fool around with SF. It is not only impossible to categorize SF, but too much trying can be dangerous for both the reader and the writer. One fan once tried to work out a decimal system for SF, whereby all sf ever written could be filed away in neat little cubbyholes. In that direction lies madness, but worse than that such endeavors lead to increased genre consciousness, which is a bad thing.

Look again at the Lowndes suggestions. Now consider how many truly great SF stories have been written by genre writers. I think you will agree there have been none. The term "great" is not to be thrown around lightly, and I'm not sure if there ever has been a science fiction novel that can be considered "great literature", but if there has been it was probably written by an outsider. For one thing the conditions within the genre discourage greatness. Hugo Gernsback nearly dealt the field a death blow by locking the rapidly coalescing fantastic tradition into an iron-fast ghetto in which the writing was on an idiot level. For years it was simply impossible for good fiction to appear in genre magazines. If a story approached even a modest level of literary sophistication it would be turned down for being too good. There was a considerable upgrading of quality in the stories during John Campbell's first few years as editor of ASTOUNDING, but still the field was only recovering from the damage wrought by Gernsback. It was approaching goodness, while greatness remained out of reach.

Yet at the same time BRAVE NEW WORLD and 1984; Stephen Vincent Benet's "By the Waters of Babylon", which is probably the best short story of the 1930s, was published in the SATURDAY EVENING POST; Olaf Stapledon wrote his monumental histories of the future without knowing that genre SF ever existed; George Stewart, a mainstream novelist best known for his man

vs. environment stories, wrote EARTH ABIDES in 1949: Huxley wrote a whole string of SF novels aside from BRAVE NEW WORLD, all of which treated speculative themes more seriously than one would expect in, say STARTLING STORIES. Going back a ways there is the supreme SF writer, HG Wells, who wrote his best work without worrying about genre conventions. Hence his work is far superior to pulp writers of the era, such as Austin Hall and Edgar Rice Burroughs.

It would seem that as far as potentially great science fiction goes, the outsiders have beat the insiders at their own game. How many genre science fiction stories can you think of who have been read by millions of people and become part of the general culture?

The secret of this difference is found in Lowndes' phrase "conceived of by the author as science fiction". This is the distinction between genre and non-genre science fiction. In the first case the author sits down and says "I'm going to write science fiction; what kind of science fiction should I write?" In the second case he sits down and writes and somebody calls it science fiction afterwards.

This does not mean, I hasten to add, that genre science fiction is only that with the SF label on it. I think that genre is a state of mind, sort of a literary neurosis. If it gets firmly entrenched inside the author's head he'll produce only conventional and derivative fiction. He'll probably then be hailed by definition-obsessed critics as being in "the grand old tradition." This is inviting stagnation because everybody writes the same way the authors of the previous generation did. Any literature has to grow and change in order to survive. You can salute the past but you can't live off it.

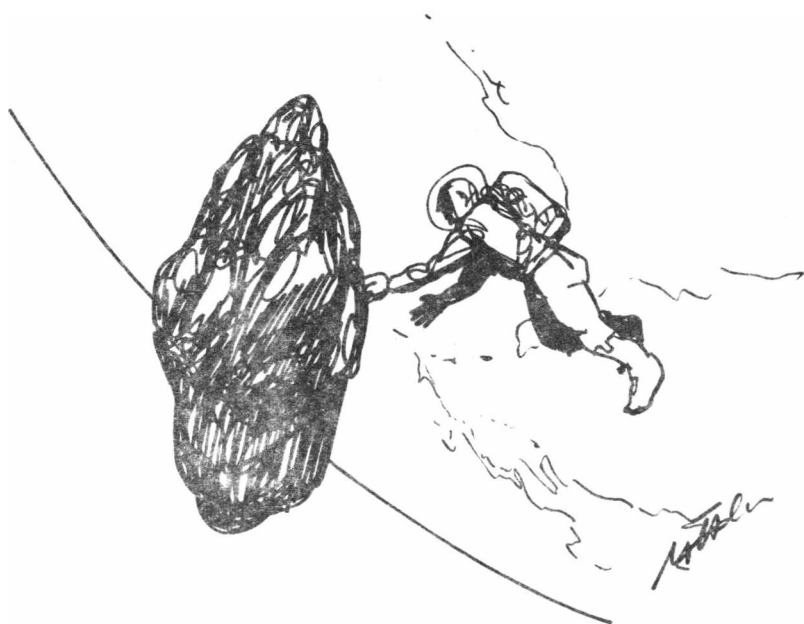
In the late 1960s we had something called "the New Wave" which was the other side of the same coin. New Wavers seemed to think that one could produce good fiction by deliberately and consciously eliminating all traditional sf elements. To use Stanislaw Lem's analogy, these people were like the negro who tries to conform by dying his skin white. Or to be more to the point, the traditionalist thinks that science fiction must have robots and rocket ships in it or else it isn't science fiction. The new waver insists that in order to be any good it can't have any of these things.

Both of these approaches are too self-conscious. Such writers are still thinking in terms of genre and definition. The only way to produce good writing is to forget about defining science fiction and getting down to serious creating. It's rather encouraging that some writers in this post-New Wave period have been doing just that. I predict that if this goes on the stories will get better and better, and the boundaries between the categories will get hazier and hazier. Eventually there will be only one genre: fiction.

What then are we to do with all these science fiction books and magazines. (I mean the ones with SF on their spines in 60 point type.) It is essential that we eliminate genre worries from the minds of the writers, but for marketing purposes we'll

have to put up with the science fiction label. Science fiction sells. There are few non-sf magazines devoted entirely to fiction, and there are virtually no non-SF original anthologies. Very possibly if there was no science fiction label many of the stories so labeled would never get printed.

Ideally, then, science fiction is a commercial item, not a writing one. Here we come to the difference between conscientious writing and hackwork. This too is a state of mind. Any writer markets his manuscripts in a commercial manner if he has any sense. A hack writes them that way. A hack is one who is concerned with genre beforehand and above all else.



MIKE GLICKSOHN



ZINEOPHOBIC EYE

Read this issue of PREHENSILE carefully, friends. Savor it, enjoy it, admire it; it's very likely one of the last issues you'll be seeing. For Mike Glycer, well-known Publishing Giant, who seemed well on his way to a Hugo nomination and a well-deserved moment of fannish glory, has posed a question only slightly less catastrophic than the time Custer asked a passing Sioux the way to the Little Big Horn. In a rare moment of editorial insanity and lack of insight, Mike has asked me for a column of fanzine reviews. This is much akin to the lemming who decided to go along with the crowd just to see where the action was.

This column first appeared in the Canadian fanzine HUGIN & MUNIN edited by Richard Labonte, and if you just said "Where? By whom?" you're in good, if surprisingly literate, company. That fanzine and its editor disappeared so quickly and so thoroughly that a third column ended up tacked onto the first issue of an even more obscure Canadian publication called EN-ERGUMEN. It lasted but a single installment there, and although fanzine reviews went on for two more issues, they too soon disappeared and the fanzine faded eventually into much-deserved obscurity.

The column was revived yet again for the first two issues of another Canadian "biggie", OSFiC QUARTERLY, which somehow survived for a third sparse issue without it and has since gone on to an almost unlamented demise. And now Mike Glycer, until now becoming known for his editorial acumen, wishes to revive it for PREHENSILE. It's too bad, too, because PRE was one of my favorite fanzines.

I've noticed of late that despite a proliferation of fanzine columns in the host of new, small personalzines that have appeared recently, not many people are writing fanzine reviews anymore. They're all doing fanzine listings, or brief reactions to fanzines received, but hardly anyone writes reviews nowadays. Buck Coulson, in a letter to ZIMRI, puts this down to the fact that fanzine reviews take a fair amount of work and also tend to be most popular in fannish times, while we seem to be into a more sercon era. He is partly right.

Proper fanzine reviews do take time, and effort, and a knowledge of and an affection for fanzines. Few contemporary fans seem to be able to put all of these requirements together. While I don't think that we're really into a sercon era, as Buck claims, we do seem to be into a period when interest in fanzines just as fanzines is at a low ebb. I'm unabashedly turned on by fanzines. I preserve them all; I value each and every one, whether I'm interested in the contents or not; I save and store every fannish output that reaches me, from the Hugo nominees all the way down to OUTWORLDS. Some of them I don't or sometimes can't read, but they're fanzines, and therefore they're important to me. I think you need that in order to be willing to put the time and effort necessary to fanzine reviews.

I also have a certain knowledge about fanzines, from my own efforts and from reading a large variety of other fanzines. So I might just have most of the requirements needed to do a review column. Now if I only knew how to write....

The answer to "Why publish a fanzine?" will probably never be agreed upon by more than three fans at any given time, but the generalizations "to communicate" and "for egoboo" are probably right there at the core of the matter. It is therefore impossible for any outside reviewer to know if a given fanzine has achieved its aims or not. The worst looking crudzine in the world, merely by attracting letters which describe it as such, may give its editor precisely what he was looking for when he produced it. But a reviewer has got to have some criteria upon which to base his evaluations, and what should they be?

Should a reviewer ponder why Fanzine A won a Hugo while Fanzine B will never get within lightyears of a nomination? Perhaps, in a way. But 95% of faneds are well aware they'll never be in the running for the award (and often as many as 12 to 15% will admit they don't deserve to be) so that's scarcely a valid way of examining their products. In ZIMRI once again Jim Allen asked "Why should I bother with ZIMRI instead of any of several other zines?" and I find that an interesting viewpoint.



YES, MY DEAR,
I SHALL
CARE FOR
YOU...

A fanzine is intrinsically interesting because it is the creation of someone who wants to communicate his ideas, thoughts or feelings to sympathetic listeners. Every fanzine therefore automatically offers its readers something unique; the reflected personality of the fan who produces it. But in the light of establishing some arbitrary standards of quality, let's try asking "What do I get from this particular fanzine that I don't find elsewhere? If I have a limited amount of time for reading fanzines, why should I read this one instead of some other?" It's unfair in many ways, but it might be interesting. (I know that fanzines aren't produced with such a criterion in mind, and I've already admitted that simply existing a fanzine offers its own justification, but you've got to have some sort of starting point. With that in mind, let me pick out a few of the more recently arrived fanzines.)

What about KYBEN 5, which is Jeff Smith's personalzine? This is a bland issue of KYBEN which in the past has most definitely had something which made it worthwhile to get, namely the personal ramblings of James Tiptree Jr. Without Tiptree, KYBEN is just a standard collection of personal comments, discussions of what Jeff has been doing, a few book reviews, some letters, and a pointless article by Darrell Schweitzer supposedly based on incidents from his schooldays. The production values are adequate, with an amusing cover by Dan Steffan that was badly electrostenciled, although Jeff shows two deft touches in his design. Basically, the point is that unless you're interested

in keeping up with Jeff's development as a fan, there's little of more than casual interest here.

Ed Cagle puts out KWALAHIOQUA #9 and has managed to build a very definite image in his first eight issues. Essentially he is insane. Only very creatively so. And until now he has managed to spark a similar creative and surrealistic type of nonsense in his stable of contributors/responders. KWAL is very simply but very effectively designed and laid out (although for all I know Ed might say that it is not laid out, but simply grows that way) and thanks to Ed's imagination it is one of the more attractive fanzines around. It is positive proof that it is extremely possible to put out a most pleasing looking fanzine without having to spend a fortune on it. Also very much in KWAL's favor is the presence of John Bangsund, certainly one of the very best writers in fandom today. KWAL would qualify as a superior fanzine for this reason alone. But not even Ed can keep up the pace, it would seem.

KWALAHIOQUA is a humor zine, and the humor is based on the insane and the incongruous. The "wild pickle" mythos Ed has built up is typical of the goonish brand of wit produced. The problem is, I think, that this style of writing is among the most difficult to produce well. It must come naturally, or not at all. And too much of this issue seems forced, as if the writers were striving to fit their own conception of the KWAL "image." There are excellent pieces here: by Ed about his life in rural Kansas, by Bangsund, a devastating spoof of "Bug Jack Barron" and by John Alderson, with a clever fable on the tribulations of being married to a farmer. Plus several interlineations and short quotes that are real classics. But there are also short attempts at humor of the absurd by Aljo Svoboda, Donn Brazier, Russ Lewis and John Piggott that simply are based on ideas that didn't come off for this reader. And even Ed himself is guilty of attempting to milk an idea long after it's gone dry.

This is a fanzine well worth getting, but I see evidence that Ed is getting caught in a trap of his own devising. Having a very definite image can be a fine way to produce a fanzine, as long as you remain flexible enough to spot when the image is controlling the fanzine instead of the other way around.

GEGENSCHN 11 is a neat, traditional sort of fanzine from Australian. Eric Lindsay. Eric isn't happy with the sort of fanzine he's been producing, and has thoughts of altering it considerably. Right now it is rather sparse. Eric tends to discuss at considerable length the technical aspect of how he produces his fanzines and many of his readers would like less of that and more of Eric. This issue has a few remarks on Eric's planned trip to North America and how it will affect his lifestyle, a longish column of fanzine summaries, and a lettercolumn with several stimulating locs. It doesn't really offer anything you couldn't find elsewhere, with the possible exception of interminable discussions of Australia's Spelling Reform 1 (which would replace "any" by "eny" etc. and is used with disquieting effect in GEGENSCHN.) It's a nice looking fanzine, with a dearth of good artwork unfortunately typical of Australian fanzines which suffer the consequences of an extremely limited number of good and prolific local artists. But it needs more than some enjoyable discussions in the lettercol to make it stand out in a crowd.

STARSHIP TRIPE #5, soon to be known as BANSHEE, comes from a new young fan, Mike Gorra, and in many ways is an archetypic fanzine. Its bad reproduction is due entirely to a lack of technical knowledge and it has little to offer other than a bunch of people enjoying themselves putting out a fanzine. (And let me remind you again that I know that's all any fanzine needs to offer in order to be worthwhile.) (Another reason there are so few fanzine reviewers today is that it's hard to review fanzines honestly and remain on speaking terms with any of your former friends.)

The contents are typical of a hundred other fanzines: what Mike has been up to lately, how the issue was produced, a TOR-CON report by Cy Chauvin and a smaller one by Sheryl Birkhead, some short pieces on Hugoes, Howdy Doody, etc, and a few reviews and letters. Nothing exceptional, nothing memorable, but I like STRIPE, and I've had a letter in each of the last four issues, I think, and I enjoy watching Mike learning about fandom and fanzines. If he has nothing new to offer yet, that's not a condemnation, just a comment on the state of the art. 90% of fanzines are ephemeral, but that doesn't stop them being fun to put out, to read, or to respond to. One just has to keep things in perspective.

WOODEN NICKEL is ephemeral but it's the sort of knowledgeable ephemerality that is well worth creating. Arnie Katz knows about fanzines (if he were still reviewing fanzines I might not be doing this today) and he knows what he can accomplish and how to achieve his aims. I shouldn't mention WOODEN NICKEL because you can't get it; it goes to 50 people, no more no less, and will have ceased publication by the time this sees print. But WN is in some ways the perfect fanzine. A single sheet every week, it likely came closest to achieving its purpose than anything else recently published. Arnie can write, the sort of mildly perverse humor that Ed Cagle does. And Arnie's friends took off on what he wrote and responded with some of the cleverest material to appear this year from the fan press. I can't describe it to you. WN was a trip through Arnie's world and it was very well done. It was worth reading because it knew precisely what it wanted to do, and that can be said of very few fanzines now appearing.

