

PROPER

BOSKONIAN

fifteen

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SOME SORT OF EDITORIAL

I'm not entirely sure how this issue of PB got to be nearly sixty pages long. When I asked Mark Keller if he would expand upon a short essay he did for APA:NESFA on the likelihood of a sentient race with non-sentient females, he estimated that it would run about eight pages. Mike Blake thought his fanzine reviews would be about four pages. And then some crazy people from the Worcester Polytechnic SF Society sent me a very funny story...about 10,000 words worth of funny, in fact.

It looks as though the next issue, due out before Boskone, will be a fat one too. David Stever is working on an article about building bookcases (I'd like a fourth-dimensional one that would enable us to keep all 15,000 of our books in one room), and I hope to persuade Melissa Dowd to begin a regular column on the professional SF magazines to complement Mike Blakes column on fanzines. And we will have the conclusion of ATTACK FROM THE THIRD DIMENSION, the aforementioned funny story.

I need book reviews. I need discussions of awards, conventions, movies. And I need letters, lots and lots of letters.

I also need artwork, both cover and interior art. I'm not interested in filling a fanzine with artwork and illustrations, but occasional illos are nice. I have problems reproducing intricate detail and/or large dark areas with the mimeo I have, so open line drawings are best. With covers I don't have this problem, since I have them offset by a good printer.

A few people have complained about the paucity of artwork in the last PB, and no doubt will feel the same way about this one. Looking through past issues, I notice illos on nearly every page; this is a fanzine style I've never liked much. Unless an illo has something to do with the surrounding text, I really find it distracting and would be happier if it were left out. So most of the art in PB while I'm editor will be at the beginning or end of articles or story, directly related to the text, or on the cover or a separate page. This is largely a matter of preference, of course, rather like the question of whether raisins belong in rice pudding.

This issue of PROPER BOSKONIAN is about two weeks late; my apologies. I had my annual fall bronchitis, and coughing makes me type even worse than usual.

I have to thank Sue Anderson, who helps me with the errand -running that is so much a part of putting out a fanzine, and who counts and sorts every page of PB before it is collated.

And Don D'Ammassa, who brings me innumerable cups of tea while I work, and who finishes typing when I fall asleep over the keys.

Write!!

THE PLAGUE THAT MAKES WOMEN

STUPID

by Mark M. Keller

There was a discussion in Apa-Nesfa a few months ago about the biological likelihood of intelligent species with "non-sentient females", such as Larry Niven's *kzinti*. Could an advanced social species have a brainless reproductive caste?

There are rules for constructing alien planetary orbits, atmospheres, and landforms. If the planets don't follow Kepler's Laws, it had better be explained in the story. Atmospheres should obey the laws of gas mixture, tocks the laws of geology. Otherwise the reader may just drop the story as making no sense.

Similarly, alien animals and plants should fit within a reasonable evolutionary framework. They should have a history, a chain of events that led to their coming into being. Such chains of events need not resemble those of earth -- they may be very different -- but they should be logical. Does a non-sentient female caste make sense under the view of evolution?

Organisms are subject to Darwinian rules -- "natural selection" -- if they fit the following specifications: they live in an environment; they reproduce; they have a genetic system which allows variation; the environment is liable to slow change. This covers quite a range of possible ecologies. Stephen Tall in his Stardust Voyages has even applied Darwinian selection to to planets of sentient teleporting rocks, and it feels logical. So Earth, Mars, Jupiter, or planets of other suns -- the life-forms should obey Darwinian rules.

Non-sentient females don't make much sense by these rules.

Before I go further, let me clear up some possible objections. Readers of SF are usually familiar with basic physics and basic chemistry. Strange new elements between helium and lithium, or home-brewed beer that becomes anti-gravity paint are not to be considered seriously. (As a joke, maybe, but not as the basis for a serious story. Yes, I know about Rick Raphael's atom bombs from filbert nuts, and Papa Schimmelhorn's marbelous inventions.)

Basic biology is less well understood, for some reason. Fans have asked me, without a trace of humor, if maybe there isn't some other kind of evolution. Certain skeptics don't know much biology but suspect any dogmatic statement. How can I be sure that Darwinian rules apply to *kzinti*? Science fiction is the literature of the unfettered imagination....

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Sure, there are other ways to explain the natural world. There's the theory of Divine Creation -- the kzinti are mean and nasty because God made them that way. There's the Ancient Astronaut theory -- long ago some space people came down and did some breeding experiments. What we see are the lab animals that escaped from their cages. There's the Aristotelian Theory -- each planet has a sould or daemon that shapes the forms on its surface. Read C.S. Lewis for an example of this one, the eldila of Mars and Venus.

Now in fact the kzinti are explained by the Ancient Astronaut theory. The puppeteers have been selectively breeding kzinti for thousands of generations. But wait a minute -- it is implied that the kzinti females were non-sentient even before the puppeteers interfered. (Niven fans please check citations?)

Try Divine Creation? Kzin females are brainless because God (Larry Niven) made them that way. End of argument.

Maybe someone should ask Larry what he had in mind. The idea seems to be brainless fecund breeding machines on the order of the queen termite. It works for termites, but I wonder how well it would work for pseudo-mammals like the kzinti. Can the kzin females care for themselves? Maybe on the open range chasing down cattle, but I doubt they could do so in an industrial technology. Remember they cannot speak language of any kind.

