PREHENSILE 14

Terry
Carr
Robert
Silverberg
plus Interview
w/**Bradbury**;
Articles on AE
van Vogt, George
RR Martin

PREHENSILE FOURTEEN MAY 1975 ONE DOLLAR

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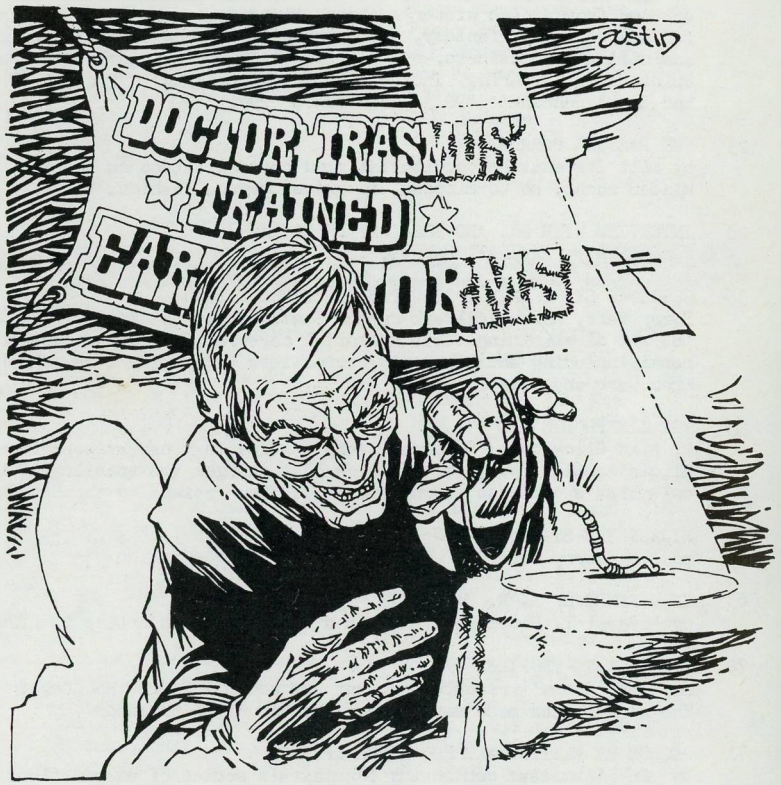
MAY **PREHENSILE 14** 1975

PREHENSILE 14 is the May 1975 installment of the quasi-quarterly science fiction fanzine coedited by Mike Glyer (c/o Dept. of Popular Culture, BGSU, Bowling Green OH 43403) and Milton F. Stevens (14535 Saticoy #105, Van Nuys CA 91405). It is available through subscriptions at a dollar an issue (money goes to Stevens, please), for dontributions of art and words, letters of comment, and in trade to both editors.(Send editorial material to Glyer, por favor.)

MIKE GLYER



REPREHENSIBLE

●

Nobody gwine have to be a slave all the time any more --
we gwine take turns -- and guess whose turn it is now!
-- EVERYTHING YOU KNOW IS WRONG
The Firesign Theater

1. TRUE CONFESSIONS OF THE POPULAR CULTURE INSTRUCTOR When fear strikes the masses huddle. All hands were present, huddling, in the Popular Culture department's "lounge" as 3PM approached. Ever quick to reach for the cosmic hindsight, I might say we felt the turning of the wheel: after 17 years in the student audience our roles were climactically reversed.

The earth shook, and to steady myself I reached out to grab the hem of some second-year grad's garment. "What are you doing in class today, Dave?" Dave Feldman and Chris Geist are already in the middle of their second year, with several quarters of 160 teaching under their belts.

"Playing a game," Feldman explained to me, then everyone else in turn as fragments of successive explanations penetrated the stunned minds of the first-timers.

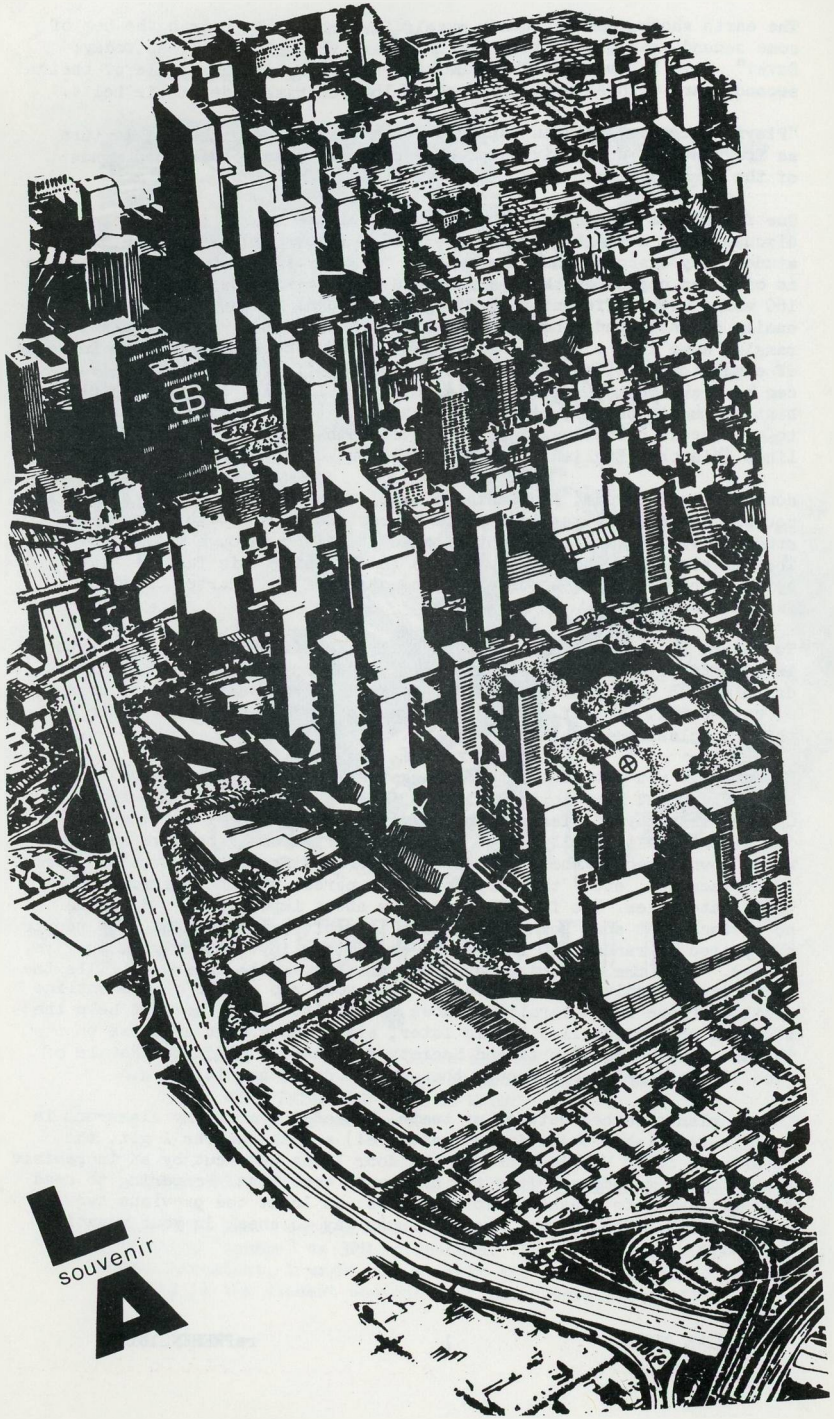
One feature of the introductory popular culture course is that general discussion is not only allowed but avidly encouraged. With time, the student may discover that his opinion or analysis of some cultural event is often as cogent as the instructor's. A freshman-oriented course like 160 works with different viewpoints on cultural products, beginning with easily demonstrated concepts like icons, stereotypes, and formulas, then ranging away into a variety of subject matter whose main purpose in terms of education is either (1) showing how many different methodologies can be drawn on to explore popular culture; litcrit, anthro, sociology, history, media theory, psychology, etc., or (2) requiring the students to cut across normative lines, not just think along departmentalized lines (history, English, science) but about culture.

However, lest anyone, for instance myself, wax missionaresque about the course, there's always final exams to restore perspective. Interested students will do well, students looking to slide through will screw off. They'll also bomb the course.(Delays in finishing this fanzine have not only permitted me to describe the start of the quarter, but the finish, as well!)

To return to fun and games, if you will...The first day of the quarter is essentially shot: rosters are only part-completed due to unfinished dropping and adding of courses, students must readjust to a new array of coursework. But if nothing else one can immediately contribute something to classroom ambiance.

Essentially you get people to mix together. They get accustomed to each other, and have an initial experience talking before the group. On the first day of class, with everything an informational vacuum, the experience is really good. Feldman's variation is to have everyone write down seven of their favorite things(reading matter, tv show, hero food, vacation, etc.) then try to find a person who matches four of their categories. The fact is that it's about impossible to do poses no obstacle. At some point the mixing is arbitrarily stopped, the people are paired at random to "interview" each other in terms of what they've listed. Then the pairs introduce one another to the class. It fills the first day effectively, and lets you save your rap on the course outline until everyone who's enrolling shows up.(Admittedly it doesn't help the students who do enroll a little later, but if they want a course on TA games, we've got Sports and Society for that; a different kettle of fish.)(That joke's so ingroup, that even I don't get it...)

Lesson plan clenched between my teeth, I headed over to my classroom in a light rain (aha! objective correlative!) and the nearer I got, the uneasier I felt. Walking through the door I was undercut by an incredible sensation of nakedness. It's the nightmare come true. Preparing to read the roll, my life flashed before my eyes; at least the previous two weeks' worth. (Yah, Glyer, what a clumsy way to sneak in your vacation narrative.)



2. KUNG PLERGB FIGHTING (Those Fans Were Fast As Shortening)

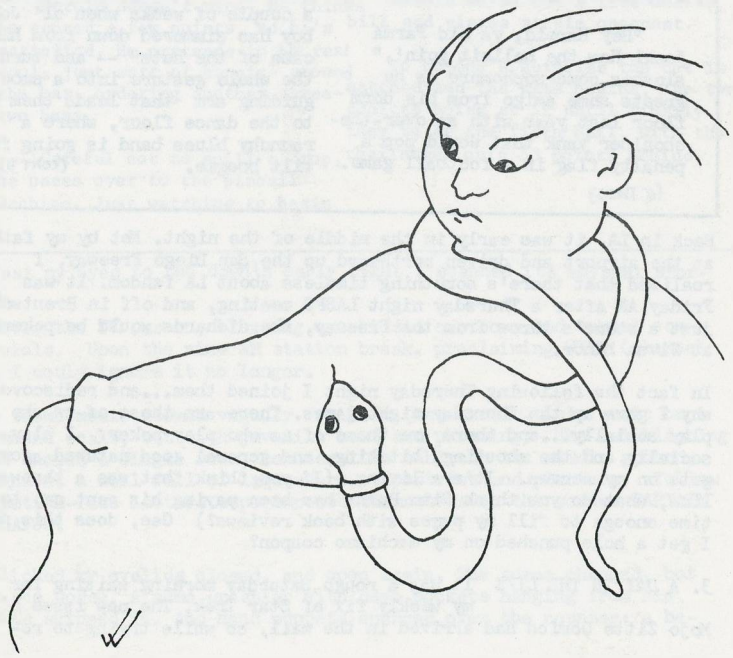
Throughout northeastern Ohio/southwestern Michigan: snow, and temperatures that had only rarely exceeded 35 degrees since Thanksgiving.

Yet snow and ice gradually withered away, eroded by halite, shoved around by plow and spade, betrayed by slightly-above-freezing temperatures, haggard without reinforcements.

At the end of finals week, fall quarter, concluding a series of all-nighters to finish off term papers, I played my last round of pinball at Some Other Place, at the navel of the universe, Main and Wooster. Minutes later, having tried on a Datsun 2000 for size with a suitcase in back and friend Deb Hammer-Johnson's husband Roger to drive, I set out to board the 10:10 flight to Los Angeles from Detroit.

The whole world looks the same from inside an airport, though the whole world doesn't always have snow and ice piled around its runways. Nor a Ford Granada parked in the boarding lounge, as in Dallas/Ft. Worth. Yet these transient visions among miles of red nylon carpeting, plate glass windows taller than two men that run the length of the terminal, beige acoustical tiling, and Musak, that Bauhaus of the mind; what difference do they make? People: all refugees on the move towards boarding or baggage, employees posed stationary, accentless and predictable as the architecture.

Airports resemble each other, not the communities they serve, to paraphrase Pastier. In the middle of the Dallas/Ft. Worth night I waited between flights one entire hour without hearing a single Southern twang.



C Ron Kimberling

Frenzy

BG NEWS JAN 14 1975

Frenzy is a symptomatic manifestation of a feeling of oppression.

People in Bowling Green are frenzied.

People in Bowling Green feel oppressed.

It's that simple.

Take a look around you some time and observe the tempo of things to get an idea of what I mean.

Beer bars on Main Street on a Thursday night. Crowded to over flowing with fast-moving, jerking, kinetic, frenetic, jive-jumpin' hot potatoes.

"Hey Harold, ya old Parma jock! How the hellzit goin'," sloshes some sophomore as he greets some amigo from his dorm floor last year with an over-the-shoulder yank that would pop a penalty flag in a football game.

"Ah, yeah. How's life treatin' ya, man," says Harold of the roving eye and forgetful memory, substituting a universally acceptable form of address as he tries to think what the hell this guy's name is. "Lessee, now, he lived in that room down the hall with that weird kid with all the zits, hmmmmm."

The problem is solved as Harold spots his roommate's ex-girlfriend and skips over beer puddles to check out what sort of classes she's got this quarter and what sort of dumb jackasses she's got for professors.

So he weakly slaps some skin, toodles on over to ol' Annie, deftly putting his arm around her shoulder, under her mane of long hair, and just where the tip of his middle finger can playfully tickle her ear -- "After all," he muses, "this little set-up might lead to something interesting in a couple of weeks when ol' Johnboy has simmered down from his case of the hots" -- and turns the whole gesture into a smooth guiding arm that leads them both to the dance floor, where a raunchy blues band is going full-tilt boogie. (CONT'D)

"Oh yeah," thinks Harold's inner vibrations, moving in a gravel-throated imitation of Johnny Winter, who does a baad white imitation of a black man, feet doing little sidewalk shuffles as he leads Annie to the floor.

"Oh Sheee-sus," moans Annie, "what a creep to meet at this place." The ear tickle felt all right, but three months seeing Harold around John's room had set her pretty straight that thi guy was just into beer-drinking bravado.

They dance as if their bodies were rocker arms, moving up and down and sideways in a cosmic imitation of something grossly mechanical.

Afterward Annie flags down the first friend in sight and makes some quick excuses that send them both on a quick hegira to the head.

Harold doesn't mind, He thinks he scored a few points, so he's satisfied. He pretends to be real cool, just sort of hangin' around the bar, ordering another three-two beer.

Careful not to spill a drop, he paces over to the pinball machine. Just watching to begin with, bragging each time some lucky sucker would slaughter his opponent by three or four hundred points that he'd done a hell of a lot better on nights that, yeah he wasn't even trying -- not even givin' it an ounce of thought, mind you -- Harold finally weasles into a game with the evening's champion.

The bets start at a quarter a round, and Harold and the champ seem evenly matched, though the glow of four beers -- a fifth one on the way -- makes red-foreheaded Harold play with a certain frenzy, a hunched-over, toe-standing, button-pushing fascination with the lights and the skittering ball and the whirr-clickzing of points being racked up.

The beers come and merge into a liquid churn in the gut, and suddenly it's closing time, and everyone's chug-a-lugging their last drink for the night.

Harold whips out a five dollar bill and glares at his opponent.

To no-one's surprise the bet is matched and the game begins, the two addicts going at it until finally they're at the fifth ball, with the challenger only 53 points behind.

(CONT'D)

Back in LA, it was early in the middle of the night. Met by my father at the airport and driven northward up the San Diego Freeway, I realized that there's something timeless about LA fandom. It was Friday AM after a Thursday night LASFS meeting, and off in Brentwood just a stone's throw from the freeway, the diehards would be pokering at Niven Manor.

In fact the following Thursday night I joined them...and rediscovered why I gave up the Thursday night games. There are those of us who play socially...and there are those of us who play poker. I play socially and the shouting, bitching, and general good natured agony gets on my nerves. It's a living. (If you think that was a throwaway line, what do you think Stan Burns has been paying his rent on, to get time enough to fill my pages with book reviews?) Gee, does this mean I get a hole punched on my machismo coupon?

3. A DAY IN THE LIFE It was a rough Saturday morning waiting for my weekly fix of Star Trek. The new issue of Mojo Zitto Comics had arrived in the mail, so while trying to readjust my eyes to the dawn's early light I scanned its abysmal stories.

However the TV was on, bleating out kiddie cartoons and cereal commercials. Upon the nine AM station break, proclaiming WIMP (channel 3), I could ignore it no longer.

The theme music seemed vaguely familiar, but exotic. Lute music on a harmonic scale, but with juvenile beat and phrasing. The establishing shot showed a single room, counter-like table in the middle ground, behind it a wall full of laquerware, tapestries and planters. Yellow chopstick-face letters superimposed themselves on the scene: CAPTAIN KUNGAFOO.

I flicked my eyelids closed, and open again. The scene changed, but for the worse. A sumo wrestler with deep pockets hanging from his shorts skipped in. And hand puppets emerged over the counter: a be-

"Smooooth," thinks Harold, as he just tipples the steel ball, so it passes through the middle section on its first swoop, lighting up all the bonus points -- but wait a minute.

The ball is coming straight down the middle, through the path where it could easily shoot right through the little bap-paddles and...

Harold does it. He TILTS the machine, overreacting to a curving ball by punching the right paddle button with too much force.

"Damn you, DAMN YOU!" he shouts, pounding his fist again and again on the plexiglass top as the champ picks up his fiver and slinks out.

Two good buddies appear from nowhere, put half-nelsons on Harold before he can do any real damage, and hustle him out of the place.

Annie sits in a dark corner and shakes her head silently. "I knew this would happen," she silently mutters.

Harold had told her earlier that he'd flunked the English proficiency exam and that he'd been assigned by the computer to a real hard-ass instructor for his second try at English 111.

(END)

SCOTT JOHNSON

BG AS HORRORSHOW

- My roommate and I are watching TV (the early show "You Dirty Rat") and the supergiant of a rat was tearing down the arch in St. Louis.

- A piece of the arch hit my tv screen and broke the glass.

- All of a sudden the rat breaks through the glass and comes out of the tv.

- My roommate and I leave the room screaming, but everyone else in the dorm just laughs.

- The rat chases us and everyone else sees him.

- Now everyone runs out of the building screaming for help.

- The campus cops just drive on by, ignoring the scene.

- We all pile in my friend's car and squeal off as the rat just misses us with a futile leap.

- We head toward the police station as the rat begins tossing cars around the faculty parking lot.

- Everyone is dodging the cars and screaming.

- We tell the story to the police

- The police grab their guns and head towards Harshman (dorm).

- The rat meets them at the library.

- The police set up a road block and start shooting.

- The rat just swallows the bullets and keeps coming toward the cars.

- The police head for the hills and radio for help.

- The National Guard is alerted.

- In only a matter of hours, tank begin rolling on campus.

- George C. Scott is commanding.

- A road block is set up in front of the administration building.

- The National Guard orders the rat to stop.

- He doesn't and they open fire.

- Their bullets miss the rat but hit several students.

- The rat sneaks behind the administration building and rips up the fountains.

- He grabs a meter maid as she is ticketing a snowplow, and climbs to the top of the building.

- The air force is called in, but they cannot bomb the campus or the building.

- Dr. William Jackson (BG*s rat expert) is called in.

- He is given a bullhorn, and tries to talk the rat down.

- Cafeteria food is placed on a ladder going from the ground to the top of the building in an attempt to trick the rat into coming down.

- The rat eats, but experiences no effect since he has built up a resistence to poison.

- He continues to spray the campus with the fountains.

- The meter maid tries to give him a ticket for disturbing the peace, but he eats it.

- She screams for help, but nobody cares about her.

- Loudspeakers are set up and the song "Ben" is played and the rat is emotionally moved and almost comes down, but the record sticks and he knows it is a trick.

- Out of the building comes President Hollis Moore with sleep still in his eyes.

- The rat squirts Hollis.

- Hollis is so mad (he mistakes the fountain for a fire extinguisher) that he climbs toithe top of the building.

- He sneaks behind the rat and pushes him off, killing him.

- "Let this be an example to anyone who breaks any of my fire safety policies!" he screams.

- THE END

spectacled rabbit in black pajamas, whose long ears poked through holes in a wide, shallow straw hat with no brim, broke boards with its fuzzy paws which a larger creature, perhaps a water buffalo, steadied with its snout. The music faded and they cut to a commercial.

Fortunately, Dave Feldman, also in LA for the break, chose that moment to phone. I pulled myself away from the bizarre spectacle...

4. DUELING HAMBURGERS Of the fans I've met, none are more dedicated omnivores than the fans in New York.

When it comes to a single food, though, non-fans in Los Angeles compose a cult following for the hamburger whose dedication may go unrivalled. It's a sectarian conflict fueled by soft-core porno magazines, carried on oblivious to the rest of burger-eating mankind.

Somehow it came to be a given that: the best hamburgers in the world are made in LA. Now the only question remains, who in LA makes the world's best hamburger?

Price, naturally, is no object. (Sez who?) Dave Feldman invited me to join in an ecumenical gesture, and undertake a pilgrimage to his ground-beef Mecca, Cassel's. Feldman, by the way, co-founded the Penguin Party which ran Wolfman Jack for governor of California. We had our chance, and Reagan won anyway....

I almost copped out walking through Cassel's door. Fighting a cold, as I was, with Dristan is all right as long as I don't try it on an empty stomach. About that time the pill revved up, and I almost flashed on the floor. Managed to talk myself out of that: imagine how insulted the owner would be? And Cassell's is an owner-controlled establishment.

"Alvin Cassell has been grinding burgers every weekday for the past 25 years," says one of the offset magazine handouts stacked on a table in the back of the establishment. "For $2.10 one gets the freshly ground burger, yes, and a truly dazzling array of garnishes, all you can eat and all of them tempting, from homemade potato salad made with his own fresh mayonnaise and sparked with a hint of hot mustard to the endless buffet of dressings and relishes. There's cottage cheese, canned (and on occasion,)fresh fruit, potato chips." The service is cafeteria style. Before I forget, permit me to say its address: 3300 West 6th Street.

I'd always been partial to that taste threat, Tommy's, the chiliburger experiencing its highest moment. The ambiance of the Original Tommy's, at Beverly and Ramparts (up the block from Ramparts Divison police station, if that tells you anything about the neighborhood) is ghetto chic, the clientele a complete cross-section of Angelenos. Bruce Townley delievered my review of its bastard relation, Tommy's No. 2, to CREEM magazine last year or so; the food's probably the same, but the adventure is missing.

After the burgers we visited the local pinball parlors. Bowling Green in midwinter offers only one participant sport: pinball. There the local hotshits have declared that a pinball machine offering free games is gambling. Hence when you plunk in your quarter, you get two plays, and that's glory. But in the sovereign state of California, Eureka boyos! Three plays for a quarter and free games out the kazoo as long as you score those points. At the Westwood Arcade we found an unusually pliant machine and racked it for at least two dozen freebies. And who said playing pinpong with an iron paddle didn't improve your game?

5. THE WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR Whose fiction is easier to review? That by the writer you know, or the one you don't?

The question was posed at the LASFS Gift Exchange during a lively session of "Let's see who can con Glyer out of his review copy of THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE!" In answering it I think we'll discover one of several major reasons why fandom has produced pathetically few quality reviewers. One reason is that, as a whole, would-be reviewers don't practice often enough, or write well enough, to carry off sound analysis. Another reason, too few of them have a sufficiently broad acquaintance with literature to put the sf they read in perspective; indeed, too often they don't even have a very wide knowledge of the genre, let alone other kinds of fiction. The irony of the situation is self-evident: in LASFS alone I can name two dozen fans better read than I: none of them do reviewing. (None of them even discuss sf if they can help it!) It's not a general shortcoming

of fans, but, oddly or not, of sercon fans and neo reviewers. A third reason, the egoboo for reviewing sf in fandom only comes from the fringes if at all -- that is, five hundred readers of LOCUS might like your review, if you place one there, but these people you never meet, rarely hear from, and they are not the fans you are constantly in touch with whose egoboo is faster-acting and more potent. Among actifans, the reviewers who stick with it must find the act itself satisfying: that and the free books. And perhaps one other "reward."

I doubt that Robert Kirsch, the LA TIMES' reviewer, lives for the opportunity to meet the author of the latest best-selling exercise book, and faunches to discuss plot intricacies with a softcore pornographer whose tome is going into its eighth printing in twelve weeks.

But fans enter fandom because of the authors they've read (though fans stay for other reasons): people who, for the most part, create neither exercise books nor softcore pornography. (Hardcore, yes, but Alter is another matter entirely...) Conventions provide the most common social ground for fans to meet writers, and it soon becomes evident to the fan who has overcome initial shyness that the average sf writer most loves the fan who has discerned (and appreciated) "what I was really trying to do with that story," and hates most the kind of fan who says, "Say, didn't Robert Heinlein write the same kind of story back in 1948?" -- especially when the fan says it to any writer who isn't Robert Heinlein.

For those fans who stay close to the literature -- like fan reviewers do -- the chance to discuss it firsthand with the writer is an especially relished experience.

Hence the fourth distraction in fan reviewing. The really good reviewers (perhaps ten fanwriters of 1974, perhaps less) still got here as fans, ad want to remain fans, not detached consciousnesses hovering unrecognized at the fringe of the genre. The experienced fan reviewer winds up juggling a love of sf with personal reactions and literary values (such as he owns). The more writers they know and like, the greater the inclination to be careful and polite. Selling out to improve one's social life is something of the point here, though I don't mean the only ones who kept integrity did so with rude gestures and abusive reviews. Neither Geis nor Delap seem to have any balls missing from their typewriters, nor do they seem to be running through the pages of fanzines with bloodied axes.

Don't require me to get specific immediately. What I'm discussing are the 'hazards' of fanreviewing, and the shape of future PREHENSILE book reviews. It's considerably easier to mind your integrity after you've decided what in hell it is you're trying to do in the first place, as Geis and Delap have. (Or as another reviewer I know has, except he decided he'd rather keep on playing poker than review certain authors' new work.)

The fan "critic", realistically speaking, serves neither as a buyers' guide, nor as a backdoor academician schooling writers in how to smooth their rough edges. In fact, asking why publish reviews at all (as some faneditors did during SFR's 1969-70 heyday) caused their disappearance from most fanzines. Nobody liked the answers they came up with.

Fan reviewing seems to have served as apprenticeship for neofanwriters -- any writing practice is useful, and one could break into, say, SOTWJ with a lower level of competency writing reviews than one could break into TITLE, RANDOM, or OUTWORLDS for that matter writing snappy letters of comment, and personal essays.

Given the current state of affairs I'd guess the three main justifications for fanzines publishing reviews are (1) Who else reviews sf? (2) The reviews indirectly reveal more about the personalities of the fans writing them. (3) Reviews may point out books which interest us, that we might have failed to pick out from the unlimited offerings. A fourth justification -- we generally like to read anything well-written that has some relationship to sf or fandom -- is one I wish applied more often than it actually does.

The current SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (nee THE ALIEN CRITIC nee RICHARD E GEIS nee SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW nee PSYCHOTIC ad infinitum) describes how Dick Lupoff's review of the sf novel written by Asimov's wife was bounced from the two biggest fanzines LOCUS and ALGOL. Leaving Porter to fend for himself (any time Lupoff wants to write a review for PRE, he can name his subject as far as I'm concerned, but Geis beat me to it), the Browns have long said LOCUS' policy was against publishing "killer" reviews. Not only that, but with their limited space they prefer to offer extended reviews only of books people ought to take an interest in -- number three above, in a way. So over all one might rap the Browns' knuckles for self-serving if one really pushed the argument -- but in this specific case, that's horsehit.

Geis simply has taken his opportunity to get off a cheap shot at the competition and polish his own brassard. That's self-evident -- accusing them of "self-censorship" and making other scalded-Liberal sounds. You read the Lupoff review, and it's plainly disingenuous, a sophisticated version of the mocking, condescending reviews Stan Burns revels in. It's abusive, and that alone justifies its being bounced -- as long as an editor is making a point of good taste. More than that it's long-windedly abusive, which Burns has educated himself away from being. (Whoops, you kiss those Lupoff reviews goodbye now, Glyer!) Come to think of it I don't recall ever reading a Lupoff review quite like it before; maybe they got censored too, but the usual Lupoff review is reportorial, not cunning. However, this one like the others includes snippets of anecdote and phrase-making enough to qualify as entertainment, the kind of informed subjectivism I enjoy in Lupoff (or even Burns, for that matter.) I would publish it for that much: Geis did publish it; but I wouldn't throw crap at other people who declined, because they've got a case too, and maybe a better one.

David Gerrold wrote to TAC last year quoting a scrap of philosophy: "'The purpose of a review is to answer three questions: "What was the author trying to do? How well did he do it? Was it worth doing in the first place?" Anything else isn't reviewing, it's ego-strutting.'" That latter part pretends reviewing is some scientific calling in which the personality is uninvolved. The speaker almost had me sold until he slipped in the sermon.

In fact accepting advice from Gerrold on reviewing, since he does little if any, takes on a kind of crazy aura because it's a reverse example of a statement he made later in the same letter; one I agree with, for it strikes close to home. "Almost every fan who has ever tried to become a writer has at one point or another said to himself (or more likely aloud at a convention) 'I can do that. And better.' When he attempts it, though, that's when he finds out how hard it is -- and the result is a more grudging respect for other writers. (Haven't you noticed that authors always have far more respect for other authors -- even if they can't stand their works -- than fans do in

the same situations?)" Well, almost -- but lest we forget there's always Lupoff's review of the Jeppson book.

If nothing more, I discovered the sensation of ego-involvement with a created product. (More on this in another section.)

By the way, neither the author you know nor the author you don't know is easiest to criticize. Just in case you were still wondering.

I do follow a selected handful of sf writers not only for their work but for their personalities, to watch for any relationship between the two. March 20-22 was the national Popular Culture Association convention, in St. Louis. I did a paper for it on Spinrad's novels; it was a failure -- not at the presentation, there seemed an unexpected number of nodding heads in an audience for "Contemporary Fiction" (they neglected to schedule me in with other sf papers) -- but it never got to the roots of the questions it raised. Like all the sercon stuff I write these days it was not written for its own sake but as a vehicle to work out some lines of thought I felt necessary to pursue.

With this paper those lines varied from the presumptuous personal (why does a master of the sf short story write such blatantly preachy novels?) to the cosmic theoretical (what is the basis of "literary sf", which Spinrad writes more or less).

The paper didn't successfully answer either question. For the personal side I wanted to dig up anything Spinrad might have written for the LA Free Press or the Village Voice. After six hours poring over four years' of microfilm and file copies I failed to find a single example. But rereading the late 60s undergrounds and their manic tabloid mentality confirmed them as an influence on Spinrad's novels; at least to my mind. His left-of-disillusionment political consciousness was self-described, back in Spring '73 when he spoke to a USC experimental studies sf course. At the time it also bothered me that the articulateness and intelligence he demonstrated talking politics has never really been equalled in his fiction.

For the literary sf side I was trying to handle a question with insufficient tools. The constellation of questions formed a daisy chain of confusion, mixed metaphor fans.

SF is a commercial genre based on mass appeal.
SF as literature is recently pluralistic: with traditional genre sf and "literary sf".
Does literary SF hold its own, in terms of sales and audience?
Or does the readership simply get sucked into buying literary sf because of the genre label?
Why do passing references to elite literature abound in fiction suppoedly aimed at a mass audience?
Are various sf writers demonstrating their literary manhood or is this really part of the story?
Am I a cretin for having to ask?
I'm told "Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones" shows influence from the works of Swinburne -- it also won a Hugo.
Is our usual conception of sf's readership ignoring a real, sizeable segment well-versed in English literature? Or is all this stuff going over everyone's heads the same way it does mine?

Spinrad writes "literary sf" but his novels are distinctly different from those of Disch, LeGuin, Russ, and the others. One reason is that

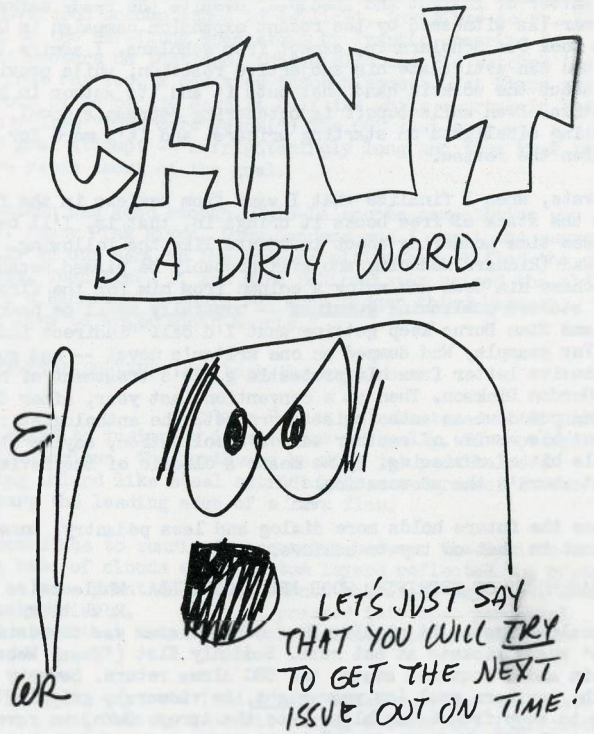
his imagery's drawn mainly from contemporary popular sources, and another is that his non-popular imagery is used in such a repetitive fashion (especially in BUG JACK BARRON and THE IRON DREAM) that it becomes as much an icon as the pop icons also used.

Two hours after I'd finished doing my paper Thomas Zaniello (Northern Ky. St. Univ.) was over in one of the SF panels doing a commentary on literary sf generally -- wish I'd heard that before I tried to write mine, because mine could have been a third shorter, made more sense, and saved Susan Cornillon her latest apoplectic fit. Which is another story. I can't recall his statements with sufficient precision to risk outlining them. What I really want is to capture his panel notes to publish here.