BIG MAC 36 also has a definite aim in mind and is therefore a more satisfactory product than many fanzines which seem to be a pot-pourri of whatever is sent to the fanned. Norm Hochberg wanted to respond to all the fanzines he'd received, so he created an acerbic fanzine-discussion/review zine. Norman found many of the fanzines he talks about to be lacking that certain something, and he is potentially one of the better prospects for fanzine reviewer now writing. He discusses 39 different fannish outputs, honestly, and if he seems to be stoned while doing it, well that adds to the fun.

Insight into life and the mind of an entirely different fan is given through Ed Cox' ESDACYOS 22. Essentially a FAPA zine, this may not even be available generally, but it's one of the best fanzines I've read lately and worth talking about here. Ed has produced a neat, attractive, well-designed fanzine with some of the best fannish writing in ages. The incom-

parable Charles Burbee has two articles in which he merely describes things that have happened to him. But he writes so well that one can readily see how he became a legend in fandom. Dave Locke writes about Ed Cox and Ed writes about a variety of things and both have a relaxed style that is a pleasure to read. This is a fannish fanzine at its very best and what it offers above most other fanzines is a quality of writing seldom seen in current fanzines. Plus an attractiveness of appearance that enhances the written contents admirably. There's sureness of purpose here that makes reading this fanzine a great pleasure.

The experience that makes an Ed Cox fanzine something special is, naturally, lacking from ANTITHESIS 1, Chris Sherman's initial publishing effort. The offset front cover is most effective in its simplicity, and the interior ditto is solid and clear, but lack of know-how leaves in such lines as "Waht are they palnning to do?" This sort of thing will disappear as Chris learns the mechanics of fanzine production, but whether he'll ever produce something truly memorable only time will tell. And this is part of the fun of involving oneself in fanzines. This first issue has articles on anthologies and the New Wave that are mostly distinguished by a lack of mature viewpoint; they seem fuzzily thought out. There are reviews, editorial remarks on plans for future issues, and some of the traditional fiction and poetry one finds in most early fan efforts. But this is a better-than-average first issue because Chris obviously cares about his fanzine. He has only a little to work with right now, but he's made the most of it and he should attract good material as a result. There isn't anything here that hasn't been done before and done better, but the fact that it's all been done in a fan's first issue is very encouraging indeed. Chris has made most of the mistakes fan make in starting a fanzine, but he's made them with style, and the result is worth your attention. Keep an eye on Chris, he could be going places.

Well, I didn't actually list contents, but whether I reviewed anything or not is up to you to decide. I hope I've managed to write here without rancor and that the faneds I discuss will react without bitterness. There isn't a zine mentioned here I didn't read, and enjoy, even if I say some are not lasting literary masterpieces. A fanzine is its own justification for being, and would-be critics like me are really superfluous. But it's the least I can do for the last few issues of PREHENSILE, that once healthy and prosperous fanzine.

KYBEN 5, Jeff Smith 4102-301 Potter St., Baltimore MD 22129
28 pp., mimeo, 35¢ or 3/\$1; plus, I assume, the usual.

KWALAHIOQUA 9, Ed Cagle Route #1, Leon KS 67074
21 pp., mimeo; response-oriented, no price quoted

GEGENSCHWEIN 11, Eric Lindsay 6 Hillcrest Ave., Faulconbridge NSW 2776
Australia; 24 pp., mimeo, 60¢ or 4/\$2 or the usual.

STARSHIP TRIPE 5 (now BANSHEE), Mike Gorra 199 Great Neck Rd., Waterford
Connecticut 06385; 32 pp., bad mimeo, 35¢ or the usual.

BIG MAC 36, Norm Hochberg, 89-07 209th St., Queens Village. NY 11427
10 pp., ditto; to friends...but send him 25¢ and make him run off more!

ESDACYOS 22, Ed Cox, 14524 Filmore St., Arleta CA 91331
30 pp., excellent mimeo, 5 new 8¢ stamps.

ANTITHESIS 1, Chris Sherman, 700 Parkview Terrace, Minneapolis MN 55426
17 pp., ditto; usual or two 8¢ stamps.

(AD)





THE VIEW from GROUND ZERO
by
RICHARD WADHOLM

Subjects for these things are sometimes pretty hard to come by. There's only so many new and uncharted regions to explore in writing about science fiction before you come down to the age old questions of "What is science fiction?" and "Who are fans?" and such like that, and I've sort of promised myself that if somebody were going to come up with the definitive definition of science fiction, it would have to be somebody else. I'm sick of reading about it. So that usually leaves me up that famous brown creek of song, story and folklore, when it comes time for Glycer to knock at my door with gun in one hand and hat in the other. (Gee, I'll bet you didn't know that this column was a chore to write, also.)

This time it took even more thought than usual to come up with a topic of interest and obscurity (maybe fifteen or twenty seconds). But something Harlan Ellison once wrote about himself in one of his anthologies has gotten me thinking. His inspirational word was that he was afraid of dying before he'd written his last story. That kind of hit me off when I thought about it for a second because, turning it around, he was really saying that he was afraid of not being written out. I mean, there are very few people I know who make their living creatively who would actually say with a straight face that they are afraid of not being written out. Usually, when it finally happens to someone, like Dylan or Zelazny, it's the cause for a lot of sad heads, mine included. I find myself rooting for the slipping artist, telling myself loudly that what he's doing is really better than it is. But usually what he's doing poorly eventually either dries up and he disappears with a terminal case of writer's cramp, or else he keeps writing and putting out books or music or films which are undeniably inferior, until he disappears by public apathy. This always strikes me as very sad.

Ellison's statement points up something equally disquieting which usually gets a lot less publicity. Some of the greatest creators have died working. Picasso was said to be painting up to the day of his death. Many of the world's great classical composers have unfinished works. August Derleth put out an entire anthology of stories which had been unfinished at the time of the death of their author, H. P. Lovecraft. He finished them in what he believed to be the proper style along with the proper plot, and he didn't do a bad job, either. But still, you're left wondering just how they were really supposed to end. You're left wondering just how much more he really did have left in him, or if he could have gone on writing classics as long as he had the chance to write. It's the empty feeling of unknown experience you can never have. It's listening to the Firebird Suite or Whipping Post and knowing there's only so many more pieces like them and no more.

Kurt Vonnegut has said that with the publication of *BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS*, he doesn't have any more to say, so he's through writing. It's an act of selfawareness very few artists of Vonnegut's popularity have. It's peculiarly satisfying (from the reader's perspective) way to end a career. Vonnegut's said what's on his mind. He ends a bright, interesting career, neither in dismal, floundering obscurity, nor in enigmatic questions like "What if he'd had the chance...?" If Ellison means what he says about wanting to get his own last drop squeezed out, his career may end the same way -- with a comfortable sigh of satisfaction instead of a disappointing, anticlimax.

Not that I actually believe either Vonnegut or Ellison will actually run out of things to say and stop writing forever -- times change, developments develop, people who've said their piece find themselves angered or moved again by things beyond their immediate surroundings -- but the willingness to wait for something new to say before demanding a renewed appraisal from an enthusiastic audience seems to be a rare patience and relaxation. I can only think of one author who's gone full-circle several times in his lifetime from admiration to fallow to reborn, and that's Fritz Leiber. And if you read the works of his various periods, you'll find something consistently new representing each one.

The problem seems to be that a person is unwilling to give up the career that brings him his living and self-worth, even when it no longer does. It's an egotism, and probably an understandable and forgivable one, for the author to become more important than the work he puts out. An artist makes attention come his way only by putting out a superior product. It's later when critics become expert at him and his work -- even more than he is -- that he becomes a subject himself for the critics and public beyond his work. (See the reams of over-intellectualizing and ridiculously exaggerated interpretations of Bob Dylan by some of the straight press' rock critics -- like *TIME* and *NEWSWEEK* -- for an example of this. And after that dig up 26 dollars for the new basement tapes he recorded last Christmas and never released. They're said to be five-and-a-half of the best songs he's ever written.)

it can be a pretty closed circle for someone who's successfully based his life and earnings on his public works. People willing to step back and let the circle pass them by have the character to produce great things, even if they lack the material.

Freff Cochran, Jerry Pournelle and Keith Laumer have all used various amounts of couth in telling me how wrong I am about Gordon Dickson being like his insufferable heroes. Gordon, I apologize, both for saying it, and for taking it upon myself in the first place. A reviewer should stick to reviewing books. Keith Laumer, you got no class.



UP AGAINST THE BOOKCASE!

NEW DIMENSIONS 3, edited by Robert Silverberg, 212 pp., SFBC
Review by Don Keller

Or the heels of the appearance of the hardback version of this new volume (oddly enough by the bookclub arm of the original publisher, which dropped it) comes the news that its second publisher, Signet, has also let it go, for reasons as mysterious as the further fate of this and the already-bought fourth volume. But it is useless to ponder upon this mystery, so let us move on to contemplate this volume as it appears.



As did the previous two volumes, *NEW DIMENSIONS 3* features a wide spectrum of writers and the types of fiction they purvey, characterized by unimpeachable excellence. Unlike the previous ones I do not think it contains a single failure; the average quality of the volumes seems to increase with each one.

Though the book is heavily weighted toward the newer writers, Silverberg does not ignore the time-honored standard sort of science fiction. W. Macfarlane's "How Shall We Conquer?" deals with one of the field's oldest themes, the first alien contact, and develops it with competence and confidence. The diplomacy of the situation is immensely believable, and the well-worn idea of human impetuosity versus alien stagnation is made to seem like it is brand new. Some fine characterization and a strong ending add further quality to an excellent story.

Silverberg notes rightly that F.M. Busby's "Tell Me All About Yourself" is a dangerous vision, seeing how it concerns itself with a most unpleasant perversion, necrophilia; but, much as in *LOLITA*, the subject is treated with such compassion, restraint and sentiment that the end result is a story that is touching rather than disgusting.

Damon Knight's "Down There" is almost a gadget story; the machine it invents is a pulp hack's dream, since it writes fiction, at least partially; but as one might expect the story goes beyond that into a cheerless portrait of a future sociological system. It proves that for all his reduced output in recent years, Damon Knight can still write with the best of them.

How can we solve our population problem? Philip Jose Farmer gave an answer in ND 1; Terry Carr gives similar answer by inventing a plausible explanation for ghosts in ND3's "They Live On Levels." It's not a totally satisfactory piece, however. The basic format is epistolary, but the plot, etc. necessitated several passages of exposition and narrative, which results in an uneasy schizophrenia of viewpoint. Also, it is one of those frustrating stories which invent a utopia only to bring it down in ruins at the end. But it is highly inventive and sensitively written, so that one realizes how welcome the all-too-occasional Terry Carr story is.

Neither did I find Gordon Eklund's "Three Comedians" a complete success, which is my normal reaction; it does, however, have a good many things going for it. The title characters are "a psychotic killer, a child molester, and a runaway android" who escape to a primitive planet masquerading as Christian clergy; by the end, each has "found religion" in his own peculiar fashion. There is also a fascinating alien race and their religion, along with a galactic religious cosmology that may have more to do with the plot and its enigmatic ending than it at first appears. The theme of religion is thoroughly discussed, and Eklund has a number of very interesting things to say. If he continues writing stories with this much strength and reduces his weaknesses even a little, I may even learn to like him.

Several of sf's more idiosyncratic stylists are represented here. RA Lafferty, one of the premier examples, has his third story in as many NDs, "Days of Grass, Days of Straw"; it is also the first one of the three I have unreservedly liked. There is a typical Lafferty idea here, regarding the "Days out of the Count", when life is a little different than it is on normal days. Indian Summer is one of these times. There is the usual Lafferty alternate reality and expertise with odd forgotten bits of lore, all wrapped up in a nice package that is the mixture-as-before, but with such an original idea that it does not hurt it. I wish, in these days of straw, that we could have a few days of grass.

"The Girl Who Was Plugged In" is a very long James Tiptree story (a full-fledged novelette) and a very good one. In the future, a very ugly, crippled girl is given new "life" as the guiding brain for a surrogate tissue-culture body which becomes a TV star/role model. The emotional impacts gets as much focus as the technology, and the social structure is well handled, and it's all done in Tiptree's jazzy style. I don't think it is in the absolute top echelon of his work, but I like it better than much of his stuff.

Geo. Alec Effinger follows his failure in ND 2 with a decided success, "At the Bran Foundry." It is pure facetiousness from end to end (pig bran, indeed!), full of all the schticks and routines that Piglet is so adept at, including the tidbit that only baseball fans will get. The basic plot is supposed to be a horror story, but it is not done quite strongly enough, and the impression remains of a basically comic tale. It's the best story Piglet has done in some time, and it's nice to see.

The prize for the narrowest range of writing has to go to Barry

Malzberg; luckily he can be brilliant within this range, if he doesn't get too monotonous. "Notes Leading Down To The Conquest" is -- hold your breath -- still another crazy astronaut story, but a little different this time. It is told as a report by a researcher on the actions of one such astronaut: not only is the astronaut going insane, but so is the researcher. Malzberg is a master at depicting gradual insanity, and it is quite interesting to see it happening in twins; still, I think even his biggest fans wish he'd write about something else besides those damned spacemen.

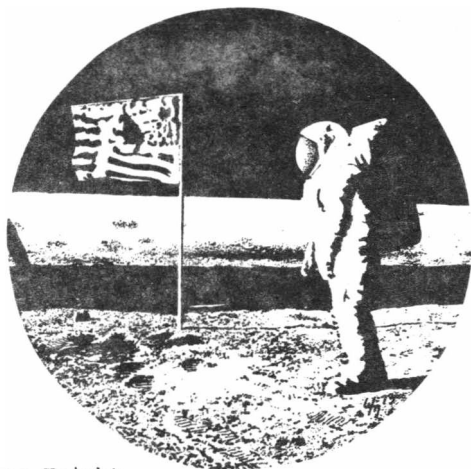
The gems of the book are the opening and closing stories, by Ursula K. LeGuin and Gardner Dozois. LeGuin's puts your mind up in the sky; Gardner's almost literally sinks you through the earth. LeGuin's sends a cobweb-clearing breeze through your head; Gardner's drops a brick on it.

I feel that "The Last Day of July" is the least of the three stories Gardner has had in ND, but that is only because I respect "A Special Kind of Morning" and like "King Harvest" so much; by all accounts this new one is a very fine story. It has a number of remarkable qualities; for example, I have read very few stories where so little happens. I once remarked flipily that most of Gardner's characters are either catatonic or dead. The main character of this story is a prime example -- most of his activity is sitting and vegetating. Yet Gardner's intense and obsessive focus (the visual equivalent of which is examining the shape and color of the dots in a newspaper photo) combined with his marvelous prose make it a fascinating psychological study of a monumentally hung-up writer rather than a dull lump of nothing. It is not merely slow, it is damned near immobile; it has a certain undeniable Lovecraftian quality about it, while sharing none of Lovecraft's peculiarities. It is the same slow, careful, dusty-musty atmosphere in both. Gardner refers to it as his "ghost story", and it is, as close as he is ever going to get. But the reader must decide just who or what is the ghost. It finally draws to a close which had my mouth hanging open and my head feeling like it was on backwards. It is one of Gardner's better stories, as well as one of his strangest.