Can they take care of their young? Mother opossums do pretty well raising baby opossums, mother cats do well raising kittens -- both opossums and cats are stupid animals. But the baby male kzinti would be sentient, and smarter than their mothers. How could they learn to talk? How could they learn the social code of Kzin society? (Imagine a mother cat trying to raise a baby monkey.)

There's only one option: there must be male kzinti who remove the young from the females and teach them language and manners. Now remember how male kzinti are characterized in the Known Space stories. They are nasty, brutal, quick-tempered, and vicious. I visualize Speaker-to-Animals being given a litter of kzin pups to nurse and clean and supervise....I see the pups lasting an average of ten minutes each. Any human parent knows there are times when the impulse to strangle the little brat becomes almost overwhelming. (((Amen...sgd))) Kzinti are far less tolerant than humans.

Yes, someone should ask Larry who takes care of the kzin young.

Back to Natural Selection. Leaving aside the kzinti as possibly an artifact of the puppeteers, we can ask if species of non-sentient females could have evolved on their own. There have been attempts in science fiction to use this idea before now.

Intelligent alien races with two sexes: our brothers and sisters from the stars. Non-intelligent alien races with two sexes: the old familiar BEMs. But alien races with one sex smart and one sex brainless... well, there are the inhabitants of Lyrane II from E.E. Smith's Second Stage Lensman.

The women of Lyrane II are wholly human in mind and body; the men are stunted angry non-sentient medgets used only for breed-

ing. The matriarchs are working on ways to eliminate the males altogether. (Here it's the males who are non-sentient, but the problem is the same -- how did things get this way? Smith doesn't tell.)

Out on Lyrate VIII is a settlement of Eich: huge, cold-blooded, sexless. They are cosmic pirates and dope-dealers who hope to use the Lyrane women as spies on the human worlds. The Eich prefer to deal with sexless species as their agents. They encourage the matriarchs to phase out the male sex entirely as soon as possible. Did the Lyranians have two intelligent sexes before they came under the influence of the wicked Eich?

Clarissa Kinnison, the first female Lens-bearer, visits Lyrane II and soon tracks down the machinations of the villainous Eich, who are thereafter wiped out by the Galactic Patrol. Lyranian matriarchy is left to stagnate. Smith saw the interplay of male and female as necessary to keep a society dynamic.

The Eich had previously tried to infiltrate humanity by agents from Kalonia. The Kalonians are blue-skinned humans in which men totally rule the women, keeping them "barefoot and pregnant", to coin a phrase. But even if the male Kalonians were a feminist's nightmare, the Eich ideal of a one sex race was far off. Presumably the male Kalonians liked having women around to beat on when they felt nasty. (See Children of the Lens for details.)

Lyrane and Kalonia are not gone from the pages of SF. Lyrane leaves daughters in a whole series of manless matriarchies. Kalonia is now called Gor.

There have been stories in which non-sentient humans have been bred. I recall Jack Vance's Dragon Masters and Piers Anthony's "In the Barn". Anthony had a parallel Earth in which plagues killed all the cows and the rulers bred a sub-species of bovine humans to replace them. Human female infants are brain-stunted from birth: tongues slashed so they cannot learn to speak, hands bound so fingers atrophy into a clumsy hoof, isolated in dark rooms until their intelligence is permanently extinguished. Then come hormone shots(?) to increase breast size and lactation. Male infants are mostly killed except for a few kept chained in the barns as stud bulls.

Anthony shows how easy it is to destroy the potential sentience of a species. You might also find parallels with Chinese foot-binding of girl children, and with the "animal machines" of the modern dairy industry.

This is how non-sentient females (or males) are most likely to be produced: the deliberate destruction of a consciousness already functioning. Babies are most vulnerable, although most SF with this theme is about de-braining adults. Edgar Pangborn in East of the Sun describes a primitive tribe of aliens. They force enemy prisoners to drink a brew made from local plants, a brew which causes brain damage but not death. Thus they gain many tractable slaves.

In many of John D. MacDonald's stories, not all of them SF, the major threat hanging over the hero is reduction to idiocy via lobotomy. But this is also a major threat in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and A Fine Madness as well as numerous tales of life in the madhouse. Perhaps I stray too far from SF.

Here's one from the December 1958 Astounding -- "Queen Bee" by Randall Garrett. Garrett tells of a lifeboat crash on a far planet out among the stars -- typical plot so far. Four men, three women, no hope of rescue...they decide to follow Standard Procedure and become colonists and breed lots of new humans to claim this planet for mankind.

One of the women is lazy and selfish. She will not help the others to build a colony. She is also a psychopath. In order to improve her own status, she shoots the other two women in cold blood. Then she dictates terms to the stunned men. They dare not injure her: the only woman alive on the planet. She will be the queen bee. Sex and babies are at her choice alone.

The men grab her and burn out her frontal lobes. Three years later she is alive, healthy, pregnant again, and without volition. The colony is growing. Seems a rather strong story for "rivets" fans -- how did An Lab like it?

The situation has precedents, I might add. The first Norse colony in North America had a madwoman named Gudrun who one night killed all the other women with an ax. The colony folded and headed back for Greenland. (Details in the Icelandic sagas.)

Does Garrett's story look like the worst form of sexism? "They just want her body, not her brain, so they destroy her brain." But the actual problem is how to control a killer in a tiny community with no laws and no police. The Greenlanders and the Eskimos both had to face this. Remember, the queen bee murdered her two potentials. Though Garrett doesn't say this, the men must have feared she would knife them too some day.