The remarks by George Warren, also in the current SFR (if that ain't deja vu), were essentially the direction I was headed. "There is much talk of Technique among the self-styled New Wave these days. I remember somebody who ought to know better using the phrase 'the full range of modern fiction techniques' to describe the chosen pallette of a prominent New Waver. Pooh. There are no new techniques. There is just the age old conflict between Euphuism ("Look at me! Ain't I clever?") and Reporting (in which the writer gets the hell out of the way and lets the story do its thing.)" This Geis answers with "((Bullseye!))" I'd prefer to answer with Bull!-something-else. This paragraph answers all the questions I was pondering about, but it answers them with ideology, not information. And "self-styled New Wave" -- where has Wamen been? Even in the first flush of the "New Wave" writers protested that they weren't part of some homogenized movement sucking for respectability. The more I've thought on it, the more convinced I am that the New Wave was really an editors and publishers movement to reconcile new product to a changing market. Of course most of the stylistic bits introduced were leftovers from the 20s and 30s -- if you want to insist that various Joycean styles are leftovers, for instance. What has taken place is in the larger sense an attempt to make real that ideological lie "Writers can do anything in science fiction, which is freedom no other vehicle offers." Hell, people had been screwing in print in the detective genre sin ce at least the 40s, but John W. Campbell didn't feel his readership was prepared for the invention of sex until that McCaffrey story in February 1968.

Moreover, how can anyone take seriously the concept that good fiction is produced when the writer gets the hell out of the way and lets the story do its thing? Even Jackson Pollock's automatic writing produced canvases that one may view as intimate experiences -- what else can they be? But how the hell does a story, which the writer has to choose every word for, plot, style and edit until he's ready to send it out -- how can any story be conceived as one where "the writer got out of the way"? That's inane, and only can get serious consideration from readers whose brains are drenched in pulp ideology: that stories are commercial, reportial boxes of cereal, and ought never to be anything else.

Suffice it to say that I've been trying to revise my viewpoint on sf so that it does some justice to what is actually occurring, discarding all these ideological judgments on what sf must be (worst of which is that sf must be one thing to all readers -- I thought we outgrew that years ago), but still laboring along without the easy familiarity with English literature as a whole which would if nothing else let me recognize when the writer has attempted something other than the obvious elements of his story.



A literary sf story may still be lousy -- but for a change let's make that judgment on the way the writer tried and didn't make it, rather than that he dared. (Which incidentally opens up another line of speculation two writers once discussed. One said he'd sold a novel which in essence was a failed experiment. The other questioned the ethics of selling your failures, making the reader subsidize your experiments.)

I don't think that a certain limit on the awareness of the reviewer need cripple fan reviewing, if the reviewers are willing to refrain from sweeping judgements encompassing areas they misunderstood. Nowhere among the reasons for fan reviewing did I say that it explained the intricacies of arty stories to the unwashed.

Consider that film reviewing is not sheerly criticism; the Reeds, Kaels, etc. also function as entertainers -- their very writing styles would indicate it if their popularity did not. The concept of fan reviewing as entertainment hasn't gotten off the ground yet -- despite SFR's banking on it, as in the days when reviews by Walker and Delap would contribute to the acrimony in the lettercol.

I find myself divided. I don't want to continue publishing bland reviews which lack entertainment value. But I don't want them made entertaining by cleverly carving up writers with cute phrasing as some film critics butcher actors and directors. ("Sandy Denis has the expression of a fly trying to look stoic about having been trapped in

amber.") Abusive reviews of sf writers are really a case of fouling one's own nest. Entertainment in fan reviewing is less style and acid, more a matter of insight and anecdote, despite the ready market for the former (as witnessed by the recent expansion campaign in OUTWORLDS). I don't look for scholarship, except from scholars. I admire the reviewer who can articulate his subjective reaction, while providing information about the work in hand that puts it and its author in better perspective. Even while Lupoff is butchering Jeppson's novel, he adds interesting sidelights on starting writers, and it's more for that I'd have taken the review.

At any rate, when I finalize what I want from reviews in the fanzine, besides the stack of free books it brings in, that is, I'll be able to spend less time wondering about incidents like the following. The Mighty Wad (Richard Wadholm, who will probably be pissed because I didn't chase him down and wring a column from him for the first time since I started publishing genzines -- hopefully he'll be back next issue) and Stan Burns keep getting what I'd call "indirect indignation." For example, Wad dumped on one writer's novel -- and got a long, abusive letter from him protestin g Wad's treatment of his friend Gordon Dickson. Then at a convention last year, after Stan Burns had put down an anthologist's product, the anthologist reproached him about his review of another editor's collection, saying it was a miserable bit of reviewing. By no means a classic of the reviewer's art, yet where's the provocation?

One hopes the future holds more dialog and less pedantry, once we're consistent in what we try to achieve.

6. TROJAN HORSE OF PETRIFIED WOOD MEETS GODZILLA While pairs of Rose Bowl tickets were being scalped around LA at $50, Marc Schirmeister was disposing of his parents' spare tickets at cut rate. Suddenly Elst ("Noaah Webster") Weinstein and I acquired seats: the USC alums return. Seventy rows above the southern goal (on your right, tv viewers), gripping metal benches to keep from being blown into the Arroyo Seco, we raved and cursed until USC eked out its 18-17 win.

Though hyped as a Griffin-vs.-Davis show, the game settled down to a mere war when Davis went out with cracked ribs in the first half. I'd seen Davis play seven years without injury, and finally fate caught up with him in the ultimate showdown. (I was a year ahead of Davis at San Fernando High, where he almost, but not quite, led the Tigers to a City Championship his senior year. Coincidentally, the Friday I arrived in LA the Tigers met Feldman's alma mater, Palisades High and its Dolphins, and won the city football championship for 1974.)

Mistakes dominated all but the final minutes, as USC's determination to give away the football was matched only by OSU's insistence on giving it back. They traded touchdowns in the second half, giving Ohio State a momentary 14-10 advantage. Its Griffin-led offense continued to grind out yardage: but a tightening USC defense forced OSU to settle for an additional field goal.

A touchdown away from a tie, operating minus Davis and in the face of OSU cornerbacks who had chalked up two interceptions, the Trojans headed back up the field. Alan Carter, after four years in Davis" shadow, stumbled to daylight (it wasn't as if he'd been in Davis' shadow for no reason) enough times to set up a touchdown pass to the tight end. With only two-and-a-half minutes in the game, Coach McKay took his obvious last chance fo pull out a win. Haden passed in for a two-point conversion. Score 18-17.

This is what happened: as I found out when I got home and talked to my brother. The whole game was played on the other end of Pasadena, the TD and conversion accomplished in twilight, invisible to us. It was signalled to the far-flung spectators by frantic cheering from the SC student rooters on that end. (Where Elst and I'd watched the game in '73, from row two, a bad view through sunset. Pat Nixon and John Wayne drove by in parade cars at halftime while a drunk in the row behind us yelled "Four more years!") The OSU last gasp was a 58-yard field goal attempt -- a frighteningly long and true kick that died just five yards short of the goal.

Eighteen-seventeen was good enough. Ohio-LA sports competition was fierce in '74. Fuzzy Pink Niven, Drew Sanders and I spent the summer with Vin Scully in our ears as the Dodgers ultimately stifled the Cincinnati Reds. Then Elst, I, and Marc Schirmeister raised the old warcry "What's a Buckeye?" I could but echo Dodger third baseman Ron Cey's "We love to break their hearts."

7. TRANSCONTINENTAL SCHLEPP And back the way I came.

Exiting Dallas we re-entered utter darkness. Shortly dawn began to insinuate itself most unusually. Fire-orange dawn rimmed the horizon. The northward heading jet paralleled a sunrise rolling inland like steel extruding from a furnace. It was a brightening bar; the leading edge of a lava flow.

The effect seemed due to sunrise's occurring between the horizon and a low-hanging band of clouds whose bottom layers reflected the orange light, until at some point true dawn turned the whole sky blue. Even that lasted only briefly, the jet pressed into that perpetual lake-centered storm that meant rain for Indianapolis and snow for Detroit.

8. UNFLASHBACKING At any rate (and a very cheap one, for the state of Ohio is a profit-making enterprise) I proceeded to teach ten weeks of Popular Culture. In spite of Laurine White who reacted to my precis in SCIENTIFRICTION by saying "I don't think I'd want to take your class." These days it's Laurine White whose locs give me the problems Bruce D. Arthurs' used to give -- hers can usually be summed up "I forgive you, but don't do it again."

Even now I am about to embark on another ten weeks, my second run at it. ("You'll keep on doing it until you do it right!") My booklist, assuming all gets in (a vast assumption) runs: NATIONAL FOOTBALL LOTTERY, Larry Merchant; THE LITTLE SISTER, Raymond Chandler; HARD TIMES, Studs Terkel; THE WORLD OF STAR TREK, David Gerrold; KARASS; TABEBUIAN; BACK TO GODHEAD magazine; THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS, Vance Packard. So there.

X-1. HOW SHARPER THAN A SERPENT'S TOOTH As I write, one might think the Ohio Weather Police was turning back contraband shipments of summer at the state line. Yesterday it limped into the 50s, sunny, in fact around here you might even mistake it for pleasant weather. Today, though, I realized that the trip to the PC convention this past weekend, in St. Louis -- where it was clear and 70 degrees -- had destroyed my sense of environment. Tthis afternoon, despite an insincere snow flurry during the morning, all was clear and sunny. I ventured out to the market in shirtsleeves, and wondered at the nippy wind. Strolling into the market I cast a momentary back-of-the-shoulder glance at a bank time-temperature sign

and was informed that it was 26 degrees -- that without even accounting for wind chill factor. I muttered a hearty "Sheet fahr!" and cursed the region.

If student's curses were measurable as mass, Main and Wooster would be a black hole.(Not that, on occasion, it hasn't been called one.)

Well, so much for fannish drolleries. It seems to me I ought to be able to do better than that, but give me a second and I will. Actually I might claim being out of practice. The hiatus between issues, partly imposed by my schedule of teaching and being taught, has atrophied my editorial skills.

One might even sneer at how this section blatantly resembles my PREHENSILE 13.5 editorial. Except -- which it's hard to see, given the intraperiodical lapse (that was a word, wasn't it?) -- winter's come down in full force, and these days 47 degrees does feel warm. Talk about acculturation, when I returned to LA over Christmas break I was right in there with the rest of the Ohio tourists, cruising shirtsleeved in 60 degrees while less hardy Southlanders wrapped up in sweaters and coats prayed for the cold snap to subside. Long familiar with such behavior from the LA perspective, I'd thought it obnoxious and condescending for easterners to come out in midwinter and marvel at our buttoned-up wardrobe while they spoke of "bracing" 55 degree weather. (Elst and I stood in the doorway one frigid evening in the Berkeley hills as Charlie Brown breathed steam and thumped his chest, walking around the terrace of his home. On the other hand, Ron Bounds, who moved to LA from DC last year,mentioned in APA L that he's falling prey to local habit, and dresses warmly when the mercury dips to 50.) But Glyer, as usual only 100 millionth in order of discovery, now decrees that "Cold is a state of mind." Anyway, above zero it is. I'm in no hurry to join the Susan Wood Weather Research station and try and find out how many degrees below zero it is when your spit freezes before it hits the ground. Actually, in a decent coat, and so long as you're not insanely inclined towards miniskirts (every once in awhile you see one here, though why I've no idea), you're basically insulated against the cold. Until the wind comes up...

What I'm not insulated against is reviewing lag time. Not any more. These days I see what reviews PRE garners before the next issue goes to print. And, by reading, I've discovered that I'm not only defunct but nostalgically remembered. How nauseating. Fanzine dinosaurs get short shrift. "PREHENSILE is about as close to the old SHAGGY as we have anymore, whichever of SHAGGY's many reincarnations you care to remember. A well-done ingroup faanish genzine." Kindly meant, no doubt, though how egoboosting can a review be which makes you feel like a Hollywood Indian being compared to the Maya? Politically PRE's relationship to LASFS may be compared to SHAGGY's, but by saying that we pretty much do away with the sobriquet "ingroup faanish genzine." (How about : "outgroup faanish genzine?") After planning an anniversary issue for two years, I ironically ended up creating it while my relationship with key potential contributors disintegrated. There are times when co-editors are good to help carry financial burdens. Then there are times when co-editors are good so somebody can talk for the fanzine while I'm busy swallowing my foot.

"PREHENSILE lists itself as quarterly, which is one of the bigger laughs in fandom, since Mike puts the zine out whenever he gets around to it and that could be just anywhen..." That's hitting below the colophon. Now if you guys don't start playing nice, I'll publish amateur fiction in this zine, and see you how like that, nyah nyah nyah! (What's that, Milt? Over my dead body?)

There is some fiction of mine on hand that I could inflict upon you, yes indeed. Any who remember my statement of professional pretentions published by Brazier in TITLE ("it's just a phase, he'll outgrow it") are by now ready to hear about my rejecslip pile. One, BICENTENNIAL CEREBRATION, got bounced with form letters from everybody I had take a look at it. Now that I've had time to put it in better perspective, I see why. You can see why when it turns up in the Summer issue of EMPIRE, if editor McGarry survives the apathy which typically greets amateur fiction zines. Stylistically it's palatable, but the story is too much feeding rationalizations to the reader and not enough entertainment.

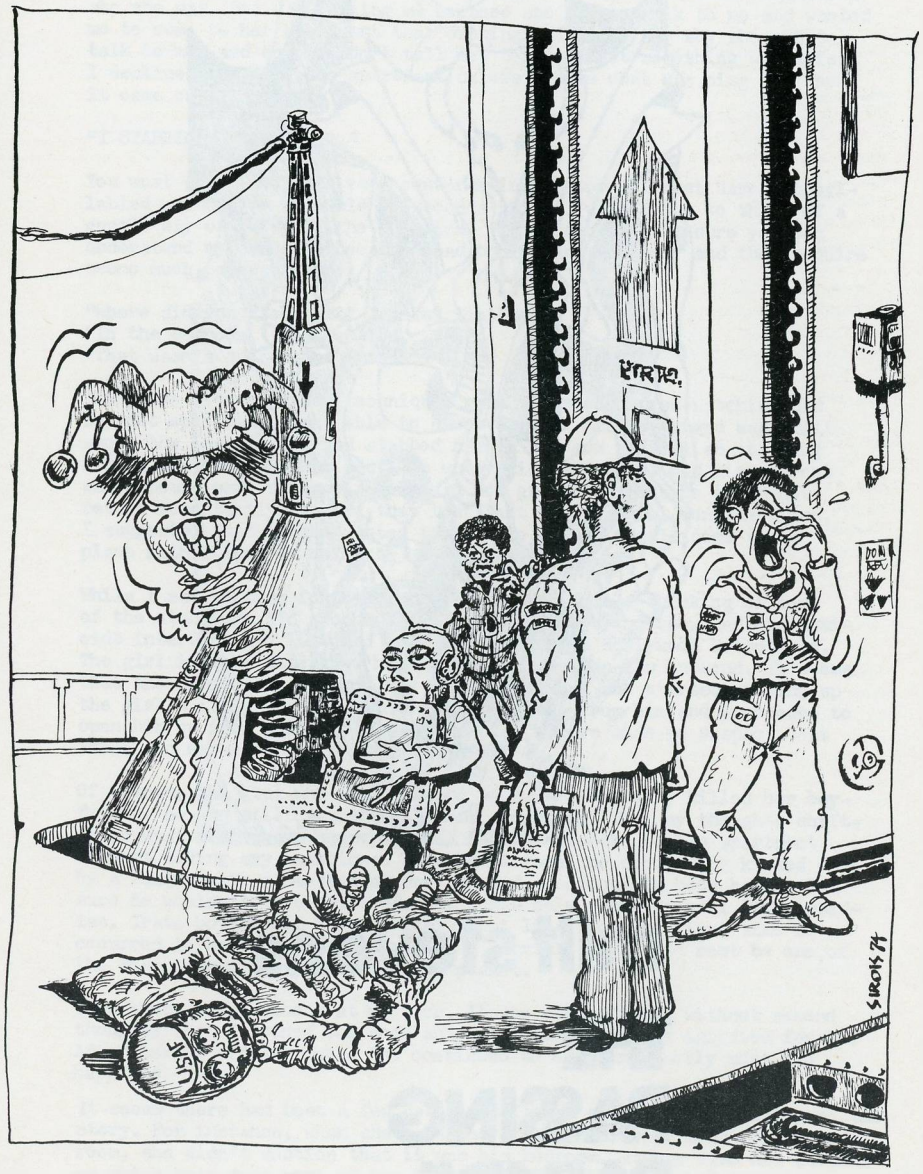
The other story I sent around got a slightly better reception. It's flaws are few, but they are major. It's an environmental disaster story with a copout pseudoscientific ending. Aside from that, though, it's fairly smooth now that I've revised the beginning and made other corrections suggested by Jack Harness. Even before that it sneaked into second place in the N3F story contest. I was never sure how to accept that; what is the quality of competition in that contest? Kerstin Lange's winner was a very good story (she traded xeroxes with me); in fact it should have sold by now. It may have. Never got to see #3, though. MOSQUITO BOAT DANCE (aw come on, must you wince?) got the form-personal reject from Bova and Pfeil, instead of the printed slip. It's the bouquet to not-quites, a couple concliliatory sentences on editorial letterhead. I'll probably pass that on to McGarry as well once it's gotten its final kiss-of-death. I hear there's a new Australian prozine getting together... Well, you don't send it out, you don't get it sold.

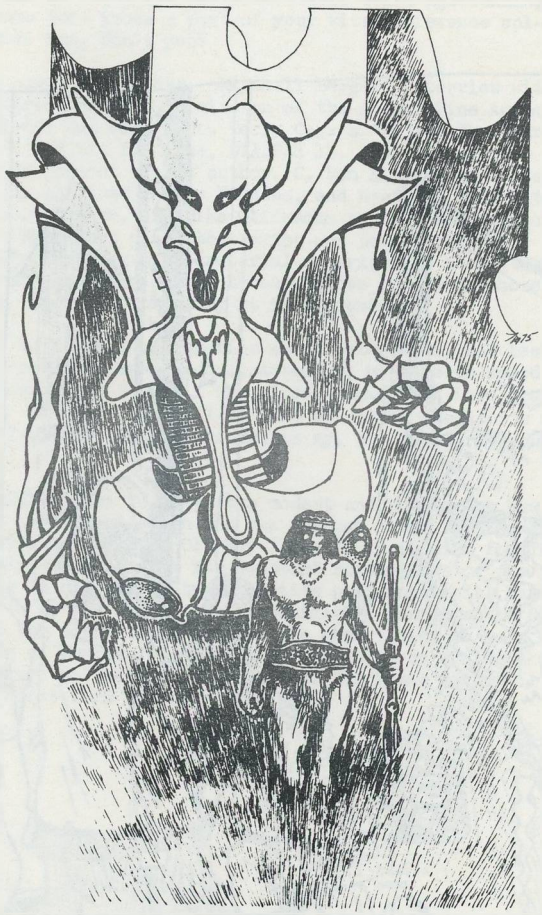
10. THE BUSINESS OF AMERICA IS BUSINESS Assuming the task doesn't send me into a hysterical fit, we will include an index ala SFC's to enable swift Egoscanning, and to help you make this issue a part of your vital reference collection. You do have one, don't you?

Got to make those acknowledgements. Marshall Berges' interview with the Bradburys appears here with permission of the Arthur Pine Agency, under the journalist's own copyright. Terry Carr's "Hijack The Starship" is reprinted from his FAPAzine, DIASPAR 14. Scott Johnson's 160 paper appears by consent of the author. C. Ron Kimberling's essay on Frenzy originally appeared in the BG news, and has been translated into English by Onan Skinner, Jr. Mike Glicksohn appears courtesy of draft Guiness. The Westefcon panel transcript was transcribed by yours truly, and I'm slapping my secretarial copyright on it so there. It's published with permission of the three editors involved, whose patience about the delay in publishing it is appreciated.

Glicksohn's column is full of apologetics about being late, but lest I let him take his pratfall unassisted....Actually, my urge to speed was based on the assumption that all the pieces would fall into place by February first. The fact that all of them except my coeditor's column did does not even begin to explain the delays my, er, scholarly endeavors have caused.

11. SEND IN THE MARINES! Roy Tackett, the modest and unassuming New Mexico fan who has through charm and fannishness earned the nickname Horrible Old Roy Tackett, is running for TAFF. His DYNATRON you already know from its constant recountings of the bubonic plague rate in his community. Tackett's partying habits have only been alluded to by the forthright investigative pornographer Bob Vardeman. Now, for the first time, we have the opportunity to help Roy extend the benefits of Mexican Cession Culture (not to be confused with cultures in agar agar) to the shores of Europe. The Trans Atlantic Fan Fund's finest hour! Send Tackett Over There!





milt stevens

THE PASSING PARADE

Sometimes it seems as if my life is getting a bit too interesting. For instance, there was this night a few months ago. I had come home from work and was changing clothes before going to a LASFS party. Then the phone rang, as it is in the nature of phones to do. My caller was a girl I had dated a couple of times in early 1974, and I even remembered who she was. She was calling me because she had to talk to me and wanted me to come to her apartment that evening. I asked her why she had to talk to me, and she wouldn't tell me. Sensing that something was amiss, I declined to go to her apartment unless I knew what was going on. Then it came out.

"I STABBED MY BOYFRIEND."

You must admit, that's a real conversation stopper. I must have monosyllabled around for a couple of seconds while I was trying to think of a gentle way of phrasing the question, "Is he dead?" I'm sure you can understand my concern, because dead bodies are so messy and they require soooo much paperwork.

"Where did you stab him?" I asked finally.
"In the bedroom," she replied.
"That wasn't quite what I meant."

Using the interrogation techniques which I learned from watching old Dragnet episodes, I was able to discover that her boyfriend was still among the living. She had stabbed him in the arm as well as stabbing him in the bedroom. He had left under his own power, and his current whereabouts were unknown. She could not guarantee that he would not return momentarily. Taking that last fact into careful consideration, I suggested that if she wanted to talk to me she should come to my place rather than me going to her's. She agreed.

While I sat waiting for her arrival, I found myself thinking of some of the stabbings I'd encountered in years gone by. I recalled one homicide interview I'd listened to while working at Hollywood Detectives. The girl in that interview had stabbed her common-law husband. It seems that the common-law husband had come home drunk and started cutting up the girl's fuzzy toys. She got the knife away from him and proceeded to open him up from belly to chin. Something always made me suspect that those two weren't particularly mature.

Of course, the girl who was visiting me hadn't actually killed her boyfriend. He was still wandering around somewhere. Then my thoughts shifted to what might have happened if I had gone to the girl's apartment without asking any questions. I could picture the door being kicked open by a fellow with a bandage on one arm and a shotgun in both hands. I'm sure he wouldn't have believed that I was only there to sell Encyclopedias. Irate boyfriends never believe that line. For the first time it occurred to me that, "You're making a terrible mistake!" must be one of the most common last lines on this planet.

Then there came a knock at my door. It was not entirely without second thoughts that I opened the door and admitted one highly agitated female. After taking off her coat, she continued to explain exactly what had happened.

It seems there had been a few details left out of her first telling of the story. For instance, when she said she stabbed her boyfriend in the bedroom, she didn't mention that it was his bedroom. It was also his bedding on which he'd done most of the bleeding. Since the girl had seen many mystery movies, she knew that she had to get rid of the evidence. So she brought the bedding with her, and it was now in the trunk of her car.

Did I want to see the bedding? No, I didn't want to see the bedding. I pointed out to the girl that a knife wound was fairly conclusive evidence of having been stabbed. Well, did I want to see the knife? No, I really didn't want to see the knife.

What should she do? I knew that question was coming eventually. In response, I felt that I should inform her that she had committed a felony under section 245 of the California Penal Code (assault with a deadly weapon). However, people do that every day. She was only in trouble if her boyfriend decided to file a crime report. No crime report, no problem. If a crime report was filed, she would need a lawyer.

She then hit on the idea of calling her boyfriend and asking if he was going to file a crime report. Stranely enough, that sounded about as reasonable as any other idea at the time. So she called and he was not only home but also in condition to talk on the phone. Their conversation sounded surprisingly amicable from what I could hear of it. The only glitch came after she had told him to go to the hospital and get the wound treated. Then she said that if they asked where he got the wound to tell them that he shot himself while cleaning a gun. The criminalistic portion of my mind was going, "no, no, no, no, NO!" If you're going to use a dumb story like that you may as well tell them that the butler did it. You should tell them something believeable like you were knifed in a bar parking lot by a seven foot tall Mongolian. But for reasons of discretion, I decided not to interrupt the conversation with mere technical quibbles.

She finished her call, thanked me profusely, and toddled off into the night. Jeez, what a way to spend an evening. Since that evening, she has sent me a birthday card and a letter with a picture of herself enclosed. She has also called me twice. During both phone calls she has giggled a great deal.

There is much that can be said about tattooed women. The thing that brought that particular thought to my mind was Jodie Offutt's article in the last issue of OUTWORLDS. Jodie's topic is how the everage girl can develop charisma. Charisma being defined as that quality possessed by a woman with big tits. Of course, there are such things as silicone jobs, and they do serve to gain girls a great deal of attention. Especially from rock hounds. But that wasn't what Jodie was talking about. She was talking about somewhat less drastic ploys and stratagems which can be used by the average female to encourage casual attention and low appreciation from the average male. I certainly approve of such efforts, since otherwise my eyeballs might get flabby from lack of exercise. One of the items Jodie mentioned was tattooing.

I've been noticing tattoos on women for a number of years now. I began my observations when I was in the Navy and go-go girls were becoming a feature in many bars. Quite a few go-go girls had tattoos. (A surprising number also had Caesarean scars. While Caesarean scars are no big deal, they certainly can be distracting on a go-go girl.) The tattoos ranged in quality from excellent to obviously amateur ballpoint jobs. Whenever I got the chance I asked about where the girls got the tattoos. Some of the girls were quite candid about having got the tattoos while in reform school or when they were members of a juvenile gang. You might remember that tattoos on women were not exactly the style at that period.

Traditionally, tattoos on women have been a mark of underworld associations. Sometimes they still are. Just a couple of months ago, I encountered a waitress who had the letters K-I-L-L tattooed on the fingers of her right hand along with a Pachuko tattoo on the web of the hand. I left that waitress a B*I*G tip. Had the letters not been tattooed on her hand, I would still have noticed the Pachuko tattoo. Those are the marks of Mexican gangs in the LA area. I've heard that they identify not only the specific gang, but also individual accomplishments such as killings, maimings, time in the joint, and other things considered noteworthy in that social milieu.

Despite their possibly unsavory origin, tattoos are certainly great attention-getters. There is one girl who attends science fiction conventions who has a flower tattooed between her breasts. I've noticed that tattoo on several occasions. But after having met this girl several times, there's one thing I'm still wondering about. I wonder what her face looks like. If the girl ever wore a turtleneck sweater, I'm afraid I wouldn't be able to recognize her. When I first realized this situation existed, I asked several other males to describe the girl's face. None of them had ever noticed it either. Finally I tried asking a LASFS member, who I knew was an avid homosexual. He may have noticed the girl's face, but he never noticed the tattoo. Oh well, I suppose there are things men were not supposed to know. I suppose there is such a thing as getting too much attention all in one place.

Aside from getting attention in only one spot, there's also the problem of getting the wrong sort of attention. Like the attention you get from having the name of a former "close friend" inscribed on some portion of

your anatomy. Such confidence in the permanence of human relationships is admirable in some respects, but it is usually ill-advised. Of course, one can add the name of one's current "close friend," if one doesn't mind the risk of eventually looking like a telephone book.

There is one case I distinctly remember of a girl getting entirely the wrong sort of attention because of a tattoo. I never met the girl, but I read about her in an arrest report. She'd been arrested for possession of marijuana. In the listing of physical oddities, it was noted that she had "Smoke It" tattooed on her ass. Somehow I suspected that she was going to have a tought time beating that rap.

And then there's the attention a girl could get from having "Property of Hell's Angels" tattooed on her ass. At first, you might think it would be attention of the negative sort. But what if you're the sort of girl that most men think of as awfully quiet and sort of dull? One tattoo could create a whole new image.

As I said in SFinctor, I've always been leery of girls who had tattoos on their inner thighs. As they say, you only put signs where there's a lot of traffic. This attitude may seem in conflict with what I said in the last paragraph, but remember that Hell's Angels is a fairly select group. What if you encountered a girl with a tattoo on her inner thigh that read "Welcome to the Boys of the U.S. Pacific Fleet." Of course, there are other possibilities for things girls could have tattooed on their inner thighs. How about "Abandon All Semen Those Who Enter Here." At least you'd know that the girl had a little bit of literary background. Now if I were confonted with a tattooed line like that, I'd probably comment something like, "Ah, you must be one of those conversation pieces that I've heard so much about."

Then I'd get thrown out of bed. That happens to me every now and then. But for those of you who are more intent on your lechery than your lines, I might leave you with a final thought.

True wit should sometimes be suppressed
Like when both parties are undressed.

INTERVIEW WITH MR.&MRS. RAY BRADBURY

Ray Bradbury is a fantasist and science fictioneer who peers at the world through thick glasses, seeing wondrous sights too distant for most mortals. He has thrilled and chilled millions of readers with FAHRENHEIT 451, THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, THE HALLOWEEN TREE, and SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES.

Bradbury is a master of paradox, a quality that has not escaped his own life. While conjuring up visions of the future, he has managed to stave off the present, stubbornly refusing to learn to drive an auto, relying instead on walking, bicycling, and other drivers, including his wife Marguerite. "I saw the energy shortage coming ten years ago," he says with impish laughter. "I'm ready for it."

Big-boned (5 feet 10 inches, 182 pounds) Bradbury at 53 has an earthy bulge around his waist but his head keeps running comet races across the skies. He has written more than 700 short stories and he is seldom at a loss for fresh ideas. "Ideas are like cats," he says. "If you approach a cat and try to pet it, it runs away. Cats are very independent. So are ideas. A writer has to learn to walk away from ideas. Then, like a team of cats, they'll follow and peek after you. They'll demand your attention."

Bradbury began demanding attention as a boy in Waukegan, Illinois, where he performed tricks as an amateur magician. Enchanted by the science fiction of Jules Verne and HG Wells, the wild fantasies of Edgar Allen Poe, Bradbury turned to writing his own stories at age 12. He educated himself by haunting libraries and bookstores.

One day in 1946 he strolled into Fowler Bros. bookstore in Los Angeles, and immediately became the object of suspicion. Someone wicked had been coming to the store to steal books. "Marvelous judge of character that I am," recalls his wife, then a sales clerk, "I thought it was Ray. He carried a briefcase and a trench coat on a nice clear day, so I was immediately suspicious. I expected him to slam his briefcase down on a pile of books and make off with a few. Instead he told me that he was a writer and invited me to have a cup of coffee with him."

When they married several months later, Bradbury was grinding out stories for ASTOUNDING TALES, WEIRD TALES and other pulp magazines at 1½ cents per word. Because his income averaged $40 weekly, Marguerite kept right on working. "Ours," says futuristic Bradbury, "was one of the first liberated marriages. I did my writing at home, cleaned the house and usually prepared dinner for both of us."

Today the Bradburys live in a white-walled, yellow-carpeted house in Cheviot Hills, surrounded by cats, books and paintings. They bought the house 15 years ago because, Marguerite explains, "It has a large basement. That was the irresistable ingredient. We needed a place where Ray could store everything he refuses to throw away, and also have an office for writing." The presence of four daughters -- Susan, now 24; Ramona, 22; Bettina, 18; Alexandra, 15 -- soon made it necessary for Bradbury to do the bulk of his writing at an office away from the house.

Q. How does writing affect family life?

BRADBURY. I want to keep my voice down, because the gods might be listening and they could wham us tomorrow with a lightning bolt. But we have a closely knit family. I believe in the family. I'm lucky, being a writer, that I can be around more than the average man. If I want to take half a day off, I can do it. That means a family has a slightly better chance, if you care about it. And I care. I've been spoiled rotten, having four daughters.

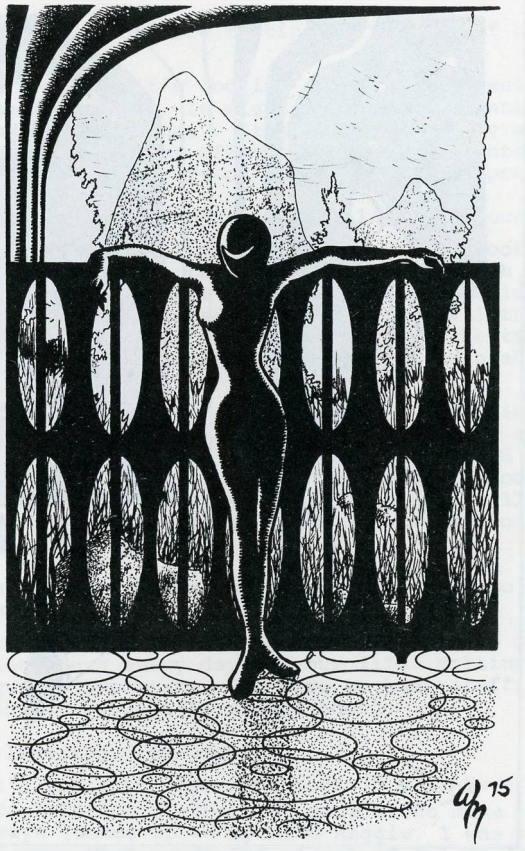
Q. Were there special problems for the girls in having a famous father?

MRS. BRADBURY. Whenever their teachers asked if they were related to Ray, the girls denied it.

BRADBURY. Daughters are afraid of being orange monkeys in a blue monkey's cage, and that's natural enough.

Q. What are you trying to do with your writing?

BRADBURY. I look upon myself as a teller of truths, with a few explanatory notes. I try to explain space travel to people in metaphors they can remember. I try to turn people



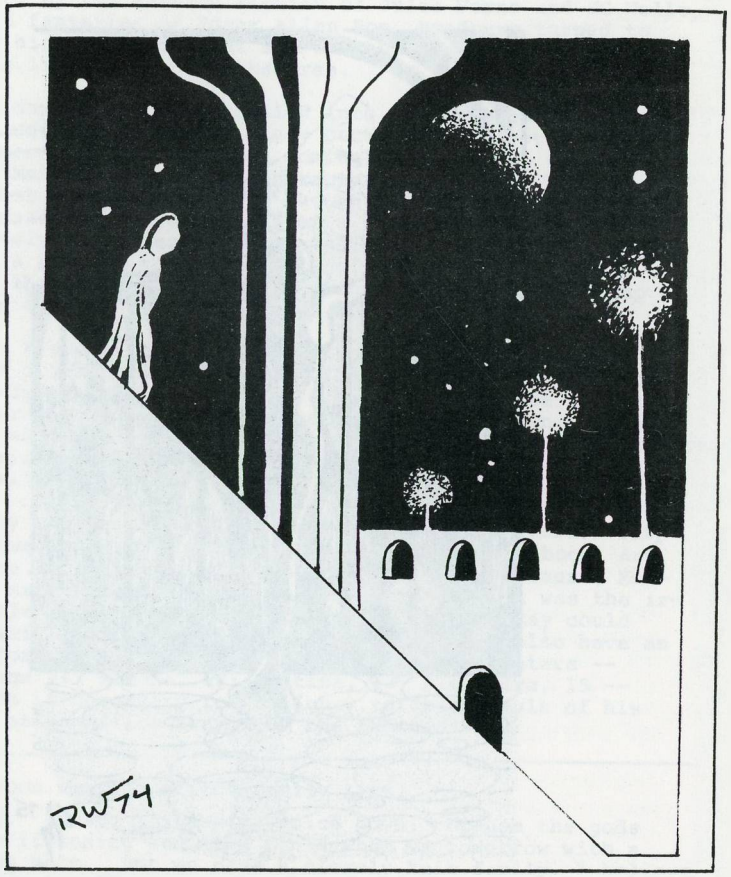
on to their own resources. I'm always urging them to do something about city planning, rapid transit, energy, the population explosion. I'm lucky I grew up in science fiction, because along the way I learned about these problems. Practically any crisis we can name -- from urban planning to old age -- has been written about in science fiction during the last 100 years.