LeGuin seems to be writing better and better in the short story form lately; "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is simply stunning. Silverberg calls it "slender but not slight;" Judith Weiss remarked to me that it is an "iceberg story". Both of them are right. One reads the first few paragraphs and expects one kind of story; then gradually one realizes that it is something very else indeed. The thing it most closely resembles is the work of Jorge Luis Borges, being one of those weird story/essay kind of things. It is moral without being admonishing, and full of a sense of wonder without being trivial in theme. I urge everyone to read it, even if you have to stand in a bookstore for eight pages; I promise it will provide you with food for thought for days. There is so much going on in it that every day new reading finds a whole new layer. I cannot deal with it adequately except in a full-fledged essay and I haven't room here. It is perhaps the finest piece of short fiction I have read in some time.

Silverberg has exquisite taste, and great skill at building and balancing an anthology. Word has come in since I wrote the body of this review that Harpers will publish NEW DIMENSIONS

starting with number 5. (3 and 4 will still appear from Signet) This means, with Harper's acquisition of ORBIT and the Nebula anthology, that they are now the most important SF publisher.



ORBIT 12

edited by Damon Knight

Putnam \$5.95 216 pp

A Science Fiction Book Club Selection

REVIEW BY DONALD KELLER

In twelve volumes covering a period of seven years, ORBIT has been a constant source of new and exciting writing; paradoxically, it has also been woefully inconsistent, not only as regards entire volumes (picking up any particular volume of ORBIT is no guarantee as to goodness or badness), but also within the same volume: there is almost certainly one story that will cause you awe and delight and another that will make you want to tear up the book in disgust (and usually several of each).

This most recent volume is one of the good ones, especially compared with the very sub-par eleventh. Nevertheless, it has the usual quota of poor stories.

"Burger Creature" (Steve Chapman) is a story one hesitates to read because of the title, and sure enough, it's just as bad. It is a ludicrous piece about a monster composed of scraps of hamburger-stand debris. Huanoid, yet. About the only kind thing one can say is that the evocation of what it's like to work in a hamburger place is reasonably amusing, but on the whole the story can be dismissed.

So can Doris Piserchia's "Half The Kingdom." She apparently has admirers in high places, but on the basis of this story (the first of hers I've read) I cannot for the life of me understand why. It's a modern (ie, ironic and reverse) fairy tale, full of all sorts of cliches of both fairy tale and bad science fiction (interdimensional doors, marvelous drugs), and comes to no worthwhile point. It does have an interesting section told from a spider's point of view, but that is hardly worth the whole story.



Ed Bryant, like James Sallis, has a bad habit of writing whatisits which are very obscure and seemingly pointless, and give the more modern type of writing a bad name. "Pinup" is case in point: it begins with a nice image-perhaps-to-become-symbol (an exploded watch in a Lucite block) and does absolutely nothing with it. Or at least nothing that makes it seem worthwhile going back to reread it.

"Continuing Westward" (Gene Wolfe) is somewhat better. Basically a WW I incident, it has that weirdly oblique off-angle attitude that Wolfe so often lends that somehow makes it worth reading. It's a rather minor Wolfe story, however, lacking the far-reaching implications that the even shorter "Against the Lafayette Escadrille" has, for example.

Also a bit more edifying is Mel Gilden's "What's the Matter with Herbie?" Those familiar with his "What About Us Grils?" will find no surprises here; it's a bit longer, but basically a similar piece about all sorts of weird aliens in a pangalactic city. It's amusing and quite entertaining, but very light; it's difficult to take a story full of mittlebran, Antarian glovo, and boiled greeb very seriously. Gilden handles it all fairly well, and almost saves the story completely.

Vonda McIntyre's "The Genius Freaks" and Kate Wilhelm's "The Red Canary" are alike in that they are solid, typical examples of modern sf writing. Good extrapolation into the near future, sufficient attention to the technology and sociology without taking the focus off people, well-crafted prose and a solid underbody of emotion -- in this case, fear. While I would call neither brilliant, neither would I hesitate to hand them to non-sf readers as exemplary fiction.

The trouble with "The Genius Freaks" is that it is almost too well-done; the focus is so close on the protagonist that we get only tantalizing glimpses of the background she is projected onto. The author has a decided bias about eugenics and similar things, and here apparently geniuses are being bred and let die after their brains have been picked. One gets a vivid picture of a girl genius who escapes, and how little (despite her intelligence) she is able to cope with the outside world; but for one would like to see what the inside of the Institute is like.

I found "The Red Canary" very odd, because I would have sworn it was by Gardner Dozois if I didn't know better. It has the same catatonic protagonist left with no way out, the same obsessive minute detail, the same richly bleak prose with its nice symbolism, even the same sort of sex scenes. I had to keep reminding myself it was Kate Wilhelm. It has a frightening theme -- the deterioration of medical care -- and explores it to its hopeless conclusion. While it would be a minor story for either writer, it is a fine story nevertheless.

Luckily for Ed Bryant's reputation, he has another story in the volume called "Shark." It is reminiscent of "Drift-glass" both in its dealing with the sea and in its general mood; it also shows a remarkable command of the flashback technique. It's nothing really special, but extremely well-done.

"The Windows In Dante's Hell" (Bishop seems to be entering the sweepstakes for most striking titles) is the first Michael Bishop story I have read, and I am very impressed. It's perfectly obvious that this is a minor story, too, because his talent is larger than the story. In the space of eighteen pages it enlarges on the theme of Gardner Dozois' "Machines of Loving Grace," comments on the excesses of the Trekkie mentality creates a new sport called combcrawling which is merely used as a throwaway, and outlines an utterly fascinating future society besides. Plus the prose is marvelous -- there is some highly evocative writing therein. Suffice to say I intend to seek out and read the longer stories Bishop has been publishing lately.

Ursula K. LeGuin's "Direction of the Road" is calculated to leave you feeling your head is on backwards. It is told from the point of view of an oak tree, but it is an odd point of view even for a tree. I hesitate to say anything more specific because (1) it's difficult to explain verbally, (2) it's something I'd rather not spoil for the curious reader. It is an all-too-rare story that provides an entirely new and original way of looking at reality.



Last but far from least is a series of four interconnected short stories by Brian Aldiss: "Serpent Burning on an Altar," "Woman in Sunlight with Mandoline," "The Young Soldier's Horoscope," and "Castle Scene With Penitents." The operative word to describe them is exquisite, and their major technique is expertise. (Read Delany's essay in QUARK/1 for an explanation.) They are most marvelously antirelevant, ars gratia artis pieces I have read in many a day, and I am firmly resigned to the fact that many people will dislike them intensely. Much in the manner of James Branch Cabell, they are for an extremely specialized taste. They are also writers' rather than readers' stories; I found them throwing away a myriad little things that started resonating around in my head until stories I had been tackling for some time suddenly fell into place and begged to be written.

So what are they, then, eh? They take place in a sort of never-never land called Malacia. Naming patterns and dropped references place it in Europe of a certain time ago; but the mixture of temporal cultures and a number of elements definitely not of this world leave the reader continually uneasy as to this question. Well, basically the world was created for no other reason than to delight, to be enjoyed; inconsistencies and anachronisms can either be ignored or remarked upon for their marvelous irony.

THE INCREDIBLE REVIEWING FAN *BILL WARREN*

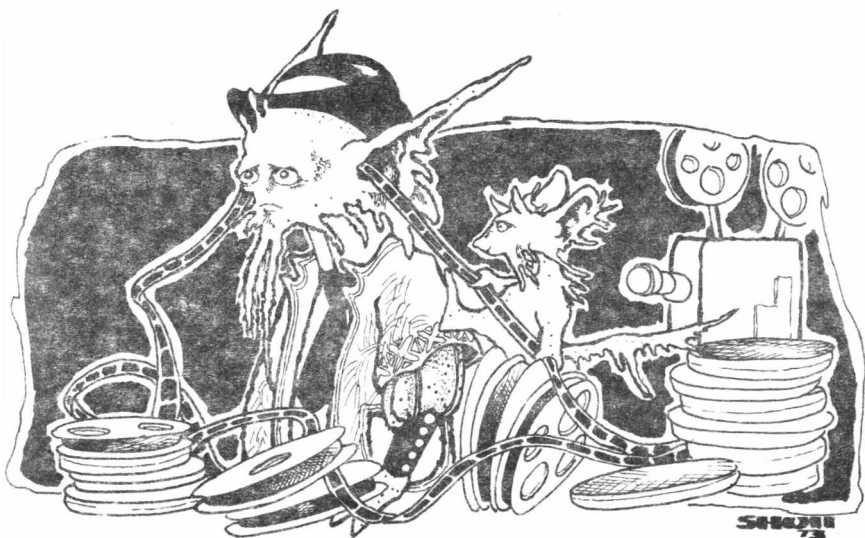
As I've said before, every year's end brings with it to Los Angeles a slew of "important" films, those which the various distributors are anxious to have considered potential Oscar nominees. This year, the films included one legitimate sf film (SLEEPER), one centering on psi powers (DON'T LOOK NOW), one borderline case (THE DAY OF THE DOLPHIN), and one out and out horror movie (THE EXORCIST). Also, in the various movie trade magazines studios take out ads extolling the virtues of their various releases from earlier in the year, and urging all and sundry to vote for the personnel and films involved. This year, MGM is giving this big advertising push to WESTWORLD.

So it looks as if sf and fantasy have finally taken the last big step "upward" in the movies, and are now considered no more shameful than Westerns or Cop movies, and have become a standard, big-budget product of the major studios. I suspect most of this change in attitude toward sf movies is due to 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY; if it hadn't been for the exploitative nature of the sequels, I would have said PLANET OF THE APES also had a strong effect. SF movies since 2001 have been, for the most part, top-of-the-line product by the various studios. Things are not likely to change, with such major films as John Boorman's ZARDOK, George Lucas' THE STAR WARS, and Universal's EARTHQUAKE in the offing.

The most exceptional thing of all is the prose. It is the key to the sequence's air of sophisticated decadence, and, being light-years away both from the Joycean garble of BARE-FOOT IN THE HEAD and the 20th century mainstream British of THE HAND-REARED BOY, proves how brilliantly versatile a writer Aldiss is. It has a sheerly Cabellian joy in writing beautifully for its own sake and no other reason. It is oblique, full of rare and 'bookish' words, ironic and sheerly delightful. Those few of us who enjoy stories of pure style have a masterpiece here.

I could write for pages about this story sequence, about its clever interlinking, about the flying carpets and lizard-men and Bledlore's glasses, about the subtlety of the eroticism, oh! about a myriad things, but I have said more than enough already. Read these pieces: if they are to your taste, you will like few things better. As for myself, I have only one further comment: damn the rules, I am nominating "Four Stories" for the Hugo as a novella.

Such is the latest ORBIT, a fairly typical volume all told. Now only is left to wait for the next one.



Of the major fantastic films of the past few months, SLEEPER is the best. Set in the next century (I think), this is about a 20th century man who is revived after cryogenic freezing, an after adjusting to the future society, leads a rebellion against the tyrannical rulers. That Woody Allen co-wrote, directed, and stars in the film gives an idea of its approach, but does not indicate that despite being hilarious, it is a straightforward, legitimate science fiction movie. I could go on for pages reciting all the good lines and situations, but I am sort of annoyed when a reviewer does this, and so I will refrain from it myself. It is extremely funny, and is Allen's best movie technically to date. Of the sf movies released in 1973, SLEEPER is the one most deserving the Hugo.

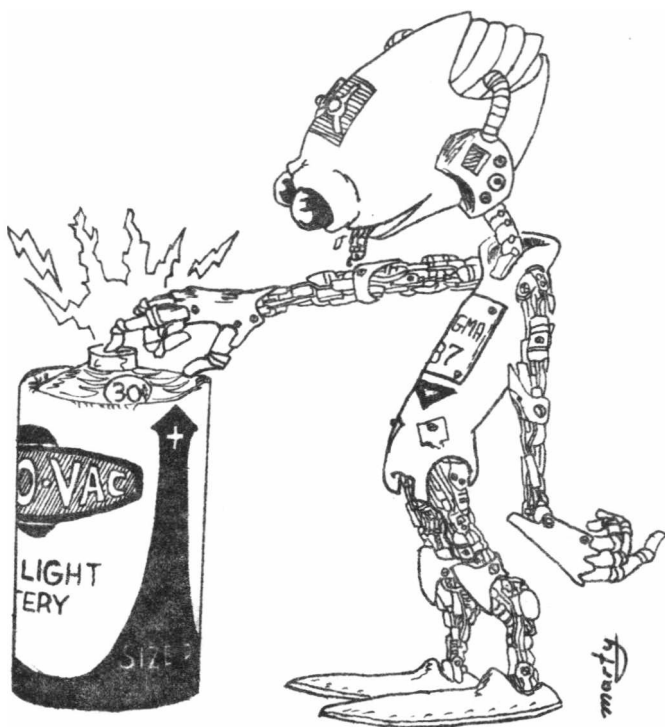
DON'T LOOK NOW is a handsome, hypnotic story of a man who does not know that he is a precog, and of the grief that results from his lack of awareness of his gift. It is set mostly in Venice, and uses that city as a symbol of the decline of life of the leading character, well-acted by Donald Sutherland. His suffering wife, Julie Christie, who is also fine, has little to do except to react to situations. The film is told in an elliptical, elusive fashion, with sequences which seem to have little relation to one another. Almost everything is cleverly wrapped up in the last few minutes, but is pretty slow going until then. It is not a bad film at all, but is rather long and slow. It is still recommended, but with two words of warning: don't expect to see picture-postcard-pretty views of Venice, and don't see it while sleepy.

THE DAY OF THE DOLPHIN is a shallow but entertaining adaptation of the novel by Robert Merle. Written by Buck Henry and directed by Mike Nichols, with George C. Scott in the lead, it could hardly help but be interesting. With the addition of an extremely personable dolphin, the film becomes enchanting. The SF element lies in that the scientist Scott has been so successful in teaching the dolphin Alpha (usually called Fa) to speak. When government agents kidnap the dolphin and his mate the plot takes a melodramatic turn out of character with the rest of the movie. And somehow, in the light of current politics, there just isn't much horror in the purpose to which the dolphins are put. Still, they are so pleasant and Scott is so powerful, that the film manages to be consistently entertaining. It is also very touching in several scenes, and is beautifully photographed throughout. It also has about 10 minutes which I consider to be perfect: the sequence in which Scott arrives back at the lab for the first time in the film, and goes swimming with Alpha. The voice of the dolphin is done by Buck Henry, and while it is extremely appropriate in that it sounds like what one would expect a talking dolphin to sound, it is also hard to distinguish from time to time. While I don't urge you to dash out and see this film at once, you should see it sooner or later. It is also probably a Hugo contender.

Among the more interesting of the older batch is HEX. This was directed for 20th Century Fox by Leo Garen, and stars a group of people largely unfamiliar to me, except for Keith Carradine and Robert Walker, Jr. It is a strange movie; the original title was GRASSLANDS, which seems more appropriate. It is set around 1919 in Kansas, and concerns a group of motorcycle riding youths who, after being chased out of a town by some outraged citizens, encounter two sisters living in isolation on the prairie. We gradually learn that the darker of the two girls is a witch, capable of killing people with her spells. And she does kill most of the cast, leaving only Carradine and a young friend of the motorcyclists. The picture is well-acted and interesting throughout, and quite funny. It is also aimless, trivial and anachronistic. It is still doubtful whether HEX will ever be released, so telling you that it is worth seeing may be futile.