The same story seen through the eyes of the psychopath is told by Joanna Russ in "We Who Are About To..." (Galaxy, Jan&Feb 1976). Once again there is a lifeboat crash with a mixed party of men and women. The protagonist wishes to commit suicide in peace, but the others won't let her. So she kills them all. She is faster and more ruthless than Garrett's queen bee. In the end she dies too, as she planned. She achieves her desire.

Lifeboat scenarios, deliberate brainwashing -- this is still not quite it. Could there be a large community lasting for several generations in which all the women were morons while the men surrounded the current IQ norm? I don't see any way it could evolve, but there is one way such a society could be produced: recurrent plagues that do brain damage to one sex only.

I'll stay with human societies for now. It saves long background explanations of the social biology of alien species. If you feel restrained by limiting the discussion to humans, feel free to invent a sapient species with whatever characteristics you find amusing. What kind of selective factor in the environment could favor brains in XY individuals but not in XX individuals? Some Wesfans suggested male dominance: angry males killed all the smart females until only stupid submissive females were left. This assumes a kind of baboon-troop society with large grouchy males and small oppressed females. It won't work for two reasons.

First, the unstated assumption is that stupid females are submissive while intelligent females are smart-ass types who bug the dominant males. Why not assume that dumb females rile the males by accident while smart females are clever enough to stay out of the way? Cowering to avoid getting hit is learned behavior. The smarter females should learn to cower faster and better. There is evidence that they do just that in troops of baboons.

Second, remember Darwinian selection can apply to groups. Troop A has big nasty males that kill females out of hand. Troop B has big nasty males that can be appeased by female submissiveness. The troop A females are selected for submissiveness but there aren't very many of them. (The males kill too many.) After 20 or 30 generations the troop B baboons are breeding in much greater numbers since they have many more females to bear young. Troop B overruns troop A territory.

Someone says, "Wait a minute, the troop A males are bigger and meaner than the troop B males." Maybe so. But they're outnumbered ten to one. Baboons tend to run gang fights rather than trial-by-combat among single champions. Ten adult male baboons together can make a mess of a full-grown leopard.

It will have to be some non-social factor. Let's try plague.

SF readers are familiar with selective plagues that kill off only the men on a planet and leave an all-female society. The adjustments are standard in "virgin planet" backgrounds: young women have parthenogenic girl babies, the matriarchy sets up a temple to worship the Goddess, the economy is primitive and stagnant. Usually the plot involves the re-contact with humanity as a spaceship full of men drops unexpectedly down from the sky.

This may be a happy day as in Poul Anderson's Virgin Planet; it may be a day of mourning as in Joanna Russ' "When It Changed". The revival of feminism in the past decade has changed the mood of "world without men" stories from gloomy dictatorship to positive utopia. A theology of Male Evil has been elaborated which finds its way into SF stories. Eden was the primitive gynarchy. The Fall was the establishment of patriarchy by warriors and fathers overturning rule of the Goddess. The reign of Sin is the regime of male supremacy under which women now suffer. The Redemption will no doubt be the anti-male plague such as the one that scoured the Y chromosome from the surface of Whilaway in The Female Man.

Such plagues are too total for the theme of this inquiry. We seek some effect that will incapacitate one sex, not kill it entirely.

There are diseases that hit one sex more than another. Some are based on morphology: cancer of the penis, cancer of the cervix. Some are based on physiology. Breast cancer in males is very rare; male hormones in the blood seem to slow its growth drastically.

Some less serious conditions are also sex-related. Pattern baldness, the bald patch in the center of the head, is caused by a dominant gene. Yet the gene cannot become active if there is a