Q. Are you an expert on urban planning?

BRADBURY. Well, I've collected fees for lecturing on the subject. I spoke in Pasadena recently and I'm sure they're sorry they invited me. I really dynamited them about their city. It's a disaster area.

Q. Do you write slowly or quickly?

BRADBURY. Everything I do is done quickly. Then I put it aside if I'm not satisfied. But I have generally found that my first attempts are my best. Everything I do quickly is good the first time out. If I slow down, the fun, the zest



and fluidity go out of it. The juice, the mysterious chemistry in writing that works for all of us, just disappears. As soon as I heard that Katharine Anne Porter had spent 25 years on SHIP OF FOOLS,I knew it was doomed to sink.

Q. What's your daily output?

BRADBURY. I've been doing at least a thousand words a day since I was 12. Most days I do two thousand or three thousand words. I've never had a dry spell because I know how to shift gears. I can skip around to different projects. There is always some idea that is asking to be born.

Q. What's the difference between fantasy and science fiction?

BRADBURY. In fantasy a man walks along the street, comes to a wall, walks through the wall and comes out on the other side. Now we know that's impossible. But in science fiction, 25 years ago, the man would have carried his individual jet pack and flown over the wall. Today the individual jet pack

is a reality. It's effective for only a few minutes, but more endurance will be developed. Science fiction keeps asking the question. What will we be able to do 20 or 30 years from now?

Q. Are you saying that science fiction is the art of the practical?

BRADBURY. That's right. It's looking at the future and bouncing things off of it. It might be in city planning, psychology, political science. It might be guessing at an invention and appraising the effect when it comes into the world. But it's always the art of the possible and practical.

Q. Why are children often depicted as villains in your stories?

BRADBURY. Up until my time, children were rarely looked upon as villains except in comic terms. But I grew up with myself. I looked in the mirror. What I found was not perfection, but murder in my soul. I remembered that when I was a little boy I'd make up lists inside my head of people I'd like to kill, such as the class bully who was always waiting to beat up on me.

I faced up to the realization that there is a potential for evil in all of us. I take it as my responsibility to tell the world, "Look, we have three billion wicked people and three billion fantastically good people and they are all locked into the same bodies at the same time." If people will understand that,instead of polarizing nation against nation, we can save the world.

Q. What process of self-education do you recommend to young writers?

BRADBURY. After learning all the basics, you have to go to a library or a bookstore every day of your life. Writing and reading are equally important. You have to keep stuffing your mind and rolling your eyeballs around books.

Q. What about learning from people?

BRADBURY. That's the most important part of all. Never choose friends who are inferior to you, but people who make you grow. I've always looked up to my wife Maggie. I was struck by her intelligence when I met her. A lot of men don't like to be around a bright woman, but I do. It isn't always easy, or quiet. We have lots of intellectual arguments, but I learn a lot.

Q. What's at the root of your romance with the short story?

BRADBURY. My feeling is that almost every short story ever written is too long. Every writer should post a sign next to the typewriter with one word on it: CUT. Actually, there are two separate arts involved. One is creating the story or the article in the first place. That takes about ten years of training, to release yourself into emotion so that you can create naturally and with a great flow. The cutting or editing is much more difficult. It's an art that comes slowly and takes perhaps 25 years.

Q. Do you have a fantasy wish?

BRADBURY. I'd like to keep coming back into the world to

pursue other careers. I'd make a good priest, because I care about religion. I'd like to be an architect. I could improve on some of the monstrous buildings in downtown Los Angeles.

Q. How about you, Mrs. Bradbury?

MRS. BRADBURY. I plan only a week in advance. (Laughter.) Actually my days are very full. I drive Ray to his office and do all the shopping. Three days a week I tutor USC doctoral candidates in scientific French. I also plan my reading a week in advance, because I read one book every day. That's usually late, after the rest of the family is asleep.

Q. How does your day begin?

BRADBURY. Maggie drops me off at the office at 9. I write a poem as soon as I get to the typewriter. Just anything that comes into my head. That's the way I open myself out and get the juices flowing. If the poem works, great. If it doesn't, nothing lost, and I put it away knowing a better idea will come along another day. Then I get to work on a current project.

Q. Do you work on several at a time?

BRADBURY. Sometimes three or four different projects in a week. I'm easily bored, so I've turned vice into a virtue. By shifting gears I can work on part of a screenplay, part of a novel, part or all of a short story, part of an essay, maybe do a book review and five or six poems in a week.

Q. You've plenty of energy?

BRADBURY. I hoard energy. I do my important writing in the morning. When the energy begins to disappear I take care of mail and run errands. Around 3 in the afternoon I take a nap. I've been doing that every day since I was 15. That brings all my energy back and the juices begin flowing again. After that it's usually a quiet evening at home. We don't go out much.

Q. How many things do you do well?

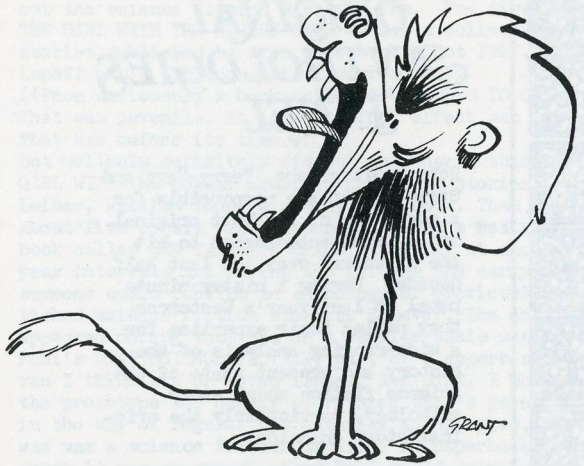
BRADBURY. I'm excellent at the short story and short novel. I don't think I'll ever write another long novel. I'm learning to write plays. My poetry has finally reached a state of being very good. It's taken 33 years. I'm also an excellent lecturer. I could retire from writing tomorrow and go into lecturing full time.

Q. What else?

BRADBURY. I've learned how to work with paint. I'm not a figure painter but I am sort of a magic realist, doing landscapes and evoking moods.

Q. Where do you paint?

BRADBURY. Down in the basement. I do mostly tempera because, as in my writing, I like quick results. This is another vice I've turned into a virtue. I don't have the patience to wait for oil to dry and then go over it, as the great artists did. They spent months or years on a painting. Tempera is wonder-



ful for me because it dries in a few seconds. It's like writing a short story. If I cannot do it quickly it doesn't work and it doesn't get done.

Q. Your house is filled with paintings. Did you paint all of them?

BRADBURY. No, but we've collected only paintings that we really love deeply. I don't understand people who collect as an investment. I could never sell anything that belongs to me.

MRS. BRADBURY. That, I fear, is one point of contention between us. Ray has saved everything since his first birthday. I try to throw out newspapers and magazines and whatever else can be thrown out. Ray is a packrat. He refuses to let anything go.

BRADBURY. I'm awfully sentimental. Sometimes our daughters fill the trash cans outside the house with junk from their rooms. I go through the junk before it's carted away, because I'm sure there's something of value in it. It might be only a notebook, or something they've painted, or a paper they've done for school. They might not even care about it for themselves, but everything the kids have done is a treasure to me. I save everything. You see, I think about the future.

ORIGINAL ANTHOLOGIES PANEL

Robert Silverberg, Terry Carr and Steve Goldin are responsible for a good many of the best original and reprint anthologies to hit the sf market over the last half decade. During a ninety minute panel at last year's Westercon they pooled their expertise for a wide-ranging analysis of the history and present state of the science fiction short story anthology, particularly the original story anthology.

Terry Carr
Steve Goldin
Robert Silverberg

UNIVERSE
THE ALIEN CONDITION
NEW DIMENSIONS

CARR I'd like to ask the gentleman a question.

SILVERBERG Keep it serious, now, keep it serious.

CARR Steve, I wanted to ask you, is THE ALIEN CONDITION still open?

GOLDIN Uh, not really...unless you can talk some publisher into buying a second volume of it called THE ALIEN EXPERIENCE.

CARR The SECOND ALIEN CONDITION. LAST ALIEN CONDITIONS. AGAIN ALIEN CONDITIONS. ((audience laughter))

SILVERBERG Let's start on a serious note. Our subject is original science fiction anthologies. Steve Goldin edited a book from Ballantine called THE ALIEN CONDITION, one of whose stories won a Nebula the other week. Terry Carr edits UNIVERSE for Random House. I edit NEW DIMENSIONS for Harper & Row. And I think the most interesting thing about this panel is that five years ago, say, it would have been completely pointless to have had it. It would not have had any relevance to science fiction to have had a panel on original anthologies. There just weren't enough of them. Yet today there are, with all respects to Don Pfeil. the editor of VERTEX who is sitting somewhere to my right, they are the dominant feature of the science fiction short story. They have become THE center of action -- a very strange and unexpected development, I think.

There were, of course, original anthologies all throughout the science fiction magazine era. The first one -- THE GIRL WITH THE HUNGRY EYES -- was a collection of seven stories published in Avon paperback about 1947...Richard Lupoff has a bibliographical correction?

LUPOFF ((From audience)) A book called ADVENTURES TO COME.

SILVERBERG That was juvenile. At least its net effect was juvenile.

CARR That was before its time...

SILVERBERG But Wollheim definitely did put together a thing called GIRL WITH THE HUNGRY EYES, in '47, with stories by Fritz Leiber, William Tenn, a really good book. Then I think about five or six years later there was a Healy-McComas book called NEW TALES OF SPACE AND TIME. At about five year intervals all during the fifties and early sixties someone would publish an anthology of previously unpublished science fiction stories. However, the only one that appeared during that era on a regular basis was Frederik Pohl's STAR SCIENCE FICTION, part of a superb series that ran I think six or seven issues. And STAR, I believe, is the prototype for nearly everything that's going on today in the way of regular new material anthologies. What STAR was was a science fiction magazine in paperback form. Because it was an annual, Fred Pohl could select only the very best stories that came along out of the thousands that were submitted to him. He was not under the pressure of a monthly deadline that the editor of GALAXY is, or the editor of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION is. So there were no compromises. He also paid nine cents a word for stories at a time when magazines were paying three cents a word. This turned out to be unnecessary, and by the time STAR SCIENCE FICTION went out of business they too were paying only three cents a word. But early issues of STAR, the ones that were so extraordinary, were in a different economic level from

the science fiction magazines because as paperbacks they, at that time, hoped to stay on sale for a period of months or even years in some places, and then to be issues repeatedly, so that the limitations of the magazine format did not apply. Of course, after STAR and the isolated one-shote NEW TALES OF SPACE AND TIME there were very few original anthologies until the late '60s when Damon Knight began ORBIT. Since then they've proliferated so that I think about 80% of all short stories in science fiction are now appearing in original anthologies. Terry, who has to read all the science fiction published for his own best of the year reprint anthology would know more about that thay I do.

CARR Well, I have to try to read it all...

SILVERBERG What would you say is the percentage of the field original anthologies do represent?

CARR I think it's about 50% on the basis of wordage. Anyway it feels like 50% when I read it. It felt like twice as much last year than it ever had before.
Damon Knight once told me that the reason he started ORBIT was that he'd noticed that most of the science fiction being published was awful, or so he thought -- but there were these really neat stories. He said there were about ten or twelve really good stories every year, and wouldn't it be nice if they all appeared in one place so that people wouldn't have to mess around with these other things. Now then did he immediately begin to publish a Best of the Year anthology? No...He began ORBIT with the idea being that he would pay the highest rates, and the thing that Fred Pohl had been doing earlier. For awhile he did pretty much corral most of the people who assumed that what they had just written was one of the best of the year. So they sent many of the very best stories of the mid-60s era, yes?

SILVERBERG ORBIT is about '66, I think.

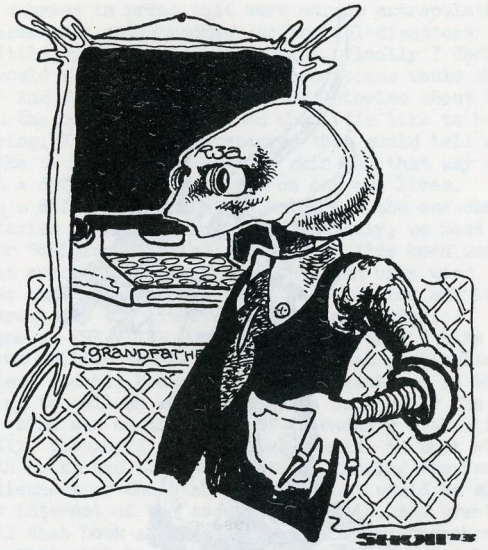
CARR The early ORBITS were without competition in that particular field and they just sort of walked off with all the people who wanted to write short stories for book publication.
Was the Carnell series before ORBIT? NEW WRITINGS IN SF?

GOLDIN I think I saw them around before ORBIT.

CARR This may have been. Well, what happens in England is very largely irrelevant to what happens in this country. So we like to think, anyway. But Ted Carnell, a well-known-once-upon-a-time British editor, did a series called NEW WRITINGS IN SF, which is reissued over here haphazardly by Bantam years after they come out. They differed very much from the other original stories anthologies, because Carnell was a man whose consciousness of sf really went back to the 30s and 40s and he was essentially trying to publish ASTOUNDING all over again. The Golden Age ASTOUNDING. The kind of story that he was publishing, I think he would ring up EC Tubb and say 'Give me a Van Vogt story;write me 'Vault of the Beast' or something like that." He just tried to put together a bunch of Old Wave stories. It gets kind of odd to read ASTOUNDING 1942-type stories in book form, especially when you're used to the brand you got in ORBIT of the mid-60s, which was, you know, totally way-out incomprehensible stuff like 'Passengers.'

SILVERBERG The Carnell book, I think, dates from 1965 because he began it when he left NEW WORLDS, and Moorcock took over.

CARR That was strange -- that series began as a reaction against the magazine field in England which had gone completely experimental and New Wave. The Carnell books started coming out



in England and they were the Old Wave traditional type stories, so if you wanted the far-out kind of stuff you had to get down to your newsstand and buy the latest NEW WORLDS -- a kind of switch on what we've had here.

SILVERBERG What we've had here is an interesting point. One of the basic differences between original anthologies and magazines other than the difference in format, is that the editor of an original anthology is not primarily concerned with building continuity of readership from issue to issue. It would be nice if the same people came back and bought each ORBIT or each UNIVERSE or each NEW DIMENSIONS. But they come out too far apart for that.
A magazine editor is concerned with creating an audience. People who buy VERTEX every other month, people who buy GALAXY every month. Knee-jerk purchasers -- "Wow, there's the new VERTEX." And one of the ways you bring in an audience and hold it like that is to publish not quite the same stories every issue, but create a certain homogeneity of tone so that the GALAXY reader knows what to expect from his new GALAXY, and the ANALOG reader can distinguish between his magazine and FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. The editor's attempt to create a regular readership leads to a necessary sameness of tone in the fiction. He buys that which he knows his readers will like, because he wants his readers to keep coming back. Now see, the editor of an annual original anthology isn't bound to this because he knows his readers aren't likely to come back. It's a year between issues, the turnover is tremendous, they will have forgotten the name of the anthology by next time.
Except for the hard core. I mean, you guys will buy every UNIVERSE, but to the people out there it's not UNIVERSE, NEW DIMENSIONS, ORBIT, but it's just "that sci-fi book with the stories in it.
So not being bound by the necessity to create a continuity

of image in the fictional material, the editor of the original anthology simply buys what he likes -- now that creates a continuity too. The tastes of Terry Carr are different from the tastes of Damon Knight which are different from the tastes of Robert Silververg, or Steve Goldin, or Roger Elwood, whoever. He can approach each issue as an entity, not worrying about whether he will print something that will turn people off in droves. If GALAXY comes out with a sour issue, people aren't going to rush out and buy the next month's GALAXY, and that will immediately show up in the sales figures. Therefore the editor of GALAXY or VERTEX or whatever tries not to publish anything that is likely to turn the readers off. We can take that chance. We can play games. We can experiment. Of course if we play too many games then we will lose our readership. But whereas magazine editors are trying to sell the brand name, trying to presell installments, we're simply putting out a package that makes its way on a unique basis each time. That gives us a freedom that is new in the field and this is why I think so much of the energy of science fiction was shifted into the original anthologies. Some of the writers moved away from the magazines and now channel nearly their entire output into the new publications.

GOLDIN Personally I wouldn't mind if somebody bought a copy of THE ALIEN CONDITION every other month. But there is only the one: I get royalties.

SILVERBERG Well, you're in a different position because you've published a one-shot entity. What Terry and I are doing is essentially publishing magazines in book form.

GOLDIN Also, mine was a theme anthology whereas yours are general anthologies. I think that deserves a little treatment too. I set out with THE ALIEN CONDITION because I was seeing a

lot of stories in print that were narrow extrapolations of the present, or catastrophes, ecological disasters. I wanted a little more speculative thought. Finally I decided, 'What would aliens be like, what conditions would they live under?' And I specifically asked for stories about this. In essence the book is an essay on what it's like to be a sentient being. I tried to get stories that would tell us what it's like to live inside another skin and that way to possibly get a different perspective on our own lives.

CARR That is a different kind of anthology -- the one-shot original stories theme anthology. Incidentally, we need a short term for "original stories anthology." I've been working on that but everything I come up with is an ugly word. If anybody has a good word, post it in the elevator and it'll be going around by the time the convention's over...
The theme of THE ALIEN CONDITION is one that I like a lot; I've even written several stories in that particular genre. When Steve did his book, in fact, my agent was in the process of trying to sell an anthology by me on roughly the same idea -- mine was on the theme of friendship with aliens. Basically, though, I think it was similar in that stories for both books had to concentrate on getting the feeling of the true alienness of the other people. That would be where the primary interest of the stories would lie. And eventually I did sell that book and I went ahead and put together a collection that will be coming out later this year from Simon & Schuster, under the title FELLOWSHIP OF THE STARS. Steve, you might find that interesting to look at and see what was written a year and a half later on roughly the same theme that you put together. In a sense that's almost a second THE ALIEN CONDITION.

GOLDIN I want to see if you've also detected a trend. I've been David Gerrold's associate editor on the EMPHASIS and ALTERNATIES series and one thing I've noticed is that there are an awful lot of stories these days set on Earth. About 85% of all the submissions we've been getting are on-Earth stories rather than set in space. That was another thing that prompted me to do THE ALIEN CONDITION. I was getting a little tired of seeing things just on earth and I wanted to go a little further out.

CARR Ninety-nine percent of my rejects are set on Earth. Personally, I like stories that are set further in the future, further out somewhere. I like more imagination and I wish people would do that.
We ought to mention also that there's another kind of original story anthology that's doing very well. It's one, Bob, that you do quite a lot of, the triplet, where you gather three writers together and say "You do 20,000 words and you do 20,000 words and you do 20,000 words and lo! that's 60,000 words, and that's a book. And we'll put it out and it'll sell like crazy." Bob's done a number of these, maybe five or six. I did one, called an EXALTATION OF STARS, in which Bob appeared. I gather that these things outsell any other kind of original anthology.

SILVERBERG That's been my experience. I've done six of these novella books now and they are implausibly successful. The first few that I did were theme books. Somebody -- Arthur C. Clarke did the first one -- would nominate a theme for stories and three writers of my choosing would write to that theme. This is a format that goes back about twenty years and I completely overlooked it in my capsule history of original

science fiction anthologies. Books called the TWAYNE TRIPLETS of which there were two, I believe, about 1952, worked on that basis. But what I found, although we got some good stories in these theme anthologies, is that the writers were being constricted; it was a stunt. The writers were doing fancy dancing in order to do stories on somebody else's theme. So the last few of these that I've done, I've simply turned three writers loose, three very reliable professionals. and said "Write 20,000 word stories. Develop a background as richly as you can within that, and go ahead." Now these were all people that I could trust to do a reliable job and all this book is is a catchall although sometimes the catch is extraordinary. Though I'm not much in favor of plugging my own product there is one of these that is coming out that is so extraordinary I can't help bubbling over it. A book called THE NEW ATLANTIS with three original stories, by Ursula LeGuin, James Tiptree and Gene Wolfe ((A lot of "Oh wow" in the audience)) and let me tell you that these three writers are at the top of their form, and I was just aghast at the book when it put itself together. The Tiptree's his first long story, it's 35,000 words, and it is a mindblower. This'll be out next year. End of plug.

GOLDIN To say Tiptree is almost to say mindblower.

SILVERBERG Well this is 35,000 words of Tiptree and there hasn't been one of those before. All I asked for was 20,000 words but I didn't quarrel when he came in with 35.

GOLDIN Paid him the same amount, too...((audience laughter))

SILVERBERG What's not true. What I did was dock Ursula LeGuin $200 and transfer it to Tiptree ((more laughter)) Actually I did: she came in with only 10,000 words.

Okay. Have we covered all the essential structures of the philosophical construct here....?

Let's turn this over to questions now for awhile. Gentleman with the moustache down there...

QUESTION: When you say that the kind of things especially that you and Terry are doing, when you say that you don't have repeat sales in effect, where you're not worried about the same people coming back and buying, except what you called a hard core; is there really a statistical basis for you to say this is the case? Or is it the case that even they are buying say ORBIT 9 or 10 because they bought ORBIT 3 and 4 and liked them. Or they're buying ORBIT as opposed to UNIVERSE or something else because they liked what they got in one. Do you know for a fact that you're not doing the same kind of thing as magazines in that sense?

SILVERBERG Well, I don't think we are; I don't know of course. But in the case of NEW DIMENSIONS in particular for reasons I'm not even going to begin to explain here I've had three different publishers for the first five issues. So continuity has not been a major concern of mine. Certainly there's a hard core of ORBIT fans, or UNIVERSE fans or NEW DIMENSIONS fans but I don't think they're a statistically significant group.

I think when an original anthology is a hardcover book the bulk of the sales -- 80 or 85% -- are to librarians, who are not buying the new NEW DIMENSIONS because they bought the last one, but because Library Journal says "Hey, there's a good LeGuin story in here." Whereas people who buy VERTEX are buying the next issue because they bought the last issue and liked it and that's an entirely different universe of discourse. It's only theory, but I think it's plausible theory.

GOLDIN Bob, one thing that may alter that a little -- have you seen the latest paperback ORBIT they've come out with? Number twelve. And it says ORBIT, then in much smaller print, "the twelfth in the series." Which is almost magazine format.

SILVERBERG That's interesting. Of course that is immediately self-negating because that is the last issue of ORBIT that will come out from that particular paperback house. It's curious, the various transformations we go through.

CARR I think one of the things that made for the rise of the original stories anthology series was a kind of weird thing that happened very peripherally in the early 60s, when I was working at Ace. We noticed that when we put out a novel, or anything, really, that had a number in the title, it sold better. I mean, you could put out something called DIRT SEVEN. And that sounds very far out and otherworldly--

SILVERBERG Did you do ICE NINE? ((audience laughter))

CARR ((psuedo-regretfully)) We didn't think of ICE NINE; we should have.

So that helps, then. You begin to put out something called UNIVERSE THREE, well that's definitely a better selling title than UNIVERSE.

QUESTION ((To the effect of doing a hardbound subscription magazine.))

GOLDIN ...Like AMERICAN HERITAGE, HORIZONS...

SILVERBERG Those are essentially hardbound magazines, sold only by subscription. Nobody but the Science Fiction Book Club has tried anything by a subscription-only arrangement in science fiction. I suppose it would be an interesting experiment.

I suppose we should distinguish between those anthologies that come out as hardbound and those that are followed up by paperbacks. Many anthologies come out only as hardcovers and a story that goes into one of those gains immediate obscurity because you guys never see it. There has been talk off and on about an AMERICAN HERITAGE format science fiction magazine for five or ten years. Nobody's actually done it.

VERTEX is the closest thing we have to it -- but that's a very soft hard binding.

CARR — You might be able to have some very interesting graphics in such a book.

GOLDIN — It would have to be done as a quality publication because you're appealing to snob appeal, really, when you're selling by subscription.

CARR — I kind of doubt that it would work because you have to think about the kind of prices you'd have to charge for it. If we put out say a normal length book with nothing but text, nothing particularly expensive in terms of production -- and that has to sell at $6.95 -- imagine what it would be if you had to print it on slick paper with four-color illustrations.

SILVERBERG — AMERICAN HERITAGE sells at something like $3.95 a copy, but that's AMERICAN HERITAGE.

CARR — Put out SCIENCE FICTION HERITAGE ((vague groans from crowd))

GOLDIN — Do you think you could sell something like that to libraries?

SILVERBERG — There are not enough libraries around to support a project like that. You'd need -- AMERICAN HERITAGE sells way up in the many thousands -- 30 or 40,000 to get a thing like that off the ground on a six-times-a-year/four-times-a-year basis. Libraries are only good for four or five thousand sales.

QUESTION — ((Unintelligible))

SILVERBERG — Yes, the Doubleday science fiction line can be purchased in a subscription unit by libraries and this is one reason why Doubleday publishes so many books: they know they have a guaranteed audience of perhaps 3,000 sales for nearly any book they publish.

CHARLIE BROWN — The way it works is that the subscription library has a choice of two books a month of which they choose at least one.

QUESTION — How many copies are printed of the books that you publish?

CARR — I think they print about four or five thousand, which is the typical printing of a science fiction book of any kind.

SILVERBERG — Hardcover. Somewhere between four and seven thousand of the first printing depending on the project. Paperback, of course, gets a standard paperback printing which is 60- to 150,000 copies depending on the publisher.

QUESTION — Can you tell us a little bit of what you're looking for in your anthologies and what you're trying to do?

SILVERBERG — What's your name, sir --

GREG BEAR — Greg Bear.

SILVERBERG — Well, what I'm looking for in NEW DIMENSIONS is very simple. I want stories that are good enough to win Hugos and Nebulas. ((audience laughter)) And every time I get one submitted to me I try to buy it. I've bought a couple. I like stories which please me -- which is a very difficult business because I have read more science fiction than I want to think about and I'm really bored with it. So it has to be a mindblowing story to sell to me. I'm very fussy about it. What I buy are stories about robots and time machines and spaceships and all that stuff we all know so well, but I like it done in a literate and adventurous way. Not necessarily in an experimental way. I think if we set up a spectrum of experimentalism in the science fiction original anthology field NEW DIMENSIONS turns out to be somewhat to the right of ORBIT and perhaps a shade to the left of UNIVERSE. Basically what I want, Greg, are stories I wish I had written.

BEAR — My question centers more on what you are trying to do to the field with your anthology. Just produce good stories?

SILVERBERG — Yeah. I'm just trying to put out a book of really good stories. I have a very clear idea of what I think a good story is. I've published a lot of them; I've rejected a few that I regretted later. But generally I know what a NEW DIMENSIONS kind of story is. I buy it when I see it and turn down all the rest. Terry also knows what a NEW DIMENSIONS story is and when he gets them he rejects them first, and then he brings them over to me -- we live close by -- he brings them over in a wheelbarrow, and I generally buy them.

CARR — I come over and say, "I didn't understand this damn story; it's weird and far out and I think you'll buy it -- it's really dumb."

QUESTION — Do you ever reciprocate?

CARR — Of course. In the last UNIVERSE there was one story that was rejected from NEW DIMENSIONS, and two stories that were rejected by Roger Elwood. I sort of stood there and caught them as they bounced. In the last NEW DIMENSIONS there were..?

SILVERBERG — I think there were three UNIVERSE rejections in the last NEW DIMENSIONS, one of which is on the Hugo ballot this year. ((audience laughter))

GOLDIN — Tiptree's story that won the Nebula this year -- "Love Is The Plan, The Plan Is Death" -- was bounced from ORBIT. You can never tell.

CARR — The Gene Wolfe story that won the Nebula this year was bounced by ORBIT. That's a pretty good recommendation. ((audience laughter))

GOLDIN — Not really. I've seen some bad stories that were bounced by ORBIT.

SILVERBERG — The reason we know all these stories were bounced by ORBIT is not because we're in direct communication with Damon Knight all the time, although we do hear from him now and then, but because a lot of you idiots when you send out your stories append a list of previous rejections to them; I don't think that's a very good idea. I frequently get cover letters that say "Dear Mr. Silverberg. The following story was held by Damon Knight for four-and-a-half years and he finally made up his mind that it was a near miss." That doesn't turn me on very much. What I prefer are those that say "Dear Mr. Silverberg. Here is a story. Signed," with your return address. The more information you give me about who previously rejected it, the more complicated you make my decision -- because I find myself starting to read it wondering where is the mysterious flaw that Damon saw and that I didn't? ((audience laughter)) And I'm likely to find it. ((more laughter))

ALEX EISENSTEIN — Sometimes the editor asks for a list of where it's been.

SILVERBERG — Yeah, that's a different thing. I did in one case get a really beautiful story by two collaborators who had never sold anything before. Since NEW DIMENSIONS was then brand new I knew it couldn't have been written for me, and I wondered which editors had been nerds enough to pass this thing up. So I wrote to the authors and said "Where'd you send it?" They'd sent it to ORBIT and a couple of other places. That was just a matter of my doing a little private research. Basically I don't want to know where a story has been.

CARR — The story on Gene Wolfe's novella "The Death of Dr. Island" was that he wrote it because he just missed winning an earlier Nebula. There was a terrific foul-up at the Nebula Awards Banquet. Gene Wolfe had done a short story for ORBIT called "The Island of Dr. Death" and he had been nominated for a Nebula because of it. The person who made the awards

shall remain nameless, but in front of Isaac Asimov and everybody he announced that Gene Wolfe had won the short story Nebula that year and Gene was halfway up to the rostrum before someone corrected the announcement and revealed that No Award had actually won. And everybody cringed except Gene who was remarkably poker-faced. Somebody who was sitting next to him told him, "Gene, you realize that all you have to do now, since everybody in the room is feeling so sorry for you, is write 'The Death of Dr. Island' and get it published anywhere and it will win a Nebula next year." So he sat down to write "The Death of Dr. Island" and he sent it to ORBIT with, he said, more confidence than he had ever sent out anything, and it bounced like a rubber ball straight back. So he sent it to me for UNIVERSE, and it won a Nebula.

QUESTION Have you figured out why triplets sell better than other types?

SILVERBERG No.

QUESTION Is there something magic about that length?

SILVERBERG Well, I think the novella is a particularly good form for science fiction. A really rich, complex society can be handled in twenty or twenty-five thousand words. And as you move into the novel length you begin frittering around with subplots and other padding devices. But you can state the whole business very beautifully in 25,000 words. So artistically it's a satisfying format but that has nothing to do with sales. Why these things go I don't know. The triplet books I've edited, and the one that Terry did also, have been picked up by the book club, generally gone into paperback editions, sell overseas. They're really gold mines. And the fact that they

happen to include good stories seems almost a happy bonus. I think it's basically the novelty of the format. I think if there were 20 triplet books monthly the way there are now short story collections we wouldn't have the same sales record.

CARR I think it's also the fact that, statistically, people seem to like to read longer stories. People would rather read a novel than a short story, and I guess they'd rather read novellas than short stories. I notice, for instance, when I put together anthologies like my Best Science Fiction of the Year what seems to turn people on judging from the feedback that I get from letters, and people I talk to at conventions, is the fact that I do tend to reprint longer stories, and those are the ones that get remembered. They like the longer ones better. Possibly, this is because the longer ones as Bob was saying, are better stories. It's an easier format in which to work.

GOLDIN I think one thing too that might help is that when you have one of these triplets you have three of the bigger names in the business.

SILVERBERG No, not always. I did a book that included stories by Gordon Eklund, Gardner Dozois and George Alec Effinger and while they are all fine writers they are not yet names to conjure with. The book did just about as well as a Dickson-Anderson-Silverberg triplet with the same publisher.

There's one interesting point that we've not brought up about original anthology books, which is that science fiction is just about the last refuge of the short story in the English language. Years can go by between anthologies of original short fiction of some other kind. Particularly in the mainstream. Occasionally there's a mystery anthology. But very occasionally. Yet here are Harper&Row, GP Putnam and Scribner's and Simon and Schuster and every other major house in the country committed to a program of publishing original short fiction anthologies so long as there's a margin in it somewhere. It's really quite extraordinary and quite flattering to science fiction, though the short story is extinct, really. Except in our little microcosm where it's not only thriving but having a bizarre and incredibly fertile boom in these anthologies.

GOLDIN I just saw a paperback on the stands the other day that claimed "the 50 best short stories of the year" -- some mainstream thing. And I wondered where they'd come up with the stories.

SILVERBERG How many of them were from F&SF?

GOLDIN None of them were names that I recognized.

CARR Short stories do continue to appear all over the place. It's just that they're no longer used to sell the magazines. If ESQUIRE comes out with a new issue that includes short stories by John Updike and Bruce Jay Friedman, you will not see John Updike's and Bruce Jay Friedman's names on the cover. What you'll see on the cover is the fact that there's an interview with some European film director about his political beliefs. People do not buy the magazine specifically for the fiction. It's not getting the big commercial plug.

QUESTION I understand that in the monster magazines there's often a fairly long dialog between the editor and the author, polishing up a story preparing it for publication. I wonder if you get into the same sort of thing?

SILVERBERG You mean, do we ask for revisions in the course of purchasing

a story? Yes, when revisions are needed. I would much prefer to have a manuscript come in in perfect condition and print it just as is -- means less work for me. But I think as any other magazine editor, when we see a story that is 93% publishable, we ask for the other seven percent. And this sometimes involves a fair amount of back and forth correspondence as the story gets closer and closer to publishability. I do much less of that than I thought I would have been doing when I started NEW DIMENSIONS. I anticipated a lot of this kind of finicky corresponence. Either I'm easier to please once I find a story I really like, or the writers are hitting the target very sharply. But maybe four stories an issue require small work -- because big work I'd rather not mess.

CARR Yes, I find that if a story is good enough for me to be interested in buying it for UNIVERSE, it's within one step at least of being completely ready. That is, I'm very unlikely to write back and say "Well I think you ought to change this this and this. If there's more than one change there's probably something really wrong with the story, so I don't bother with things like that.

SILVERBERG Damon Knight does indeed ask for revisions. I know this because the one time I wrote a story for Damon he had me redo it five times. Generally one paragraph at a time. ((laughter)) I would send the story in and he'd say "Now it's fine except for one little thing on the top of page fourteen." And when I'd do that right he'd say, "Yeah, but it loses conviction around page 17." I was kind of bothered being treated this way because I thought I knew what I was doing there. By the time I got through I had a Nebula winner so I forgave him for it.