WESTWORLD is the financial savior of MGM this year. The picture has proved to be so popular that there is some talk of a sequel, and Michael Christon seems to have assured himself of a career as a director if churning out silly sf novels ever gets to be too much for him. And the damned thing is that the movie is about as good as the profits indicate. It is fast-paced, well-directed and scripted, very well acted, unusual and entertaining as all hell. I really would rather that Christon had fallen on his face, made such a stinker that he would have to crawl into a hole to lick his wounds, but he double-crossed me and made a snazzy little picture. Damn him. (Another writer & director have adapted THE TERMINAL MAN, which stars George Segal, and should be out soon.)

The TV movie FRANKENSTEIN -- THE TRUE STORY is nothing less than the



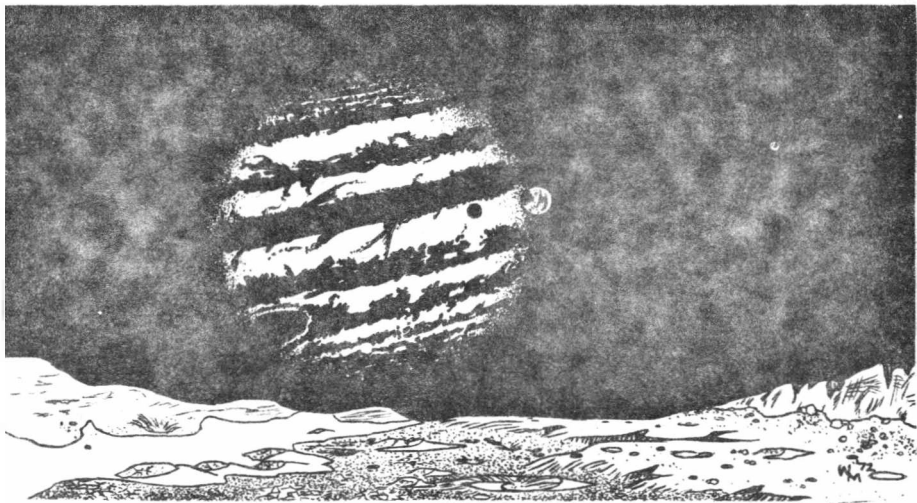
best Frankenstein movie since *THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. While hardly bearing out its advance publicity that it would follow the book closely (in fact it deviates farther from the book than any other version), it is still an interesting story, wherever it came from. This time, the monster that results from Frankenstein's experiments is good-looking at first and gradually becomes scabby and lumpy; the monster is nicely played by Michael Sarazin. I would not have thought that the director, Jack Smight could do something this good — his only other major venture in the field of fantasy was the dismal *THE ILLUSTRATED MAN*. The film was made in Europe with a top case (including James Mason, David McCallum, Michael Redgrave, John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, and Agnes Moorehead) and expert use of locations. It is an instant classic — brutal, vivid, funny, visually stunning, and exciting. I plan to borrow it as many times as I can for upcoming conventions.

THE LEGEND OF HILTBILLY JOHN is the silly title that distributor Jack H. Harris has attached to the movie version of Manly Wade Wellman's *WHO FEARS THE DEVIL?* (It was filmed & first reviewed under the title of the book). It has received poor distribution so far — on the West Coast the only showing I know of was *FILMCON II* — but it may turn up in your area sooner or later. With some warning, you should be able to enjoy it. First, it is not the best possible version of the book, although it is far from a schlocky ripoff, being an honest, sincere effort at translating a book the authors of the screenplay seemed to

love. Some real errors were made -- Hedge Capers may be a reasonably good singer, but he isn't good enough an actor for the role of John the Ballad-singer. Too much time is spent on John getting his silver strings (with the help of a mysterious stranger, beautifully played by Severn Darden, who may be the Devil or God), and not enough on the stories. Included are "The Desrick on Yandro," "O Ugly Bird!" and some I didn't immediately recognize. Probably the biggest single mistake, however, was in not using the genuine folk songs on which Wellman based his individual stories; it wasn't out of ignorance, since Capers and his co-songwriter Hoyt Axton certainly know their material, but apparently because today's audiences wouldn't get much out of the folk songs. This is a shame, since in many ways it is a nice little movie. The supporting cast, including Harris Ylin, Percy Rodriguez, Susan Strasberg, Alfred Ryder and Denver Pyle, is superb. The Ugly Bird is clumsily but excitingly animated, and the aftermath of its death is a real surprise. All in all, a noble attempt, nothing more.

Other recent fantasy films include THE PIX, a Canadian film which is excellent up until the last five minutes when the fantasy element is introduced and the film falls apart; THE CAT CREATURE, a TV movie which, despite being written by Bob Elsch and directed by Curtis Harrington, stinks on ice; TERMINAL ISLAND, a strange violence-exploitation film set on an island off the California Coast where all criminals convicted of capital crimes are sent to live by themselves, and which, taken on its own level, is a nice little job; TALES THAT WITNESS MADNESS, a very uneven multi-story film with at least one stunning sequence involving a time-traveling bicycle; and the abysmal DR. DEATH SEEKER OF SOULS.

I have decided not to see THE EXORCIST yet until the lines are less than four hours long. Advanced word is very mixed, ranging from "it stinks, only 20 good minutes" to "the scariest horror movie I've ever seen" -- and both from horror movie freaks.



MINIREVIEWS BY STANIEL

ONE EYE by Stuart Gordon, DAW #76, 1973 95¢
Minireview by Stan Burns

This is Gordon's second novel, and it is little better than the first. It is grossly overwritten (it takes three chapters for an elevator to get from the basement to the ground floor) in a dull pedantic style full of

said-bookisms. The plot is the familiar after-the-atomic-war-mutant-against-the-normals-type, with little in style or execution to place it above other forgettable past novels in this category. The jacket blurb says the book will be compared to Vance and Heinlein. I suppose it could serve as a bad example, of what not to do. Gordon lacks either the sense of pacing of Heinlein, nor does he display the talent for creating interesting backgrounds in a fluid, graceful style that is Vance's trademark. If I had a choice of reading this book, or watching Harlan's THE STARLOST, I would have a difficult time in deciding which effort would bore me to death first...

HUNTERS OF THE RED MOON by Marion Zimmer Bradley, DAW #71, 1973 95¢
Minireview by Stan Burns

This novel is space opera at its best. While not as good as her previous DAW novel (DARKOVER LANDFALL, in my opinion the only good original novel DAW published in its first year) this novel is good for several hours of adventure and entertainment. It stands up well in comparison to deCamp's ZEI novels, and Vance's BIG PLANET. For those who liked such novels (I did), they will certainly enjoy this one.

I have been pleasantly surprised by the maturity that Ms. Bradley has established with her last few novels. They are a far cry from the ACE Doubles that marked her first publications. She writes with a deceptively simple style, rich with subtle irony. Her characterization, while not especially deep, displays a smooth polish. Her plot unfolds like a road map, sharp at the corners and following proven lines toward an established destination. It is gratifying to find that someone can carry a story to a conclusion without screwing up the ending. A very professional and enjoyable effort.

HIGH DERYNI by Katherine Kurtz, Ballantine 23485 1973 \$1.25
Minireview by Stan Burns

I will freely admit that I am (gasp) quite fond of fantasy (Horror! What foul language to use in a sercon fanzine!) Unfortunately, while this book is well (if a trifle over) written, I can't take it as serious fantasy. I think that the fantasy elements are not really strong enough to carry the novel, and I am not fond enough of medieval romance to have such an abiding interest to carry me through to the book's conclusion. Ms. Kurtz would probably, judging from this novel, do quite well writing historical novels (not to mention receiving more money and critical acclaim) but as fantasy, this novel doesn't make it.

It is set in an alternate medieval Wales, a period and location that don't interest me (though I found the region quite charming during my stay) and I've had it up to here with esper stories (Who said Telzey out there? I'll kill him!!)

But the major drawback of her novel is her style. Especially in the use of dialog. It doesn't lend itself to fantasy, it sounds more like an encounter between corporation executives. At random, I came up with the following conversation between a Lord and a Bishop.

"See anything?"

"Just Derry."

"Are you ready to move on?"

"I want to show you something first."

"The last time we were here you were in no condition to appreciate what I'm about to show you, but I think it will interest you now."

This conversation just doesn't sound right. I might take place now, but not in the year 1200 between a noble and churchman. It sounds more like two advertising directors planning a campaign to launch a new mouthwash.

THE BODLEAN WAY by Louis Trimble DAW 1974 95¢
Minireview by Stan Burns

1974 is only two weeks old and already I have come across a rotten novel. No, not a rotten novel; a stinking, decaying, pathetic piece of absolute crud. The novel is so confused and contradictory, the characterization is so inept, the plotting is so insipid, the writing so banal, that I can only come to the conclusion that its poor deficient author has been taking writing lessons from Kenneth Bulmer. And was unable to absorb the little Bulmer understands about the subject. For example, on page 23 the author states:

"As an artist you should know you can't portray anyone on a Bodlean world. Bodleans believe that to reproduce anything alive will bring early death to that thing -- and to the reproducer. Photographs or drawings of Bodleans are taboo."

But on page 51 the author states:

"...I knew immediately the status of our honored guest. Has not every viewscreen in the Galaxy shown that loveliness at one time or another?"

The person spoken of is a Bodlean -- gundge!!

ASTOUNDING (John W. Campbell Memorial Anthology) Edited by Harry Harrison
Review by Stan Burns Random House 1973, \$7.95

This is supposed to be a super edition of ASTOUNDING. I hate to say this but I doubt very much whether Campbell would have bought half the stories in this book. Some are incomplete, others trifling, some just plain bad. But let us get on to the stories themselves.

"Lodestar" by Poul Anderson. I found this story extremely disturbing, its mood both pessimistic and bitter. It is the last van Rijn story, and it ends on the note "He moved to pour from a bottle; and Coya saw that he was indeed old." I felt as if I'd just attended the funeral of an old and dear friend.

"Thiotimoline to the Stars" by Isaac Asimov. While this is set as a story rather than an article in a "learned journal" it manages to convey the feeling that this farce originally established. Whether this is good Asimov I leave to those who can dissolve in water faster than I do.

"Something up There Likes Me" by Alfred Bester. I hope that this, and other stories I have been seeing, means that Bester has returned to the field permanently. This story is quite entertaining. It has the flavor of some of Fredric Brown's early stuff. "Lecture Demonstration" by Hal Clement. This is his standard 'hard' fare, a scientific puzzle story with the "alien" being more human than the "humans". Still, this type of story is all too rare these days, and I miss them. And welcome this one. "Early Bird" by Cogswell and Thomas. Mein Gott!! Space opera of the worst sort. It's...well...amusing?

"The Emperor's Fan" by L. Sprague deCamp. This story has the feel of the fables de Camp had his Hero spouting in THE GOBLIN TOWER. I liked those, and this one. A good, amusing, solid fantasy. "Brothers" by Gordon R. Dickson. I am much more fond of Dickson's short pieces than his longer ones. This is no exception. It is good. Dickson doesn't get so involved in making a superman out of his hero but spins an intriguing tale of revenge and conflict.

"The Mothballed Spaceship" by Harry Harrison. Another Deathworld story. Rather boring. All of the recent stories live in the shadow of the first. "Flack Sheep Astray" by Mack Reynolds. The unfortunate aspect of the story is that while all the characters are black, they all sound white. The story itself is typical of ANALOG -- let's roll up our shirtsleeves and straighten out this mess. "Epilog" by Clifford D. Simak. The final "City" story. Deals with Jenkins, the 'family' robot. I found it rather nostalgic, and one of the few stories that captures the mood of the originals. "Interlude" by George O. Smith. I was surprised to see this story. I had been told that Smith was dead. The story itself, however, doesn't have the flair that the earlier Venus Equilateral stories did. The problem isn't as interesting, the characters are shallow. Disappointing. "Helix the Cat" by Theodore Sturgeon. This story was originally rejected by Campbell. It should have stayed that way. It has few of the qualities that make a good Sturgeon story. I understand why Sturgeon didn't rewrite it, but I wish he had...



THE SPACE RITUAL, LIVE IN LIVERPOOL AND LONDON; HAWKWIND ++ United Artists ++ Reviewed by RICHARD WADHOLM

You can tell by the cover that it's another Hawkwind album without even looking for the title. It's corny. And it's dull. It's a big, bright, comic book colored picture of a naked girl in a headress looking spaced-out and vacant. It doesn't mean anything. I guess it's supposed to be some kind of heathen goddess of deep space or something, but it, like the rest of the art on the twelve-sided foldout cover (not to mention the music itself) communicates the fact that it doesn't mean nearly as much to you as somebody at UA hopes it does. In a way, it sums up the whole history of Hawkwind, up to and including this album. What Pink Floyd or King Crimson can visualize and make you visualize by subtle implication, Hawkwind has to come right out and show you bluntly. And somehow, their bluntly detailed pictures don't mean as much as Fripp's and Floyd's vague hinting.

Hawkwind tries to play hardware music. In science fiction literature there are two schools of writing -- the soft, lyrically surreal type, and the technical, hardware type. Other science fiction bands play gentle, haunting poems on eternity. Hawkwind aims at the hardware type, but somehow they come up with something that isn't so much technological as it is dehumanized.

Taken on musical terms alone, the band suffers from chronic overindulgence. They've taken their formula and strangled it. Each song on the album is just more of the song before it with a few different words. The whole album is diluted to the point of being relegated to background music by the aimless, overextended jamming that smothers the soul of each song. All of this is not helped by the fact that there probably isn't enough pure musical ability among them to make up one guitarist of Mark Farner's competence. I mean, Simon King, the drummer, makes Charlie Watts look like Ginger Baker, right? Their electronics are even more amateurish. Edgard Froese's forgotten more about evocative synthetic music than Dik Mik and Del Ditar ever knew. They create a constant barrage of mindlessly irritating squirrely little bubbles of electronic noise straight out of the "funny-little-noise" school of synthesizer music. The only member of the band with anything like talent is Bob Calvert, their resident poet and vocalist. Not only are his own poems pretty good, but the cold, immaculately empty hateur he brings to Michael Moorcock's "Black Corridors" and "Sonic Attack" make them two of the most nervelessly terrifying tone poems I've ever heard. However it's never very long 'til you're back to being drowned in that minor-key garbage disposal drone again, and that makes it hardly worthwhile.

So what does the album sound like specifically? Not half bad, actually. Tangerine Dream they're not, but as far as homework music goes, they're more atmospheric than Hendrix. Their narcotizing drone will drive you out of the room if you actually listen to it. However, if you just set it on the turntable and let it go without you, the sheer repititious weight of it will pervade the room with a dark aura -- like burning reusable incense. What Pink Floyd can do in under ten minutes with "Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun," And Amon Duul II can do in three minutes with "Deutsch Nepal", Hawkwind does in an hour and a half. It has its advantages. It's nice for doing other things by.