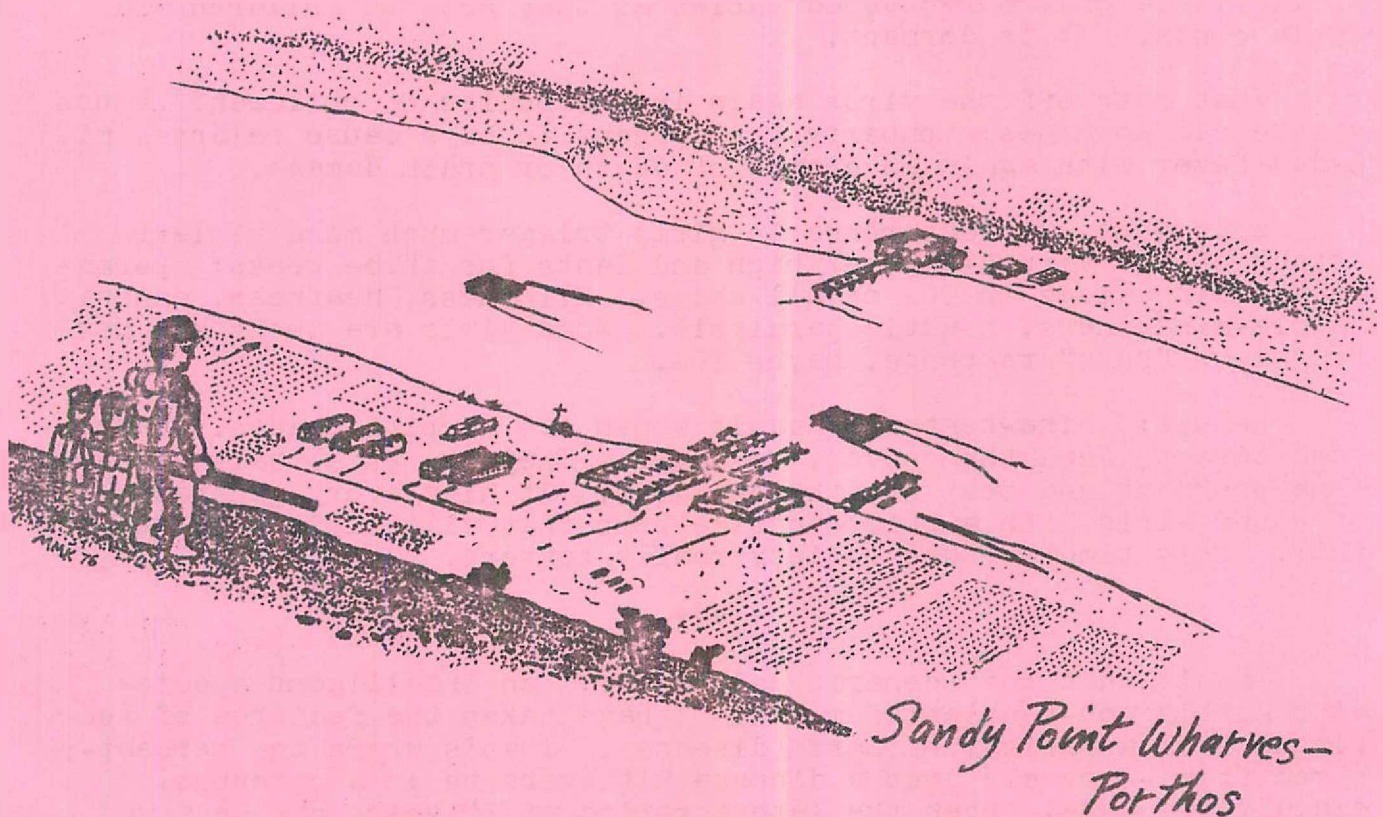
high blood level of female hormones.. So a 40-year-old man may be bald while his twin sister has all her hair, although she may lose it after menopause.

In a biochem lab working with musk extracts, the women technicians complained of a strong odor. The men noticed nothing. Outside witnesses were called in - the women detected the odor, the men did not. Nor did pre-pubescent girls. Certain levels of estrogen in the blood are required to sensitize the nasal cells to this odor. Since many mammals use musk-like compounds as sex attractants, this dependence on blood hormone levels is not too surprising. Of course it does suggest certain very interesting areas of research. Humans no longer use sex-attractant odors the way dogs do ... wonder how much of the old smell centers of the brain respond ... not on a conscious level, though ...

Using differences in blood hormone levels as a key, let me set up a script. Colonies are being dropped on earthlike planets four and five years travel time from the home world. (2000 parsecs out; FTL is not that much faster than light.) They are isolated from medical aid, pretty much on their own.

Yellow sun G-45201, earthlike planet now named Porthos. Mild even climate, oceans and low continents, flora and fauna in early flower and primitive mammal stage: Eocene equivalent. Drop 10,000 colonists to surface; crew of 500 stays in orbiting cargo hulls.

Allow three generations to pass. Bring 50,000 corpsesicles from freezer hold of cargo shell down to surface, thaw with 95% success, use as casual labor. (To get to the stars frozen is cheap but dan-



gerous: steerage.) Set up 50,000 frozen embryos in plastic wombs to increase population fast. Embryos are brought out from Earth thanks to Birthright, which collects aborted fetuses and tries to find good homes for them. Earth is crowded.

Delayed immigrants on ice, plus baby boom, brings population of Porthos to over 200,000 in fifty years. Crew still in orbital shells now numbers 5000 at stable population. The crew likes it up there. (Ask any member of the L-5 Society why living in space is great.) The crew sends down technology and computer services, the planet sends up protein and metals.

Half of Porthans are still farmers: soybeans, barley goats. Scattered in communities of 2000-5000 along major rivers. One big city, New Buffalo, at river mouth -- 75,000 people and fusion power plant. Shuttleport on island offshore. Earth plants push aside native Porthan with ease. Goats can eat Porthan weeds if given supplements; proteins are 40% compatible with earth types.

Too compatible, it turns out. Birus of Porthan rodents can also live in nerve tissue of Earth-descended humans. After 70 years it makes the jump. There is a plague that sweeps Porthos: 100% infection, 20% mortality. Think of it as smallpox -- once recovered, you are immune to further attacks. Think of it as typhoid too -- immune survivors still carry infectious virus particles within them. Porthos society staggers but survives. Worse is yet to come, however.

By year 80, all adults are immune. Each new crop of babies gets infected by carriers among adults; death rate among babies is 2%. For most, it's a mild 3-day fever and recovery. But the virus has been modified slightly by passage thru human hosts. It stays in brain tissue of the recovered babies as they grow to children and adolescents. It is dormant.

What sets off the virus again in the bodies of children? Flush of steroid hormones: puberty. Androgens in boys cause relapse, mild 3-day fever with again 2% chance of death or brain damage.

Estrogens, progesterones in girls trigger much more violent attack of the virus -- fever high and lasts for three weeks: permanent brain damage in 90% of all cases. Blindness, deafness, amnesia, feeble-mindedness, spastic paralysis. Some girls are lucky and get only weak "boys" response, maybe 10%.