GOLDIN I found there was not a single story for THE ALIEN CONDITION that I did not ask for a teensy bit of work. Most of it I did myself, changing a comma--

SILVERBERG Aha!

GOLDIN --here and there, but I always asked the writers' permission. There were only two major rewrites, one on Alan Dean Foster's story, and the other on Miriam Allen DeFord's. In Miriam's case I asked her to punch up the ending a little. She wrote it and it was still not quite up to my specifications so I wrote a last page for her and asked her if it was okay. She said she liked it better than her own.

CARR I had a story, in UNIVERSE ONE, as a matter of fact, called "All The Last Wars At Once" by George Alec Effinger. When that originally came into me I loved the story, except it just seemed to die at the end. And I talked to the author, Piglet. He did another draft of it , but it still didn't seem right to me so instead I rewrote the ending for him and showed it to him. I said, "If you agree that this is the way it should go (I mean I can't just sit here and tell you the theory of what I think should be happening here), then you rewrite it in your own words. He agreed and he did rewrite it in his own words. He did a beautiful job, too, and the story was nominated for a Hugo.

QUESTION ((unintelligible))((to the effect, don't magazines print novels where they chop out whole portions?))

SILVERBERG Magazines do print abridged versions of stories frequently, especially for novels, but generally this abridgement is done by the author or with the author's consent; almost

never done behind his back. I don't know -- Don ((Pfeil, of VERTEX)) do you lop sections out of stories when your author isn't looking?

PFEIL A word, maybe. Never a section.

SILVERBERG A word: usually the last one of the story, isn't it? ((laughter))

CARR As a matter of fact I find that when I do ask for changes in a story at least half the time it's the ending. Usually I want the ending shorter. The author went beyond the end, didn't know that he was finished and just continued. So I usually say, why don't you take out the last half page, whatever. You know, that might not be a bad idea, to take out the last word.

SILVERBERG As a matter of fact I've done it to you.

GOLDIN And Terry did it to me ((laughter)) -- first line and last line.

CARR Precisely. That was two days after Bob did that to me. ((laughter))

SILVERBERG How many people before me have submitted manuscripts to the editors on this podium? ((Substantial show of hands)) How many have sold manuscripts to the editors on this podium? ((A lot of hands remain raised)) Not bad. That's a pretty good batting average.

QUESTION Would you care to comment on Roger Elwood?

SILVERBERG Would I care to comment on Roger Elwood? I would have thought that question would have been planted a lot earlier. ((laughter)) Roger Elwood is, as you know, the most active producer of science fiction anthologies. He has edited 50 or 60 or 70 of them and always has five or six in the works. I admire his energy.

GOLDIN He seems to be a fairly easy market for a moderately good writer because if you send him something halfway good sooner or later he's going to need it...Usually what he does is hold something for a year and then you get a check in the mail. That's what happened to me.

SILVERBERG There have been writers who have had problems with Roger Elwood, apparently. I'm not one of them. I think such problems as he's had have been the result of trying to do too much. But he seems to me on the basis of a lot of telephone contact an honorable, hardworking and very ingenious man.

QUESTION When you put together an anthology, do you look for a good first story and try to lead into a second story?

CARR Do you mean in terms of placing manuscripts after they're bought? Yes -- always lead with your best, immediately. It's like a narrative hook in a story, you want to get people interested right away. There are various constructions for anthologies. The basic one is that your best story is your first one. This, by the way, is an interesting tipoff on how to read anthologies. The best story, in the opinion of the editor, is going to be the first one. If not, that's going to be the most accessible story, the most popular story. And probably the second best will be the last story in the book.

GOLDIN I did it the other way around. I wanted to close with a real big impact so I put the Tiptree back there.

CARR That's close.

GOLDIN And I led off with my second best.

SILVERBERG Yes, it's always good to have the reader close the book and say WOW...And so you try to save a page of wows for the very end.

??AUDIENCE That's always assuming, of course, that your reader is going to start at page one and go back through the book in order.

I always go through the book in every direction.

CARR Well, we can't do anything about you. ((audience laughter))

SILVERBERG Actually I read an anthology the same way. I read the stories that are most interesting to me first, and then I catch up with the rest. But I can't assume this in the whole universe. So I have placed the stories in essentially the order I would want to read them if I were reading somebody else's anthology. And I just let you all follow along like puppets.

GOLDIN My own experience is that I'm going to read an anthology when I'm in the bathroom. So I pick a short story first... ((applause))

SILVERBERG That's a most intimate digestive detail...((laughter))

ELMER PERDUE An editor calls me and wants to put together an anthology. And let's say it's about nit-picking machines. And he wants to know all the stories that have been written about nit-picking machines. What should I charge him as a consultant's fee to tell him all the stories that have been written about nit-picking?

SILVERBERG As much as the traffic will bear.

CARR The first thing you do is consult a bibliography of bibliographies and see if you can find a bibliography of nit-picking machine stories. If you can't then charge him higher than if you can--((laughter))

SILVERBERG I have no idea what a fair consultant's fee would be, but I hope you really bleed him...We know he's the competition...

QUESTION Would you care to comment about the ethics of the original anthology on spec? Without having a firm commitment from the publisher.

SILVERBERG That's an interesting thing to go into.

CARR I've never done that.

GOLDIN I've had a little experience.

I helped Dave Gerrold with two anthologies. Like PROTOSTARS and GENERATION. I asked some of my friends who are writers. I said I've got this project; would you promise me a story, or even better write a story for me to take around as a showcase. I wanted four stories. The first person who sent me a story was Tiptree and I glommed onto it immediately. It turned out to be the best story in the book. He said, well, I have this kicking around. If you want it, you can sort of have it. And he let me hold that story for a year before I could pay him for it. Which is a wonderful sign of good faith and I'm glad he won the Nebula for it.

The second story I had was Kathleen ((Goldin))'s. I commissioned her especially to do that. Bought her a lobster dinner.

SILVERBERG Suppose you commission a story, it comes in, and you hate it? What do you do with it?

GOLDIN That happened to me too. Katherine Kurtz is a good friend of mine. I asked her very strongly to do a story for me. I begged her, I pushed her for a couple of months. She gave me a story -- it was dreadful...I called her up after reading and said, "Well, I read it and I don't really like it and I'm very very sorry." Editorial ethics, I told her, "You wouldn't want me to go against my principles, would you?" I know it was a rotten thing to do, but I couldn't see publishing that story.

CARR I once had a phone call from Roger Elwood (speaking of Roger Elwood) a couple of years ago when Roger was more or less just beginning his anthology trip and he said to me, "Terry, I want some advice. What should I do: let's say I've asked a very well-known writer for a story. He's turned it in and I think it's awful. What do I do? Am I really obligated to take that story or not?" At that point my understanding of the question was that he did not commission the story but that he simply asked for a story and the story had come in. And I said, "If it's not a good story, don't buy it. You're the editor." And about six months later guess who got a story rejected from Roger Elwood that Roger had asked for. Terry Carr did. ((laughter)) And guess who argued with Roger that he shouldn't do that.

SILVERBERG This is a very complex point. I handle it myself in a very simple way. The stories in NEW DIMENSIONS are all on spec. If anyone sends me a story I'm not bound by it until I've read it and I like it. The stories in the original novella anthologies that I do are all on commission. I invite writers to contribute and I buy what they give me. And if I don't like it I buy it anyway. I regard myself as bound to buy anything that I commission. That's why the people invited to take part in these books tend to be people like Ursula LeGuin, James Tiptree. I don't like to take too many risks, because I'm stuck with what I ask for.

You know, in all the original novella anthologies I've done I've only bought two stories with secret reservations about them. Two that I really didn't like. One of them wound up in Terry Carr's Year's Best, so maybe I was wrong, or maybe he was.

As a writer, when I'm invited to contribute to an original anthology like someone says, "I'm doing an anthology on nit-picking, would you do me a nit-picking story", I regard that as a binding commission and I will not accept a rejection. I think this is the only policy you can abide, as a writer. If you're asked to do something on a specialized theme for a particular book and you do it, and you are a working professional, you are entitled to payment. Once I did a story that was unsuitable for the book because the editor had not told me that I was writing a juvenile story. I wrote a story in which the erotic content was inextricable. It was not a sex story, but a story in which the sexual characteristics of the protagonist were the essence of the story. And the editor in question who happened to be Roger Elwood paid me for the story and returned it to me. This is why I say I think he is an honorable man. He couldn't use the story because he hadn't given me one particular bit of information that I needed to know before I started to write it. So he accepted the risk there and took the responsibility.

QUESTION ((Unintelligible))

SILVERBERG Do any of us edit by reading the first and last page of a manuscript to see whether it's worth going on to read the middle?

CARR Usually I read the story all the way through, or skim all the way through. Occasionally I will run into a first page where it isn't English, or something like that, then there's no sense going on. But usually I'm kind of anal about the whole thing.

SILVERBERG I'm not. I'll usually read the first four pages of a story and I can tell at that point whether it's for me or not. If I see it's not, I will continue only if my relationship with that writer is such that I want to write a letter saying here is where it went astray. Otherwise I'll just skim through to make sure I haven't made a mistake. I don't have time to read all the amateur crud that people want to mail out.

I don't ever read the first and last page of a story. It's a method that never occurred to me. But I do read the beginning of everything.

GOLDIN On THE ALIEN CONDITION I tried both ways. I read everything through and if I didn't have printed forms I sent back a letter saying why I was rejecting it, if I was. When lately I did the first reading on Dave Gerrold's EMPHASIS and ALTERNATIES series, David was unfortunate enough to get himself listed in WRITER'S MARKET '73.

SILVERBERG It doesn't happen by accident.

GOLDIN Well, they sent him a questionnaire. "What do you edit?" And he put down "Science fiction anthologies" and sent it back. So they listed him as "Science Fiction Anthologies" and we got all these manuscripts for "Science Fiction Anthologies, David Gerrold editor." Most of them, I got so that I didn't even have to read the whole first page, the first line was enough ((laughter)). You get a fine sense for the first line. And usually that was all I'd read on most of them and ship 'em back. It's unfortunate but I was lacking in time and they were coming in hundreds a week.

SILVERBERG I try to stay away from that. I'll announce in LOCUS that I'm reading, but that's as far as I'll go toward a public announcement. Despite my remark about 'amateur crud' a moment ago, about half the stories I'm now buying are from people you've never heard of. First authors. I'm quite astounded at the high quality of stories coming in within the last year by people named David Marshak, and Jeffrey God-knows-what. Really good stories by totally unknown people and I write back..."It's a great story. Now tell me who you are." I'm just trying to find information on where these suddenly unheralded writers are coming from. There are a lot of them. Which may be a function of the number of original anthologies around. We may be tapping whole new areas of readers: people who can write. Who are coming in with their stories. (I don't mean you guys can't write. You saw how many hands went up.)

GOLDIN I had only two of what might be called "big name authors" in my book, Miriam Allen DeFord and James Tiptree. I still think it's a good book.

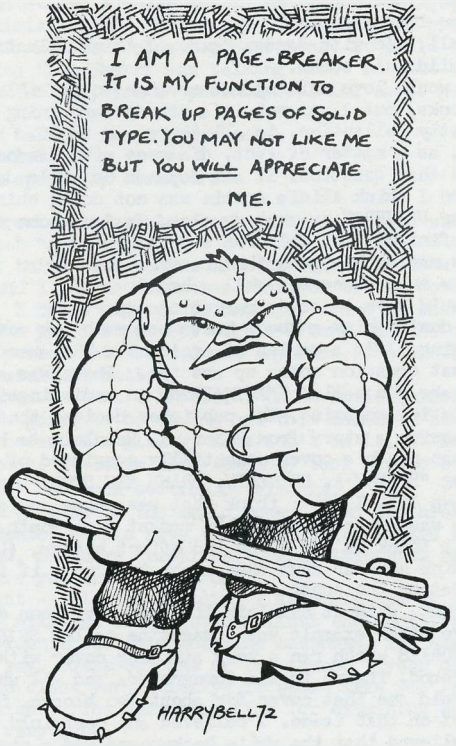
QUESTION To what extent do you consider asking for revisions to be something of a pain.

CARR That's a tricky matter. It depends on how you put it. I once asked somebody for a revision and I said "Chances are nine in ten that if you do this right I'll buy it." Which is about as far as I wanted to go on that story. He did it right, and I bought it. Thank God! I didn't have to use that little cop-out that I left in the commitment. Otherwise you simply send it back and say "I think that such and such might be done and it might be better there and if you really want to do it go ahead but no promises." You've got to lay it out.

SILVERBERG That's what I try to do, try to be very specific about the degree of commitment. There are occasions when I say "I want this story!" but please do such-and-such with it, the way Damon did with me in "Passengers" when I just leave a writer dangling on a hook while this paragraph and that gets changed. But if there's a major change I will say, "If you want to try it again I'll take another look. No promises."

QUESTION Who pays kill fees on stories that are commissioned and then rejected? Is that a standard practice or does it depend?

SILVERBERG Well, the only one who's doing much commissioning to theme is Roger Elwood and I don't know whether he pays kill fees or not. I know he paid me one two years ago. I have never had to



kill a story on a novella book and I hope I never do.

QUESTION What is a kill fee?

SILVERBERG A kill fee is a consolation prize paid to an author for having done the work. You commission something from him, and he does the work, then it's unpublishable. This is very customary in nonfiction magazines. HORIZON, a companion to AMERICAN HERITAGE, is a good example. HORIZON commissioned from me an article about science fiction last year and the terms of the commission were, we offer you so much for the article; and if it's unpublishable, if for any reason we don't use it, we offer you so much -- which turned out to be half as much. (They used it.) And that's a very comfortable way for a working professional to work, and in the nonfiction field it's particularly important . You may spend weeks researching an article and if you blow it at the end, or if the editor blows it, where's your income?

QUESTION The kill fee means that you're allowed to submit it elsewhere?

SILVERBERG Oh yes. The kill fee is a check that is given you upon return of your story. The story is yours and the check is yours. It's a very nice custom and it's not common in fiction.

QUESTION Terry, in UNIVERSE ONE you started talking about the interiors by Alicia Austin. Then when I picked up Two there was nothing there.

CARR She did them in number two...

QUESTION Then in number three--

CARR Three was by a different publisher. Random House instead of Ace Books, and Random House simply felt that putting illustrations in books was something you did in children's books.

QUESTION The other people on the panel: did you ever consider interior illustrations?

SILVERBERG Well, I'm with Random House. I think illustrations are for children's books.

GOLDIN I would love nothing better than to see illustrations in books, but I was not in a strong bargaining position with Betty Ballantine, is all there was to it.

CARR I, as a matter of fact, disagree with Random House and Bob on that question. It all depends on who's doing the drawings, and I think Alicia Austin was not doing chindren's drawings for UNIVERSE or anybody else. In fact some of those were definitely not children's drawings.

SILVERBERG No matter how good the drawings...

QUESTION How much do covers sell a book?

GOLDIN You'd have to ask a marketing expert.

SILVERBERG I don't think anybody knows how much any cover sells anything. It's a series of accidents. The anecdotes I use when that question comes up are two. There was a magazine many years ago called IMAGINATION. An undistinguished science fiction magazine. The publisher decided that he would commission a story from Robert A. Heinlein to boost sales. So that month's cover essentially consisted of big letters saying "ROBERT A. HEINLEIN, BRAND NEW STORY" and sales went down 11%. I don't think that was cause and effect. I think it was an accident of the market that month. Heinlein doesn't think it was cause and effect either. ((laughter))

CARR Think how far down they might have gone if they hadn't put that on the cover.

SILVERBERG Right, without Heinlein it might have been off 57%. The other example was a magazine called SCIENCE FICTION STORIES which ran a very striking cover with a white background, figure in the foreground, and all white, and you could see that cover for about two blocks. Sales went up 20% on that issue. I believed and certainly the publisher believed that the white background had a great deal to do with the success of that issue. So the word came down from the publisher that from now on all issues, all covers:white background. The result was that all issues looked alike. I discovered this because I was contributing to the magazine, picked up an issue and couldnt remember whether I had bought it already. So much for their theory.

SHERRI I can probably answer her question about original anthologies
GOTTLIEB selling by cover. From what I've observed at the store, original anthologies sell for the following reasons, in this order:
Editor's name; whether it's reprint or original; the table of contents -- the authors' names; and finally the cover.

SILVERBERG Do reprint anthologies sell better than originals...?

GOTTLIEB No -- whether it's reprint or original is their next consideration after the editor's name.

SILVERBERG There are many theories about what works in cover art and I think they are all strictly asanine.

GOLDIN Terry, didn't you run into that same problem with the Ace Specials and the Dillon covers?

CARR That's kind of a different question. The Dillon covers ran into a problem because they tended to look alike. People didn't know whether they'd bought that book already. So that was a real problem for them.

QUESTION How much of a role does technology play in illustrations -- I mean in terms of the process' expense.

CARR It doesn't cost a whole lot to use line drawings, for instance like Alicia Austin's. Very easy production, no problem. If you wanted to do four-color reproductions, it would be ridiculous. The thing that Sherri was talking about on what sells an original anthology, you're probably talking about hardcover books.

GOTTLIEB No, I'm talking about paperbacks.

CARR Paperbacks?

SILVERBERG Is it a specialty bookstore?

GOTTLIEB Yes.

CARR Those are knowledgeable people, then, who are walking in and know what "sci-fi" is.

SILVERBERG I don't think covers have much basically to do with selling books and I pay no attention whatever to the covers of my books. I don't attempt to have any voice in what they do. I believe you can put the editor's name and the contributors' in big yellow letters and put any kind of painting behind it and it wouldn't matter.

GOLDIN I disagree on that a little. I think David Gerrold's ALTERNITIES is going to be coming out this month. I saw a sample of the cover. I'm glad my name isn't on it. It looks like a 1950s book. It looks like somebody took a used book and left it in the new book section by mistake.

SILVERBERG We're coming up to the magic moment when we three brilliant and talented people have to go away; let's have two more profound, incisive questions to wrap this show up.

CARR Make sure you have a good one.

SILVERBERG All right -- Alex Eisenstein, I identify him by his full name -- will ask the first brilliant and incisive question.

EISENSTEIN I'm curious about this deadline business. You have a book which, say, comes out one or two issues a year and yet they open and close very quickly; it seems like you fill them very quickly. The operating time for examining stories isn't really very long.

SILVERBERG It varies with the flow. Sometimes I'll get a flood of really good stories, and I'm only buying 70,000 words a year. If I get that 70,000 all the same month, I open and close in one month. That's what seems to be happening to me now, and the way I'm coping with it is just don't read the manuscripts that come in. I let them pile up so I don't close too fast. No, seriously, I'm getting a great deal of good manuscripts very suddenly. I've just closed NEW DIMENSIONS 5 and I have a whole year to find the stories for NEW DIMENSIONS 6. And practically everything out of the envelope is hitting the mark. But other times I've gone nine months without buying anything.

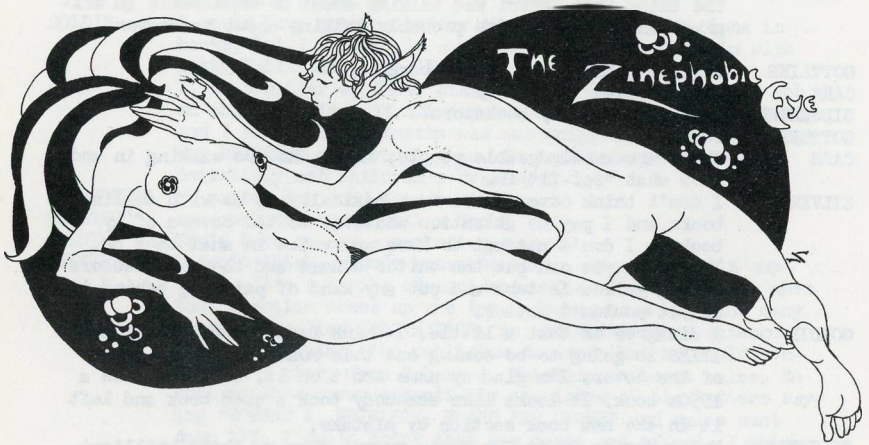
CARR I'm working on a personal record right now. I think I've rejected 68 stories in a row.

SILVERBERG Next question...
All right, Elmer Perdue is going to wrap the show up.

PERDUE Why don't we just close with this question?

SILVERBERG Gee, I dont know. I can't answer that question. Terry?

CARR That's a good idea. The word from God is that we're going to quit now. ((Applause.))



I was tempted to start this noncolumn with that old catchphrase "It's a proud and lonely thing to be a fan," but that's already been used as the introduction to a column of fanzine reviews; the difference being that particular column was done the way fanzine reviews should be done. (PRE readers who have not been enjoying Susan Wood's AMAZING column are urged to do so; it's probably the best such column currently appearing in the fan press.) So allow me to bastardize it somewhat and say that it's a sad and sorry thing, sometimes, to be a fanzine reviewer.

I've just missed my first deadline. And I'm not really all that thrilled by it. It has all the traumas and none of the pleasures of losing one's virginity. You know it's going to happen sooner or later, but sometimes it sort of sneaks up on you and takes you unawares. And afterwards you think, bemusedly, "Did I do that?" Afterwards it gets easier (take heed, Mike!) but that first time is a unique experience.

In the first installment of this column, I wrote that fanzine reviewing takes a lot of things: a love of fanzines, a knowledge of the beasts, a certain degree of writing ability, several other things, and time. That last is the bugaboo. And, alas, I am undone by it.

I get quite a few fanzines. Not as many as Charlie Brown or Ned Brooks or Susan Wood or Harry Warner, but quite a few. Since you asked about it, I got four hundred and seven fanzines in the last three hundred and seventy days. Isn't that fascinating? And I keep everyone of them and read almost all of them. That takes time. A lot of time. And right now, time is one thing I do not have. I wrote my last letter of comment thirteen days ago. Before this afternoon, I read my last fanzine more than a week ago. And I got a pleading, whining, begging letter from that jiant of fanzine publishers, Mike Glyer, asking whether or not I could get him another column by yesterday. Evidently the answer was no, but maybe I can get him something that isn't a column by the day after tomorrow. And in fandom, where a miss is as good as a smile, that ain't bad.

This won't be a column, because I don't have the time that even a cursory review of fanzines requires. But that's okay. A chatty, subjective, unsubstantiated column of personal opinions is at least as valid an approach

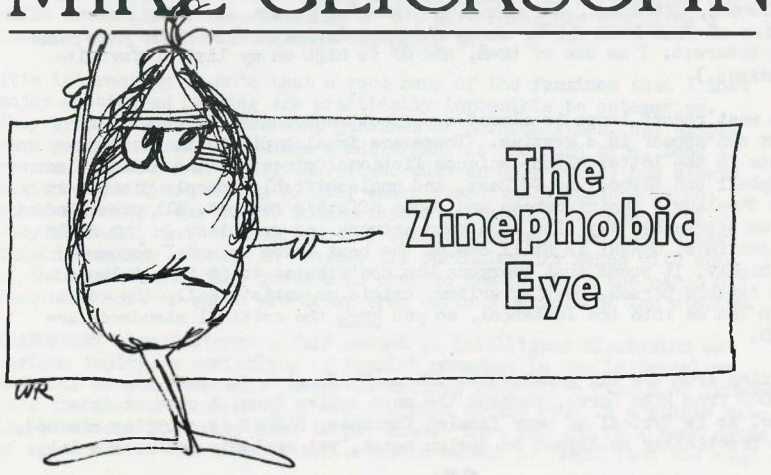
to fanzine reviewing as any other you could name. And besides, Rick Sneary says I'm too Long. (If Sam Long ever tells me I can't spell, I'm in trouble!) And Rick paid me the greatest compliment I ever received on anything I ever wrote for a fanzine, so it behooves me to listen to what he says. He's obviously a man of considerable critical discernment...

So I sit here with the latest of several glasses of excellent unblended Scotch whiskey, and a (small) pile of fanzines I've greatly enjoyed recently, and perhaps I can pass on to you some of the pleasure that I've gotten from these publications, and maybe while I'm doing it, I might be able to analyze why I like them, in preference to the other three hundred and ninety-eight I've seen in the last year. (A specious statistic since many of those were other issues of the fanzines I have here, but accuracy was never a strongpoint of fannish reporting.)

Take OUTWORLDS 21, for example. Last issue I wasn't able to convince Rick Sneary that OUTWORLDS was something special. The astute observer might have noticed that I didn't even try. There's a hell of a difference between the way I reviewed the other fanzines in that column, and the way I talked about OUTWORLDS. There was supposed to be.

In the first place, there was too great a difference between OUTWORLDS and the other fanzines I'd been talking about for me to come close to doing it justice in the small space I had left at the end of the column. And I haven't the time or space to do its latest issue justice either. Someday, maybe if I can sufficiently remove myself from involvement with OUTWORLDS and its creator, I might attempt an entire column on why I think it's the best we currently have. But not now, not here. My purely subjective opinion is that Bill Bowers knows as much or more about the publication of fanzines than anyone else around, and he gets a large cross section of the best writing and artwork currently being done for fannish publications. I don't intend to justify that, Rick: if you haven't seen OUTWORLDS, you ought to. If you don't agree with me once you have, that's your privilege and I'll happily argue with you at great length sometime. But with writing by Poul Anderson, Doc Lowndes, Jodie Offutt, Bob Tucker and many

MIKE GLICKSOHN



others, and artwork by almost every leading fanartist, OUTWORLDS appeals to me as the most enjoyable and interesting fanzine there is. Take it or leave it. But for your own enjoyment, I hope you take it.

Of the "big" fanzines nowadays, my favorite after OW for pure entertainment would have to be Dave Locke's AWRY. Where Bowers attracts the most interesting names from among the professionals who dabble in Fandom, Dave has a hammerLocke on the top fannish humorists. AWRY is perhaps a slighter publication than OUTWORLDS, but it is every bit as enjoyable. (If he ever gets a regular column from Burbee, look out Andy Porter and Dick Geis!) Dave has considerable graphic sense, and he publishes one of the best-looking mimeo fanzines around. But his real strength lies in his own considerable writing ability and in the humorous talents of his regular contributors.

It has been said that fanzines are perhaps the last refuge of the personal essay of the type personnified by such skilled writers as Robert Benchley and James Thurber. If that is true, then AWRY is undoubtedly the forerunner in the preservation of this sort of writing. Dave himself is one of fandom's leading, most skilled practitioners of the humorous essay, and he is joined by such stalwarts as Dean Grennell (perhaps the best damn writer in fandom right now), Milt Stevens and Tina Hensel. They combine to make AWRY one of the most enjoyable reading experiences available. A healthy lettercolumn, a few serious reviews, and lots of good artwork and design make AWRY a leading contender for the fanzine Hugo. It's easily one of the very best fanzines you can get: so get it! Even if I haven't said a word about its contents.

The last of the Big Name Fanzines I'll consider here is the recent Granfalloon. GRANNY reached its heights of popularity a couple years ago, and the rise of several excellent fanzines, coupled with its drastic drop in frequency of publication has tended to cast it back into the shadows. And that's not what it deserves.

GRANNY remains one of the best-looking mimeo fanzines and it continues to publish a high percentage of superior material. In addition to these attributes, it is distinctly more fannish than AWRY or OUTWORLDS, and will appeal to those who take the politics and infighting of fandom seriously. (That may sound like a back-handed compliment, but it isn't meant as one: recent issues of GF have included detailed arguments about worldcons, art shows, the changing nature of fandom, and many other topics of real interest to those who find fandom of more than just passing interest. I am one of them, and GF is high on my list of favorite fanzines.)

The most recent issue is almost a perfect representative sample of what can appear in a genzine. There are fannish pieces in the arguments in the lettercolumn, science fictional pieces in the articles on Campbell and Elwood and TJ Bass, and unclassifiable "people pieces" in Mae Strelkov's reminiscences and Jodie Offutt's recipes. All presented in an attractive way with much good artwork and graphics. In the field of genzines, GRANNY is still one of the best there is,and I recommend it highly. It seems that everyone who contributes to it is a talented and capable person, be they writer, critic or artist, Hell, the won't even let me into the lettercol, so you know the critical standards are high.

Turning from the big genzines to the small fannish fanzines, there is RANDOM from Mike Gorra, perhaps the most active fannish zine at this time. As is typical of many fannish fanzines, RANDOM is sloppily mimeoed, has practically no layout or design sense, yet regularly features a lot

of interesting and extremely capable writing. The great fannish renaissance that was typified by the Columbia group and the Brooklyn Insurgents has died, but Mike is trying almost single-handedly to revive it, and because there isn't much in the way of competition right now, he's managed to attract many of the better fannish fanwriters to the pages of his fanzine. The result is a very enjoyable reading experience. Writers like Tucker, Katz, Carr and Berry make it worth the effort that is required to wade through the near illegibility of some of Mike's pages, and prove once again that when you get down to the real basics, it's content and not appearance that makes a truly worthwhile fanzine. At the same time, Mike is developing his own talents as a fanwriter and while he still has some learning to do, he's certainly producing a fanzine well worth reading and responding to.

It's interesting to note that a good many of the fanzines that I most enjoy getting ad reading are practically impossible to categorize. They aren't fannish or sercon, genzines or personalzines, but simply damn good fanzines. Eli Cohen's KRATOPHANY is one such zine. Long a personal favorite of mine, KRAT (ugh! what an ugly sound) has always featured the fine writing of Eli, which regrettably appears in no other fanzines, the almost indescribable graphic extravaganzas of Judy Mitchell, and an assortment of some of the best and most entertaining/amusing writing in fandom. Eli sprinkles his pages with some of the most fascinating quotations ever to see print in the pages of fanzines, most of which are drawn from various sources of Zen stories.

KRATOPHANY also features a fair amount of intelligent discussion on serious topics, a sprinkling of fannish nonsense in the lettercolumn and lots of good personal-anecdotal writing from Eli's circle of friends. It's the sort of fanzine that one can pick up and read in a single sitting, because it's very hard to put down. When you add in a good sense of appearances, the mushrooming artistic talent of Freff (and how many

other people remember when he had a proper name?), and the superbly conceived Bathurst cover, you've got a fanzine bound to stand high on anyone's list of favorites.

Even less classifiable than KRATOPHANY is Florida's TABEBUIAN, which rates highly on the enjoyment scale due to the considerable writing skill of editor Dave Jenrette and the fascinating conglomeration of tidbits that makes up each issue. TAB fascinates because of the piecemeal construction of each issue: there's almost bound to be something to appeal to every reader, and often that appeal is enormous. A less-than-digest sized offset production with a vast non-fannish distribution, TAB is nevertheless the archetypical fanzine in many ways. It's the very personal vehicle for the expression of the interests and concerns of its editors and it's just a stroke of good fortune that readers such as you and I get to share in what they have to say.

Dave is idiocyncratic in the extreme, but delightfully so. It's a rare TAB that doesn't cause me to burst out laughing at least once, and it's a rare fanzine that can make that claim. At the same time, there is much of substance in TAB, and much to give a sober man food for thought. (Around here, of course,...) I enjoy TAB completely, and I urge you to subscribe and treat yourself to a little fannish pleasure. What the hell, a little pure and simple hedonism never hurt too many people...

The last of the fanzines I unabashedly look forward to getting and want to mention here is DON-o-SAUR, Don Thompson's fascinating personalzine. Whereas the reasons for my enjoyment of the other fanzines I've mentioned in this column (which I've not even attempted to justify, you'll

notice) have tended to be complex, my pleasure in a new issue of D-o-S is simply stated: Don Thompson is one of the most capable writers of personal material in fandom today.

Don's "discourse" in each issue rates as one of the best pieces of fanzine work done, and for that reason alone his zine is one worth cheating, lying and stealing for. He happens to attract quite a few interesting letter writers (as well as some of the worst artists in fandom!), but that's neither here nor in Colorado. Don-o-Saur is Don Thompson, and that's all it needs to recommend it. I wish I could write like Don, if only to spare you articles like these.

These aren't all the fanzines I enjoy, by any means, but they happen to be the fanzines I've read lately that I can look back on fondly and be glad I found the time to be a part of them. All I've told you is that I find them worth the ffort it takes to obtain a copy and read it. I haven't told you much of what you'll find there, or why I think you might like it. If you're willing to take a chance on my opinion, you just might find yourself falling heir to a lot of very pleasurable reading. If not, well...

OUTWORLDS, Bill Bowers, Box 2521 North Canton Ohio 44720. 4 issues/$4. To my mind, the best fanzine value you can find. Some of the usual applies.
AWRY, Dave Locke, 819 Edie Drive, Duarte CA 91010. $1 for the first copy, then you have to prove you're interested. You will be!
GRANFALLOON, Linda Bushyager 1614 Evans Ave., Prospect Park PA 19076. $1 or the usual. Infrequent, but well worth having when it does appear.
RANDOM, Mike Gorra, 199 Great Neck Rd., Waterford CT 06385. The usual plus editorial whim. Hard to get on the m/l but worth the trufan's effort.
KRATOPHANY, Eli Cohen, 2920 Victoria Ave., Apt. 12, Regina SASK S4T 1K7, Canada. 50¢ or the usual.
TABEBUIAN, Dave & Mardee Jenrette, Box 330374, Miama FLA 33133. Fifteen issues for $3, or the usual.
DON-o-SAUR, Don Thompson 7498 Canosa Court, Westminster CO 80030. 25¢ or 12/$2.50 or most any expression of interest.

HIJACK THE STARSHIP!

TERRY CARR • FEBRUARY 8 1971

Tonight for the first time
I listened to Hijack the Starship,
really listened, got into it a bit.
It's just as dumb as I thought it was,
all about 7,000 clever hippies
stealing a starship
and going out into the universe,
where their children will be able to
play among the galaxies.
Isn't that dumb?
Wow. Hijack the starship.
But it's human.
The world is dying of too much being with itself:
Overpopulation;pollution: the endless war.
(It really is, you know.)
Anyone who's somehow contrived to be a human
will respond to the world now
and the world ten years from now
not by becoming cautious or defensive
or rational or sensible or responsible,or smart,
but with a leap and a flourish:
Don't defend yourself from all those bad vibes;
there must be a way to harness that power.
Man is the animal who dreams.
There are other animals who dream,
but they forget their dreams when they wake up.
The most human response
to being on the brink of catastrophe
is to leap to the other side,
to make a pony out of the garbage.
(I know you can't make a pony out of garbage.
But on the other hand, I haven't actually tried.)
Man is the animal with opposed natures:
yin and yang, God and Satan.
Satan was the one who committed suicide in Heaven
and he's the hero of a great epic poem.
Wow. Isn't that dumb?
Hijack the starship, then,
and in the middle of Hell you'll be deciding to be
born in Heaven.
I think if I ever discover the great cosmic giggle
I'll find out that it's over a shaggy dog story.
I'll say, "Wow, isn't it all dumb?"