BEYOND CONTROL, edited by Robert Silverberg, Thomas Nelson, 214 pp. \$5.95
Review by Cy Chauvin

In H.G. Wells: Critic of Progress Jack Williamson mentions that there are three basic patterns of plot: man against nature, man against society, and man against himself. I've also seen this mentioned in various English literature textbooks. Fifty or a hundred years ago, perhaps, these divisions were enough, and covered the full range of human conflict, and thus the basic themes of all fiction. But since the time of the Industrial Revolution, man has found himself coming into increasing conflict with something not on that list: the Machine. Ever since the first textile workers broke and burned the first spinning jennies, men have felt that technology has gotten "beyond control," that we may have created a Frankenstein's monster. And while science fiction is not the sole type of literature which is able to deal with man in conflict with the machine, this has always been one of its primary themes. (Another, man against intelligent alien beings, should also be added to Williamson's list.) Silverberg, in his introduction to BEYOND CONTROL says that "again and again, science fiction stories warn against the terrifying possibilities of disaster that lie hidden in technological progress." Most of the stories in this anthology were originally published in the 1940s and 50s, so they were not written to cash in on a recent trend, but for their own sake.

My favorite story is Philip K. Dick's "Autofac." An atomic war has occurred, and all factories have been made completely automatic and put underground, to save on manpower and to protect them from destruction. When the war is over the survivors find they can't regain control of the factories -- the robots deliver what they need, but won't let them inside the factories. So they try to start a rivalry between the autofacs over raw materials, hoping to take over after the autofacs have weakened and partially destroyed themselves. The amusing but not overly rigid parallels between our own society and the "autofacs", the inventive, realistic detail, all help to make this one of the best stories in the book.

Another fairly good story is Terry Carr's "City of Yesterday," which is about pilots who sleep in suspended animation during flights between stars, and then are awakened by a computer when they reach a planet. They separate from the mother craft, swoop down in small individual rocket planes to destroy targets on the planet the computer has specified. The pilots serve for a term of 20 years, and their memories of their lives before being pilots are washed away, to be retuned when they finish their service -- for it has been found that pilots do a better job without their former memories. One pilot still remembers a hint, a feeling of his former life, and he begs the computer to tell him where his parents lived. Carr portrays the psychology of this character excellently; the story is quite touching and poignant.

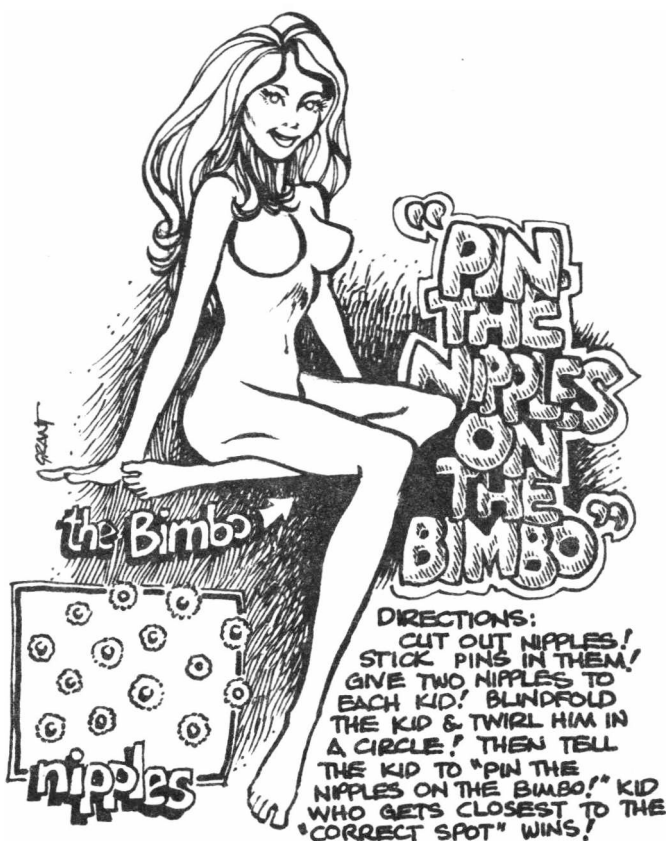
Not all the stories in the anthology are good. Isaac Asimov, in "The Dead Past," uses a device employed by another author in an earlier story, but less well. This is the chronoscope, a device which can view the past, but is highly restricted by the government. The story and its ending are logically derived, but a major flaw of the story is that, while set a hundred years in the future, all its characters talk like someone from the 1950s, and none of the story's background details indicate a future setting at all. The future, obviously, is going to be different, probably radically so, and if a writer is going to set his story in the future he should change more than the calendar date.

The four other stories in the anthology are by James Blish, Robert Silverberg, William Tenn, and Alfred Bester. BEYOND CONTROL is a fairly good, slightly above-average collection of SF stories.

UNIVERSE 3, edited by Terry Carr, Random House (SF Book Club) 179 pp.
Review by Don Keller

Maybe it was the time of year, or maybe just the time of man, to sort of quote Joni Mitchell, but somehow this third UNIVERSE impressed me very little. The previous two both had a good percentage of excellent stories, and the first one was a very fine book overall. But out of the seven stories in the present volume, not one of them did I find particularly edifying. I found that very mysterious -- I must have been in a strange mood that week.

The closest that came close to satisfying me was Geo. Alec Effinger's "The Ghost Writer." This in itself is odd, because I found so many of Piglet's recent stories so unsatisfactory. But here we have another story about storytelling, art about art. The title is typical Effingerian irony; the story concerns a rather Athenian future after the fall of civilization where 'artists' are those in temporal/telepathic contact with the great writers of the past. Irony piles on irony: one performer is Shakespeare, while the protagonist is the minor sf novelist Sandor Courane, main character in another Piglet story; the academics argue



the relative merits of the two. And the contrast between the conformist society and the different past is interesting also; and the ending is very nice. Then why didn't I like it even more than I do? Perhaps because it is another goddamned enforced-conformity story.

So is Edgar Pangborn's "The World is a Sphere," but he handles it better because it is his central concern. We see again his post-Holocaust DAVY world, viewed this time from the eyes of a minor council member in an ostensible republic actually ruled by a corrupt emperor. It is a fine portrait of a man of integrity, vision, and flexibility in a position that he cannot find freedom in. Pangborn is never less than competent, but I feel here that he did not give sufficient room for his several thematic ideas to develop themselves as fully as they deserve. And I wish to hell I knew what he meant by that last line.

Gordon Eklund's "Free City Blues" is kind of strange. It has a basic situation similar to his novel A TRACE OF DREAMS, and involves an esper girl with other strange powers coming to the city for the first time. Its major characteristic is an extreme unpredictability of plot. Intellectually I sort of admired it, but I think it bothered me on some archetypal level. The background has some very interesting elements in it, but

he merely runs the plot by them. (Eklund is the plottiest of the new writers, and I think it hurts him at times.) And I have an aversion to stories where characters have nearly unlimited "magical" powers, however scientifically explained. A typical Eklund story, as far as I'm concerned.

And "The Legend of Cougar Lou Landis" is a typical Ed Bryant story. His future city of Cinnabar this time is the setting for a CAT BALLOU type story of a girl who sets out to right wrongs. The technology and social extrapolation are very good, but somehow I could not get a grip on the damned thing; any kind of analysis of what it did to me is totally elusive.

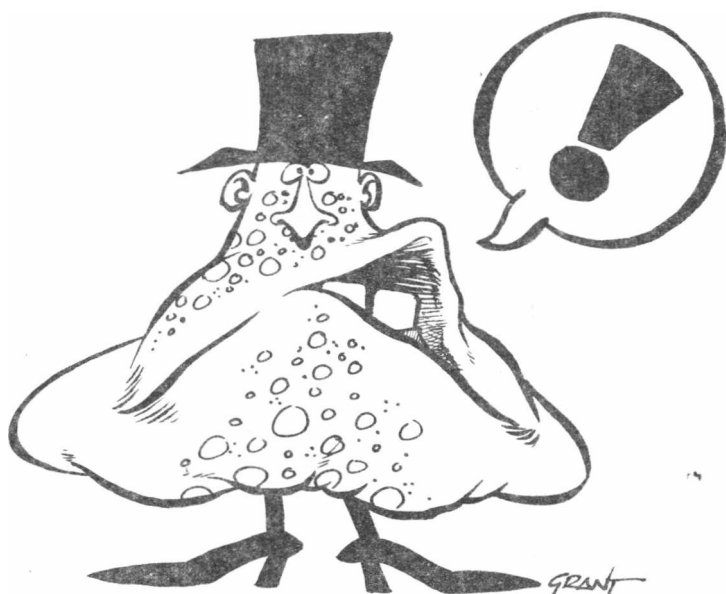
Why is it that the old writers around these days have such jazzy styles? There's Tiptree, Lafferty, and Ross Rocklynne. Rocklynne's "The Randy-Tandy Man" is of that generic type instantly recognizable as an "F&SF story," and recalls in particular Shirley Jackson's classic "One Ordinary Day, With Peanuts." It shows a belief in human perfectability, and in not unusual fashion glosses over how its future society could possibly come to be. It's clever, with a not-too-intrusive moral, and is fun to read because it trips along so delightfully, but is overall pretty lightweight. Nice, but nothing great.

Much the same can be said of Robert Silverberg's "Many Mansions." It's the first Silverberg UNIVERSE story I have liked at all; here his facetiousness kind of works. It's a time travel story about people screwing/-killing their own grandparents, and he puts enough people into the situation to make it pretty complex in the first place; but further, he throws in wish-fantasies that deliberately cloud the issue so badly that it is impossible to figure out what exactly did happen, if anything. The erotic overtones are interesting, if you can put up with Silverberg's sex-scene style. Basically, like UP THE LINE, this is not meant to be taken too seriously, so I don't; Lightweight.

The most frustrating story of all is Gene Wolfe's "The Death of Doctor Island." (Don't groan; it has only a tangential, non-linear relation to his near-Nebula winner "The Island of Dr. Death and Other Stories." A jumping-off point, no more. This is a novella, very little shorter than "The Fifth Head of Cerberus," and nearly as full of ideas. Wolfe, like Farmer used to, throws them away by the handful. He creates a fascinating situation -- a kind of progressive sanitarium on a moon of Jupiter, with all the technological bits thoroughly thought through. But whereas "Cerberus" managed somehow to leisurely explore its wealth of ideas within a brief compass, this one doesn't. It kind of throws its ideas one on top of another, and they just lie there in a heap and don't really do anything. There is some interesting character interaction and building, but overall the story didn't really work for me, sadly. I honestly feel that a rereading might straighten me out about it, but for now I have to say that it disappointed me.

So there you have it: a group of potentially fine stories that for one reason or another (one being my state of mind, probably) just did not work. Sorry Terry; better luck next time.

THE FANIVORE



JACK CHALKER PO Box 7687, Baltimore MD 21207

All thanks for PREHENSILE 10. Of interest mostly was Jerry Pournelle's article on con financing, which gives a somewhat weird picture of things since it's based entirely on the LACon financial report.

Firstoff, my general feeling is that nobody should get paid unless everybody does, and I think this sets a serious problem, not the least of which is, as Jerry suggests, turning the top spots at big cons into popularity contests for the few. It's a problem to get writers to see this since every one has the understandable feeling that they are going to be the most popular and sought-after, but the bruised egos will be the real problem -- or do I have to bring up the Author Brunches at LACon?

Secondly, from St. Louiscon, to Helcon to Noreascon to LACon to TORCON I've been on stage at a Worldcon longer than anyone else at those cons -- doing between 7 and 26 hours of auctioning. My fee for this is a bucket containing two cold beers, and if that be payola, then make the most of it. ((Find out what brand it is and I'll send a keg to each of my concom...)) However, if I discovered that just one of the professionals appearing on the program got paid, I'd not auction without the normal

15% auctioneer's commission -- nor, I think, would anyone else. Now that is just me -- think of the 30 or 40 fans who give up a lot of their own times -- good times -- to work long and very, very hard at these cons. Their input is certainly worth as much as a few words from Norman Schlobodnik who's just sold a story to Ted White and "performs" on a new author's panel. Just where does Jerry draw the line?

((The point itself is well taken, but in Jerry's case he never proposed that writers be paid but that they receive benefits -- ie, free membership and banquet ticket, hospitality room. I think that refund of membership is the least you should accept from a con you, fan or pro, speaker or auctioneer, have worked for. The rest depends, except that paying fees to anyone at a Con seems hazardous because of the precedent involved.))

True, cons -- really big cons -- make a surplus amount of money, but it's also true that the financial burden is on the committee until the money -- most of it too late to do any good -- materializes. Is SFWA going to financially guarantee a con? If so, I'll put it on and guarantee equal payments to all.

Jerry also overlooks a few other things -- notably the fact that many of the big name authors he alludes to not only won't accept a fee for speaking at a con but will refuse to speak at a con where anyone is being paid. Check out Ike Asimov or Lester del Rey on this subject.

Now, this doesn't refer in any way to cons put on for the express purpose of making money, such as Star Trek Con. I consider them rapes, or, at best, exhibitions, and refuse to go to them, but I would say that any con put on to make a profit should and in fact must pay its personnel, including authors.

I don't think we do it that way. If we're paying I'll gladly take minimum wage for all the hours I've already -- and will be -- putting in on Discon II. That, however, would eat up the surplus.

My feeling is that the authors should get paid only after all of the con committee's expenses are repaid (I've only had one con ever pay even so much as my room bill). Authors have the least kick -- THEY CAN DEDUCT EVERY PENNY SPENT AT THE CON OFF THEIR INCOME TAX. Any con. The fans and fan workers can not.

On the other hand, I agree wholeheartedly with Jerry that services should be bought and provided for if money permits. This means things like the coffee and buns for speakers beforehand, payment of GoR expenses, etc. On the other hand, I don't think these things should be taken for granted until the money is in. Does Jerry want to comment on the fact that ten (count 'em -- 10 --) fine, upstanding SFWA authors asked for a table right up front at TORCON, got the tickets with a promise to pay when all were collected from, then never paid their banquet bill? And some of them didn't even appear anywhere on the program!

As for providing an SFWA room, I'm all for it at every Worldcon -- provided two conditions are met. (1) the room is open to all con goers, and (2) the SFWA swears never again to tell all and sundry that the Worldcon is theirs. (1) is important, I think, since the money that subsidizes that room comes from everyone who attends -- and no general funds should be expended for private con-duration rooms. I know of 4 people at 3 different cons who were nastily ejected from SFWA rooms despite the fact that they'd been talking with a SFWA member who led

them there for a quieter place to talk. I was once signing a contract in the SFWA room with a SFWA member and one other fellow came over and made a fuss that I'd have to leave. When told I was a publisher conducting business, he mellowed and faded, but the point's made. I was also, at one time, a SFWA member but I quite (now I don't qualify, so it's moot) over just such actions.

Which brings up another point. Two First Fandom members of long standing were rudely told by SFWA members that they could not come in to the SFWA party at TORCON. Fair was fair, so, when I was acting as doorguard for the FF party (and told to keep various folk out) I refused to let Jerry and five friends come in. Jerry got extremely abusive; he threatened to kill or cripple me and refused to listen to my side of the story. His credentials for entering: "But dammit, I'm the President of SFWA -- I can enter any party I damn well please." Direct quote. And after 2 people who were sponsoring the private First Fandom party had been told they couldn't enter the SFWA party! I don't quibble with the right of any closed party to exclude whom they please -- but neither should Jerry. And throwing his rank and position around doesn't endear him to the fans whose hard work put on that con he had fun at -- and will deduct from his 1973 income tax. I wasn't paid a dime for Torcon -- and I was on stage and backstage for more hours than Jerry was sober.

It's this "I'm SFWA, Kiss My Ass" attitude that's caused any schism that might have existed.

However, on the matter of providing services for authors and workers from the surplus funds, I'm afraid Jerry's kicking a dead horse. The LACon was the only one to my knowledge that didn't!