Result: nine-tenths of adult women are hospital cases. They need care to feed themselves, to dress. They can still walk and become pregnant and bear healthy children. It hits every generation of young girls with a built-in time bomb that will explode in 90% of them. This time Porthos society really totters.

That's what the scenario called for: an intelligent species with mostly non-sentient females. I have taken the features of the plague from a variety of Earth diseases. That's where the percent-comes from -- rarely does a disease hit everyone in a community exactly the same. Even the latent period of 20 years can be found in Earth diseases: think of Hansen's Leprosy, think of syphilis which may cause brain damage forty years after infection. Think even of

chicken pox, which causes a rash in children and then can go dormant for 30 years only to reappear in adults as shingles (same virus).

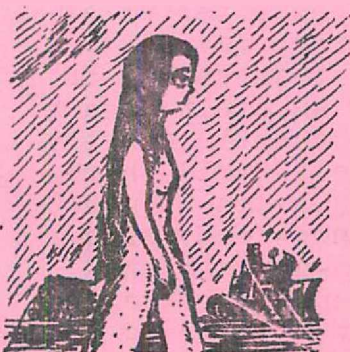
What kind of social system would evolve? The crew would stay in their high shells, isolated by total quarantine and increasingly arrogant toward the Porthans far below. The cities would shrink as population moved out to the farms to be closer to the food supply. Large windowless barracks -- Mother Houses -- would be set up as chronic wards for the women unable to care for themselves. These would be in smaller towns, on farms, decentralized. The bigger cities would be reserved for technicians and engineers, liason with the crew in orbit and such heavy industry as survives.

The man-woman ratio in the cities is at least 9:1, probably worse. The small fraction of undamaged women can't be wasted as courtesans for cities of horny oilmen and steelworkers. Undamaged women are in the towns helping to raise the children, and desperately overworked at that. Porthos is a world in which 40% of the population is in hospital; the burden is awful. Steelworkers make do with whore-houses stocked with non-fertile brainless women, or turn to the increasing number of young painted boys in the street. Some of the adolescent boys have had sex-change operations to become false females. This is still rare, however. Priority in the medical services goes toward keeping the non-sentient mothers alive. Transsexual cosmetic surgery is way down on the list of priorities. There are too few surgeons as it is.

Out on the farms live 75% of the Porthans (95% of the female Porthans). The farm complexes are communes with central tractor stations, growing N-fixing cereals and root crops of Earth descent. Tractors run by electrical power cells charged at the fusion plant in New Buffalo. Household current comes from solar panels. Barges bring power cells upriver to the farm docks, and load up with grain and manufactured goods for the return trip. Small factories on the farms produce clothing, paper, precision instruments.

Oilfields, coalmines produce organics for plastics. Steel and other metals come from seacoast complexes. These are all-male communities.

On the farms, men do the heavy plowing and harvesting while boys herd the goats and do light maintenance and housework. Men and boys take turns as nurses in the Mother Houses. Girls under 12 care for babies and adult women, under the supervision of old men or undamaged adult women. Some of the adult women can feed themselves and help the paralyzed others. Most of the inhabitants of the Mother Houses are brought out to sun themselves on bright summer mornings.



Non-sentient females: not a world of cheerful instinctive mama cats, but a planet-wide sickroom. The girls are somber most of the time. Little boys can look forward to being tractor drivers or barge pilots, doctors or scientists, council members or nuclear engineers. Little girls can look forward to becoming drooling idiots producing five or six babies they will not recognize, dying probably in mid-thirties at the latest. For there is a tertiary stage of plague, triggered late in life when the hormones shift again. It may come with menopause or

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with a fifth pregnancy. It leads in most cases to rapid paresis and death. It is the final gift of Porthos to the little girls.

They're not gloomy all the time. They are children, and they are loved, and if they work hard, well, so does everyone else. There's so much to do. But a few days a month there is an afternoon off for a holiday. Hikes, swimming parties, barge trips down to the big city -- but so rarely do they see a grown up woman out in the world moving about as the little girls do.

The town councils usually set up the work schedules so that the girls have more free time than the boys. "Let them enjoy it while they can." Education is limited on Porthos, with resources so scarce. Classroom time is generally reserved for boys. To teach 50 girls and have 45 of them lose the knowledge to plague at puberty seems a waste of time. If they emerge from the fever still able to talk and think -- then there's time to teach them how to read and write.

It's not quite that extreme. Many girls do learn basic literacy, and one who shows real talent may be given a boy's education in mathematics. It is considered worth the gamble; she may be one of the lucky ones who come through the fever intact. Still, most of the sentient women on Porthos got a late start in learning and feel inferior to the men in that regard. Some have suggested that all girls be taught the basics but nothing has been done. Even in the "nuclear family" communities there is discontent.

Most adult women are unable to live in the cities -- they feel too conspicuous -- and they often can't stay for long on the farms where they have to watch over wards of imbecile mothers. Perhaps three quarters of the undamaged women drift into "nuclear family" settlements by age 30. In these settlements the only adult women are undamaged ones. They choose men from the surrounding farms to join them as husbands. Children are raised by both parents in imitation of the family in North America, where the ancestors of most Porthans came from. It is an island of stability in a sea of change.

Girls from nuclear family settlements see women who are active, intelligent, and sit in the councils. They can aspire to this themselves. Of course 90% of them do not; 90% of them fall to the fever and are shipped to a farm dorm. Perhaps not quite 90%; the loss rate in such towns is actually down around 75% by year 130. What they are doing is selective breeding for females that are less vulnerable to plague. But it goes so slowly.