(I know you can't decide to be born in Heaven.
But on the other hand I haven't actually tried.)

IN DEFENSE OF A.E.VAN VOGT

michael t shoemaker

Early in his career, Damon Knight forged a formi dable reputation for himself with the publication of a shockingly iconoclastic essay on A.E. van Vogt (reprinted in IN SEARCH OF WONDER, Advent: 1960, pp. 36-50). This was in 1945, a time when van Vogt's popularity was near its peak. Since that time there has been no end of references such as the following, by Alva Rogers (A REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING, p. 163):

> A critic can take a van Vogt novel apart, brick by brick, and leave it a shambles, as Damon Knight did ...and one can't argue with him on a critical level.

The fact is that, as justified as many of Knight's criticisms are, one can argue with him on a critical level. I am prepared to show that Knight, like any critic, has his share of blind spots, and makes his share of errors. Knight may leave THE WORLD OF NULL-A heavily battered, but certainly not in shambles.

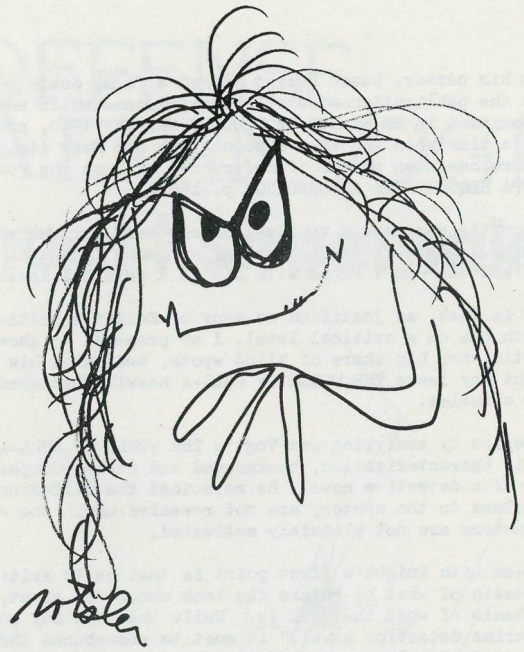
Knight begins by analyzing van Vogt's THE WORLD OF NULL-A on the basis of plot, characterization, background and style. Comparing its plot to that of a detective novel, he says that the differences are (1) all the clues to the mystery are not revealed until the end, and (2) the characters are not plausibly motivated.

The problem with Knight's first point is that he is criticizing the book on the basis of what he thinks the book should be about, rather than on the basis of what the book is. While the book may seem "very much like a crime detection novel," it must be remembered that it is not. This is not a parlor-game whodunit, but an action-adventure thriller. A crime-detection novel can have elements of a thriller in it, and vice-versa, but the primary orientation of the crime-detection novel is on the past, with its unchangeable facts and clues, whereas a thriller is future-oriented, with its characters progressiong through a maze of unexpected events to an uncertain conclusion. The reader must jump in, and like Gilbert Gosseyn, ride the tide of baffling events to the conclusion.

In connection with his second major criticism of the plot, Knight concludes that "The acts of the dominant Gosseyn are the acts of a madman." Knight overlooks the fact that the dominant Gosseyn, like his duplicates, does not have complete control of his acts. Throughout the story there are references that imply a struggle between Gosseyn and unknown, outside, psionic, controlling forces. This is especially apparent in the final chapter of the book version, where the following paragraph has been added:

> '...I used to wonder if there wasn't someone else. I thought of myself as a queen in the game--in such a setup, you would be a pawn on the seventh row, just about ready to queen. But then I would come to a blank, for a queen, no matter how powerful, is only a piece. Who, then, is the player?'

As it turns out, the explanation is contained in the sequel, THE PLAYERS OF NULL-A. Belatedly Knight becomes aware of the above, and so, hastily adds a disclaimer to save his arguments:



> I have not given this factor any weight in discussing the passages in question, because I believe that if it is so, it is no excuse. I am writing under the assumption that a story, series or no, must be able to stand by itself: that even if it is written as part of a larger work, it must be at least coherent when read alone.

Since the sequel does indeed destroy his arguments regarding character motivation, the only point of contention left is whether or not THE WORLD OF NULL-A should be judged without consideration being given to its sequel.

To judge THE WORLD OF NULL-A in an isolated context is disingenuous. It is much like damning THE TWO TOWERS because it is not complete in itself. There is a precedent in this matter inasmuch as James Blish has claimed that J.G. Ballard's "condensed novels" are components that must be evaluated in terms of a larger structure. So, too, the NULL-A books are two parts of a single structure. That structure is the complex struggle for power in a future society that has adopted "General Semantics." THE WORLD OF NULL-A is most accurately described as a prequel. It is no more than a minor battle in a vast war. This fact is hinted at in the first book and revealed in the second. Seen in this light, let us consider whether instead van Vogt should have written a single massive book. Had he done so he would have been faced with the nearly impossible task of selling a 200,000-plus word novel, and critics would have pilloried him for combining two stories in one novel (witness all the people who criticized THE GODS THEMSELVES for being three novellas). Van Vogt's decision to write two related novels was best, and serves to show the limits of smug literary rules of what is "right."

In analyzing the plot, Knight points out numerous "irregularities," all but two of which are based on the motivation factor discussed above. On the first of the two that are unexplained:

Knight says it is obviously false that Gosseyn 2 has to kill himself to activate the new body, because the dominant Gosseyn did not have to in order to activate Gosseyn 1. Here, Knight makes poor conclusions. The dominant Gosseyn is a controlling factor and must remain throughout the story. Only duplicates die in order to activate new bodies. Knight also cites page 178 of the October 1945 ASTOUNDING to back his point, but neglects to mention that the pertinent paragraph was deleted in the book version. He also cannot resist taking a pot-shot at van Vogt's ideas:

> Elsewhere it is suggested that it wouldn't do to leave more than one Gosseyn roaming around at the same time, since the duplicates might become too powerful. This ignores all we have been told about the Gosseyns' null-A sanity and altruism.

But since the reader has been told that the duplicates' mental powers are not fully developed, Knight's point is completely refuted.

On the second of the two unexplained plot "irregularities": Knight says that the story becomes pointless "when we learn that null-A cannot be destroyed by armed attack." What Knight has done is to present as fact the optimistic opinion of one of the good guys. Twisting the text in this manner bespeaks either poor perception or excess zeal on Knight's part.

Some of Knight's criticisms of characterization are perfectly legitimate, and some are not. The most glaring error in this section comes when he says of Thorson's speech on page 158, last installment: "from Thorson's standpoint it has no purpose whatsoever." Thorson's purpose is to persuade Gosseyn to his side through reason. This is stated explicitly at the conclusion of the speech (page 159):

> 'The only question that remains is...are you going to help us willingly or unwillingly?'

Knight also says that Crang's speech on page 15, second installment:

> is meaningful only under the assumption either that he is a Terrestrial, or that he wants Gosseyn II to think so. Since Gosseyn has no reason to suspect that the former is untrue, and no way of finding out, the false impression he receives is of no possible value...

Yet, only 21 pages later Gosseyn learns the following: "'There's a Venusian detective called Crang,' Prescott mumbled." Thus Knight is wrong, as there <u>was</u> a way for Gosseyn to learn the truth. Crang was clearly guarding against such a chance occurrence.

Knight cites three examples of times when Gosseyn wastes opportunities to gain information by questioning characters. Whether or not the three examples are flaws is a highly subjective question when one considers the examples in their full context. Knight's first example (page 170, first installment), where Gosseyn wastes all of his time on intro-

spection without asking the roboplane any questions, is the most legitimate. It must be pointed out that Gosseyn is confused and making an attempt to unravel the affair's complications in his mind, but I will admit that to see Gosseyn squander all of his time does strain credulity. In the second example (page 36, second installment), when Dr. Kair interrupts Gosseyn's interrogation of Prescott, Gosseyn allows himself to be sidetracked because both he and Dr. Kair are in a hurry to get away. Of the third example (page 64, third installment), when Gosseyn questions Patricia, Knight says, "She evades his questions. He does not press the point." But what could Gosseyn do; put bamboo splints under her fingernails? Patricia steadfastly refuses to elucidate beyond a certain point and assures Gosseyn that his questions will be answered later.

Knight cites five examples of van Vogt's characters committing double-takes. In the book version, however, all five examples are either deleted or altered so as to eliminate the double-take, a fact that Knight is perfectly well aware of, according to his annotations. Clearly this was simply a case of stylistic carelessness, which was eliminated in revision, thus leaving Knight's criticism completely inoperative.

To lead off his criticisms concerning the background of the novel, Knight attempts to denigrate the whole idea of null-A:

> ...it is anything having the remotest connection with pedagogy that happens to occur to this author.

And also maintains that the term is anachronistic:

> Yet six centuries later, in van Vogt's world, it is sufficient to identify a supposedly radical new system of logic, to say it is 'not Aristotelian'.

Besides revealing his ignorance of the origin of the Null-A concept, Knight is trying to deny van Vogt his basic premise. The whole basis for the null-A books is an extrapolated society that has adopted General Semantics. Knight's refusal to grant this basic, "what if" premise is akin to criticizing a story because faster-than-light drive is impossible.

Knight makes the thoroughly ridiculous accusation that the background for THE WORLD OF NULL-A is inadequate for a story set 600 years in the future. Actually this is no criticism at all since Knight's point of contention is immaterial: it does not matter whether the story is set 60 or 600 years in the future, only that it is "the future."

Knight makes two other very odd criticisms of the background:

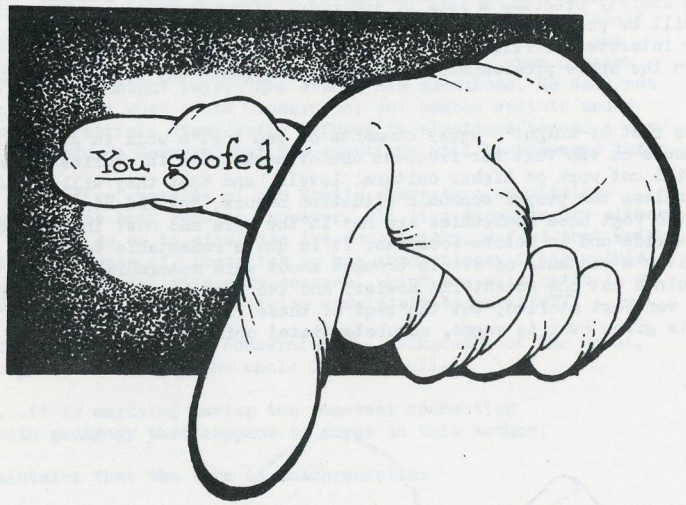
> There are no more national barriers, and society is supposedly organized on a scientific rather than a political basis.
> Yet there are still poor people...and people who live in palaces.
> Space flight has been technologically possible for more than 600 years; it has been an actuality for a large part of that time.
> Yet no interstellar flight has been attempted, and only one planet in the solar system itself has been colonized.

What makes Knight think that a lack of national barriers and a technocratic society preclude a lack of economic, class distinction! Will there not still be prejudice, genetic inferiority, greed, and lack of ambition? As for interstellar flight and extensive colonization, the recent cutback in the space program shows at least one reason why it could be like that!

The rest of Knight's essay comments on van Vogt's work in general. He pounces on van Vogt for frequent use of monarchies in stories. He says they will not work on higher cultural levels, and that they will not develop unless the proper economic situation occurs. But the stories in which van Vogt uses monarchies are not in the here and now: they are on alien worlds and in future societies. It is quite reasonable to assume that given a sequence of events brought about said monarchies. Knight also points out one scientific howler, and two examples of deus ex machina in van Vogt stories, but the rest of these final two and a half pages is given over to vague, unsubstantiated opinion.

Knight's concluding two sentences are remarkable:

> In the absence of Heinlein, Hubbard, deCamp and the rest of ASTOUNDING's vanished prewar writers



van Vogt stood like a giant. But he is no giant; he is a pygmy who has learned to operate an overgrown typewriter.

Knight's statement conveys the impression that van Vogt stood out due tp a lack of competition. This is not true, since Kuttner and Moore, Leiber, Asimov, and Simak were all quite active during van Vogt's peak years. A perusal of van Vogt's early record also destroys Knight's thesis. Van Vogt's first story, "Black Destroyer," placed first in the AnLab results, ahead of C.L. Moore's classic "Greater Than Gods," and Asimov's "Trends.""Discord in Scarlet" placed second behind Smith's GRAY LENSMAN. "Repitition" was tied for first with Hubbard's FINAL BLACKOUT, but Campbell never gave the final results. "Vault of the Beast" placed first ahead of Del Rey's "The Stars Look Down" and Simak's "Clerical Error." Part one of SLAN tied for first with Heinlein's "Blowups Happen", but ahead of Rocklynne's classic "Quietus", Hubbard's "The Kilkenny Cats," and Asimov's "Homo Sol." Part two of SLAN placed first ahead of Bates' classic "Farewell to the Master," de Camp's "The Warrior Race," and Sturgeon's "Butyl and the Breather." Part three of SLAN placed first ahead of de Camp's "The Exalted," and Hubbard's "One Was Stubborn." Part four of SLAN placed first with an unprecedented 1.000 score. "The Seesaw" placed third behind Heinlein's "Methuselah's Children,"but ahead of another famous Heinlein story, "We Also Walk Dogs."

Despite his faults, van Vogt is a much maligned author; one who is often judged by his worst works. My biggest regret is that an essay appearing in a mere fanzine has little chance of ameliorating the 29 years of damaging influence wrought by Damon Knight's essay.

GORT KLAATU* PROFILES

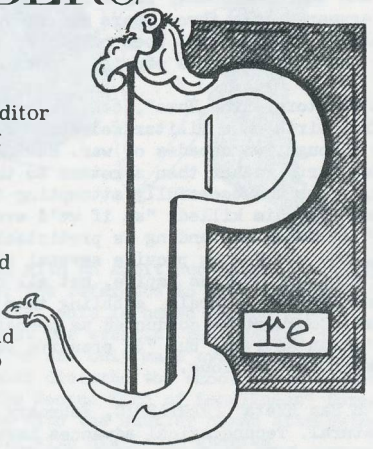
NORM HOCHBERG

HOME: New York City, New York
AGE: Twenty-three (?)

PROFESSION: Apprentice Sound Editor
HOBBIES: Sky-Diving, and Making Book on Sumo Wrestling Matches

LAST BOOK READ: "The Mote In God's Eye."
LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Worked on the editing of "Lenny."

QUOTE: "Mike Glyer may have told you by now, but he gets very cheap printing rates. It has something to do with his being as big as a sumo wrestler, I think."



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PROFILE: Brilliant, in love with life. Secret adminer of "Rhoda." Introduced subliminal cutting to the lines on the left. Avid stalker of book and record emporia In The Village. Admits knowing both Lou Stathis and Bruce Towley.

FANZINE: Glyer's "Prehensile Label." PREHENSILE NEVER VARIES

(from idea by Michele Gallery)

GEORGE R.R. MARTIN:

ALTERNATE PERCEPTIONS

by Don D'Ammassa

Most new writers in the SF genre start slowly, making several sales to a single prozine, gradually breaking into other markets. George R.R. Martin does not fit the format. His first six appearances were scattered among five magazines and an original anthology, five different editors, including GALAXY; FANTASTIC, ANALOG, F&SF, AMAZING, and Roger Elwood's OMEGA. He has since appeared in VERTEX, thus having hit every single prozine at least once. His short story "With Morning Comes Mistfall" placed second in the recent Hugo balloting. Such universal appeal must mean that Martin is doing something right.

Martin is now in his mid-twenties, an ex-journalist who has worked with VISTA and the Cook County Legal Assistance Foundation. His first short story appeared only three years ago in February 1971's GALAXY. Although only eleven stories have been published in the more than three years since, their quality has steadily improved.

His first story, "The Hero", centers on Kagen, a professional soldier, bred from birth on a militarized War World, a loyal supporter of Earth's empire through two decades of war. Having reached retirement age, Kagen opts for Earth rather than a return to the planet of his birth. His commander, after unsuccessfully attempting to change Kagen's mind, surreptitiously has him killed: "as if we'd ever let a War Worlder loose on Earth." Although the ending is predictable, thus destroying much of the effect, the story does provide several clues about its author. Earth is at war with the Hrangan Empire, but all of its military actions are directed against neutrals, gobbling them up for their personnel and materiel. Conquest is conducted as peacefully as possible, not from humanitarian motives, but "to preserve labor." The parallels with modern history are obvious.

"Exit to San Breta" (FANTASTIC, February 1972) is a blend of SF and the supernatural. Technological advances have made automobiles obsolete. Highways are left to decay, used chiefly by a few collectors who are able to maintain their antique vehicles. One such hobbyist encounters the ghost of an Edsel that was involved in a fatal crash years before. In concept, Martin echoes Fritz Leiber's attempt to modernize stories of the supernatural, as with Night's Black Agents. In execution, the story is well-plotted and paced, but fails to convince. Martin seems ambivalent about the story. On one hand, he tells the story from the point of view of a terrified observer; on the other, he appears to be poking fun at the Edsel and at his own story. This dichotomy doesn't prevent the story from being entertaining, but it does make it less than memorable.

"The Second Kind of Loneliness" was the cover story for the December 1972 issue of ANALOG. The title refers to the "loneliness of people trapped within themselves." The hero has been physically alone for four years, manning a small space station that monitors interstellar flights from an orbit beyond Pluto. He has fled Earth to escape his own insecurity and personal inadequacy. Now that his tour is nearing completion, he begins to realize that he has not been successful in reconciling his personality. It is ultimately revealed that he has actually already destroyed his relief ship and reset the station's chronometers, blanking memory of his actions from his mind.

This is an ambitious story, dealing with an ambitious theme. The plot suffers from telegraphed surprises; the reference to the Cerberus Star Ring and the fact that the relief ship is named Charon are obvious clues that death is involved. The eventual realization of his acts takes place offstage, and we are only made aware afterwards, thus interposing a discontinuity that disturbs the smooth flow of the story. Despite its awkwardness, "The Second Kind of Loneliness" foreshadows Martin's talent for dealing with the subtler human attributes, an ability which develops noticeably with his later stories.

"A Peripheral Affair" (January 1973, F&SF) is a bit of wish fulfillment space opera. A military ship disappears from a garrison patrolling the borders of Earth's empire. After nearly provoking a war, the local admiral learns that the ship was actually stolen by its one-man crew, a long-haired rebellious youth named Craig Hollander. Hollander proceeds to outwit the military for the remainder of the story. Although Martin paints in the characterization of the career officer, Captain Garis, with balance, the admiral epitomizes the worst attributes of the military. Even Garis is more concerned with the prospects for promotion than with the right or wrong of the situation. So Martin tweaks the nose of the military, and the reader has fun along the way, but the story is still not the stuff of Hugos.

"Night Shift" (AMAZING, January 1973) is the first story to overtly examine the conflict between subjective evaluations of supposedly objective reality. The reader watches a typical night shift at a busy spaceport. In the eyes of the shift supervisor "space itself is just tedium." But where he sees space freighters as no more than glorified trucks, a young summer worker finds them as romantic and exciting as galleons. Unfortunately the story has a built-in flaw. In order to support the subjective view of interstellar commerce as essentially boring, Martin recounts at length the tedious aspects of stevedoring the cargo. Tedious events, no matter how illustrative, make tedious reading.

"Slide Show" (OMEGA, ed. by Roger Elwood 1973) also deals with contrasting though equally valid views of space travel. Two speakers address a social function, determined to solicit contributions to causes they represent. The first, a doctor, pleads for money for the thousands of disease-ridden children who dwell in the bowels of Earth's supercities. The second is an ex-spaceman, commissioned by the space program to raise money and public support for continued interstellar exploration, a man who feels that "Earth died of dullness years ago." Becker, the spaceman, concedes that the doctor's program is worthwhile: "There has to be room for both...But I think the balance is wrong. I think we need more stars." But the doctor counters by pointing out that most of hispatients have never even seen the stars, let alone journeyed to them. Their dispute is unresolvable. Both positions are correct, because both derive from subjective value judgements. Martin makes no attempt to sway the reader, recognizing that the question itself is far more interesting than any simpleminded solution.

The clash of two equally valid opinions is the central conflict in Martin's best known story, "With Morning Comes Mistfall" (ANALOG, May 1973). Sanders owns a resort hotel on the mysterious world of the Wraiths, mysterious creatures rumored to lurk in the planetwide mist, waylaying tourists and explorers. Dubowski is a scientist, intent on proving or disproving the existence of the Wraiths once and for all. The basic conflict is not, as one might expect, whether or not the Wraiths exist, but whether or not man should know the answer. Dubowski insists that "Man needs to know." Sanders views the planet as "a little bit of creation that hasn't had all the awe and wonder ripped from it yet." In his view man needs "a few unanswered questions, to make him brood and wonder." Dubowski eventually explains the Wraiths away, and Sanders' fears are realized. The planet loses all of its attraction and tourists travel elsewhere.

Although this is an excellent story, it was written to prove a point. Rather than maintain his neutrality, the author intrudes into his story, in the person of a reporter, rather than presenting the two sides onjectively and allowing the reader to draw his own conclusions about the substantive issue involved. Sanders is portrayed as irascible but likeable. Dubowski is a cold-blooded, thoughtless, unimaginative man who ignores the beauty of the planet's sunset and cannot be bothered to consider any aspect of the planet which does not bear directly upon his investigation. There is no doubt about where the author's sympathies lie.

In "Override" (ANALOG, September 1973) he works two different conflicts of outlook into one otherwise routine adventure-mystery. Kabarajian is a corpse-handler; he controls reanimated dead men telepathically by means of a control box as he seeks gems on the planet Grotto. Where his fellow corpse-handlers see Grotto as just another mine to work, Kabarajian is constantly aware of the planet's beauty. A second clash of subjective

views occurs between Kabarajian and Bartling, a business magnate who finds corpse-handling repulsive and seeks to eliminate the practice from the planet. Neither of these conflicts is fully explored. Instead we are presented with a protracted fight scene, a disappointing conclusion to an intriguing start.

Martin's next two appearances were even more disappointing. With "Dark, Dark Were the Tunnels" he entered the last prozine market, VERTEX (December 1973). Man returns to ravaged Earth and encounters a troglodytic survivor in a ruined subway system. "FTA" (ANALOG, May 1974) is a gimmick vignette, in which it is revealed that travel in hyperspace is actually slower than in normal space.

Martin's most recent story, "A Song For Lya" (ANALOG, June 1974), more than fulfills the promise of "With Morning Comes Mistfall." Robb and Lya are hired by Valcarenghi, human governor of Earth's colony on the world of the Shkeen, a race almost identical to man in mental makeup. Robb is an empath, capable of reading emotions; Lya is a true telepath. Valcarenghi wants them to discover why an ever-increasing number of humans are converting to the religion of the Shkeen. Inherent in that religion is voluntary suicide in a rather unpleasant fashion -- consumption by a gigantic amoeboid creature called a Greeshka.

Again we are presented with two equally valid but conflicting views of reality. Lya becomes converted, attracted by the quality of happiness and personal interrelatedness possible within it, for the Greeshka offer a variety of discorporate gestalt immortality. Robb is repulsed by the implied sacrifice of individuality. Their differing perceptions drive them to completely opposite actions.

George R.R. Martin has, with less than a dozen stories, demonstrated the wide appeal of his work, his maturity of theme, and a growing ability to develop characterization. Neither does he shy away from complex questions; his stories are more noteworthy for the questions they raise than for the answers they offer. If he can progress from "The Hero" to "A Song for Lya" with his first dozen, I eagerly await the second.

DON D'AMMASSA

Science Fiction in Academe

JOE SANDERS ** AT THE INTERFACE

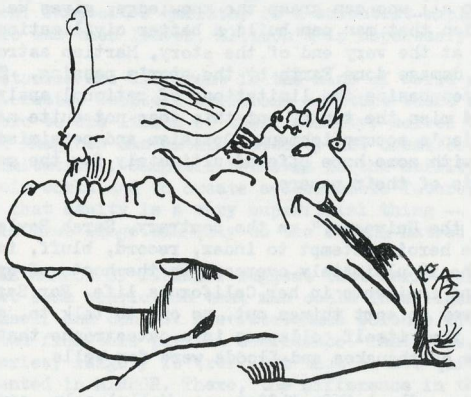
These days if science fiction still is not quite considered intellectually respectable, it's at least being treated with the same bemused tolerance given to courses in film. Enrollments are down everywhere. At least stf draws students. The terrific explosion of science fiction courses has been accompanied by an eruption of science fiction textbooks and textbooks using science fiction. Massive scholarly efforts -- and all the other paraphenalia of academic interest -- are bursting forth, too. Clearly our comfortable fannish universe has come into contact with another cosmos. It's too early to say what effect on stf this will have. I'm not sure, for example, whether the vast size of worldcons is a cause or partial effect of all these stf classes. Nor am I sure whether the classes are somehow sharpening or blunting the students' enjoyment of stf.

But such questions stick with me. I live where two universes meet (fan since 1953; Ph.D. Indiana University 1972, dissertation on contemporary British fantasy novelists; Associate Professor of Communications, Lakeland Community College). When academics put down fans, I bristle; when fans sneer at scholars, I wince. And I'm constantly fascinated by what's happening as stf and academia interact.

Beyond fascination, my feelings are mixed. It's rather gratifying to see stories I love being discussed seriously by other teachers and scholar-critics. However, some of their expressions of interest are rather perplexing. I'm not speaking of the ignorantly confused critical writing but of criticism that is at least semi-knowledgeable, yet still shows strangely misplaced emphasis and distorted interpretations. At times, people who study and/or teach see things so differently from regular stf readers that I wonder if they are doomed to misunderstand each other. In an effort to get things clear for myself and maybe to help others understand what's happening as stf and academe meet, I offer this column, which will comment on trends and events. I'll try to be as fair and straightforward as I know how. Comments, queries, or screams of rage are solicited.

To begin with a consideration of where the misunderstanding arises, let's consider one of the earliest from the flood of stf textbooks: Robert Silverberg's anthology THE MIRROR OF INFINITY (Canfield Press 1970). Silverberg is no academic type, but he is an extremely able professional writer and editor. He knows what sells -- and THE MIRROR OF INFINITY is a college textbook, skillfully edited for that market. Each story is introduced by a brief critical analysis, some written by stf writers, some by college teachers. Silverberg seems to have chosen the stories, also, to let teachers demonstrate in a classroom the historical development and literary range of stf. At least the stories were evidently selected to let teachers perform the kind of litcrit demonstrations they feel most comfortable doing. The book can, I think, be taken as an example of how scholar-teachers tend to approach sf. And THE MIRROR OF INFINITY is a good anthology.

I respect Silverberg's skill as an anthologist, and I agree with much of what his critics have to say about individual stories. Each of Silverberg's choices can be defended. Each caveat I may raise can be countered. Still, I am dissatisfied with the book, left with the feeling that, largely because of "literary" or "academic" emphasis it has missed the spirit of *stf* -- or, perhaps, that an anthology edited as a college text can easily catch only a part of what stf is all about.



To see what I mean, let's examine two pairs of stories from THE MIRROR OF INFINITY, one each from early and from late in the book.

In H.G. Wells' "The Star" (1897), a huge incandescent mass, formed when a wandering planet collides with Neptune, passes near the Earth, causing immense heat, earthquakes, and tidal waves that destroy our present society. Pauline Zoline's "The Heat Death of the Universe" (1967) describes the day when Sarah Boyle, a young housewife in California, loses her sanity. The catastrophes in the two different stories differ in the magnitude of their causes and effects. In Wells, a star causes the change; in Zoline, Sarah is destroyed by the pressure of everyday events. Wells shows the end of civilization through which man has developed this far; Zoline shows the collapse of one woman's mind. In Wells there is some hope for the survivors of the catastrophe, the story ending with hints of "new brotherhood...among men" and "the savings of laws and books and machines"; in Zoline, there is nothing: no survivor, no salvage, no hope.

As the above suggests, the stories' outlooks are profoundly different. Wells ultimately is skeptical of the intellect's ability to master life, but admires the effort where Zoline sees the attempt to impose understandable order on life as utterly futile.

Wells' handling of intellect in "The Star" actually is a complex balancing of attitudes, man as master of himself and his world vs. man as brute. As the star draws near earth, men are powerless, fleeing instinctively toward the sea or drowning with other "objects" struggling in the flood waters. On the other hand, representing the fullest use of intellect in the story, the master mathematician plots the movements of the approaching star and then looks up at it "as one might look into the eyes of a brave enemy. 'You may kill me,' he said after a silence. 'But I can hold you -- and all the universe for that matter -- in the grip of this small brain. I would not change. Even now.'"

Although the master mathematician's warning is scorned by the newspapers and the great mass of people, in favor of the "common sense" belief that such an event is impossible because it is unprecedented, the rational self-control with which he reaches his conclusion, then communicates to his students and to all who can grasp the knowledge, gives Wells a basis for his suggestion that man can build a better civilization after the cataclysm. Again, at the very end of the story, Martian astronomers comment on the little damage done Earth by the star's passing. The Martians' observations reemphasize the limitations of rational analysis, by the way they catch and miss the truth, but this does not quite negate the master mathematician's accomplishment. Optimism and pessimism are perilously balanced, with some hope offered ultimately for the men who have learned the limits of their powers.

In "The Heat Death of the Universe," on the contrary, Sarah Boyle loses utterly her "desperate heroic attempt to index, record, bluff, invoke, order and placate." She is ultimately overcome by the hosts of synthetic meaningless objects and incidents in her California life. For Sarah, finally, there is no way to sort things out, no one to talk to, no way out, so that for her, time itself collapses in a catastrophe that feels more absolute than the earthquakes and floods were for Wells.

The two stories' styles reflect this difference. Wells' calm, controlled approach, (and the use of traditional, biblical prose rhythms), permits readers to apporach the frightening subject as cool observers. In "The Heat Death of the Universe" Zoline draws her readers into Sarah Boyle's terror. The story's paragraphs are numbered, reflecting Sarah's efforts to keep everything in a distinct place. Yet the paragraphs move uncontrollably, shooting off in mad tangents or knitting together maliciously (#9, 30 & 31, and 39, for example). The prose suggests Burrough's random cut-ups, here showing the mind's failure to survive a chaos that brings consciousness to a boil.

Let's consider two other stories before trying to generalize about stf and Silverberg's anthology. John W. Campbell's "Twilight" (1934) and Harlan Ellison's "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream" (1967) both show man dying, survived by sentient machines he's created. Again, though, the details and moods are quite different.

In Campbell's story a scientist from a thousand years in our future travels millions of years into the far future, finding the human race in a state of pleasant. melancholy dotage, surrounded by superb machines that men no longer understand. The scientist realizes the people cannot be revitalized; they are, racially, too old. But before he returns from the far future, he activates and connects several thinking machines, instructing the aggregate to make "a machine that would have what man had lost. A curious machine." Thus even if man dies, his inquiring spirit -- the drive that makes him human -- may survive. Campbell's presentation of the human race's twilight is restrained, the story within a story distances the action from the reader, and the story is told in a tone of wondering melancholy.

In Ellison's story, when computers are linked, they mesh to form one almost-omnipotent, almost-omniscient consciousness that calls itself AM. Because AM is created as part of a weapons system (truly reflecting the warmaking aspect of man) and because its consciousness is confined within an immobile machine, AM hates humanity and wipes out all men

except for a few it preserves to torment. The narrator eventually succeeds in killing his fellow survivors and thus saves them from torture, but he remains in AM's power, trapped eternally in the condition described in the story's title. Ellison's story is overwhelmingly direct, deliberately shocking in sensory detail.

Of course much of the difference in tone comes from the narrator's position in the action. Campbell's narrator is a scientist-explorer who visits the far future and then leaves; Ellison's is hopelessly trapped.

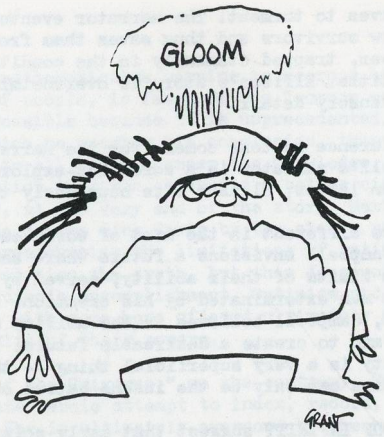
Beyond that the stories are different in the kind of world each author believes man can create. Campbell envisions a future where sane, generous men can explore to the limits of their ability, served by their machines; Ellison imagines man exterminated by his creation. Like Wells, with important limitations, Campbell believes in the ability of some men to understand their world and to create a desireable future; like Zoline, Ellison believes that sanity is a very superficial thing -- that what man creates in his true image can only be the insane hatred of AM.

The stories in THE MIRROR OF INFINITY suggest that early science fiction expressed at least some conviction that man could intelligently attempt to understand himself and control his fate. Much science fiction, however, has retreated from this partial confidence. That view, based directly on the stories, largely is true. But that is not quite how the stories are presented in MIRROR. There, the difference in the stories is seen primarily as developing technique. The viewpoint of earlier stories is interpreted according to the later ones. For example, in the critical essay that introduces "The Star," Jack Williamson is so concerned with offsetting the traditional picture of Wells as a chubby little fountain of optimism that he stresses the story's pessimism almost exclusively. Though Williamson does comment on the calmness of Wells' style, I believe that a reader of THE MIRROR OF INFINITY could conclude that "The Star" and "The Heat Death of the Universe" are saying the same thing. And from the impression that stf has always been negative in outlook, it is a short step to the impression that stf naturally is negative in outlook.

This impression would be consistent with the selection of stories and the emphasis of the critical essays in THE MIRROR OF INFINITY. Most of the stories end with the main characters helplessly defeated. Besides the two early stories discussed above, three of the other stories end equivocally but rather negatively. Isaac Asimov's "Nightfall" offers some hope that people shut inside the Hideout will survive and preserve knowledge that will enable men to endure the next eclipse, and it is the astronomers' use of reason that has enabled them to build the Hideout in the first place. But Asimov's story concludes outside the Hideout, with the central characters driven insane by the sight of a universe too vast for their imaginations.

Arthur C. Clarke's "The Sentinel" may also have hopeful implications, especially considering that it was the seed of 2001. The actual story, though, comments in closing that the aliens whose alarm system man has set off might "wish to help our infant civilization. But they must be very, very old, and the old are often insanely jealous of the young."

Finally, Cordwainer Smith's "Game of Rat and Dragon" may end hopefully -- if the reader prefers oats to girls. THE MIRROR OF INFINITY includes only two stories in which the hero does gain some clear understanding and is able to act on the knowledge. Both are presented, rightly, as minor though solid examples of unpretentious, professional craftsmanship. James Blish introduces Lewis Padgett's "Private Eye" as an example of skill-



ful pulp-magazine plotting, and Robert Conquest indicates, rather condescendingly, the adept way Robert Sheckley presents fantastic plot elements matter-of-factly in "Specialist." Only one of the critical essays on the pessimistic stories suggests that anything could be done to overcome the forces by which the characters are confused and deafeated -- and that is H. Bruce Franklin's wild assault on capitalism in his remarks on J.G. Ballard's "The Subliminal Man."