As to the future, I'm intimately connected with the upcoming Discon' II and can assure you that no funny business will be going on there financially. A non-profit corporation, Science Fiction Conventions Inc., will and is handling all income and disbursements. The accounting will be made at the end of the con, and it will contain nothing ridiculous. Nobody's fare to LACon will be deducted, and any disbursement for authors or workers will be stated as well (if any). Every penny of the con income will be spent or allocated or given away. ((That usually happens to con income, I've heard.)) SFCI is a non-profit corporation and it's damned well going to stay that way. If you don't believe us, check IRS in '75.

As much as possible in the way of services will be provided, but nobody will be paid to perform.

Yet another thought on the payment idea: while it's true that worldcons make money (except for the out of NA ones -- Australia's got to pay close to US\$5000 for the con facilities!) most regionals do not. Payment to authors at cons will be expected of the small cons -- meaning many small cons, indeed, most, will have to fold unless some good folk in the family, like Fred Pohl, Asimov, del Rey, Clement, Zelazny and the great many others, stay loyal. And the latter named will. Their roots are with fandom, as Jerry's is not.

Isn't that the idea? Cons should be held for the primary object of having fun. The thousands going to a worldcon pay a great deal of money to get there. Pros like the ones mentioned above, and many, many more, including 80% of the top names in the business, by rough guess, are the valuable ones anyway -- they come because they have fun and they like us. Those who feel that cons are an obligations for which they should be paid should stay home -- or come and take their tax writeoffs denied the masses who are there and have fun anyway.

RE: This letter is strictly my view; it doesn't represent any con or bid.

It seems to me the essay by Cy Chauvin is one of the best pieces you have ever published. The contrast between religion and science (as exploration of the world) is mirrored in fantasy versus science fiction, as ways of talking about alternate possibilities to the present. The major contribution in this essay is not so much to bring out totally new and original views on science fiction, but rather to pull together many different ideas which have been neglected. The fact that science fiction is not necessarily married to scientific accuracy, does not fundamentally try to predict the future, uses science more as a metaphor than as a guiding light, and derives most of its density and worth from the special complexity of invention science fiction can employ -- these are all good points, and welded together here to make an even better point: that science fiction does need some idiosyncratic critical standards not found among other literature.

He seems to feel there are four separate standards needed --

1. Utilizing imaginative possibilities.
2. Develop these logically and consistently.
3. Integrate imaginative possibilities into the story, so they cannot be separated.
4. Avoid cliched and overused possibilities.

This is the scheme laid out on page 13. But made into bare bones like this it seems obvious to me that only the first rule is necessary. The rest merely states in detail that these imaginative possibilities must be used well or else they lose their power.

A few comments about how to apply this new "rule". The standard of logical and consistent development usually has implied scientific extrapolation of a rather hard-nosed sort. But after all the requirement is only for consistency and logic, and I believe this is why the work of Larry Niven has been so popular. Many times Larry does not explore a scientific problem, but simply sets up a number of rules as the beginning and works through them using ingenuity and craft.

Also, it seems to me this general rule of Cy's can often be misinterpreted. Imagination does not simply mean the wildest visions one can dream up. There is a high standard for consistent and deep probing of ideas and it seems to me that most science fiction fails in precisely this area. Of course, this is simply a matter of personal taste, but for my money too many ideas are either tacked onto the story, or if the idea is in fact original, the thinking-through in terms of emotional implication is dreadfully shallow.

I admit that I am something of a specialist, and my disagreement with the prevailing taste in science fiction is based on issues of scientific accuracy as well as failure of fictional techniques. But it seems to me that a book like Ringworld can be faulted on thematic and novelistic grounds as well as the scientific ones. I liked many things in that book very much, but I still feel that it was a failure as a novel. Nonetheless, it has won many awards. I think the issue of imagination is crucial here: such a large concept, even not perfectly worked out, inevitably impressed a lot of people. But unfortunately I think that herein lies the key to why imaginative content cannot be used too strongly by critics.

After all, ideas wear out. No matter how imaginative an idea, if it is not brought to fruition in a solid manner, using those "literary qualities" we here invoked, then inevitably it will be forgotten. Cy perhaps does not realize that imaginative possibilities are themselves a highly dated item. The only way a strong imagination can produce a lasting work is by being coupled equally well to a strong sensibility, with a goodly knowledge of literary techniques and background.

All this is nothing new. To write a great book you must be a great writer and to write a great science fiction novel you must be a very good writer with a very good imagination. Now that we all have that straight, perhaps we can get to work.

MATTHEW B. TEPPER 2200 16th Ave., San Francisco CA 94116

PRE 10 arrived on Yom Kippur, and I ate it up -- I guess I'll have that to atone for next year because I was supposed to fast on Yom Kippur. But, all told, I managed to read it rather quickly so I suppose that was fast enough to get by.

Your new format is interesting, though I rather miss the spread-outness of the good old mimeo PREs. The illos you've used for #10 work well in the new medium, by and large, and I'm particularly pleased with your "discovery" of Marc Schirmeister as a fan artist. His illos...strike me as the best I've seen from him, and I'd like to see him develop his sense of small forms. Appropos of art comment, I notice that you've credited Bruce Townley twice for his rather mediocre piece on p. 64, but Jack Hargness is nowhere credited for his p. 53 one save for on the illo itself. The Ken Fletch on p. 19 is perfect for the article it illustrates, and to me is the best way of showing advantages to keeping a fairized art-file.

((As seems the case with most artists in PRE, Marc "discovered" me more than vice versa. He has already appeared in Riverside Quarterly, maybe elsewhere -- 342 Camino Del Sol, South Pasadena CA 91030 is the place for faneditors to beat a path in the direction of. As for the Fletcher illo, it is an inheritance from the Rudolph SHAGGY and fits in both artistically and putridly, only 5 years after it was first circulated for publication.))

That article in particular ("The Old Fanzine Dealer's Guide," by Ken Faig writing as "Joe Baloney") is quite humorous but uneven, perhaps because in a work of that length (I kept asking myself how long is this thing going to be?) it's hard to keep the funnies coming...Maybe the article could have been broken into sections or chapters, allowing the reader convenient breakpoints to rest his eyes or something. I must say that for all of this structural fault-finding I can tell that the author has a damn good ability to relate to things fannishly -- he just has to cut down on detail when it tends to make his prose lopsided.

Once again Stan Burns' book reviews seem to be the highlights of the section, but Staniel's tendency to get "cute" still grates on me -- especially when I have more than one review by him side by side. He spends too much time editorializing on DAW books when perhaps he should be reviewing Tiptree at greater length than he did. That one paragraph quoted from TEN THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS FROM HOME is nearly the only actual comment on the book itself, and to me it doesn't emphasize the "droll, effortless style" Staniel is talking about it. To me it looks like "the same meaningless shit I see in stories by X, Y and Z," so I doubt if Staniel really did the best job he could reviewing that book.

Richard Wadholm does a bang-up job whamming into that garbageman of the air and its recent bastard offspring, UFC. Wad tries for the "cute" a bit too much at times but he does achieve a unification of his materials in the process, especially as he (deservedly) does not take the subject matter he is reviewing seriously. Bill Warren's film column was mildly interesting to me, which gave a bit of surprise because I do not like films, or talk about films, to any extent...

In the lettercolumn, Gene Wolfe makes a good point about the Black Hole Ranquet (of which I was in sole charge, should anyone have failed to get that impression) when he says, "...you could not seem to make up your mind about whether you wanted to be funny or serious, and it showed." Admittedly, it's hard to really organize an event such as a banquet or a Ranquet so that all the speeches, presentations, and so forth make a nice even series, and so part of the fault there was the very nature of the thing. And as anyone will know it is hard to truly sustain good humor (especially when it is all, in effect, one joke) for any real length of time. Even the best stand-up comedian has to have some singer or animal act or something in the wings to entertain the audience, lest it have its fill of his jokes and skits. So, as far as is possible in this case, I must take the blame for this undecidedness about the whole affair. Sometimes I almost think I like to leave people guessing whether or not I'm serious, though, and that can get pretty unnerving to everyone.

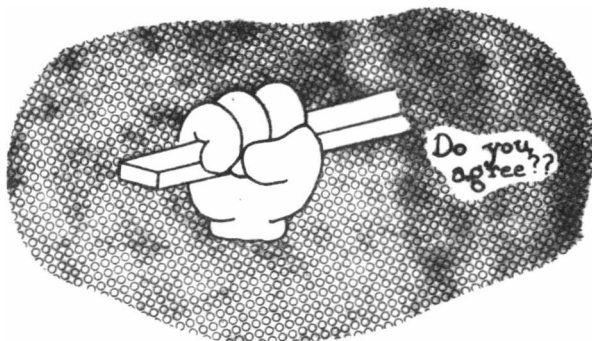
Rick Sneary may have to revise his Watergate/LACon personnel parallels, as he has Crayne down for Agnew. Better to make Crayne Kissinger and assign the missing spot to, say, A Well Known Gafiate.

((Indeed, Matthew is solely responsible for the tremendous artistic and social success of April's Black Hole Ranquet, and one of the world's leading authorities on putridity.))

DAVID GEROLD Box 526, Hollywood CA 90028

The part I like best in your fanzine is the reviews. Second best, I like the letters. Gosh, but I get envious when I read about all the famous people all you big-name-type fans get to hobnob with, and rub shoulders with and talk to and like that.

What makes me particularly green with envy is how perceptive you all are, especially people like Lou Stathis and David Stever. Gosh, I



never would have realized how much an author puts himself into his books if it hadn't been for them pointing it out -- but I guess that's because they're lucky enough to know all those famous people and hob-nob with them and rub their shoulders and like that. so they would recognize those kinds of things. When you know someone that well, you can't help but see all those little things that they don't realize they're putting into their books.

Well, I've gone on long enough for now. I'll just say that I think you should keep up the good work.

((I couldn't say how much those worthy fen hob the nob or rub their shoulders, but when I read as sincere a tribute as the one you just gave, it simply chokes me up. It inspires an emotion more moving than that one experiences after consuming 12 Tommy chili-cheese-burgers. Quick, Watson, the bag...))

MIKE GLICKSOHN 141 High Park Ave., Toronto ONT M6P 2S3 CANADA

This may well be the last letter ever written in the hallowed halls of Maynard Avenue wherein all those great fanzines were ~~read~~ read! I'm surrounded by about 80 boxes containing the kipple of my life and the sense of impossibility is strong. Just getting it ready to move seems out of the question while my enfeebled brain refuses even to contemplate the move itself.

PRE 10 is a good issue, although it has weaknesses. I don't mind the reduction and have no fannish prejudice against offset, but I would like to see you take a little more care with the paste-ups. On several pages the presstype titles slope in several different directions and the text is at another angle still. With all that excellent Shull artwork, you've got enormous potential for the appearance of the fanzine and it's a shame to see it spoiled by rushing through the preparations.

Following Cy's advice, I skipped his article. But I'm sure to many it was the highlight of the issue. ((How will you ever know?)) Isn't it wonderful how everyone in fandom has different tastes and yet we all get along so well? ((Not tastes, so much, as different prejudices. Yes.))

Jerry Pournelle airs topics of considerable recent interest, and I find myself in agreement with him and sometimes not. I think it's an excellent practice to refund the membership costs of anyone who appears on the program. (This practice, as you know, was started by the LACON committee and they deserve considerable credit for it.) But I'm against paying for speakers and I know several sf writers who are too. If there are writers who would refuse to be on a worldcon panel unless they were paid, then let them stay away. I have a very strong feeling that the SFWA overestimates greatly the power of its members to draw crowds. And if by some chance Jerry is correct, and attendance would drop sharply if the "big names" were absent, why then he's found the very solution that hard-core convention fans have been seeking for the last few years!

A keynote speaker is a different matter, though. I'm not sure, not being a TORCON committee member, but I think we did a little more for the writers who had the keynote speeches each day. I think the TORCON idea of a luncheon for panel members was a marvelous idea. It gives participants a little extra (a nice free meal) and lets them plan out in advance what the panel will deal with. I don't know how it worked at TORCON since I didn't get to any of the program, but it's a great idea in theory. But I honestly believe that that's all a person should expect for being in the pro-

In essence, I am in agreement with what Pournelle says. It's his assumption that without the writers the cons would collapse that I agree with. The regionals are a continued success for those who attend despite the fact that often only one or two of the lesser known pros attend. Perhaps worldcons would be smaller if all the writers stayed away, not that that would ever happen with so many of them fans, but that would be very far from the death knell of the convention. As I said earlier, it might be exactly what we're looking for.

Ken Faig has a nice idea, but he writes about it for seemingly three times the needed length. The article got boring after awhile, and would have benefited from some tighter writing.

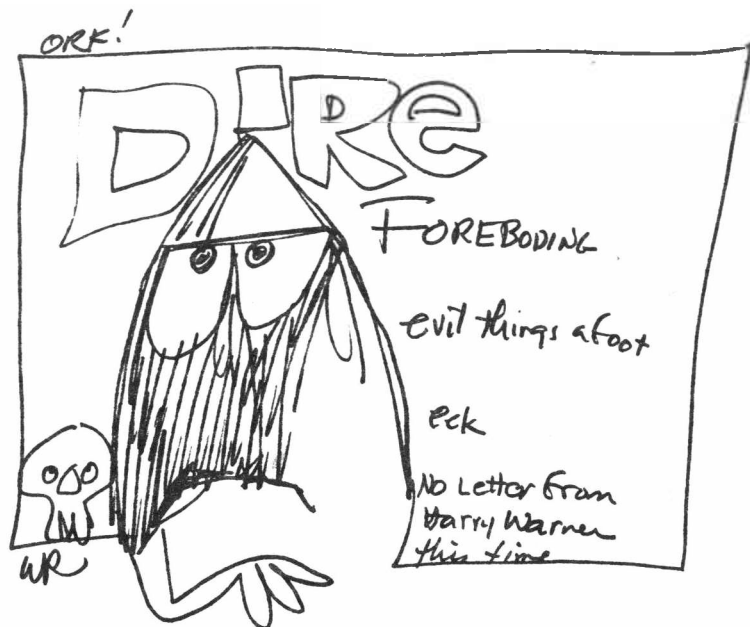
I agree that Tiptree is perhaps the best new talent to appear since DeLany and Zelazny set the field on fire several years ago but one thing about his book that Stan doesn't point out is that it's about the worst packaged volume to be printed in ages. No index, no division between stories, and Tiptree was very disappointed in it. For all that DAW may not publish classic books, although I've enjoyed several myself, he does know how to package properly and his success indicates that this is an important factor in the modern book market.

For Rick Sneary's information, TORCON was one con not interested in body count. In fact, most committee members did their utmost to keep attendance down. There was no local advertising, minimal fan advertising once the bid was won, and still we ended up with the largest worldcon ever. It's gotten to the point where the con is going to grow despite the efforts of the committee and the wise committee will realize this and provide something for all those attendees. Rick confuses cause and effect. We didn't add things in order to attract larger crowds, we attracted larger crowds and so had to add things! It's a matter of ethics, really. Aware of the fact that hordes of people will be coming to the con, can the committee just ignore them and leave them to fend for themselves, or does it have an obligation to provide as wide and as varied a program as possible so that all the people paying to attend can get their money's worth? We felt that we had such an obligation, and tried to live up to it.