Back to the farms: the men gather in their lodges after work, their drinking and smoking clubs. In one corner a group may be watching a porno tape from the Big city, a tape of a transsexual boy or an unaware non-sentient woman but almost never of an adult woman talking or telling a dirty joke and then grinning at them in conspiracy. And this is what they most want, because in their world there are two kinds of females: immature ones who talk and laugh but are forbidden, and mature ones who are approachable but non-responsive and lethargic. Most farm men have never seen a grown-up talking woman. The girls who survive the fever unimpaired usually leave the farm in less than a year. And on Porthos the society of boys is almost totally apart from the society of girls. The boys from the

age of five grow up in an all-male world.

The passage into manhood is not concerned with women at all. It is surviving the fever (which 98% of boys do) and being invited to join a men's club. Manhood starts at age 14 generally.

Sexual initiation? Yes, there is a ritual entry into the Mother House at age 15 or so, this time not to carry bedpans or mop floors as in boyhood. This time in a company of older men to a screened alcove, where a burnt-out husk of a woman in her late teens is propped up ready for him, vacant eyes, perhaps a reflexive smile as he cautiously strokes her arm. This may be her first sexual experience as well; the doctors don't like pregnancies too early.

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Narrow in on one farm, one clubhouse. Here at Sandy Point, a day up from New Buffalo on the Big Muddy, the barley harvest is about to begin. Relaxing with a jug of beer is Michael Dusek, tractor maintenance. Everyone of his ten tractors is in good working order. This is so rare that he wants to celebrate with his friend Petlura, a hypnotist and therapist.

The two men sit talking. They have known each other for ten years, since Petlura was sent out here after intern training. Dusek is slightly worried about his daughter Jane. Children are raised communally, but parents keep track of their own kids. Most of Dusek's co-workers spend time with their sons but tend to ignore their daughters.

Dusek, however, knew Jane's mother when they were both children. Pre-puberty bonds between boys and girls were not common, but they did happen. The kids planned how they would move to a "nuclear family" town after the girl got through the fever, to a town where she could really work on painting and sketching. Oh, she had a talent, no question. He had some sketches she made soon after menarche, when the fever was starting to set in. But the talent was lost in the two weeks of fever,

and Dusek had been more frightened as it went on and on. Everybody knew that the longer the fever, the worse damage. The talent went, and hearing, and speech, and then the fever broke.

Petlura poured two more beers. Dusek had visited the girl a month after she went into the wards, when his own fever had come and passed lightly over with no appreciable effect. She could walk and recognize him, but when he gave her a pen and sketch pad, she could only make abrupt scrawls. Motor problems, said the attendant. --Dusek set up an exclusive contract: he would be the only man brought in to impregnate her when she was ready. They agreed, as it was a harmless enough foible. The doctors decided that five children by Dusek and his ex-girlfriend would be a benefit to Porthian society.

*She hasn't talked to me  
for fifteen years, Doc—*



Still, you couldn't talk to her. She didn't understand the words. That was why Dusek was so fond of Jane. She was so much like her mother had been fifteen years before. She was bright and alert and liked to tell jokes.

Jane was almost twelve, and she was counting the days slipping away until the shadow took her. She had seen her mother. No more jokes. Dusek had seen Jane staring at the Mother House. Just last week his six-year-old son had been teasing Jane about how she would become a dummy and go live in the stupid house and squeeze out babies one after the other. Dusek belted the kid good for that, but had been too late. Now the girl spent hours walking the perimeter of the farm, scuffling through the shortgrass with her long-legged stride, eyes down on the ground. She had withdrawn, become remote.

Not surprising, said Petlura. Many girls think of suicide as their time comes. Look forward to being a woman, yes, but also to a kind of death. And their own body is going to loose the killer on them. But most of them go into the fever still hoping. Not me, not me, the others but not me.

It's capricious enough so that any girl can say, I may survive. And she may indeed. But lots of them get "survivor syndrome" - that's why so many who get through decide to leave their towns as soon as possible.

Haven't heard of it? Consider. Here's a girl, has five or six friends her age. They all get fever. She comes through safely, the others are burned out. Her friends are over in the house, sitting, lying down, but gone, nothing left. And she is still here, all alone. She feels lonely, yes, but also guilty. She wants to leave them behind. She goes away.

Around Dusek and Petlura is the chatter of the man's clubhouse. One man is telling how he talked on the screen to a woman tech from one of the satellites. Must have been 25 or 30 years old. What did he say? Oh, just an order for special coating for plow blades. They could work carbide fiber easier up there in zero-gee. --What her voice was like? Higher than a man's, sort of soft. No, not like a girl's voice, not at all. Not slurred either...

Ha, said Petlura. They could hear all the women's voices they want if they listened to the tapes from the "nuclear family" towns. Instead they go for this cheap porno, with surgically altered boys dancing and a little girl's voice dubbed in. You've seen them?

Yah, says Dusek. Always the same plot. Spaceship crashes from a cargo shell, or maybe from Earth. Woman climbs out, and old Horny Jack jumps on top of her. And when he's through, she tells a dirty story, And then they screw again, and she sings a song, ans so on, and so on. You know, you're right -- it's never about a woman from one of the "nuke" towns, always someone exotic from far away. And I never saw a nuke town woman playing in one of them tapes, either.