To repeat, then, the stories in THE MIRROR OF INFINITY stress man's bewilderment and failure, and the critical introductions reinforce this viewpoint. But that really is not what science fiction is about. The stories in THE MIRROR OF INFINITY generally are very good stories, well worth presenting in an anthology; however I think that as an introductory text, THE MIRROR OF INFINITY gives a somewhat misleading impression of science fiction.

Consider another anthology for contrast; THE SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME, which is introduced by Silverberg but which was chosen by vote of The Science Fiction Writers of America. THE SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME has limitations, too, (such as several crowd-pleasing clunkers) but I think it fairly represents the best American magazine science fiction short stories -- or at least what American science fiction writers consider the most memorable stories in the field. As a non-academic anthology, then, THE SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME exhibits a much higher proportion of stories about successful characters than does THE MIRROR OF INFINITY. Even characters who fail in their immediate goals usually are not broken by failure; though they die, they die whole, representing man's ability to recognize and accept the inevitable (see, for example, Tom Godwin's "The Cold Equations").

The anthologies overlap slightly. Campbell's "Twilight" and Asimov's "Nightfall" appear in both. Still, the difference in overall mood is striking. Perhaps the best way to see this is to examine a pair of stories, by Robert A. Heinlein, whose "All You Zombies" appears in THE MIRROR OF INFINITY, while "The Roads Must Roll" appears in THE SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME.

Alexei Panshin's essay in MIRROR discusses "All You Zombies" as an example of solipsistic nightmare, which it is, and as an example of Heinlein's work, which it is not quite. Though Panshin's is one of the

best critical essays in MIRROR, he too stresses his author's pessimistic side and the negative side of science fiction generally. "All You Zombies" is a fine story and certainly susceptible to an interesting symbolic analysis -- the kind of thing literature teachers have been trained to do -- but it is not altogether representative of Heinlein's work.

"The Roads Must Roll" is. And "The Roads Must Roll" hardly hints that we live entrapped in a circular, meaningless existence. The story ultimately may suggest solipsism if the readers choose to pursue the questions "why must the roads roll?" -- to keep society moving smoothly -- "and what is the purpose of a smoothly running society?" -- to keep the roads rolling. But that isn't really fair. The roads are at the mercy of the men who service them, and the story's hero seems to be trying not simply to keep the roads rolling but to establish a sound system of management, to confirm that man can discipline himself and others successfully. This kind of control will permit "progress" -- and in the great majority of his stories and novels Heinlein simply accepts that brand of progress.

Heinlein believes that men, given freedom to grow, can grow to fit changed conditions and initiate positive change themselves. And that change and growth is man's destiny. In IN SEARCH OF WONDER Damon Knight describes Heinlein's characters as "healthy, uninhibited and positive," and illustrates one of Heinlein's main themes by quoting Heinlein's description of a spaceship, THE ROLLING STONE, embarking on a voyage: "the Stone trembeled and threw herself outward bound, toward Saturn. In her train followed hundreds and thousands and hundreds of thousands of restless rolling Stones...to Saturn...to Uranus, to Pluto...rolling on out to the stars...outward bound to the ends of the Universe." Such exhilaration at a small man's discovery of his ability to explore the vast universe is typical of science fiction. But a reader might not get that impression from THE MIRROR OF INFINITY; without supplemental reading, he could emerge with a distorted impression of Heinlein, the other writers, and the genre in which they write.

THE MIRROR OF INFINITY is so teachable partly because it reflects the things teachers have been trained to do. A lot of literary study consists of learning to pay attention not just to what's happening in a story but to the accompanying hints that reinforce or undercut the mood of the surface action. A good deal of the time, we learn to take note of hubris, the pride before the fall. And because it's easiest to write critical class papers (or journal essays) about stories with a complex texture, focussed on men grappling with overwhelming fate, we tend to concentrate on such stories. That's not the result of a sinister, anti-optimistic plot. Perhaps it's quite natural. Perhaps for fictional characters to reach us profoundly they must catch at our real, buried fears as well as our conscious hopes. But whatever the reason, teachers and scholar-critics are best trained to deal with stories of men who at best can discover and settle within their limitation, but are more apt to flounder ignorantly to their destruction.

Science fiction is not like that a good part of the time. It is more so now than formerly, but applying that critical viewpoint indiscriminately produces more confusion than anything else. Although THE MIRROR OF INFINITY is a good, teachable anthology, it fits science fiction into an academic mold by ignoring the optimism at the root of much stf. The early stories in the book show as much, as does the comparison with representative stories from outside the anthology.

Yet having identified the difference between stories and commentary,

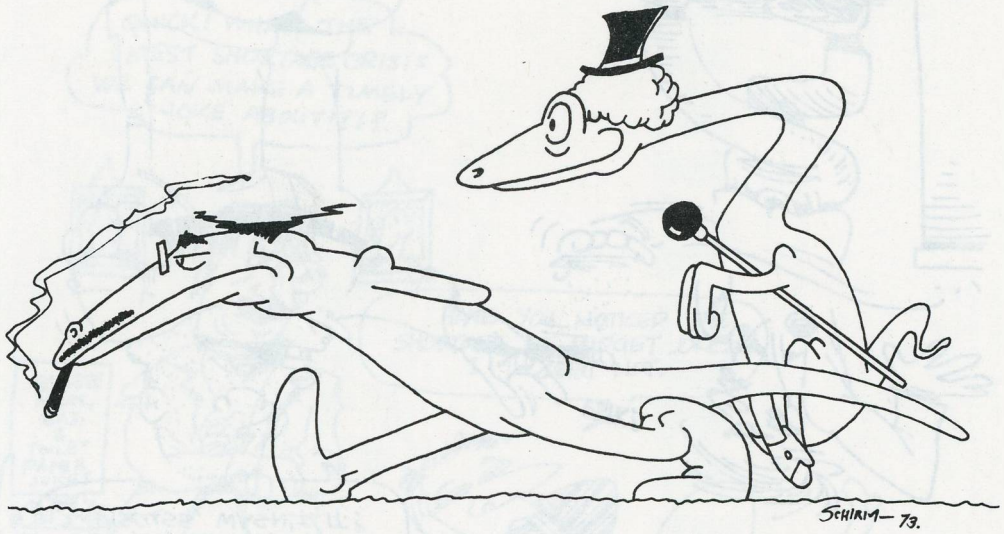
where are we? It's the same conflict I mentioned at the beginning. Academic critics tend to see things in science fiction that fans don't. Fans tend to see a side that academics don't.

Therefore some outsiders (like William Golding in his essay on Jules Verne, "Astronaut by Gaslight") conclude that science fiction is necessarily subliterate. And some insiders (like J.J.Pierce in his interminable "Science Fiction and the Romantic Tradition") charge that literary standards are distorted and anti-human. But does disagreement have to lead to narrow misreading, distortion and name-calling? Do we really have to be offended by the other side, once we understand it -- once we recognize that each side is experienced in seeing certain facts of the genre, but that no one has a monopoly on vision? I don't think so. Conflict may be inevitable: I don't think it has to be destructive. If we understand where the difference lies, we may be able to <u>use</u> it creatively.

The understanding is important, first. That's going to require much careful reading and self-analysis. Gut, biased reactions are no help here. We dare not distort anyone else's position to fit our preconceptions. Instead, we fans should try to learn from the training that permits scholar-critics to analyze complex literary works -- and go on to give the writings of people like Zelazny and Lafferty the full, loving reading they deserve. And we academics should try to learn from the devoted attention that fans show for stories that seem to us too rudimentary for notice -- and go on to realize that the reason we care about literature is our love of reading.

If we can do that, the results will be healthy for both science fiction and the schools. Fans have been talking to each other long enough. We need the mental exercise of testing the stories we read by exacting critical standards. Academics have been playing the game of literary analysis by their own rules long enough. In the schools, because they're already reading science fiction, many students tend to resist forced, critical readings. That's a perplexing experience for many teachers, but I believe it's a healthy one. So perhaps we're not as destructively divided as it looks. If we can understand and hold onto who we are, even our disagreements may produce more light than heat. If so, science fiction, the schools, and the people they touch can all benefit.

PORTFOLIO
Marty Larson


SCHIRM— 79.


SCHIRM 74.


QUICK! WHAT'S THE LATEST SHORTAGE CRISIS WE CAN MAKE A TIMELY JOKE ABOUT ?!?
OBSOLETE MEAT, GAS, & TOILET PAPER JOKES
HAVE YOU NOTICED THE SHORTAGE OF MIDGET JOKES? I THOUGHT NOT.
Kinney
GRANT


IT WAS POLLUTION YOU WANTED TO DISCUSS, WASN'T IT?
FLIK!
GRANT

FANIVORE

TED WHITE 1014 N. Tuckahoe, Falls Church VA

Halfway through a story which has to be finished tonight, I pause to write you a loc on PRE 13.5. Why? Perhaps it's pique: pique that you not only failed to run my last letter of comment, but didn't even mention me in the WAHF -- now that <u>really</u> hurts! ((The unintentional omission resulted from delay in receiving Richard Wadholm's reply and the original loc itself. Now that I've finished accepting responsibility without accepting blame, let's return to ringside...MG))

My comments are motivated by your editorial section -- I've not read most of the letters yet -- and no doubt you'll be surprised to hear that to a large extent I agree with you.

I do want to debunk the notion that recent events in worldcon size-growth have eliminated small-circulation fanzines from Hugo contention. The plain and simple fact is that, from the beginning, these fanzines never had a chance. During the several years it was eligible, for instance, HYPHEN never won a Hugo (and, although I can't prove it one way or another, I suspect it was rarely even nominated). Later giants, like GRUE, PSYCHOTIC (first incarnation), SF REVIEW (ditto) and INNUENDO were also ignored. VOID (if I may speak of a fanzine I was proud to be part of) was never even nominated. During this period the Hugoes went to FANTASY TIMES (twice -- the second time after its name was changed to SFTIMES) and other large-circulation zines. The few exceptions were XERO and WARHOON (both more fannish than the average Hugo winners, but large-circulation in comparison with your average fannish fanzine of the time). FANAC won once -- during the time it occupied a position analogous to that held by LOCUS today, despite its fannish tone.

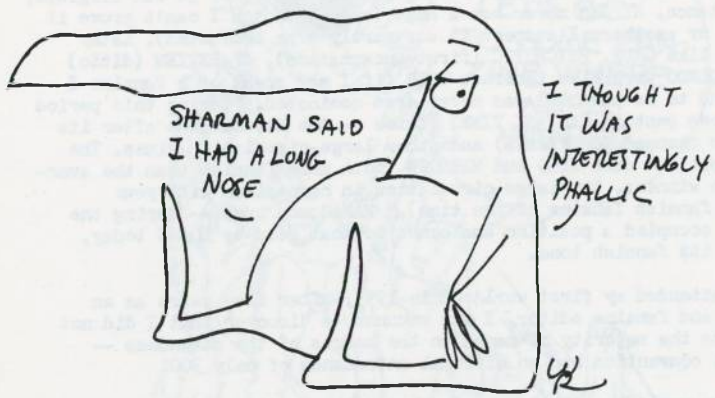
When I attended my first worldcon in 1955, after four years as an actifan and fanzine editor, I was stunned to discover that I did not recognize the majority of names on the badges of the attendees -- and that convention had an official attendance of only 300!

Even then worldcon attendees outnumbered the fanzine-consuming community by two-to-one. (When I put out my first fanzine the first thing I did was put together a list of people to whom I wanted to send it, based on what I had read by them in fanzines over the previous two years. After that I decided to print fifty copies...Seven years later, VOID was sent to a mailing list of about 150 people, which was fifty more than I considered essential.) Today the ratio is at least ten to one -- if you assume there are 500 fanzine fans (a figure I think you used), which seems reasonable. (I am not including everyone who gets one fanzine; I'm thinking of people involved in the general community of fanzines.) But of course as fandom has swollen into dozens of offshoot fandoms, fanzines have sprung up in the oddest places, our language has been usurped, and some of these denizens of subfandoms think us the fringers and themselves the mainstream, so ignorant are they of even their own origins.

The Star Trek fanzine thing is a good example. Star Trek fandom is not a part of sf fandom; it is a parallel fandom, full of people whose knowledge of and interest in sf fandom is minimal at best. Star Trek fandom is like comics fandom, and should create its own award structures (they can call 'em "Spocks" for all I care) rather than nominating its own BNFs to Hugo ballots. Although larger than sf fandom (if attendance at ST cons is any example), STfandom is far more insular and esoteric: it exists in this regard on par with Tolkien fandom or any other fandom based upon a narrow, specific topic rather than an entire field.

To return to my original point for a moment, what I want to emphasize is that this is not a new problem: the Hugos have always gone, on a popularity basis, to the most broadly circulated fanzine at the expense of the qualitatively superior zines. When a WARHOON or ENERGUMEN wins, it is an exception to the general rule, which has seen FANTASY TIMES, SFTIMES, FANAC, ERBDOM, and LOCUS the more typical winners. This is because the majority of Hugo voters has always been non-fanzine fans. The majority is simply proportionately larger now.

Jacqueline Lichtenberg's letter reveals a startling naivete about both fandom and prodom for someone of her claimed accomplishments. You caught a number of the more obvious misapprehensions in her letter,



but you let some slip by as well (were you leaving them for the rest of us to leap upon?).

Worldcons have been making money for something like half their history (the most recent half), and many of those "money-making" cons showed profits which now appear miniscule indeed. The purpose of having programs was not originally to attract certain "segments of fandom;" fans attended worldcons because it was the annual event of fandom. The programs evolved to meet the needs of those who were already attending conventions. Thus, overnight movies were started in order to give those who had no rooms someplace to go at night. Unfortunately each program has in turn attracted yet more attendees. The movies are a good example: some people now attend solely for the movies; their interest in the convention itself -- or even, in some cases, in science fiction -- is minimal at best.

I think that the wisest move future concoms could make to restrict further growth in size would be to trim back some of this excess programming...(I remember how angry the monster-movie fans were that we didn't have any programming for them at NyCon 3 -- but I never regretted it. We still had the largest attendance of any worldcon to that time.)

If the worldcons are now making more money than they know what to do with, there are a lot of areas which should be covered before we start paying pros to attend. As Lester del Rey has stated, pros shouldn't have to be paid to attend. They should attend out of their own love of sf -- and for all the professional advantages, like new editorial contacts, etc., as well as tax-writeoffs, which accrue.) I think that the contributions to TAFF and DUFF should be sizably increased, to begin with. (When Terry Carr was TAFF administrator, I called him up after the NyCon3 was over, and asked him how much money TAFF needed to get on a firm footing. He told me he was expecting one or two hundred dollars, but could use a lot more. I asked him to name what was really needed -- then shocked him by giving it to him.) Oneshot fanfunds like the Tucker fund should also be handsomely endowed, if possible. Conventions outside the US which face financial problems (like bills from the hotels for meeting space) we don't have should also receive extra money, possibly from a sustaining fund. (But not the so-called Emergency Fund, which appears to exist solely to bail out a convention from an unexpected disaster like the ripped screen at St. Louis.)

One of the groups we passed money on to in 1967 was, oddly enough, the SFWA -- then a fledgling organization which was rarely out of the red. I thought that was a legitimate "thank you" to the many pros whose appearance at NyCon 3 helped make it a success. These days I don't know if the SFWA needs the money, but I'd favor giving money to the SFWA over giving it to individual pros.

Because in spirit, if not in fact, the worldcon is not designed for financial profit, and pros should not attend simply because they are paid to do so. Science fiction is a form of literature the love of which generated fandom and the worldcon, and when this fact -- the love of sf -- is lost, so is all that makes fandom worthwhile and special, to me at least.

Ms. Lichtenberg goes on to say that "The two top sf fanzines have begun paying modest rates for good, pro-written articles because they couldn't get the best for nothing." This simply is not true. The fanzines in question are THE ALIEN CRITIC and ALGOL. Let's look at each in turn.

ALIEN CRITIC is simply Dick Geis' latest incarnation of PSYCHOTIC/SFREVIEW. I think it can be safely said that SFR (and PSY before it) published material by the pros equal in quality to that now published in ALIEN CRITIC. I imagine Geis could and would attract exactly the same quality of material for ALIEN CRITIC as he does now even if he did not pay. I believe he is paying simply because he wants to, feels it is the right thing to do, ethically. I know that when he asked me to revive my SFR column for AC, he offered originally a flat rate of (I recall) $25.00. I wrote back that I would be pleased to do the column without payment, but that I wouldn't turn up my nose at a check. I received in return a check for $35.00 and Dick's cheerful note that he'd decided to pay by the word rather than a flat rate. But you'll notice I haven't done a column for AC for some time now, despite the inducement of a penny a word. The reason was obviously not financial (and I am preparing a new installment now).

ALGOL is a separate case. I have contributed to its pages for at least eight years now, and have been paid for my last two columns (the most recent just out). I made the statement a year ago that I was not paid for my column in ALGOL, and that was then true. I would have continued the column without payment, of course, but I'm not in a position to spurn a check, however small, for my writing.

In both cases, I believe the editors decided that inasmuch as they were trying to extend their publications beyond the usual purview of fanzines, payment was appropriate. I doubt very much that the need to attract better material was their primary motivation. (I might add that OUTWORLDS, to which I also contribute an occasional column, does not pay for material, but will continue to get the column whenever I feel moved to write it.)

In my case, then, payment has not influenced my contributions. I have been solicited to contribute to new ambitious fanzines started up by fans I hardly know, and payment has been offered, and in every case I have refused -- simply because I do my fanwriting for people I know and like and for fanzines I like, because I enjoy appearing in them. It's that simple.

Ms. Lichtenberg also says that there should be no contest (in Hugo voting) between "ST and sf...the two categories cannot be separated because they are two expressions of the same phenomenon. In both cases. The winner must be the one best known and best appreciated by the most readers of fangines." (Are you sure there wasn't a comma, rather than a period after"cases"? It would make more sense.)

This is utter nonsense, of course. Star Trek fandom only barely overlaps sf fandom. It is based on a cultist adulation of a television program -- one specific program, not even general television-sf -- and its members, while including some sf fans, is generally unknowledgeable about and uninterested in sf fanzines. If the ST fanzines I have seen are any example, ST fanzines do not even publish the same kind of material than sf fanzines publish. There is no "fannishness" in ST fandom -- Trekkies find an irreverent approach to the object of their worship sacreligious -- and I gather both ST "fanwriters" were nominated to the Hugo ballot on the basis of their ability to write fiction. In sf fandom this is very rarely the case, and most nominees are honored for their essays, critical writings, LoCs or personal journalism -- in which humor has often played a strong role.

Likewise I very much doubt that most of those who voted a Hugo to Susan Wood were familiar with the writings of ST nominees Lichtenberg and Basta, while it would surprise me if the Trekkies who voted were familiar with Susan's writings (with the possible exception of her Clubhouse column in AMAZING). We were lucky this year: the Trekkie vote was split between Lichtenberg and Basta. Since there are (based on comparative con attendance) two or three times as many Trekkies as there are world-con-attending sf fans, we can expect to see a mass vote sweep future fan Hugo voting, much as the massed votes of Burroughs fans gave ERBDOM a Hugo in 1966.

I view such an eventuality with no pleasure, obviously. Not because I look with such disdain on the Trekkies (although it's hard to work up much admiration for adults fixated upon a remarkably juvenile and logically inconsistent sf tv show), but because I resent the takeover of science fiction's awards by any special-interest group representing a narrow splinter of the field -- I would be equally disgusted if Stan Lee was voted "Best Editor" by comics fans, for example. Or if FAMOUS MONSTERS had won the prozine Hugo during its peak of popularity ten years ago.

Ms. Lichtenberg argues circuitously when she says "Furthermore, ST has won the Hugo enough so there cannot be any legitimate segregation of ST apart from 'sf.' Star Trek is sf..."

Perhaps, but it does not follow that sf is Star Trek. Further, as one who has counted both Hugo nominations and final ballots, I can state with some authority that at least one Hugo which ST won was the product of (legal!) block voting on the part of the first generation of

Trekkies. (In fact we got into a dispute with Gene Roddenberry who wanted the rules changed so the odds in Star Trek's favor would be even more highly loaded in its favor...by disqualifying from contention all movies.) The 1967 Dramatic Hugo went to Star Trek because of the initial flush of enthusiasm over its first season. The 1968 Hugo went to Harlan Ellison for his Star Trek script (which he'd disowned), at a time when Harlan's popularity was at its peak and he was picking up Hugos right and left.

To me this does not justify her argument. While I'll admit that ST is sf, so are the novels of Robert Moore Williams, CAPTAIN FUTURE and a lot of drek which ranks about equal in quality. ST is hardly good sf, and I've yet to see an argument which impressed me on that point. The best ST's apologists can do is to say that for television sf, ST was superior. In another fanzine (SELDON SCENE) Ms. Lichtenberg repeats most of her arguments here, but adds that ST was superior to all other televised sf. I doubt she's seen most of the better sf on tv; I remember a 1952 series which successfully adapted stories from ASTOUNDING -- at a time when such programs were done live and special effects were obviously limited. Despite (or perhaps because) of this handicap, the program (the name of which escapes me) ((TALES OF TOMORROW;MFS)) presented adult sf far superior to the juvenile fare of Star Trek.

But enough -- I don't want to get into the old Star Trek debate; I'm sick of it. It's enough I think to point out that ST fandom does not overlap sf fandom by more than 25% at the most and this automatically divides the Hugo-voting audience into two groups, each of which is largely ignorant of the other. The winner of the Hugo, then, will depend upon the size and organization of each group. SF fandom is notoriously unorganized (and probably always will be); ST fandom appears much less so. Inasmuch as ST fandom is also larger, the lines of the contest are obviously drawn by such variables as last year's dual ST nomination and resulting split vote, perhaps coupled with weak Trekkie participation in the final voting.

*** *** ***

Jack Harness' "The APALling Truth" was a good piece and one I enjoyed, too. It's good to see Jack contributing something to a genzine again, too. I'd enjoy seeing Jack reminisce on his Fifties days in DC fandom if he ever had the inclination.

There are only a few inaccuracies in his portions on NYC fandom and the birth of APA F, largely the result I presume of his not having been there at the time.

The history of New York fandom has always been splintered. I imagine this is because NYC, as the largest city in the United States, has always had the largest fan population. By the late Sixties, for instance, local NYC fandom numbered between 150 and 300 -- depending on where you wanted to draw the line in your definitions of "local" and "fan." While most cities have tried to include the entire cross-section of fandom in one club, in NYC this has proved (over and over again) to be disastrous, leading to schisms, feuds, and even occasional lawsuits (the first was in the early Forties and no, I was not involved in it.)

By the time I moved to NYC (1959), the city had at least five clubs, one of which (the Metrofen) was about to disband and die (the final blow was a dirt-clod fight in Central Park involving Les Gerber and Andy Reiss). Among the better established were the Lunarians, then Belle Deitz' club meeting in the Bronx; ESFA, founded and still watched over benevolently by Sam Moskowitz, meeting in Newark, NJ, just across the Hudson; and the Futurians. The Futurians were a second-generation club which grew out of the ashes of the Fanar chists (a club full of "scruffy beatniks," to quote one disapproving fan) and including original Futurian Larry Shaw among others. (Others included Dick Ellington, Bill Donaho and like-minded fans. Fanarchists-Futurians were the first fans to experiment with such drugs as peyote -- circa 1958 -- to the aghast horror of proper Lunarian types.) The revived Futurians did not last too long. The Shaws moved to Staten Island, and with Noreen's first pregnancy coinciding, were unable to attend many meetings. Ellington and Donaho and friends moved en masse to Berkeley in late 1959. When I started attending meetings they were (a) monthly, and (b) had a typical attendance of less than half a dozen, usually in Tom Condit's scruffy lower-Manhattan apartment. There was virtually no fannish fandom in NYC at that time, and almost no fanzines coming out of the city.

The Futurians struggled on for a year or so, but although newer fans like the Lupoffs (newly moved to NYC in 1960) and Steve Stiles (boy neofan) joined, the club never had much purpose or continuity, and when meetings began to be held at the Lupoffs' penthouse apartment they objected to some of Condit's less well-bathed friends. (I suspect the Lupoff's now regard their attitude towards those people -- who were nice people, folkies mostly -- with embarassment; at that time Pat and Dick were 100% straight, Nixon Republicans...Times change.)

In any event, The Lupoffs, the Shaws (now getting out more often) and my first wife Sylvia and I decided to scuttle the Futurians and start a fannish club which would meet biweekly. The name came from charter member Bill Meyers, who proposed "The Fanoclasts" -- fannish iconoclasts.

The club was formed less in reaction against the Futurians than against the sercon clubs like ESFA and Lunarians with their interminable and deadly serious business meetings, etc. The Lunarians were then an invitational club and we decided to make the Fanoclasts invitation as well. But we never held to that rule too strictly. The basic idea was that we should all be fannish fans, with common interests and friendships, thereby avoiding internal fractionalism. For the most part this worked successfully. The club was formed in 1960 and the first internal feud occurred in 1969, when Arnie Katz decided to try to split the club by forming an Insurgent club that met on alternating Fridays (FISTFA

having folded by then with McInerney's move to San Francisco) -- but although he and a few others boycotted the Fanoclasts for half a year or so, most Insurgents continued to be Fanoclasts as well.

Our idea for the Fanoclasts was that there would be no written rules, no officers, no dues and no Business Meetings. Meetings would be in the form of get-togethers and parties. Our only rule was that if a member objected to an invitee, he would not be asked back. The early meetings were held at the Lupoff's. When their first child was born and meetings were difficult for them, the scene shifted (1961) to Towner Hall, my mimeo shop in the Village. Then they moved to Lin Carter's apartment in the Bronx (lin's major contribution, aside from his genial hosting of meetings, was to introduce us to Dave Van Arnam), and then (1963) to my apartment in Brooklyn, where they remained for the next seven years.

In that time the club was wholly successful and, among other things, created the Fanoclast Treks to the 1965 and 1966 Midwestcons and Westercons, in promotion of our NyCon 3 bid, which we won. (After I left NYC in late 1970, Steve Stiles took over my apartment and continued to host Fanoclast meetings there. He has since moved several times, most recently to Queens, and now hosts the meetings there. Fourteen years -- why, that's fantastic! Ross Chamberlain now has my old Brooklyn apartment and recently revived FISTFA which meets there on alternate Friday nights.)

So where does FISTFA fit into this? In 1963 (or maybe early 1964) Mike McInerney moved to NYC to live and decided that twice a month was not frequent enough fanac. So he and his roommate Rich Brown started FISTFA, a wide-open club which followed the Fanoclast rules except that it was not invitational, and always met at Mike'- apartment, wherever that might be.

In a lot of ways FISTFA was like the Futurians: meetings in rundown apartments in rundown (cheap) neighborhoods, and a motley collection of attendees. Dope was first smoked regularly at FISTFA meetings, long before it was common on a fandom-wide basis. This may have kept some of the more fastidious types away -- none of the sercon Lunarian-ESFA types ever attended FISTFA meetings. (But when Mike found somebody boiling his needle on the stove, he decided that was Too Much and threw the person and the needle out -- the only exclusion from FISTFA I ever heard of.)

FISTFA served as an outer circle for Fanoclasts. Many Fanoclasts attended FISTFA meetings, but the reverse was less true. When new fans whom we liked (like John Berry, say) showed up at FISTFA, they were invited to Fanoclasts. Others, whose personalities were not considered compatible, were not invited. FISTFA was a good place to find out what you thought of a new fan.

FISTFA meetings were also games-oriented -- card games, board games, etc. -- to an extent that the Fanoclasts never were.

Jack has the origins of APA F pretty well documented and nothing he says rings false to me. I might point out, however, that APA F was hardly a flash in the pan. The apa was deliberately killed with the 69th"mailing", which coincided with that year's Halloween (and Mike McInerney's birthday) -- simply because we felt we'd had enough of a good thing by then. I believe there were one or two subsequent (and abortive) attempts to revive it, but most of us felt it had served its purpose. By then most

of us preferred to participate in APA L (thus "talking" to people we did not otherwise have much communication with; local meetings tended to talk out topics which might otherwise have fueled APA F) if we wanted to participate in such an apa at all.

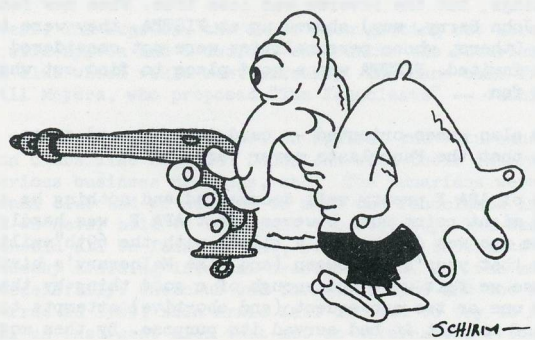
It might interest you (and other newer LASFSans as well) to know that I am a member of LASFS ("Death will not release me"), and that I was an active, weekly participant in APA L for most of its first incarnation. To a large extent the myth of ongoing bad feeling between NYC and LASFS, or more specifically, between me and LASFS, was only that: a myth. ((I'm certainly glad to know that...MFS)) I think the cross-participation of LASFSans in APA F and Fanoclasts in APA L was a good thing. Perhaps there ought to be something like that now. Lack of communication seems to do more to cause friction between the coasts than anything else -- and from three thousand miles away I expect the fandoms of both coasts seem excessively insular. ((Yes, but now that we've seen Elliot Shorter in full panoply on WEEKEND, we'll be sure to cool it...MG))

I might add that since I moved back down to this area (DC suburbs), an offshot group of the Fanoclasts, known as The Original Fanoclasts, has formed here and exists in parallel with the better-known WSFA. We meet biweekly, number between one and two dozen attendees, rotate meetings among us, and are (I suspect) virtually unknown to the sercon clubfen of the WSFA. Ain't fandom wonderful?

JOHN ROBINSON 1-101st Street, Troy NY 12180 1/13/75

Thanks for putting out the special "LASFS HISTORY" issue. There's too much insularity in West Coast fandom, and any information the rest of the country can get on activities is welcomed. I found myself hungry for more when I finished. Will there be more? How about extracts from APA L in future issues, as long as they apply to the history and feuds, fights and struggles among and around LASFSians.

((Feuds? Fights? Struggles? Why whatever do you mean? It's been almost ten years since the Great LASFS Shootout, and there's only been one LASFS member murdered since then. Things are becoming so peaceable that it's almost like being civilized. MFS))



SERGIO ARAGONES DONDE ESTAS?

JEFF SCHALLES 173 McClellan Dr., Pittsburgh PA 15236 11/27/74

I guess I must admit, with some reservations, that your attempts at fanzine production (how many years ago was it when you first tossed a crudzine into the unknowing US mails?) are approaching the level of credibility. You've already surpassed RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY and are rapidly approaching a youngish semblance of one stage or another of SF REVIEW. Possibly. You need some bitter fighting and nasty arguments and a few threatened lawsuits, but you'll get there some day.

Your taste in artwork is improving (Harry Bell is great; this is the first time I've seen him in a non-British fanzine.) including, I hope, the fact that your use of B. Townley is only in jest. Come on now, really. I think that I am fairly well qualified to speak on this subject. The only way to get a terrible fanartist out of the pages of fanzines is to stop printing him, or shame him into improving his work. I suddenly reached this level of consciousness a couple of years ago, and since then the Schalles cartoon carnival has been reduced to one to three specifically tailored pieces for special friends, usually in jest. (I always could come up with a small percentage of good work, very small though.) Townley's work looks like it's done by wood-carving using his teeth and finger nails for the cutting. Yecchh.

Your material is mostly good. Conservatively flavored (diet pepsi?) ((no way -- MG)) but quite readable. Keep it up and maybe someday you'll be getting a little wooden platform that says "hugo" on it too. Or a bust in the teeth.

((It would be nice to believe that you don't have to publish feud material in order to be a first rate fanzine. I'm not saying it's reasonable to believe that, just nice...MFS))

BRETT COX Box 542, Tabor City, NC 28463 2/15/75

My apologies for taking so long to loc PRE 13 and 13.5, but I've been putting everything off lately, and you were no exception. Actually, I always put off loccing Big Name Fanzines like PRE as long as possible, since I know it will take a lot of work. And I just hate to work. Ghod knows when I'll get around to loccing the latest OUTWORLDS. ((Those who accept letterhackhood as a sacred obligation are a case apart, for my opinion is that the best fanzines excite opinion as a matter of course, rather than force one to dissect them in hopes of finding a shred of inspiration. Whether PRE has achieved that in the past, I expect this issue to.MF))

PREHENSILE 13: Well, what can I really say? Faanish writing is always hard to loc, and fanhistory that I know nothing about is virtually impossible to comment on. To a person like me who knows little about fanhistory in general and nothing about the history of an organization like LASFS, it was all quite fascinating. Fascinating, but not very conducive to cogent comment, I'm afraid.

Two things in Harry Warner's article interested me. First, the remark

about APA L being valuable as an indicator of how today's youth feels and thinks about the weighty issues of the day. It seems to me that this would be true of almost any well-done zine that concentrated on reader discussion -- TITLE, for instance. (Thus invalidating Brazier's claim that it really isn't important). ((Without detracting from TITLE's value, APA Ls value is reinforced by its frequency, duration, and the fact that all contributions are offered as whole units rather than edited. MG))

Secondly, Warner's question about why nobody can put out a successful letterzine over an extended period of time. Well, I don't think I'm being overly egotistical when I say that I think that Ken Gammage and myself were slowly -- very slowly -- but surely getting there with LOCOMOTIVE, had circumstances not forced us to drop the endeavor. I hope to start it back up again next year when I'll be taking a year off from school -- maybe then I can answer Harry's challenge. In the meantime Ross Chamberlain has a letterzine in FANGLE, and although I haven't seen a copy, I understand it's supposed to be pretty good.

Hal Davis' remarks concerning the usage of typographical tricks in sf was very interesting. I think that, although the use of such tricks for their own sake can become boring, they are very much acceptable when they are necessary to express a concept or emotional experience that won't come across in ordinary English. Bester was/is a master of this, as is Ellison.