As it was, TORCON had fewer gimmicky things than many worldcons. If Rick sees a way out of the spiral, I wish he'd let us in on it. It's all very well to say "Eliminate all but a few hours of straight sf programming" but the concomm that does is going to find itself with close to 2500 disgruntled attendees on its hands and I'm doubtful that any concomm is going to have the guts/gall/whathaveyou to make that first step.

Since this issue of PRE was prepared before TORCON, I can assume that Dan's remark about my being paid off in Hugo votes was merely an off-the-cuff slur. I wonder what he'll have to say now that I've actually won? As for what I got for being on the TORCON committee for a while and helping with various parts of the convention, I've already told you. One free dinner with Rotsler to entertain a guest of honor. One free dinner with Susan in exchange for work done on the TORCON. As organizer of the "All Our Yesterdays" room, Susan got a free hotel room which she shared with me. The expenses we had going to cons and putting on parties before we'd won the bid we cheerfully accepted as things we would have done anyway. Again, a matter of principle, I suppose.

Enough. Keep up the good work. You deserve a Hugo nomination. I'll nominate you next year, but I suspect that the age of the small fanzine Hugo winner is vanishing. Is next issue's print run 2000 by any chance? TORCON committee members bought their own banquet tickets; I see no reason why others shouldn't as well.



DON AYRES Stevenson Arms 221, 600 W. Mill St., Carbondale IL 62901

At last I get to see the famous PRE. I see the beautiful Grant Canfield cover. Twenty minutes later, I get to see the rest of the magazine. Seriously, I didn't spend that long ogling the cover woman, although some of the others here at the apartments have looked about that long. Non-fans in fact. ((Great science fiction art can inspire even mundanes...))

Where to begin? I'll start by skipping Chauvin's thoughtful article because it is essentially a semantic question and the best way to handle these is to say "These are my definitions for the following... Modify my statements to suit your definitions and good luck."

Having committed myself to such a viewpoint, I'll jump to Richard Wadholm's article. Having also modified his definition to some extent by consulting my own dictionary and adding the characteristic of irrational and noncontextual arrangement of material besides the effort to portray the subconscious or dream mind, I'm still a bit puzzled. Are people's dreams all that similar? I've never experienced anything at all along the Dali line. In fact, my dreams are reasonably coherent and have sufficient plot and motivation to be quite saleable with a little reworking. I may displace things, like the time I put the Grand Canyon within a mile of my dorm here in southern Illinois, but that was for effect and is not in itself rationally indefensible. Under those circumstances, virtually the entire field of popular fiction qualifies. And those are dreams. It may be semantics; the word "surrealism" may not be defined in terms that accurately represent it. ((You want to run that by me again? I can't consider something a person consciously scripts, corrects, rewrites, and polishes as a dream. Dream connotes a passivity which would exclude something as deliberate as cash-and-carry-prose. At least it connotes that to me.))

I am also thoroughly confused about the Aldiss story, largely because I have absolutely no way to check it directly.../The/ main point of the story as I saw it was that the very thing that the religion /in "Heresies of the Huge God/ had organized around, its purpose, had run into a conflict when the animal departed, knocking earth from its orbit and into deeper space. The purpose of the religion was in itself a heresy from the new enlightened viewpoint of the narrator and the story concludes with the narrator suggesting that they start praying for the return of the 'Huge God'.

Far more ethereal effects exist in the works of other artists -- Kafka for example. I don't really see what the role of "Heresies of the Huge God" is in this scheme.

There's also something humorous in Stan Burn's stand on Wollheim, particularly when you consider that Ace Books was the training ground for many of the current writers under his leadership. For a long time, my library had about as many paperbacks from Ace as there were from all others combined... Were the Tiptree collection typical of Ace, I might join your applause, but it isn't, and Ace prices have already risen. Don't short-change yourself on Wollheim yet.

BRUCE D. ARTHURS 53 Transport Co., Ft. Lee VA 23801

First, a few words in response to Bill Warren: There is a minimum level of quality necessary before a movie is eligible for a Hugo. At least, I think there is. Suppose the best film for a certain year was THE THING WITH NO FEET or some such crud? Oh, yeh, there may be obscure films that didn't get the publicity or distribution (an excellent animated film a couple of years ago, SHINEBONE ALLEY, appears to have had a very short run coupled with bad distribution; no one I've mentioned it to has ever heard of it) but I'm not going to take your word that such a film is best. If I'm unable to see a film, sorry, but that means I'm not qualified to vote for it as best of anything. Maybe films are important enough to Warren, and worth the trouble, that he doesn't mind tracking down those rare gems. But I, and most other fans, can't do it that way.

The entire issue is, purposely of course, planned to appeal to the average con-goer; someone who's read sf for some time and is still unfamiliar enough with sf criticism, fandom, conventions, and all its other aspects that he'll be curious enough to, maybe, glance through this PRE and fork over 50¢ for it. But for myself, I didn't have any strong reaction to it. Sorry, Mike. Please don't rip me in half like a Volkswagen.

((Is there some reason you feel such hostility to PREHENSILE? Or me? I don't write -- or edit -- down to people. PRE -- which, by the way, didn't get published in time for TORCON -- is a fanzine the best I can publish within the limits of my tastes/prejudices and the availability of good material. It is not intended to appeal to some common denominator of unknown name and conjectural background. I would be rather foolish to even attempt such a thing, since I believe the average reader will only lay down good money for a zine that can flaunt a solid list of pro contributors -- an ALGOL, a TAC, perhaps OUTWORLDS.))

CY CHAUVIN: What, exactly, are imaginative elements? And why is something like an sf ram more imaginative than, say, a fictional literary relationship during Regency England? The only difference I can see is that the ram uses speculation about the principles of physics, or that the galactic empire and psychohistory involve speculations about socioeconomics and psychology as scientific (?) disciplines, whereas the so-called mainstream fiction involves observations of individual psychology and integration of history on a nondisciplined basis. Which is not to say that sf is literature about science, but rather that in some respect, with the pure form, sf is concerned with some "scientific" discipline -- mathematics or psychology, economics or nuclear physics -- "scientific" in that it involves a rationalistic approach. Something Asimov talked about on a recent radio show as "literature which recognizes the importance of the scientific method," -- not that I think Ike hit the thing squarely, but still, it's an approach. Then there are the "non-pure" (to say nothing of impure) forms of sf -- such as Dick's fascinating THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE (which might be called fantasy) -- and recognizable fantasies, such as THE LORD OF THE RINGS and other classic fairy tales, Fritz Leiber's excellent Lankhmar stories, and so on. All of which we tend to lump under the generic name "science fiction".

((Maybe you'd like some sample of rhetoric in the neighborhood of "rationalized fantasy" or "dream engineering". I prefer to look for a less arbitrary description, that will pass the "Elision-Bradbury" test: if it includes what Bradbury has done and what Elision has done -- not just the Campbell-Asimov-Dickson-Heinlein-Younis hard-core of scientification -- then I'll start thinking about adopting it as my description of the genre. For starters, you tell me what recognizing "the importance of the scientific method" has to do with "The Veldt" or "Repent, Harlequin," Said the Ticktockman.))

JERRY POURNELLE: It sorrows me to have to disagree with one so distinguished as yourself, but -- I, both as a fan and as a developing writer, never want to see a writer take or offered a fee for speaking at a con. One of the most delightful things about fandom (Ghu knows there are few enough left) is the marvelous spectacle of the profan. Never let con-attendance become a purely professional matter. Let every writer be able to say as Lester Del Rey was at the LACon past: "I'm a fan, Harlan." I'll have to agree that cons should furnish hospitality benefits for writers -- as a SFWA room or suite if one's available, an N3F hospitality room, maybe another CBE, since LACon's was so successful, free banquet tickets for speakers (etc.))

((There has been a minor stampede of two or three pros to echo Del Rey's "I'm a fan, Harlan" -- but I'm of two opinions there. First, I go along with Elision's reply of the time which in so many polite words was "Bullshit." Del Rey could never slip back into fannish anonymity, nor fully function if he did. Second, the categorization of fan and pro is something few people think about and hardly anyone is fanatic about. The reason is that those who are sound repulsively elitist. Also, some fans have now become prominent professional writers, helping to erase neat categories, but I'd hardly treat it as a sociological phenomenon. And to pray for the day when every pro rehearses "I am a fan" begs the question of what is a fan?))

REED WALLER New Richland, MN 56072

Greetings from Sunny Minnesota where the palm trees sway in the breeze.
((Palm trees in Minnesota? Tell me Reed, you sure you're not swaying in the breeze?))

And listen -- IGNORE those people who are bored with your "humorous fantasies." What do they know? Anyone who has become so sercon as to no longer appreciate the hidden significances in your editorial glossolalia is obviously petrified beyond hope of redemption. And as for Gerrold, maybe he was just speechless because you weren't paying him enough. (Speaking of selling out, it must be the stylish thing to do if Gerrold is doing it. You know, if all our best writers -- Elish, Asimov, Bradbury -- how'd HE get in here?; Clarke, et al -- are so heavy into selling out, then maybe pretty soon we fans will have to sell out too, just to keep up with our Good Heroes. How about "I Read Sci-fi for The FBI" for the next Reader's Digest? "The Real Truth About Godzilla" by eminent sci-fi enthusiast Bill -- or James -- Warren. Cy Chauvin can write for GOOD HOUSEKEEPING on how sci-fi stories are, well, probably not corrupting our youth.) But enough parenthetical wisdom. Back to the subject, which is, ah, um, oh yes, your "editorials." I think they're swell, so just go right ahead with those fantasies of yours no matter what your friends say, and always remember, no one's judgement is correct all the time, not even mine.

Paul Novitsky -- I have noted a change in reaction to ordinary printed material in different graphix layouts. Eg. I and some friends I asked could think of examples of stories we didn't like in hardcover but liked in paperback and vice-versa. And magazine format (2-column) caused differing reactions. Differences? paper color, quality, typeface (much hardcover sf is set in Schoolbook Century type, which is rather staid and gives the text a formal heaviness. Not the typeface for a fast-paced adventure), type size page size, and shap (rag edges) and (perhaps this opens seldom-discussed vistas) smell. A paperback doesn't have the heady fragrance that a hardcover book does. ((Strange -- Bradbury smells books, too. A new faanish past-time revealed at last!))

There is more to the published word than a mere two-D matrix. As well as smell there is color-sense, which relates to both the ink and paper and to index of refraction/reflection of paper, reflex color of ink if glossy (cheap red will reflect gold at an angle), thickness of paper and opacity/transparency of paper... Lord, you could go on forever.

Graphics is a life's work, not a small sideline diversion, and is ultimately as important as the words printed themselves.

MICHAEL T. SHOEMAKER 2123 N. Early St., Alexandria VA

I've said it before and I'll say it again (tell him this time) I think Bill Warren's movie review column is great. He gives extensive coverage of the field, he writes enthusiastically and interestingly (he really cares about his subject) and if he deems a movie worthy, he is capable of discussing it in depth. I think the only comparable column is Baird Searles in F&SF.

I agree completely with Pournelle. IF the conventions are profiteering then the authors, who are the main drawing card for the large mundane segment of the crowd, are certainly entitled to share in the profits. BUT: who



the hell wants that kind of convention? Not I. This kind of profiteering makes me sick. Conventions started as events put on by fans and catering to fans, people who really had a deep love and devotion to the field and the people related to the field. Some people might argue that this would not be a World SF Convention, and I suppose they're right. What I want is a World SF Fandom Convention, which is what Worldcons were in the "good old days" (or so I gather from what I read). Actually I think fans could still get the Worldcon back to the exclusiveness it enjoyed in the past if only they were able to unite and say "God damn it, let's do it this way, and kick the profiteering leeches out in the cold." The hardest part would be winning the bid. What it would take would be a coup d'etat of the bid by a clique of dedicated, altruistic fans. The rest would be easy, eliminating the massive publicity, news coverage during the event, and the various special programming items. I really believe this could be done, but I suspect that in a few more years it will be impossible due to a mundane awareness of the existence of the Worldcon that is too large to overcome.

((reactionary idealism in fandom has always appalled me because it is ever presented as a kind of indignant fatalism -- like so many old people crabbing about "those god-damned hippies". Besides professing nostalgia for something you never lived through, Mike, what is it you really expect from a Worldcon that (1) isn't already happening, and (2) is possible? Glicksohn's letter demonstrates that even in the absence of advertising a Worldcon will still draw a crowd, but until mundanes start organizing Worldcons I expect you'll have to look far for a bid not being operated by "dedicated, altruistic fans" assuming you don't define those terms to arbitrarily exclude certain communities. The Discon 2 committee, at least according to the Discon 2 committee, has already done what you call for right in your own neighborhood, within realistic limits. The real trouble with talking about Worldcons anyway is that everybody sounds like he's running for the Presidency, preaching "Two auditors in every account and a pro in every garage." What we're really waiting for is the Messiah -- a fellow who won't even have to live in Falls Church and rich brown will still take his word for something...))

ERIC MAYER RD 1, Falls PA 18615

The cover on PREHENSILE 10 is gorgeous. (I just love toadstools). As a matter of fact Richard Geis could take some lessons from you on designing THE ALIEN CRITIC (which, I take it, is produced the same way). For one thing there's nothing more disheartening than page after page of microscopic type unrelieved by any artwork...and black and white line drawings reproduce so beautifully...that it is a shame not to take advantage of the fact.

((Considering that most of my layout is ripped off from old SFRs -- also Granfalloon -- I don't think Geis needs any lessons from me: he just needs to use what he knows, and get away from willfully producing an ugly magazine.))

Jim Shull's fox on page 24 is really absurd. It does strange things to me. (Nothing like Grant Canfield's toadstools, though. Exquisite.)

Highlights of the reviews, for me, were the satisfying little diatribes by Richard Wadholm and Stan Burns. I've felt gypped and insulted by what I thought was deliberate hackwork more than once. Half the stories in ANALOG seem to be inspired less by scientific speculations than by wordage rates. When I walk into a bookstore and see rows of PERRY RHODAN and BLADE, and -- But what's the use? Besides I'm always bothered by this nagging question: "If the stuff is so rotten (and it is, it IS) then why can't I get anyone to look at anything I write? Is incompetence a virtue? Or do these hacks, aesthetically lousy as their work is, possess something (even if it's only a formula) that I lack?" I should try writing something in their vein. Why don't I? Maybe because I'm afraid I wouldn't succeed -- and that would be awfully hard to swallow.

I don't have much to say on the Chauvin piece. I can't argue with it. It's the best definition of sf I have ever read. (Of course, in all fairness, I haven't read enough to be getting tired of them yet.) He seems to pull together a lot of ideas I've seen hinted at elsewhere: ideas I've almost, but not quite, had myself. An IMPORTANT ARTICLE. (Do you hear, Ted White?)

"The Old Fanzine Dealer's Guide" was quite good. I realize it was supposed to be humorous, but it sounded so SENSIBLE, as if it were really what it purported to be. I feel as if I've just read an honest-to-God psychological study of collectors.

Paul Novitski makes some interesting points. There probably is a graphic element in punctuation. No doubt isolating anything, whether it be a drawing or a word, calls attention to it. So short a sentence, isolated in its own paragraph, stands out more than a sentence buried in a solid page-full of other sentences. This is a form of punctuation. But, as Paul admits, it is the conceptual content of words that is most important, and I wonder how far graphic experimentation of this "In the Deadlands" style can be carried before it interferes with the conceptual content.