That's been noticed, says Petlura. Strange things happening in New Buffalo. Men going to sperm-donor stations, they get a choice of any tape they want. Damn thing is, last two years they choose those dumb crash-landing tapes 80% of the time. I mean 4/5 of the men who come in to donate sperm would rather look at skinny boys with plastic tits than at old Earth classic porn, North American stuff from before the crackdown..

15

Weird, says Dusek, and swallows a third glass of beer.

Not the worst, says Petlura. Some of the women in North Island nuke town got worried about the trend. Made some tapes of their own to donate to the centers. I made a copy of one, that's this Murtagh woman doing a strip while she sings about Hard-ass Reilly from Island Five. Absolutely amazing.

Is that true? asks Dusek. Somehow I never thought of women knowing these songs. And singing them...? He, I want to see that tape, old buddy.

Petlura smiles. Why, certainly, Mike, he says. I thought that would rouse you. The thing is, even that isn't working. The men down in New Buffalo are so far gone they prefer their pretty-boys even to Murtagh. ---Oh, I didn't tell you. I met Murtagh in person last month at the regional conference. She's an agronomist, not a therapist. But she wanted to get our opinion on the tapes.

She was the hit of the regional conference. , no question. She tells stories at private parties that are a lot better than anything she put on tape. Her husband was there. Must have been 300 men shook his hand and told him how lucky he was. Just incredible to me that most of those damn fools at the New Buffalo donor bank... they saw the tape of Murtagh and they saw some silly bondage boy tape, and 80% chose the bondage boys.

Strange, says Dusek, shaking his head.

The pitcher of beer is finished, and he does want to borrow that tape from Petlura before the evening is over. They both stand. Petlura says, I hope you get a chance to talk to Jane before her time comes. I think she may want to say a few things. ---Sure hope so, says Dusek.

Leave them to walk back to Petlura's room in the bright light of Porthos' single small Ceres-sized moon, shining like a distant landing beam. Out in the fields Janes sits on a tarpaulin-covered pile of irrigation pipe, staring at that same moon, huddled against the cold breezes from the river. She has a certainty how it will be in a month or two. She will feel dizzy, and hot: the onset of the fever. She will be taken to bed in that special room off the children's ward, and her friends will come to wish her well, nervously. Her father will be there -- of course he will. Probably he will be trying not to cry. Men on Porthos don't cry. But he will know.

Not in her familiar bunk near her father's room, with her five roommates, but in the hospital bed, the fever will take her. Doctor will say some comforting words, anything to soothe. And she will sink under. And when she wakes, the room will be dim, and all sounds echoing faintly. And her body heavy and slow.

And the doctor will speak garbled sounds with no meaning. And then he will shake his head, and her father leave the room, and she be helped to the long house for the long long waiting to the third and final stage. She will not speak or sign to anyone. Perhaps they will put her near her mother. And to eat, and sip water from a cup, and play with a ball of fluff from under the bed. And a man comes, dimly, to press her down. And swelling and pain, a child to be born, perhaps like her, or perhaps luckier and born a boy. They are always



short of milk to feed the babies. Sometimes if the mother retains enough awareness, they let her nurse her own baby. Not often, one in five perhaps. ---Maybe I will be that lucky, thinks Jane. Not so far gone that I roll over on the baby and crush it, not so far gone that I let it fall from me and hit the floor. I have seen those things happen.

To retain enough intelligence to hold her own baby -- a small request, thinks Jane.

There is a bright star moving slowly across the sky west to east -- a cargo shell with its 250 rich and healthy inhabitants never troubled by the shadow plague that fills Porthos. There is some concern in the shells about the decline in petroleum on the planet. They need another 7000 tons of plastic foam to complete the stadium for falcon races, a great aviary attached to the Council Shell. It would be annoying to do without the petrochemicals. Foamed rock from the moon isn't the same thing at all, esthetically.

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Different societies, different worries. That incredible wealth and medieval misery could be separated by a mere 500 kilometers, planetary surface to orbit, is not incredible at all. There are cities on Earth (they still stand, which is a testimony to the patience of God's wrath) where in recent memory families died on the sidewalks of starvation while inside there was a 50-course banquet in progress.

It could be different? Yes, of course it could.

What if the shadow plague was triggered by androgens and not estrogens? Then it would be the boy-children who grew up under the shadow, and the girls who could play secure in the future. Then it would be the boys who walked the roads of the farm towns by night, fearful, trying to imagine some kind of life past the barrier of the shadow that was coming into sight ahead.