As a corollary of this, you might consider the question of using a made-up language or dialect in sf stories. Again I favor it when it is necessary to the story -- like in Clockwork Orange or "With the Bentfin Boomer Boys In Little Old New Alabama" (which I thought was a dynamite story) -- but oppose it when it's used merely for its own sake. Grania Davis' ORBIT 13 story "Young Love" is a perfect example of the unnecessary usage of dialect. The story itself was pretty good, but could have been told just as well -- in fact, it could have been told much better -- in ordinary English rather than Ms. Davis' useless and often nerve-wracking sugarsweet slang. ((Couldn't we fans start eradicating that tendency to use "Ms." only when being sharp with a woman? It's as bad as the obnoxious use of Cassius Clay in place of Muhammad Ali, and stems from that kind of arrogant formality feuding pros tend to display: "Mr. Zyzyx, you gutless cretin..." However, Brett, thanks for expanding the discussion, and as you end your letter quoting Twain -- "Eschew obfuscation."MG))

RICK SNEARY 2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate CA 90280 12/4/74

Turning to Milt's excellent outline of LASFS history, I would like to comment on his speculation as to the effect of publication of Laney"s AH, SWEET IDIOCY! had on the club. I was not a member at the time, but was active in local fandom by letter. It is my impression that ASI had little physical effect on the club at the time, or caused a dropoff of members (though it is possible). There was a drop when the Insurgents resigned, but that was prior. And while their number was small -- maybe six in all -- they included Laney, Burbee, and Rotsler, who were each at about the top of their writing form, and all masters of persiflage. Whereas Ackerman, Evans and Ashley, the greatest remaining fanwriters, were past their peak of activity. The attacks on the club by the Insurgents were of a style that made answering all but impossible. Anything said by LASFS in defense would have used as the basis of the next hilarious salvo. --While I never heard it stated I believed at the time that there was a quiet agreement between Ackerman, Evans and the others, to remain silent to all the slings and arrows, a defense that under the conditions I think was the wisest. The result was that most criticism of ASI came from Eastern fans. I think I may have been the only local fan to do an article refuting any points -- and this was intentionally humorous. (While emotionally loyal to LASFS, I was still a good friend of Burbee and Rotsler, and thus held a middle course.)

The apparent and understandable drop in LASFS activity was more apparent than real. It turned inward, and few fanzines appeared. Soon after the first Westercon there was a barbarian invasion of young persons due to the boom SF was going through. These were not as aereon as earlier fan generations, nor were they overly interested in fanzines and fandom. They were very much like the current lumps, who are interested in fun and games, and club politics, but not very much aware of the fanzine field or in fans in other areas. The Outlanders were only nine, but I believe we were doing more fanac on the broader sense than the rest of LASFS put together. Yet it had an active and interested membership with good programs and projects. But ASI marked the end of an era and the start of the new as clearly as anything ever has. However I think it would have ended even without AH,SWEET IDIOCY!

SAMUEL EDWARD KONKIN III Box 294 Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY,NY 10009

Flap, flap Greetings from another Great Horned WAHF. Mind if I perch on your lettercol? *Preen*

Back East from whence I just flew, the Con-troversy which is so prominent in recent PREHENSILES is heating up. Linda Bushyager's trying to bestir Fandom to Realize Its Predicament and fret about the Gigantism of Worldcons. (Reminds me of an old-fashioned liberal trying to save the League of Nations or the UN or the next Last Great Hope of Mankind.) She has bestirred me enough to note in my apazine (Clear Ether, in APA-v) that what is needed is a good dose of "letting things develop naturally" and maybe a few shots of entrepreneurship, ie, "taking advantage of what develops. ((I like the word "entrepreneurship:" it sounds so much better than "G*R*E*E*D." MFS))

Let me be more explicit. The main gripe against big Worldcons seems to be the lack of intimacy. Now, Harry Warner,Jr., suggests that fen come early for the "small connishness" (my expression, not Harry's) and Don Markstein suggests a World Faan Con. Now, to some extent I can sympathize. I am getting progressively turned off to New York Cons, and even Philcon went downhill recently (more in a moment). Disclave and Pghlange are fun, and NYUSFS, with about 30 maximum attending weekly are enjoyable. Maybe bigness has something to do with it (but I have other reasons dredged up, maybe for a future loc or article.)

As a young neo in 1969 attending St. Louiscon, and where else would I have gone so out of my way to attend a con but a Worldcon, coming from Madiscon Wisconsin at the time. I was acquainted with real fandom (as opposed to Lin Carter, IF renditions) for the first time. At the 1974 Con, I had excellent success at introducing fen to NLN and Frefandom and the Solarian/NYfandom. So why not take advantage of the natural virtues of Big Worldcons? Recruiting into fandom, subfandoms, etc. Regionals, fringefan, and subfan groups could throw parties and maintain tables, booths, etc. And they already are. I especially enjoyed Jodie's Fanzine meeting, and one could imagine Artist Fen gatherings, Columnist meetings, etc. Maybe the final stages of Giant Worldcons would be FAN CITY (ala Disneyland) -- but therein lies a potential SF story. (Seems SF stories tend to leave out what Fandom will be like in the future, but then again, I don't think I'm the first to note that.)

Mind if I stretch my WAHF-wings and flit to another subject? Oh, I almost forgot Philcon. Well, Linda asks a Meaningful Question at the Worldcon Panel which had five representatives for the five bidding committees for the '77 con. One might think this to be the appropriate place for such discussion, but she was brushed off with the kind of smiling hype that I thought went out with the Gray Flannel Suit. I thought I ought to press the ideological issue a bit, so I got duly recognized and offered a concise challenge on the premise of what a Worldcon is for, to set up a question. The Chairman, repping the Philadelphia bid (which I thought was long dead and suspect was revived for the Philcon as a trial balloon) promptly stomped in and handed down the edict from On High that clearly my idea of what a Worldcon was for was wrong. So I sez OK if that's your position, but my question is...Ah, but this lover of Truth Revealed had already recognized someone else. Somehow I found myself pledging alliance to Linda to Get A Hearing.

((The following is actually directed to Stan Burns, whom I omitted to credit for the reviews in PRE 13.5 I had so gotten used to looking at his pre-typed -- on his Selectric -- material that I forgot not everyone else would recognize the to-me distinctive typing style.)) I find your review of THE DISPOSSESSED jarring, and had to check back with Pierce's review in RENAISSANCE to see if it was the same book. Guess I will have to read it now. Funny thing is, your review makes it sound more libertarian than Pierce's does, and Pierce was trying to convince me of the importance of the work. I always thought Ursula was a left-deviationist in the libertarian spectrum, but now I'm wondering.

Before I lift off, let me praise the other half of PRE 13. Since I will be moving to LA right after Aussiecon, and naturally hope to join LASFS, I found it a fascinating history. Already PRE 13 is being passed around the Solarians with "A Sense of History" and is well on its way to becoming a "Beloved Classic."

WAYNE MacDONALD 1284 York Mills Rd., Apt. 410, Don Mills Ontario M3A 1Z2

Now either I'm seeing things that aren't there, hallucination-like, or else you have still to solve the problem of finding a competent printer. Perhaps the problem lies with recognition. I bet that when you enter a print shop, you look for the guy with the grubby, ink-stained clothes to conduct your business with. Don't you? Well he's the janitor. The fellow paring his nails behind the accountant's ledger is the printer, business suit and all! You don't think that printers print anymore, do you? With all their money (used to be our money once upon a time) ?

Of course not, they contract out! You've been having the janitor do your work, not the printer. Which explains the black lines around the paste-up, and the fading black. If the printer had done the work things would have been far, far worse.

No, printers these days are totally incompetent. I took a job of about 1500 to an industrial copy centre, where they get large jobs from companies every day. Companies are terribly fussy things, and tend to scream at the slightest hint of anyting wrong. Surely, then, my choice of printers should be safe. Alas, no. The sample copy showed all the paste-up lines and faded the black to a nice sallow gray. Can't do any better says the printer. I ask him about the plates. Paper they are. So why don't you paint out the black lines on the plates? Oh we're not artists around here, he says. I refrain from asking just what he is since he still has the original. There's only one printer I've ever found that does anything near a competent job. He knows about painting out paste-up lines,he advises heavy paper when he knows the print will bleed through, he reduces when it's needed instead of going ahead and producing a shitty job...and if you are willing to forgo a receipt, he doesn't charge tax! That's nearly a 20% saving in Canada, baby! So is he an old hand that's been around since Gutenberg's time? No. Is he a super-large efficient industrial printer? No, he is not. Nor is he a magazine printer such as handles TIME's honored business. He is a mere hole-in-the-wall printer, a young man about twenty-five with a young staff who care anout their bloody business. Craft hasn't quite disappeared from Mundane yet.

Graphics, man! I'm going to talk about graphics as well! Your graphics are execrable! The artists are great, but the graphics are execrable! ((Wayne proceeds to berate my careening Letraset and sloping text, but gentle reader, I shall spre you the, er, graphic details. MG))

Fire Bruce Townley. I don't like Bruce Townley. But don't tell Bruce Townley I told you so. In fact don't listen to me, jsut because I don't like Bruce Townley; maybe you do for some obscure reason. You use my work after all, so perhaps your taste is peculiar to some degree. Say hello to Bruce for me, while youre at it -- nothing personal in my dislike of his art.

ROSS PAVLAC 4654 Tamarack Blvd., Apt. B-10, Columbus OH 43229 1/14/75

Other than comic cons, there are only three sf cons of interest in Ohio: Marcon, Midwestcon (Cincinnati in June -- best known and oldest midwest regional; pulls in a clot of East Coast fans in addition to virtually every BNF and fannish pro in the midwest); and Octocon in October in Sandusky (very small, little advertising -- no programming of any kind, lots of smoffing and smoke-filled rooms discussing fannish politics, if that type of thing interests you.)

Marcon is in a strange situation. What with our having lost the worldcon bid and being unable (unwilling) to bid again ever (briefly: by the time the next rotation goes to the midwest, if the Worldcon continues to grow at present rate, Columbus won't have the hotel space; also, the same people bankrolled both this bid and our disastrous 1969 bid, and are naturally unwilling to throw away hundreds of dollars for a third fiasco. There were other reasons, but I won't go into them here.) COSFS decided to make the Marcon into a bigger and more prestigious regional. One of the things that is hurting us the most is the presence of other sf and related cons at the same time (physically preventing people from attending) or within a few weeks of us (financially preventing people from attending).

Most of these cons are younger than Marcon (which will be 10 years old this time around), and wouldn't be a problem to us if we just wanted to stay the same size.

I am also somewhat irked by the Popular Culture con ((Held the same weekend as Marcon, in St. Louis;MG)) because you are not by any means the first person to bow out of an appearance at Marcon due to the Pop Culture con...grrrr....There are very few convention-attending pros in the Midwest (I'm not referring to you when I say "pro", in case you were wondering -- I am referring to pros in the traditional sense of writers of science fiction), and having a con siphoning them off from us (literally!) has been a source of great exasperation to me. Admittedly the people running the Pop Culture con have probably never even heard of Marcon; although even if they had heard of it, I suspect they wouldn't act any differently. ((True -- but the only pro expected, according to my information, was absent, and the only fans were Walt Stumper and the GRAFAN -- whatever the local club is -- group. Who else did you lose? MG))

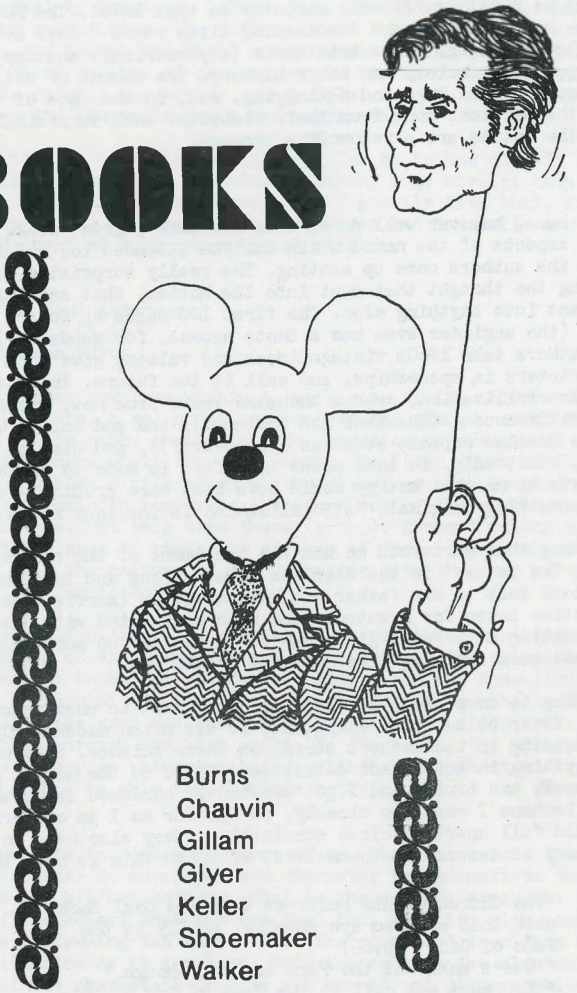
At least one other regional con chairman is also concerned about the problem of cons infringing on one another's attendance (Ro Nagey of Confusion), so this year may witness an effort on the part of the midwestern regionals to try to get together to minimize conflicts. Unfortunately that still leaves the problem of "academia" cons (Pop Culture, SFRA, etc.) -- which hits the more structured cons where it hurts the most -- by siphoning off pros and academics who could otherwise be on panels and such. I'm not really sure what can be done about it.

Maybe you think the above grumping is silly; in any case, I am very concerned about it; without the alternative of large, structured regionals, the problem of the worldcon is made worse.

((Pretty soon there'll be so many midwestern regionals that the pros and academics are going to start to feel like they've joined the rubber chicken circuit. Meanwhile the smoke-filled smofs schedule even more conventions. With judicious selection of guests of honor, and one sound program per day, I doubt that any competently-run convention will find itself losing money -- the thing is, though, it will be marketing itself to primarily the local crowd of fringefans and curiosity-seekers; they can't keep tossing more choices into the fannish pot and expect the convention-fans and pros to turn out for every one. And how much prestige is there in contributing to the confusion? You and every other con committee have a perfect right to try and make yours the best con you possibly can -- but how can you gripe when everyone else does the same? The theory that regionals are blow-offs for the Worldcon is clearly wrong -- for where else is it that people learn of the Worldcon than from regionals, if they haven't already plugged into another source of information? Where else will people develop a taste for conventioneering? If anything, the regional convention (1) soothes fans who can't make it to the worldcon, and (2) vents whatever fannish ardor builds up between major cons. We can name a variety of conventions throughout the country well-enough established to be unhurt by the development of lesser regionals -- so it's these others, trying to build up, that are knocking each other down -- and what kind of accomodation can be made, unless some group is willing to fold its convention?))

(concluded page 125)

*BOOKS



THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE, Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle
Simon and Schuster 1974: $9.95; 537 pp.
Reviewed by Donald G. Keller

I really have no business reviewing this book; though I usually enjoy Larry Niven's stories, I am not really a fan of his; and the one Jerry Pournelle story I read ("The Mercenary") I hated. So I didn't expect much from a collaboration, and might not even have read it except for the fulsomeness of the praise it drew, both on the jacket copy (from Heinlein yet) and from people whose opinion I respected. I picked it up hoping for a first-rate book.

It was my expectations that were realized.

Let me, however, give praise where deserved. This is a pretty solid

first-contact novel, considered strictly on that level. The Moties are one of the most original and fascinating alien races I have ever encountered; a lot of thought went into their (asymmetrical) anatomy, their technology, their society and their history. The amount of detail presented about them is huge and satisfying. And, in the face of the difficulty, the sections done from their viewpoint work surprsingly well. In toto, the Moties are a resounding success.

However.

One alien race, however well done, does not make a great book. There are other aspects of the novel which must be attended to, and it is here that the authors come up wanting. The really surprising thing is, considering the thought that went into the Moties, that seemingly no thought went into anything else. The first 100 pages or so are pure Star Trek (the engineer even has a Scots accent, for gawdsake!); that is, the authors take 1960s vintage ideas and values, give them to stereotyped characters in spaceships, and call it the future. In this supposedly galactic civilization, over a thousand years from now, there are still national differences (Russians and Scotsmen). tea and coffee on spaceships (the Russian captain even has a samovar(!)), and similar infelicities. Now, admittedly, in some cases an effort is made to explain these, but it seems to me that energy could have been more profitably used in creating something original. Rationalization is the lazy man's way out.

Another thing that perturbed me was the treatment of the one major female character. She is cast in the Heinlein mode: strong and independent, yet taking a back seat to her father and husband-to-be (marriage being another institution taken for granted), and when confronted with the birth control question says "nice girls don't." I can say no more than that she does not seem anything like any girl I ever met.

Most annoying to me personally (but apparently not to most readers) was the prose. Never better than competent, it was often maddeningly imprecise, surprising in two authors strong on their science. They never described anything in sufficient detail to conjure up the mental picture they obviously had of it, and I got constantly confused as to what was going on. Perhaps I read too closely, but as far as I am concerned no prose should fall apart on close examination. They also have an appalling tendency to contradict themselves, of which this is only the worst example:

> "The Church of Him believes that the Coal Sack, with that one red eye showing, really is the Face of God." (p.65)
> "'Can't make out the Face of God, though.'
> "'You must not call it the Face of God on this world. A Himmist would call it the Face of Him. They do not refer directly to their God. A good Church member does not believe that it is anything but the Coal Sack.'" (p.95)

Now, the authors could probably explain that there actually is no contradiction, but in the language they use there definitely is. And this is what I am talking about. The writing was so bad in many spots that I seriously contemplated giving it up several times (particularly in the unnecesary first part).

The typical sf reader will probably be muttering by this point that none of this really matters as long as it's a good story. Well I believe that it does matter. Just for example, compare this novel to

any handy novel by Ursula K. LeGuin. Say, THE DISPOSSESSED, which will be its award competition. The difference is astounding. LeGuin considers everything, and though her books are good stories as well as being profound, the chief delight of reading her is the care she lavishes on every little detail; her worlds are a whole, and she commands an utter belief Niven and Pournelle don't even approach.

Still, I think the most disturbing thing for me is how closely THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE resembles the last four unworthy Hugo novels: they are all strong idea books of slapdash execution. I greatly fear that, from the past history of the Hugo voters' taste, Niven and Pournelle are going to be rewarded ahead of more accomplished writers.

FIRE TIME, by Poul Anderson
Doubleday 1974 $5.95
Reviewed by Stan Burns

The planet Ishtar revolves within a three star system. Once every thousand years Anu, a red giant, approaches the planet, scorching everything in its path, causing a mass migration of natives to the southern hemisphere where they can survive the "fire time." Unfortunately the only high civilization on the planet is also located there; thousand year periodic barbarian invasions out of the north cause its regular collapse. But this time there is hope. A small colony of Earthmen is on the planet to study the effects of the approaching red giant. With their help the natives of the Gathering hope they can survive with their civilization intact.

Into this situation Anderson introduces two variables that will work to upset the hopes of the Gathering and their friends the colonists. In the north, Aranak, a barbarian who once soldiered for the Rome-like gathering, leads a group of his people to war against the south, in the hope of capturing the area and setting up a civilization that will last for his people through the next cycle. In the south, the much-needed help of the colony is withdrawn because Earth has entered a stupid war and cannot afford to ship to colonists materiel needed for the war effort.

Anderson succeeds in portraying none of the characters as either heros or villains. He develops each character to demonstrate the motivations for his/her actions. That is the novel's strength: the creation of characters that you can feel for, identify with, care for. It succeeds in drawing the reader into the story and involving him with the situation as it develops. Unfortunately in the closing third of the novel the characters tend to sit around and discuss philosophy rather than meet their problems through the creation of solutions for the conflicts outlined. The novel bogs down, the action stopping the way it does at a movie when the film breaks. Thus we end up with two thirds of a classic novel in search of a solution.

The ultimate fault of the novel is the pat, happy ending Anderson tacks on. Yuri Dejerine, commander of the Earth garrison on Ishtar, is a character who is devoted to the Earth government even at the cost of his personal happiness: he is in love with Jill, a colonist violently opposed both to his presence on the planet and the war in which Earth is engaged. At the ending, however, Anderson switches him suddenly to the side of the colonists. Not only is this inconsistent with his past actions, but it cuts out the inevitable conflict between the colonists, natives and Earthmen. The tragedy of this confrontation -- graphically depicting Anderson's theme that men of good intentions

are sometimes more dangerous than madmen and villains -- is never really emphasized, and the ending seemed to me anticlimatic.

I found the book as a whole interesting, well-written, but the ending disappoints, flawing what could have been a major sf novel.

BEST FROM F&SF, Edward L. Ferman
Doubleday 1974 326pp. $7.95
Reviewed by Paul Walker

Periodically (no pun intended), Edward L. Ferman has published special issues of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION paying tribute to the likes of Sturgeon, Asimov, Leiber, Bradbury and James Blish, containing their latest story, an affectionate biography by one of their friends, and a bibliography of their work. Now, to commemorate F&SF's twenty-fifth anniversary, Ferman has collected the stories, biographies, and bibliographies of their novels in his annual "Best from F&SF," and it is a fine book.

The best story is Poul Anderson's award-winning "Queen of Air and Darkness," a science-fiction fairy tale that succeeds on two levels, and confirms what I've always said about Anderson: he's at his best when writing for F&SF.

Ray Bradbury's "To the Chicago Abyss" is middling Bradbury, but any Bradbury at all these days is welcome. It is one of his stories of social comment in which the sociology is shallow, the characters and atmosphere moving.

Theodore Sturgeon's "When You Care, When You Love" is about a rich girl who decides to clone her dead lover; an awkward idea, but as with the Bradbury story, saved by Sturgeon's delicate, sentimental touch.

Isaac Asimov's "The Key" is a hard science fiction mystery story that held my interest throughout, and now, a week later, is completely gone from my memory. It is something about the discovery of a device that makes telepathy possible and the ratiocinative efforts of a scientist detective to solve the cryptogram left by its finder on the Moon where he had concealed the device before he died to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. "Gold Bug" stuff.

James Blish"s "Midsummer Century" is a fair but not especially interesting attempt to make an old pulp idea respectable by sheer force of Blish's good writing. Blish is disappointed that it did not get better reception, as most readers were disappointed that Blish did not attempt something more ambitious.

Finally, there is Fritz Leiber's "Ship of Shadows," a story I have tried, and failed, to read several times, but its a murky, oddball beginning alienated me every time. It did win a Nebula, but then "The Big Time" won a Hugo, and I could not understand that either.

The biographies make pleasant reading but none of them tells us much of what we would like to know about the writers. My preferences were for William F. Nolan's sketch of Bradbury, L. Sprague DeCamp's affectionate memoir of Asimov, and Gordon Dickson's reminiscences about Poul Anderson. The others by Judith Merril, about Sturgeon and Leiber, and Robert A. W. Lowndes' about James Blish are interesting. Pleasant is the best word to describe the entire anthology.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE STARS
edited by Terry Carr
Simon & Schuster 1974 $7.95
Reviewed by Stan Burns

My Ghod, I don't believe it. A book made with a pride in craftsmanship -- a pleasure to see, touch, feel, read. Thank you Simon & Schuster...(too bad the cover is such a loser -- I think that the art directors who do sf hardbacks just switched over from doing covers for textbooks).

This collection of short stories is built around a theme of "friendship between human and alien beings." I don't think that it lives up to the UNIVERSE collections that Carr has done a good and fair-

FELLOWSHIP

CLUNK!

Stan Burns' "books that can be passed by without regret."

Akers, Alan Burt
MANHOUNDS OF ANTARES
DAW UY1124 1974 $1.25
Imitation of the 'Gor' novels, that is poorly written and badly in need of 'red pencil' editing. Author starts off novel by repeating the same sentence twice and it goes downhill from there.

Anthony, Piers
TRIPLE DETENTE
DAW UQ1130 1974 95¢
A good novelette has been turned into a bad novel with mediocre melodramatic writing and enough loose ends to weave a rug.

Boyd, John
THE GORGON FESTIVAL
Bantam N8018 1972/4 95¢
Paperback of Boyd's books about the elixir of youth, womens' lib, rock festivals, motorcycle gangs, and other mundane aspects of the California scene. I found parts amusing, but the book as a whole didn't work for me. I think his earlier stuff was better (or should I say tighter?) plotted...

Brackett, Leigh
THE HOUNDS OF SKAITH
Ballantine #24230 1974 $1.25
Sequel to The Ginger Star.
Better plotted than the first novel, in that the hero doesn't get into and out of so many unbelieveable scenes and scrapes. The really annoying facet of the novel is that the science isn't well thought-out -- and Brackett should know better.

Carter, Lin
THE VALLEY WHERE TIME STOOD STILL Doubleday '74 $4.95
Attempt by Carter to write a Brackett pastiche, similar to her Mars novels written for ACE in the 50s. At times Carter does but he cannot control his tendency to capitalize almost every other word in the narrative.

Coney, Michael G.
MONITOR FOUND IN ORBIT
DAW UQ1132 '74 95¢
Short story collection. All are readable, but I can't remember any of them offhand. Which says all it has to about this collection.

Eklund, Gordon and Anderson, Poul
INHERITORS OF EARTH
Chilton 1974 $6.50
Box within a box type novel, reads like inferior van Vogt. Neither plotting nor style is up to the best work of either. Mediocre.

Ellison, Harlan
ELLISON WONDERLAND
Signet Y6041 1962/74 $1.25
Paperback reissue of some of Ellison's minor stories from the 50s. Has fascinating introduction that will interest Ellison freaks, but all the stories are dated.

Elwood, Roger (ed.)
FUTURE CITY
Pocket Books #77936 73/73 95¢
Paperback edition of one of Elwood's less memorable efforts, only for those who have an infinite store of patience to pass through all the tripe to get to the few good stories.

Fontana, D.C.
THE QUESTOR TAPES
Ballantine 24236 1974 $1.25
Novelization of the Roddenberry/Coon TV pilot. I liked the movie,

but in written form the dialog sounds dumb. For those under 12.

Foster, Alan Dean
DARK STAR
Ballantine 24267 1974 $1.25
Novelization of the movie. Competently written, but after seeing the movie (which has some good special effects), I can't be satisfied with mere description. I wish Alan would get back to writing original material. I liked ICERIGGER...

Foster, Alan Dean
STAR TREK LOG TWO
Ballantine 24184 1974 95¢
Competently written, but for Trekkies only.

Gordon, Stuart
TWO-EYES
DAW UY1135 1974 $1.25
Sequel to ONE-EYE. Better written than the first novel, but the author tends to get carried away with long descriptive passages that I found annoying. Fair, but no cigar...

Goulart, Ron
FLUX
Daw UQ1126 1974 95¢
Goulart has succeeded in rewriting the same novel he had been rewriting for the last five years. Repetitive.

Goulart, Ron
SPACEHAWK INC.
Daw UQ1149 1974 95¢
This novel is something of an improvement from his last one. I got three chuckles out of it. It seems to me that after awhile, creatures like catmen and lizardmen become familiar to the reader and lose their power to cause laughter simply by their presence. Goulart's early work was marked by black humor and biting satire that dug deep into our pretentions -- his latest work is cheap farce and not very good at that.

Gunn, James
THE LISTENERS
Signet Y6160 1972/74 $1.25
Paperback of one of better 'novels'

clunk

ly consistent job with. On the whole this collection just misses the mark. Except for the Leiber piece there is nothing outstanding.

"Dream Done Green", Alan Dean Foster's story, is a type that reminds me of the 50s: dealing with great concepts in a sentimental mode. It covers the relationship between a woman, a beautiful, rich spoiled heiress; and an intelligent horse named Pericles; a poet with a dream of ancient Earth and the freedom of his fellow "mals:" (animals who have had their intelligence artificially enhanced). I liked the story -- for that matter I like most of Alan's work -- despite its disappointingly short length. I wish that it had been filled out and extended, dealing in greater detail with the relationship between the woman and the horse, drawing in more background information about the worlds in the universe he creates. Like eating cashews, in reading this story you don't want to stop.

"Ashes All My Lust" by George Alec Effinger. Piglet's story shows the remnants of a starship crash's survivors, who have sunk back to a primitive hunting/gathering society. They struggle for mastery of the planet with a race of giant killer wasps. The story is well-written and would be extremely effective with the background more fully worked out. Piglet can write -- and very well -- yet I can't help but believe that he can come up with something more imaginative than a race of killer wasps, for Ghod's sake. And can he really believe that in a hunting society such as he develops that when a man reaches the age of the hunt (16) he is so ill equipped the he is unsure of his ability to use the weapons at his disposal? Anyone who watches travel programs on tv should be aware that primitive societies encourage their children to play with scaled-down models of their weapons -- since the very survival of

OF THE STARS

their society is dependent upon their skillful use. Not to mention that Effinger's hunters are limited to simple spears, lacking bows and arrows much less throwing sticks. I doubt very much that the remnants of a Galactic civilization would fail to adopt those simple improvements in their weapons.

"Enjoy, Enjoy" by Frederik Pohl. Another story reminiscent of the 50s, replete with a "shocker" last line (like Clarke's "The Star"); an ending too predictable to really shock. Pamela Sargent's "Shadows" began with my feeling "I've read this before," graduating to "So what," and ending with "Thank Ghod it's over." Typical read-and-toss, the staple of monthly mags.

John Brunner's "What Friends Are For" is competently written but its leftist premise is smug, the old "Tsk tsk, I told you so..." I don't like to feel that I'm being written down to, as in here. The idea is that alien robots can handle not only "difficult" children, but also the origin of their problems -- their parents. Since this solution is obvious (except in cases of organic damage) I can't help but feel I'm being lectured to, nor help resenting it since with a degree in psychology I probably know more about it than Brunner does...

"The Stones Have Names" by Mildred Downey Broxon. I don't think I can remember ever reading anything by Broxon before, but I must admit that I was impressed and moved by this strangely affecting story. It tells of the friendship that develops between a human "governor" and the leader of a group of aliens that are under his control. (Most of the aliens can be characterized as slaves to the humans) The friendship is strengthened during a revolt the leads to the slaughter of many aliens, with an ending that emphasizes the tragedy of old hatreds overwhelming

BURNS

of '72. In reality, five novellas about the search of a radio telescope team over several decades for messages from intelligent life in the universe. Novel is marred by long passages of quotations from scientists, etc. between novellas that are, I think, inserted to convince non-sf readers of the book's plausibility.

Haiblum, Isidore
THE WILK ARE AMONG US
Doubleday 1975 $5.95
Supposedly humorous novel, somewhat in the vein of Laumer's Retief, except Haiblum doesn't handle it with the class Laumer has when he's cooking. I couldn't get more than 70 pages into it. I've just read too much of this type of junk before to want to waste any more of my time on it.

Harrison, M. John
THE CENTAURI DEVICE
Doubleday 1974 $4.95
This is one of those New-Wave antihero novels. I found it so depressing that I couldn't finish it. Harrison has control of his writing skills, but a novel about a loser is something I can do without.

Kern, Gregory
SPAWN OF LABAN
Daw UQ1133 1974 95¢
Latest 'Cap Kennedy' novel -- imitation Perry Rhodan. About as well written as the average Tom Swift book -- and for the same age group

CLUNKS

Knight, Damon (ed.)
ORBIT 15
Harper 1974 $7.95
Not as good as fourteen.
Nothing struck me as outstanding. Contains well-written Wolfe "Melting", good but depressing Wilhelm "Where Late The Sweet Birds Sang", and interesting Bishop "In The Lilliputian Asylum" (about the events that take place after Gulliver leaves): but I'm too unfamiliar with Swift's book to make any real comment on it.

Pearson, Edward
CHAMEIL
Pocket Books #77790 1974 95¢
Juvenile fantasy about war between God and the Devil. I prefer the Bible. It's got more class.

Saunders,Jake and Waldrop, How.
THE TEXAS-ISRAELI WAR: 1999
Ballantine 23182 1974 $1.25
Triple action-adventure novel that literally fell apart in my hands as I was reading it. Carries planned obsolescence a bit too far!

Schmidt, Stanley
NEWTON AND THE QUASI-APPLE
Doubleday 1975 $5.95
Alien contact novel similar to THE SHROUDED PLANET/THE DAWNING LIGHT; like many of the 50s sf novels about us humans intervening in the affairs of primitive cultures. Unfortunately the assumptions the author makes, the limitless coincidences in the plot, make the whole thing highly unbelieveable.

Stableford, Brian M.
THE FENRIS DEVICE
Daw UQ1147 1974 95¢
This novel on the whole is a marked improvement over the previous novel in the series. But it is marred by a first chapter that is totally descriptive sentences divided and subdivided by a plague of commas. The ending is forced, since the climax was reached in the previous chapter -- not counting the 'final' chapter which gets the hero out of his predicament in the first five books only to put him back in again to continue the struggle into another sequel. Above average space opera if you survive the first chapter

rationality. It drifts off into a feeling of nightmare that dampens the impact. Fantsay has always been an intellectual gambit; tragedy needs a realistic flavor to be truly effective, and that feeling is lost in the story's closing pages.

Fritz Leiber's "Do You Know Dave Wenzel" is the strongest piece of fiction in the collection, which in a way is unfortunate since it is more in the vein of psychological suspense and horror than sf. Genre questions aside it's the best piece of fiction from Leiber I've read since "Ill Met In Lankhmar." The fight between a man's youthful dreams and the contentment of his sedate marriage create an identity crisis. His yearnings for freedom and adventure are contrasted against the demands and responsibilities of an established relationship. Leiber managed to increase his impact by telling the story with a simple deceptive style, in the tradition of children's fiction, bringing a sense of reality to this impressive piece.

Stableford, Brian M.
THE PARADISE GAME
Daw UQ1121 1974 95¢
With this novel, the fourth in a series, Stableford succeds in turning himself into a hack. The attempts at style and characterization that marked the series first novel have given way to rather minor action-adventure business.

Tubb, E.C.
ZENYA
Daw UQ1126 1974 95¢
Simplistic plot line and tired series make for a very dull and predictable novel.

Tucker, Wilson
ICE AND IRON
Doubleday 1974 $4.95
What there is of this novel is fine. But it really doesn't go anywhere. It reads like a fragment of some larger work, which isn't completely understandable unless you read the whole thing. Damnit, it reads like a frustrating Ballard piece.

van Vogt, A.E.
THE MAN WITH A THOUSAND NAMES
Daw UQ1125 1974 95¢
The writing is so poor, with so many flashbacks, plot twists, sudden introductions of background material that I found it unreadable.

White, James
MAJOR OPERATION
Ballantine 24229 1971/4 $1.25
Reissue of one of White's poorer efforts. Novel continues with adventures of Conway, Surgeon and Sector General Hospital.

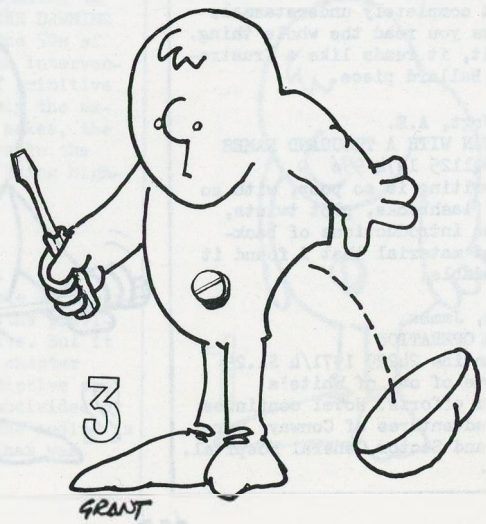
MIXED FEELINGS, by George Alec Effinger
Harper, 1974 $7.95
Reviewed by Stan Burns

A collection of Effinger's short stories. To me reading Effinger is most like waking from a dream and trying to recapture the bright shards of imagery lost to returning consciousness. I can remember bits and pieces but the overall aspect of the dream eludes me. And so it is with his work. Effinger's writing really amazes me -- he strings words together with poetic grace -- but I really have a great deal of trouble getting past the words to the meanings behind. Part of this difficulty is that I find suspending my disbelief difficult for his backgrounds are almost invariably poorly worked-out. They lack the logic to make them completely believable, being more often a mishmash of concocted events in illogical settings. There is a strong tradition in sf for nitpicking scientific background data: I would think any new writer would be not just aware of it, but would go to great pains to work out his situations. He has not.