I think that writing is only incidentally perceived with the eyes. Word symbols are intended to reproduce brain processes. Writing is unique. Unlike other art forms, it is one step removed from the sense. For instance, if a painter wishes to depict a rose (realistically) he puts red pigment onto his canvas. Light reflects from this pigment onto the eye in much the same way that light reflects from the actual rose, creating a sensation of red in the mind. The chemical compositions of rose petals and red pigments differ, but in both cases the actual sensation of red is created by physical means. Therefore, it is quite correct to say that a painting is perceived by the eye. Not so with a word. A reader immediately understands what is meant by "red".

but not through any physical interaction between the black geometrical markings and his brain chemistry. True, he can perceive whether the ink is black or purple, and it is the shape of the letters which indicates the symbolic content, but this sensory information is either irrelevant or secondary. Through training we come to quickly bypass these sensations in order to get to the symbolic content. The vertical stem of a "d" the curve of an "r" holds no intrinsic importance to the reader. (But did you ever see a child, laboriously tracing out his letters, getting some of them backwards, covering an entire sheet of paper with large, unrelated letters in all colors and thicknesses? He hasn't made it over the hump yet. He still sees letters as geometrical shapes. Graphic artists have made use of such things...Robert Indiana, for instance. But, for reasons I'll get to, I can't see writers following suit.)

The symbol "red" gives rise in the mind to an idea of the sensation known as red. The actual sensation is not created. Try thinking of "red", then looking at something red. It isn't the same. Images triggered in the mind by words are memory images; bits and pieces of the reader's own past experience rearranged, with perhaps a dash of subconscious seasoning thrown in. To your average SF reader, is a Martian desert anything more than the sand of some familiar beach, colored like a decaying tin can and then stretched all the way to the end of Elm Street and then some? It is the fact that words are only echoes of previous experience which makes it so difficult to put across subjects such as cosmic consciousness or even ESP.

These shadow experiences are much hazier, much less convincing, much less intense than real experiences. A mosquito bite would distract most readers from a written account of a man dying with a spear in his back. Only during sleep, when outside sensations are largely shut out do mental images take on a strong semblance of reality. Many readers would argue that a piece of writing is most successful when it induces in the reader a state near to the dreaming state, in which outside reality is temporarily superseded by the artificial reality of the written word. It is a cliché to say that a novel was so good "I forgot I was reading" but I think it is something most readers have experienced. (No doubt some modern writers, like most modern painters, are trying to point, deliberately, to the artificiality of their work, rather than striving to imitate reality. This is a debatable topic also, but a different one.)

Having said all this, I think my objection to graphic writing like "In the Deadlands" becomes apparent. Used in any but the most sparing manner, the graphic content, which is a real sensory experience, completely overwhelms the weak mental images created by the written word. A large, unusually placed blank space can be like a crick in the neck, distracting the reader, destroying the fragile illusion of the story. Part of this problem lies in conditioning. As readers, we have been trained to ignore the color of the ink (especially if it's black). We might also learn to ignore the unsettling effects of the words arranged in a nonlinear manner.

A long space might be perceived, not as a long stretch of white paper, but as a pause. But in such a case we would have merely another means of punctuation, not a melding of graphics and language.

I think that the two, working at different levels of consciousness, are incompatible. For instance, at one point "In the Deadlands" the words:

is it somewhere
something
howls in defeat?

are isolated at the edge of a blank page, like so. What I perceive in reading, is this: Words, isolated at the edge of a white page. The paper

is thin, there is some showthrough from the preceding page. The number 232 is at the bottom of the white space. To the left of the grouping of words is a tiny unprocessed chunk of wood. The page curves inward toward the center of the book, partially obscuring the ends of "defeat" and "somewhere." These and many more, are all actual sensory experiences. I could read the words alone, in which case they would give rise to a certain mental image, but as it is, their symbolic content is obliterated by the unfamiliar sensory data. Throughout the story, the words tend to remain, for me at least, just words. The experience is interesting, it is different and far from being useless, but it is not, for me, a successful fusion of words with graphics.

Each page presents a new and therefore disturbing visual experience. Normally we are able to ignore the graphic content of the printed word, because that content has been conventionalized. It sometimes takes awhile to get into a book. At first we are quite aware that we are reading, not experiencing; that we are only looking at black shapes, arranged in lines on rectangular white pages. But if, as we continue, the type continues to be black and linear, we begin to forget about these aspects; the mind becomes accustomed or bored with this data and ignores it. We forget that we are reading. Chapter divisions jar us out of this state to a degree, as do paragraphs to a much lesser degree. But when, with ever turn of the page, we are confronted with a new graphic design, a new set of sensory data, we are never able to focus on the symbolic content of the words. It is constantly being overpowered. And I believe that this defeats the main purpose of writing. (In fact, I think that the major sensation created by "In the Deadlands" is a certain tension caused, not by a marriage of words and graphics, but by the frustration of struggling with words arranged in an unmanageable form. An interesting effect in itself.

If the story is successful at all, I feel it is at the end, where a fairly close visual correspondence between the pages (the vertical columns of the word "run" down the side of the page) allows the mind time to become accustomed to the form, perhaps to assimilate it, reducing the glare, allowing the symbolic content of the words to shine through.

Graphics doubtless works to make an environment for words. Good layout facilitates reading, bad layout hampers it. But graphics and writing are two different things. Mix them at your own risk, I'd say.

LAURINE WHITE 5408 Leader Ave., Sacramento CA 95841

Why did you do that to PREHENSILE? It doesn't look, feel, or smell the same. I liked the amateur look of the previous issues. At least you could have waited until issue 15.

((On the other hand, I was lucky to get out of the barn before it came down on me. Right after TORCON I came back and not only was my usual place for buying paper out of all varieties of mimeo paper I used for PRE, but my mimeo itself had contracted some fatal disease and wasn't even up to repro-ing APA L zines. If the format seems less fannish, sorry, but this way I spend about half as much time putting it out. And in this issue I think you will see that it is a substantial improvement.))

The mushrooms on the cover looked all right, as did the background. But it was not a good idea to use shading on the girl. The underside of her breast looks like Nixon's jaw. Her right eye looks freaky. Was it really done by Grant Canfield?

Your editorial was far too short. Next time throw a little controversy

in. I didn't enjoy the sercon article by Cy Chauvin. The definition "sf is what you say it is" is as good as any. The articles by Jerry Pournelle and Ken Faig were really good. Stan Burns' reviews still impress me. All the Shull cartoons were nice. Will you ever put the heading on the left side of the page if the article or letter column begins there?

I liked PREHENSILE the way it was with the long editorials and the weird table of contents. What did you do with all the zine's personality-- put it into ORGANLEGER?

EXCERPZ



GREGG CALKINS: Beautiful issue! The Shull art is outstanding. Canfield very close behind, and the years have evidenced what I think of Rotsler by the appearances he has made in my fanzine, my FAPAazine, and the FAPA O-O. The format is gorgeous (you knew that) and the whole thing is one of the most attractive fanzines I have ever seen...

ROBERT SILVERBERG: I think you misread the ironic ending of FEAST OF ST. DIONYSUS, but no matter: I thoroughly enjoyed PREHENSILE 10...

DENIS QUANE: I haven't read TO DIE IN ITALBAR, so I don't know how accurate and perceptive Stan Burns' review of it is. This, and the other reviews I've seen, don't exactly encourage me to read it, although I generally like Zelazny's stuff. However, one point that Burns makes deserves comment: "And none of them do anything. Except off stage --which has to be the surest mark of hack writing I can think of." It's too bad Sophocles never heard of this critical dictum -- but then I suppose that

OEDIPUS REX was only written to please the Athenian groundlings, and carry off the prize in the voting -- whereas if he had really been trying...

This is the second review I've come across this week in fanzines where the reviewer accuses the author of hackwork. OK -- I know there are hacks, and some writers deliberately slant their work to meet the requirements of a market. Where the market is less demanding they put in less care and effort in their writing.

But -- if a writer has a record of generally meritorious work is it necessary to assume that if his latest work is not up to his usual standards, then he must necessarily have sold out, to have deliberately produced hackwork. Don't writers ever have bad days? Might not an idea, which looked promising at first, not work out as well as expected? Can't fanreviewers be charitable? By this I don't mean that they shouldn't

point out the defects of a book-- but the motives of the author are another story. It's just as reprehensible to assume that the members of the LAConcom are necessarily thieves.

((Attributing unsupported motives to a writer is not a reasonable way to review a book I agree. But the legend of Zelazny turning out novels under pressure of contract in two or three weeks is probably more than legend and reviewers who recall what Zelazny has done when he was interested in well-crafted storytelling tend to become short-tempered when he turns in lesser work.))

DICK GEIS: You'll get all kinds of feedback that the "new" PRE isn't any good and has lost its flavor and is too "cold" and ... They'll be right, of course. You skimped on putting Mike Glycer in the issue and it became just another fanzine. It's YOU I want to see permeate PRE, not Cy Chauvin. (And his was a bad, ho-hum article I've seen umpty-ump times before since 1953...and badly writ to boot.)

So -- ten pages of editorial, Mike. Nothing less. Stay in photo-offset if you can afford it.

Funny -- Grant Canfield is such a fine cartoonist, but his "straight" drawing is clumsy and amateurish -- unless that cover was done ten years ago when he was 12 or 13.

What, no trimmed edges?

BARRY GILLIAM: There is little I can say about Bill Warren's column except that our tastes don't seem to agree too often. When Bruce Gillespie was at my house recently, we went to see a double bill of The Last American Hero and The Legend of Hell House. I thought the first very good and the second dreadful. Bruce thought the first very good and the second splendid. Ah well.

KEN OZANNE: I thoroughly enjoyed the "Old Fanzine Dealer's Guide" in this. Being something of a collector myself, it hit a little close to the bone at times. But this is the best article I have seen in PRE and obviously the thing for Baloney to tout up when selling this sometime in the future. Congratulations to Ken Faig.

DON KELLER: ...It's nice to see Cy Chauvin's article in print: though I don't agree with him 100%, I still have to say that it's one of the most important critical statements on science fiction we've had recently, right up there with Panshin.

I saw Hawkwind's first concert appearance in America recently, and I was not impressed. Wadhwa says it about them so well I needn't. I dozed off during several of their numbers. Also appropos is that Philly is a great place to get records, and one store in particular has a great import section. They have this whole stack of German records, including several albums each by the Can, Tangerine Dream and Amon Duul II, whom he mentions, plus others like Nektar he doesn't. If any readers want any, they can inquire of me; they run about \$6 apiece. ((401 Quince St., Philadelphia PA))

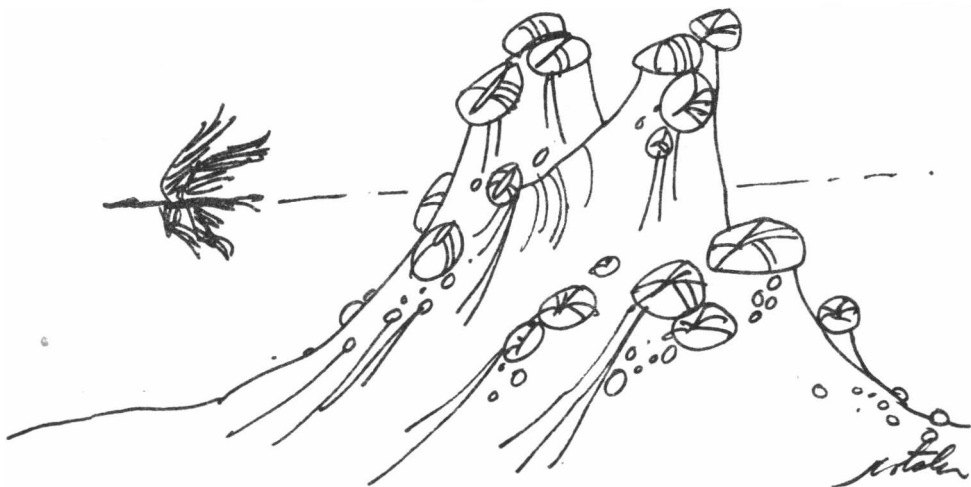
DARRELL SCHWEITZER: Anyway... Ken Faig's thing is badly written and overdone. It could have made its point far better by giving a few facts, the kind of facts that Ken should know. A quick glance through a Roy Squires catalog will tell you more than this dreadfully long article. There you'll see issues of LEAVES going for \$80 a copy, THE ACOLYTE for nearly as much, etc.... ((Methinks you missed the point))

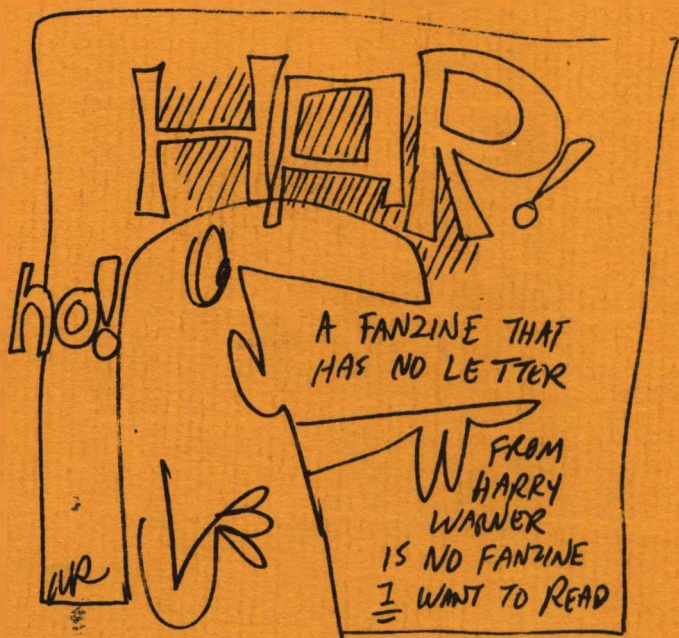
LEIGH EDMONDS: Apart from wishing that Jerry Pournelle would talk a few SFWA members into coming to Australia to reside -- they'd liven up the place a bit -- I don't have any comments to make...Sitting around last Saturday working out things for the AUSSIECON it did in fact seem a bit strange when we got around to talking about money and attendance. Already the AUSSIECON bank book has more money in it than any other fannish bank book in Australia ever had, and as for number, 500 is a truly staggering number even if most of them won't be attending. Listening to Rusty Hevelin, Milt Stevens Ted White and all the rest ((via

tape of Torcon)) talking about what should be done with Worldcons seemed almost irrelevant -- when 1975 finally arrives I think we should perhaps hang a big banner outside the Southern Cross saying "Welcome to the last of the Little WorldCons." That sign will have to be in American English and in Australian English (or Strine). We'll have a sign that says "Welcome to the BIG Convention."

ERIC LINDSAY: Your editorials get better and better -- more conceited, too, but in a fan that is no fault rather an advantage. ((Whatever you say, Eric.))

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: John Paul, Michael Carlson, Donn Brazier, Doug Leingang, Ken Gammage, Jr., Mike Smith, Rebecca Lesses, Bruce Townley, Tom Roberts, Cy Chauvin, Warren & Mary Causey, Perry Chapdelaine, Mike Gorra, Lou Stathis, Steve Simmons, Bi Cagle, and that good old APA H gang down on the Arizona chain gang.





HAR!

ho!

A FANZINE THAT
HAS NO LETTER

FROM
HARRY
WARNER
IS NO FANZINE
I WANT TO READ