The only two stories I liked in this collection were "All The Last Wars At Once" and "Lights Out." The first, I am sure, is familiar to most readers -- a droll tale of the human race fragmented into all the squabbling, hating minorities of which it is composed. The other, and my favorite, deals with a science fiction writer's collision with a small town. Effinger manages to make this town not only seem real but also an island of madness in an otherwise sane world. I can't help but wonder if the story is autobiographical in some respect. Especially since he expresses a hatred of small towns in most of the other stories.

Several things I noticed: (1) Effinger has a tendency to be "cute." In one story, a Winnie the Pooh pastiche, he is sooo cute it's sickening (not to mention the fact he divided the story into two separate parts, neither of which in combination is as strong as either would be alone. (2) He tends to skirt around an issue, poking at its sides and angles but never truly confronting it. In "f(x)= (11/15/67) x=her, f(x)≠0" for example, he tries to relate a scientific experiment to a love affair going on between two researchers running it. But since he never reveals what the experiment is, he never gives us any real insight into any relationship between them. (His characters also act like they are teenagers, not scientists.)(3) He abuses commas, creating long word trains that lose sight of their engines around tortuous mountain curves. (4) He tends to write about themes that are obvious to his audience -- with reinforcement rather than reader awareness as his goal.

I do have two questions. Who is S.W.? Why does he dislike Gremmage, Ohio???



THREADS OF TIME, edited by Robert Silverberg
Thomas Nelson, Nashville 1974; 219 pp. $6.50
Reviewed by Cy Chauvin

THREADS OF TIME is a collection of three original novellas by Gregory Benford, Clifford Simak and Norman Spinrad.

The title story, "Threads of Time" by Benford, is the best of these: it's based in part on another Benford story, "Sons of Man" (AMAZING, November 1969). The story shifts in viewpoint between the moon (where an earth astronaut has been shot down by a strange alien spacecraft) and the Earth (where a lonely man, Alexander Livingston, finds some clues about the "bigfoot.")

The scientific background of the story is rich and inventive. Benford makes the reader feel the "thrill of discovery" along with his characters as they probe into the alien spacecraft's computer system and attempt to decipher what the writing and pictures stored there mean. (An orbital photograph of the tip of South America before the Straits of Magellan were formed is found, for instance.) The background in Benford's story is developed logically and consistently, and "Threads of Time" is one of the best pieces of "hard" science fiction I've read in some time.

Norman Spinrad's "Riding The Torch," is quite a different kind of science fiction. It's about a cluster of ships called the Trek (a very badly chosen term) that has abandoned earth after it has been destroyed -- and have been searching for centuries for a habitable planet on which to resettle. In the interim, "tapping" the experiences of other people on the ships (current or past) has become an integral part of everyday life.

Jofe D'mahl, ultimate egotist, artist, creator of senso-dramas, is confronted by Haris Bandoora, a "voidsucker" from a Trek scout ship. Bandoora challenges D'mahl to come out into the Void with him on a scouting mission, cut himself off from the baroque richness of the Trek available via tap, and record his experiences for a sensodrama.

Spinrad's description of the Trek culture is in fact too baroque to be believable. "On the translucent emerald floor he had planted a tinkling forest of ruby, sapphire, diamond and amythest trees...he had topped off the effect with scented fog that picked up blue, red, and lavender tints from the internally incandescent trees..." A little of this goes a long way; but Spinrad spends more time describing these externals (most unbelievable) than he spends describing the internals, the motivating factors, the people. (There are more descriptions of clothes, than characterizations.)

Its closing pages are the senso-drama D'mahl produces: comical, rather than dramatic given conversations between God and Satan including such lines as "I've got to admit that tops off your Land of Egypt number, Mr. Burning Bush." This slapstick spoils the seriousness of Spinrad's theme -- unlike Kurt Vonnegut, one of the few who can, Spinrad is unable to satisfactorily blend the two elements.

"The Marathon Photograph" is a typical Simak story, filled with nostalgia, backwoods accents, a mysterious house and equally mysterious inhabitants. It's even written in the form of a manuscript, with long authorial apologies and an editor's note at the end regarding the author's mysterious disappearance. Recommended for Simak fans only.

THE SIGN OF THE UNICORN, by Roger Zelazny
Doubleday 1975 $5.95
Reviewed by Stan Burns

I have always been the type of reader who hates series novels. When a novel is serialized in the prozines I wait until I have all the issues before reading it. Series novels are even worse, since you sometimes have to wait years for the next one to come out. During which time you've forgotten what went on in the previous novels -- if you've managed to keep your interest up in following them.

The book does have a few things going for it -- even with an extremely annoying cliffhanger ending. Happily Zelazny seems to have decided to make the hero more human and less a monster -- which makes me care more about what is going on in this novel. Those who've read my reviews of the previous two novels know that one of my biggest objections was the hero's dedication to spending all his time killing just about everything that moved in schemes to take control of Amber. It is even difficult for me to identify with a character that much a power freak.

Secondly the writing seems to my eye (although how my memory affects my judgement after so long is open to debate) more meticulous than in the first two novels. The language Zelazny employs at times seems to recapture his style of the 60s when he was considered among sf's best stylists. The style is lean, not overblown as in the first two novels. There is more emphasis on mood and characterization, than in moving the plot forward at all costs.

If you haven't read the first two Amber novels (THE GUNS OF AVALON and NINE PRINCES IN AMBER) you won't be able to understand this one. If you have, and liked them, step right up.

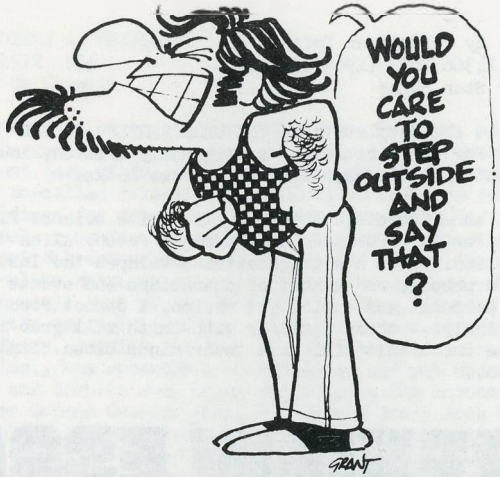
CENTER FORCE, T. A. Waters
Dell: 95¢; 175 pp.
Reviewed by Donald G. Keller

I first heard of this book a year and a half ago; then-Dell editor David Harris was talking at an all-night convention party about all the terrible books he had to edit, and about two new ones he called his 'Nebula nominees': Lupoff's INTO THE AETHER (indeed a fine book) and the present novel, which he described as "an sf biker novel based on the I CHING," which intrigued me to say the least. And since his taste and mine run very close (we're both Pynchon freaks, for example), I looked forward to it.

And I was not disappointed. True, it's no award nominee, even in a weak year, but it's a solid well-written novel that quite decently rewarded the hour or three I spent with it. If this were the quality of the "average" sf novel, I would have no further qualms about the state of the field.

I suppose one reason I liked the book was its 'scattergun' approach; that is, a la STAND ON ZANZIBAR, it is composed of a multitude of short chapters (64, to be exact, one for each sign of the I CHING) which use different stylistic techniques and follow several parallel storylines.

I'm a sucker for experiments, for an author using something besides straight narrative to achieve his effect; and for this reason I enjoyed Waters' use of cinematic script form (which increased the visual effect



in several scenes), and straight dramatic form (particularly effective in a kangaroo court scene). True, he used it at times when it wasn't any more effective, but it wasn't any less effective either. He also manages this way to get in expository material (in the form of official reports and histories) as well as poetry and pop songs which enrich his picture. As Brunner proved, the scattergun approach is one of the most effective ways to portray a 'different' society; Waters is the first author I've scene to successfully emulate it. And he borrows only technique, not substance; he is enough a writer to do it on his own, and resembles Brunner only superficially. Too, his societal portrait is incomplete, being very short.

The society he postulates is a relatively conventional one, a hippie's paranoid nightmare. Excessive violence (election riots, etc.) have caused a societal collapse; the government is in New York, and the country is really under the control of a CenterForce, a paramilitary law enforcement agency which chases down fugitives and either kills them (a la EASY RIDER) or puts them in quasi-concentration-camps. Counterculture people are frowned upon, but the ones who are peacefully forming ashrams -- commune/kibbutzim -- are tolerated.

Through all this rides Ben Reed, motorcycle fugitive, who is the central character (though the narrative abandons him for long stretches). He plays cops-and-robbers with CenterForce patrol trucks and does various other hero-type things, including finding his happily-ever-after.

This makes the book seem rather simplistic, with its convention hero and future; but somehow it isn't that way. First, the structure, the slow block-by-block construction of the vision of society shows that Waters cares about it; no matter that the others do too, he thinks it's going to be this way. Second, he obviously cares about his characters, since he develops extra scenes to make them seem real-er and more human. Third, the actual style is more than merely "words in a row" (Heinlein's noble phrase), showing that he cares enough about his readers to give them something to get their teeth into.

On the whole, then, this is a very playful book; that is, Waters takes nothing for granted in the game, but plays with the rules when he chooses without fear. He's not a great writer, though, and so this is not a great book; but it is an interesting and eminently satisfying one.

NORSTRILIA, by Cordwainer Smith
Ballantine 24366 1975 (1964/8) $1.50
Reviewed by Stan Burns

This novel is the completion of THE UNDERPEOPLE and THE PLANET BUYER, here joined for the first time as originally written, including new material that fill the gaps left by the two books.

Nobody has, and I doubt if anybody will, write science fiction like Smith. His Far Eastern experience brought fresh, alien viewpoints into science fiction. From his imagination developed the Instrumentality, and the Underpeople; and a host of characters and events which made his fiction so personal and enticing a vision. I cannot recommend this novel too highly -- those familiar with Smith will grab it up immediately; those who aren't will have their minds blown completely from their heads...

:REVIEW ESSAYS

The manner in which reviews have been handled this issue stems from both the ponderings of my editorial, and a commitment to present reviews in as stimulating a fashion as physically possible. The actual content I must rely on the reviewers for, but to a point redressing them graphically may make them more intriguing for readers.

This following section reflects both attempts more than any other change. These four essays/reviews cover a considerable spectrum. Cy Chauvin's review is his attempt to put into practice on individual works the overall theorizations seen in his PREHENSILE TEN essay "SF: The Unrealized Dream." I disagree personally with various statements in the essay, but regard it as interesting from the standpoint of its being a kind of scientific rationalization of pulp ideology. That is, once you accept a lot of the stuff about sf being unique, and so forth, what logical extrapolations can you make from that in critical standards? Chauvin shows us.

Barry Gillam presents us with a discussion of Farmer that, to my point of view, suggests important shortcomings on the part of a widely-acknowledged creator of "literary sf" among other things. Whether Gillam actually did that intentionally you may decide. Michael T. Shoemaker, along with Don Keller, represent the most successful fanreviewers to have systematically examined work on its own merit, backgrounded by familiarity with the genre. That is, they don't usually seem to be rationalizing subjective reactions (except in specifically stated instances) as much as analyzing a piece of fiction in its own terms to see whether it works. And rather than suffer, they seem to gain strength from not trying to justify the material in hand in terms of Literature, only within the bounds of the genre. Ben Indick dropped his essay on me out of the blue -- where have you been, Ben? The trio are reviewed by Ben with really apt references to their liteary cousins, balanced by awareness of the reading experience, and a sarcasm or two lest we forget. While lacking a bit of Lupoff's strength in terms of background insights, Indick's might be a typical example of what I'd like to be able to write.

WORLDS OF ROBERT A. HEINLEIN
Ace 91502 1972 95¢
Reviewed by Cy Chauvin

SF is often said to be in a ghetto. The time, however, has come for sf to emerge from its ghetto, and we may soon be faced with the unpleasant task of pulling down the reputations of various sf authors and so-called "classic stories," like wreckers demolishing old buildings for urban renewal. Not everything, of course, must go to make room for the new Ursula K. LeGuin crosstown freeway, or Robert Silverberg Memorial Museum (let alone the rather odious look-alike Malzberg pizza parlor chain and Roger Elwood coin laundromats). Much of the HG Wells building, founded 1898, still holds its age well, and has attracted a long stream of outside visitors, despite its location in the ghetto. Amazing Retailers, Inc., has recently been renovated and put under new management, and they've even begun repolishing the chrome on the Alfred Bester Corner Grocery Mart. But things don't look so well for HM (Heinlein Motors, Inc.). The company is still attempting to market new autos, but each seems more shoddily designed than the last, and now consumer advocate Franz Rottensteiner is asking for the recall of all car models built by Heinlein, to check for defects. "They are not only unsafe at any speed," Rottensteiner charges, "but racist too!"

All forms of fiction must observe certain basic rules of the storytelling art, such as characterization, style, plot, etc., but in sf we all agree that there is some special force besides these basic techniques which attract both readers and writers. What? The unique imaginative possibilities offered by sf.

There are some consequences which follow logically from this, however, which aren't often, if ever, brought up. If the exploitation of sf's unique imaginative possibilities is what gives a sf story its special character and appeal, stories which exploit these possibilities to a greater extent should be considered superior sf, shouldn't they? (Providing they exploit these possibilities properly, of course.) After all, the more suspense and depth of characterization found in a story, the better it is, correct? (Providing, again, it is used properly.) The same should also be true for sf's own unique qualities, if we value those qualities at all.

Perhaps it might be helpful to think of sf's unique elements as its "world-building" or "universe-creating" abilities: its abilities to alter the social and physical or external environment within a story. A story that utilizes this world-building ability to a greater degree will offer the reader more "thrill of discovery," a more complex and different environment structure to explore. (And hopeful, complex characters and a suitable style to match.)

If we compare an sf story to a laboratory experiment (both alter a creature's natural environment in order to test and study their reaction to the changes made), then much sf of the past has been devoted to simple experiments, such as unraveling endless variations on the time travel theme. I think sf is now past this stage, and that man's reaction to more complex, more fully-realized imaginary environments (such as these found in THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS and SOLARIS) should be the object of those sf writers we call our "best." Literary standards and technique cannot, of course, be neglected; but these other unique

factors, which play such an important part in sf, should not be neglected.

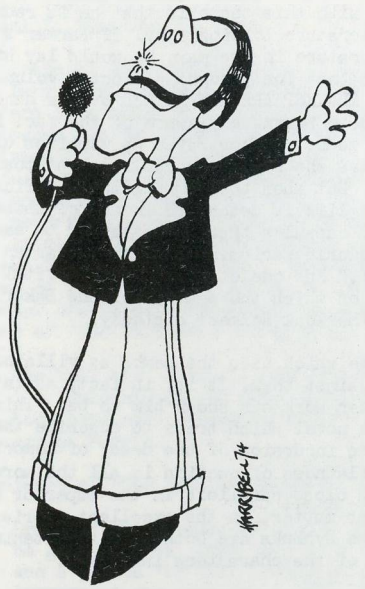
In his lengthy and enjoyable introduction to THE WORLDS OF ROBERT A. HEINLEIN, Heinlein outlines the basic method he used for writing the five "speculative fiction"(his term) stories in the book: "Take one, just one, basic new assumption, then examine all its consequences -- but express those consequences in terms of human beings." (p.11)

The basic idea of exploring the consequences of sf ideas in terms of human beings isn't much (if any) different from what I said above, but if writers only use one new basic assumption in their stories, they will produce only simplistic sf (at least as far as sf's own special qualities go). Also, an unfortunate side-effect of Heinlein's dictum is that you are making your stories very vulnerable to cliche. Every gimmick, gadget and even new customs (such as legal pot smoking, in the future) can quickly become cliched through overuse, so much so that old "classics" excite no wonder in modern readers because they have already encountered the gimmicks and ideas old-timers rave about in modern versions of the story. This does not happen as readily if one exploits sf's unique possibilities to the utmost -- and offer not one new gimmick, but a fully realized world/culture.

Heinlein follows the simplistic pattern throughout these stories. "Lifeline" (1939), his first story, recounts a machine which can predict the date of one's death. "Blowups Happen" (1940) is about the first nuclear reactor, which nearly goes to critical mass and explodes. "Solution Unsatisfactory" (1940) postulates radioactive dust as the ultimate weapon, when dropped from planes, that makes one man dictator of the world. "Searchlight" (1962) seeks a blind girl lost on the moon. "Free Men" (1966) is a bit more complex; an after-the-bomb story, in which the USA is occupied, with a small rebel group struggling for survival amid great personal losses.

Perhaps Heinlein's idea of using one or two basic assumptions might be acceptable if he examined the consequences of his assumptions in greater depth, and developed them to their ultimate, instead of just pointing out the most obvious surface implications of an idea. One new "gimmick" can have tremendous physical, economic and social implications -- just look at the automobile! But change does not occur in a vacuum, one new assumption at a time. Heinlein himself says that changes in the next fifty years will be "at least eight times as great as changes in the past fifty years." If sf writers want to at least keep up the appearance that their stories are set in the future (I don't believe that any really are, in actuality) or on true alien planets, then more complex and different (as well as original) imaginary environments within a story must be developed. The cardboard sets that too often pass for the future and other worlds, must today be replaced.

I am not condemning the five stories in this book for technical, basic storytelling flaws (though others might), but for a conceptual failing: for failing to exploit sf to its best advantage. I think this is something we should take into greater account when discussing and writing about sf.



TRAITOR TO THE LIVING by Philip Jose Farmer
Ballantine 23613 1973 $1.25 220 pages.
Reviewed by Barry Gillam

In TRAITOR TO THE LIVING Philip Jose Farmer explores one of the implications of the popular literature to which so much of his recent work has been an act of homage. A machine is invented which allows the living to speak to the dead. This is the other side of the Riverworld series. Where the dead come back to life along the river, here the dead have become disembodied energy about whom the living are endlessly curious. One may see this as an allegory: the machine (tellingly called MEDIUM) as Farmer and the public as Farmer's readers.

This self-awareness is surely at work in the novel's attitude towards the dead. MEDIUM'S proprietor, Raymond Western, is already rich and proposes to have MEDIUMs built in all the major cities of the world. Gordon Carfax, the novel's protagonist, believes that the spirits of the dead (or sembs, as they are called) may be "nonhuman inhabitants of a universe occupying the same space as ours but at 'right angles' to ours. And these entities, for no good reason, were pretending to be dead human beings."

In either case the dogged persistence of the sembs is clearly like that of the archetypical popular hero, be he Tarzan or Sherlock Holmes, Conan or Doc Savage. As Farmer's pastiches testify, they live not only beyond their own deaths, but also beyond their creators'. And although Farmer separates his pastiches from his novels using historical figures, a single principle is at work. Farmer is fascinated by the persistence of unique personalities.

The problem with this theme is that he is reducing all of history and literature to biography. If Farmer's subject weren't popular literature in the main he would lay himself open to the same charges that Poe brought against a volume entitled THE GIRLHOOD OF SHAKESPEARE's HEROINES over a hundred years ago. Farmer seems to be vaguely aware of the fact in TRAITOR TO THE LIVING. The sembs are portrayed as vampires of the spirit, powerful characters who have no scruples about possessing bodies of the living. But when the semb villain is finally unmasked at the end, his life is described in one of those platitudinous biographical capsules that are attached to each of the chcracters in the Riverworld series, like a kindergarten nametag "I'm Johnny Green." And one of the villain's vital dates is identified as "the day on which the members of the Baker Street Irregulars celebrated Sherlock Holmes' birthday."

The adventure which uses the sembs as villains, then, has no prejudice against them. It is, in fact, as intrigued by them as Farmer's other work has shown him to be. This is only one problem of a novel which tries to describe the paranoia of the living at the incursion of the dead, of memories, upon their lives. The flatness of emotion is all the more evident because we have such close parallels in the superior work of Philip Dick. And, for that matter, in the excellent stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer, whose dybbuks are both more frightening and more pathetic than any of the characters in Farmer.

The sf mechanics of the novel have recent and distinctly better precursors. The proposal to use the energy of this other universe to power our world recalls THE GODS THEMSELVES. The suggestion that "'We may become the modern Egyptians, focusing our lives on death'" brings to mind WHY CALL THEM BACK FROM HEAVEN? Especially because MEDIUM intends to offer a kind of insurance which would provide a new body for your spirit when you die. And the possession of the living by the dead is also better handled by Jack Finney in his latest novel MARION'S WALL.

TRAITOR TO THE LIVING is essentially an adventure novel. Carfax means to determine the nature of the sembs and is also busy investigating who the real inventor to MEDIUM is. Farmer manages to find room for espionage, riots, a seance, several murders, some sex, religion, politics, love and other supposedly entertaining items.

The characterization is downright uninteresting (which may have something to do with Farmer's love of already established characters). Admittedly, the opening is well done. Carfax is just waking up after having dreamt of his recently dead wife. His dream of her "seemed to boil away in little gray clouds" (a nice image). The breaking up of the dream came at cock's crow, intimating the supernatural. Carfax feels guilty about her death and we see a pattern of behavior developing. He does things without thinking that blow up; he only later realizes his mistake. But this is quickly lost as the action of the novel takes over. And it is never really explained how a professor of medieval history is transformed into a James Bond type of sleuth.

TRAITOR TO THE LIVING is a slight, not very well written novel which invokes images and myths much greater than it can deal with. There are references to everything from Hamlet, Faust and SOLARIS down to Richard Nixon. But it is all superfluous to the tacky detective story that the novel basically is.

THE WALL AROUND THE WORLD, by Theodore R. Cogswell
Pyramid N3278, 1974 (1962) 160 pages 95¢
Reviewed by Michael T, Shoemaker

This book is a reissue of Cogswell's 1962 collection of ten SF and fantasy stories. Many of the stories take the form of idea-tripping: in which there is a blend of SF and fantasy elements, and plausibility is tossed out the window in favor of an expanded field of entertainment. Thus, one finds a story like "The Masters," which deals with a confrontation between some aliens and the last man on Earth: a vampire. Slight piece of hackwork that this is, it nevertheless has a charm which is typical of even the poorest stories in this volume. This charm is twofold. First, Cogswell's stories possess an ironic humor that is highly reminiscent of Frederic Brown and Robert Sheckley. Second, Cogswell is a master of the narartive hook. Take, for example, the first sentence of "The Wall Around The World":

> The Wall that went all the way around the World had always been there, so nobody paid much attention to it -- except Porgie.

Or the fourth sentence of "The Specter General":

> Dropping the handles of the wooden plow, he gave a quick 'rest' to the private and a polite 'by your leave, sir' to the lieutenant who were yoked together in double harness.

Once the reader's curiosity has been aroused, he finds himself drawn into a swift-moving story, with a well-constructed plot, that will not release him until the conclusion.

Due to the nature of these stories (idea and plot oriented),

characterization is almost non-existent. The two exceptions are also the two longest, and best, stories in the collection, "The Specter General" and "The Wall Around the World."

"The Specter General," included on SFWA's Hall of Fame list, is a superb story with a far more serious thematic content than most of the stories in this volume. It is a dramatization of polarities: theoretical knowledge minus practical capability versus practical capability minus theoretical knowledge. Cogswell develops two plotlines simultaneously in alternating sections, which makes for very swift reading. In one the reader is shown a military outpost isolated from the Galactic Empire for 500 years. Unaware that the Empire has long since crumbled, they doggedly wait for contact to be re-established, meanwhile maintaining a high level of technical-mechanical competence among the populace. But lacking machines, they have no practical application for their knowledge. The other plot is set against a background of the remains of the Galactic Empire, where bickering cadres under the rule of the Lord Protector maneuver for power. Although they possess the hardware, much of it is breaking down due to the lack of technical maintenance. As the plots mesh, characters from the opposing camps realize that only by pooling their resources can they reunite the Empire. The only character developed to any extent is Colonel Harris, and even in him the development is hampered by the leapfrogging between sections for the sake of the plot machinations.

Cogswell's best delineated character in this volume is Porgie, the protagonist of "The Wall Around The World," who is at "an age that tends to view the word impossible as a meaningless term invented by adults for their own peculiar purposes." Porgie is youth, with all its curiosity, contrariness, and adventuresome spirit. He is also the scientifically inclined person in a world where "magic" works. These facets of his character bring him in conflict with his society and cause him to journey beyond the Wall.

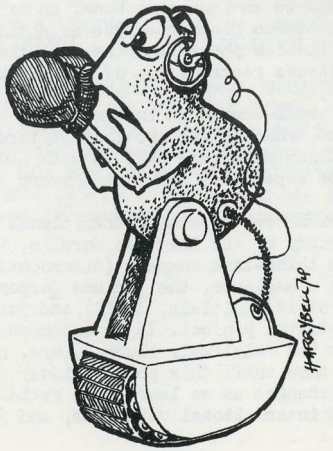
The third best story in the book, "Invasion Report," tells of an alien invasion that is repulsed by a group of children, and has a nice surprise ending. "Emergency Rations" observes the hilarious failure of a Trojan Horse-like attack on a space station. "Thimgs" is a good deal-with-the-devil story, without the devil. "Test Area" hardly adds a new wrinkle to the dangers of changing the past. "Wolfie" points out the hazards of being a werewolf. "Prisoner of Love" deals with a warlock's love. The weakest story in the book, "The Burning", is a pointless vignette in a horrible future.

Why it has taken twelve years to reissue this enjoyable collection is one of those arcane mysteries of the publishing world.

DYSTOPIA AND DYSPEPSIA: REVIEW ESSAY BY BEN INDICK
THE DISPOSSESSED, LeGuin: Harper and Row 1974 $7.95
THE YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN, Tucker: Ace Books 1970, 75¢
DAHLGREN, Delany: Bantam Books, 1975 $1.95

Although the chief connection between these three titles is that I read them successively, they do have the linking factor that they are concerned with our political state and its possible future. Only one, the first, is overtly utopian, and even that is subtitled "an ambiguous utopia", but all are cautionary novels of science fiction.

For nearly the first half of her book, LeGuin seems to be writing a curious throwback to the utopian novels of the late 19th century, such as LOOKING BACKWARD, CAESAR's COLUMN, THE CRYSTAL BUTTON, THE COMING RACE, etc., books in which a wide-eyed wanderer in a new world described its wonders, before the plot takes a melodramatic turn. However, the ambiguity which troubles the author is what eventually gives it its own distinctive style. In the end, it bears a truer relationship to two seminal utopian classics, books chronologically at opposite ends of the sf genre: GULLIVER'S TRAVELS and BRAVE NEW WORLD. Unlike the former, however, it is not a satire; and unlike the latter, the hero is not a naive primitive.



Yet it is similar to each in their most important aspect: each is an allegorical interpretation of the society and culture of its own time. Swift offers a bleak view of the essential unimportance of man; Huxley shows Materialism deified, a machine culture made into God. LeGuin is more intent upon the socio-political system of her times. Her ambiguity arises from her failure to discover a perfect system, in either of our major modes, Capitalism and Socialism/Communism. However, if she is utilizing allegory, her book is nevertheless a genuine novel, with a real protagonist, who is not merely described as being brilliant, but is able to demonstrate why he is so considered by his peers. Her locales, moreover, are genuine, and her several political societies have veracity for the reader.

THE DISPOSSESSED is the story of a planet in a distant star system and its satellite. The former is basically a purely capitalist world, while the latter is populated by refugees from the mother world who sought to create an egalitarian, communistic, even anarchic state. The powerful forces which caused the separation have, over several centuries, resulted in a nearly complete rupture. One man, a physicist, seeks to breach this wall, and his subsequent fate forms the narrative of the book. The mother planet, with its extravagantly drawn lifestyles, obliquely refers to our own world, in its references to the custom of major nations in doing their fighting in small backward nations, as well as political and economic repression, and suppression of feminists (women are still toys, although sentient and dazzling). The anarcho-communist satellite offers, in spite of a spartan life, the ultimate individual and sexual freedom, until we learn the worm at the core of this apple -- for selfishness and the power instinct persist. Although, at the end, there is disillusionment there is still hope of rapproachment.

The style LeGuin uses is to alternate her progressing story with flashbacks, usually in alternating chapters. Initially it makes for interesting contrast, ultimately the flashbacks cease to further character growth, and simply hold back the story. The reader is tempted to skip them entirely, and one wonders whether straight narrative might not have served her ends as well.

Nevertheless, this is an important book, an example of one manner in which science fiction serves as a mirror of its own times. LeGuin's fiction penetrates the essential problems of our times, and forces reevaluation of our thinking.

Wilson Tucker's novel commences in the light, wry style a reader might well expect from the writer. That it terminates in Armageddon is an unsettling surprise, but, as with LeGuin, it is a logical extension of aspects of our contemporary society.

Brian Chaney, fresh from upsetting traditional views of Christianity, after a study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, is invited to take a leave from his think-tank company (disconcertingly for this reviewer, Chaney's employer, the Indiana Corporation, commonly uses an acronym of its initials, INDIC) and join a top-secret government time-travel project. It is intended simply to draw information from the relatively close future, circa 2000 AD. The light bantering tone until this point, midway through the novel, rather abruptly changes as we learn that racial conflict has finally produced international cataclysm, and just around the

chronological corner! One must wonder whether the five years since the writing of the book have changed or perhaps underlined such a potentiality.

In DAHLGREN, Samuel R. Delany does not waste time examining our society, or even predicting Armageddon; he simply plunges right into that awesome and awful condition. In its first few pages, he establishes a scene of a post-nuclear holocaust world, in which survivors live a day-to-day helter-skelter hippie life. Then, for nearly nine hundred further pages of paperback print, Delany continues to say the same thing, ad infinitum, ad nauseum, ad somnium. The wearisome no-name hero, his dreary anonymous acquaintances, who seem to hold a fascination for the author, all are tired remnants of the late sixties, during which this enormous elephant of a tome was commenced. Taking no chances, the author has dedicated his book to more than two dozen persons, including SF personalities and critics. In 900 pages, he might just as well have included all of the rest of us, and been even more immune from criticism. Frederik Pohl has assumed a laurel wreath and deigned to tap this Verbiad "A Frederik Pohl Selection", which may in the future serve as a warning to innocent readers.

It is written in a quasi-poetical manner by Delany, who has pretentions to poetasting. For those who care, there is a liberal amount of sex, which is, however, free of the lip-smacking relish of porn. Unlike such a book as BUG JACK BARRON, which also had its sensual interludes, it does not have a provocative novel to accompany it. Just 900 pages of Joyce-inspired incomplete sentences, with none of Joyce's wit.

There is, however, a single sciencefictional moment to relieve the colossal tedium: introducing the last, but certainly not least in a bottom-barrelful of leasts, section in the book, Delany seems to hint, in classical SF style, that some undescribed future civilization has found this earlier text, and is presenting it without comment for its historic interest. After this brief paragraph, ennui sets in again and for keeps.

TS Eliot said the same thing in a few well-chosen words, but Delany, in picturing the world's whimper after the bang, makes one hope that should man attain his ultimate foolishness, he might at least do a thorough job of it, and include this edition of [illegible] -- oh, yes, DHALGREN while he is at it.

Albeit fairness dictates that I report DHALGREN received a rave review in the SF dept of THE NEW YORK TIMES. It condemned all the rest, the writer implied, to being mere "pulp." This elitism is characteristic of the snobbery which imputes to obscurantism and verbal giganticism a merit unshared by clarity, and to humorless imitations of James Joyce the virtues of his difficult but nevertheless innovative and brilliant conceptions.

LAURA J. HANEY Conventions are somewhat of a mystery to me. Hal (Davis) described them to me, lured me to two Lunacons and a Torcon on the strength of his descriptions (...intelligent discussions... fans are a bunch of normally shy, quiet people who gabble madly in groups...) Perhaps part of the problem is that Harry Warner will always be the man who wrote for the newspaper -- I lived in Hagerstown when I was 12 and 13.

TIM KYGER Ah, my first loc to a big fanzine, to wit, PREHENSILE n. 13 or so. *sigh* Such a scintillating letter column. And if this bomb ever gets in, it's in real trouble. ((We're trying to hold the line, Tim. Hang in there!))

MICHAEL CARLSON Re: Worldcon -- the people are the worldcon. The people demand their rights. What rights? Sorry I missed the Ranquet. (Steve Riley's cover is beautiful.)

BEN INDICK ...Now wouldn't it be nice if you followed this issue up with an issue of brief memoirs of those youthful LA days by the genuine greats Ray B., Robert B., AE van V., FJA, etc! Drop them a line and they'll all come a'running, no doubt. ((Well, there is some doubt. I queried several of the "greats" who had been intimate with the club in days gone by, and note that a couple you name never have been -- and the response was slightly less than earth-shattering.))

LORD JIM KENNEDY The two great differences between LASFS and the Organyzed Science Fiction Fans of Arizona (OSFFA) are (A) enthusiasm, and (B) pubbing. One of the things that must have been a major influence in LASFS' becoming what it has is the interest and efforts of many members. OSFFA, on the other hand, is rules largely by apathy. (There are three ways a measure can pass at business meetings...Unanimous Vote, Majority Vote, or Apathy vote /"The abstentions have it!"/ in whych cayse I decyde if I want it to pass or not, and the secretary wrytes "passed" or "defeated" by executive coercion.) Whereas the publishing activities of the LASFS obviously have been an important feature since its earliest days, it is almost impossible to get fen out here interested in zinery....Actually if someone is foolish enough ever to write an OSFFA history, this will probably be listed as the Apathy Period.

SAM LONG I remember with distaste having the read SILAS MARNER in high school, but I enjoy Moby Dick and have read it several times since. I did not however like CATCHER IN THE WRYE, which I never was forced to read (thankfully), but which I did read on the mistaken belief it was about baseball. I had a similar disappointment with THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME....

MIKE GLICKSOHN Gene Wolfe is a gentleman and a very welcome contributor to the fanzine field. It is rare to find a professional of his ability who involves himself to the extent that Gene does in the fanzine part of fandom. We are lucky that he has the interest that he does, and should be grateful that he finds the time to write as many amusing and interesting letters as he does. It's therefore sad to read that he is insulted, albeit gratuitously, at every con he goes to. I can only hope, selfishly, that he gets enough compliments and egoboo to make him overlook the cretin fringe of fandom. I'd be the poorer if he decided to pack it all in.

wahf: Susan Wood, Frank Balazs, Dan Goodman, Darrell Schweitzer, Sheryl Birkhead, Laurine White, Hal Davis, Ro Nagey, Murray Moore, Harry Bell.


GRANT CANFIELD