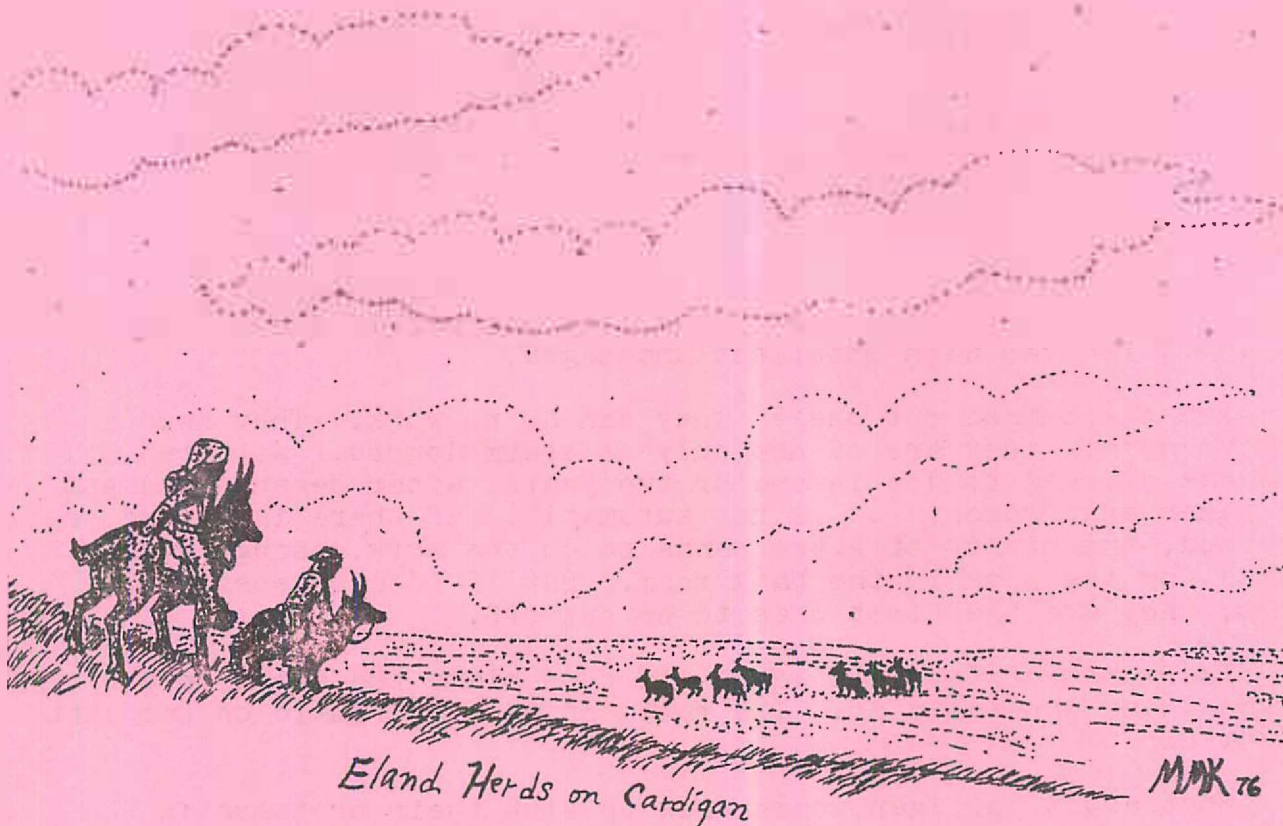
Let's play with the parameters a bit and re-write it so the plague hits boys instead of girls.

For the last 2500 words or so the men have been reading with, perhaps, a distant fascination: "how interesting, glad it could never happen to me" while the women, if the writing has been at all convincing, have heard the story of Porthos with a vague feeling of uneasiness growing: "to people like me? how could someone live with that hanging over her?" --Now to change the action of the virus slightly and see what kind of society rolls out.

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Orange star K-39104, close-in planet named Cardigan. Smaller than Earth, small salt-marsh oceans, tropical climate, extensive grassy plains on the flat limestone basins of former seas. Usual procedure: 30,000 colonists on the big continent to set up ranches; next wave in fifteen years lands with 20,000 revived corpsicles, plus a few thousand ectogenetic embryos. The crew breed up to 7500 and stays on shells in orbit.

Lots of orbiting syk-junk in this system, iron planetoids, dust,



*Eland Herds on Cardigan*

MMK 76

ices. Crew can mine its own metals out in the asteroid belt, harvest organics from major moons of gas giants farther out. No need for planet with planet Cardigan except sentiment and luxury furs or perfumes.

Economy of Cardigan based on ranching (eland, zebu, yaks on high plateau) plus fish and seaweed culture in the shallow bays. Root crops for carbohydrates. Power from fusion station is used to extract light metals.

Population is passing a quarter of a million when shadow plague hits. Fast adjustments as rigid welfare-socialist state falls apart under impact of 30% mortality rate among adults. The usual 10 year respite follows, after which adolescent boys begin dying of relapse into secondary fever.

After a generation, the society of Cardigan has shaken itself into a new configuration.

Porthos kept alive as many of the non-sentient women as possible, using them as mothers. The sex ratio for adults was about 120 male to 100 female. But on Cardigan the village committees of women see no need for unproductive males lying stuporous in back rooms. They cannot afford it. The herds will increase without much human help, the fishponds need only occasional work. But the high technology -- the fusion plant, the magnesium extractors -- requires constant repair. Cardigan is short on petrochemicals, short on

ferrous metals, short on fresh water. Bodies that do no work are a drain.

So here's how it works: boys and girls both ride after the herds and catch fish, under the guidance of women. Girls may be given technical education, boys not. With the onset of puberty, the sexes are separated. Girls go through the fever in "training villages". Most survive, and are given intensive vocational lessons for six months or so. Then, at 14 or 15, they are adult freewomen in the planetary community.

Boys go through puberty in isolated clinic/stockades. When they get the fever they are sedated until the outcome is known. Some few (10%) recover with intellect undamaged.

And the burned out ones? They can do no work. They need intensive care. They are of use only as sperm donors. As a result, many are allowed to die in one or two years, after semen specimens are taken and frozen. It is not automatic. If there is a good year for food, and plenty of extra hands to do the work, enough can be spared for the boys in the back room. But if food or energy runs short, they are the first ones to be cut off.

The women of Cardigan women can thus blame the death-on bad seasons; and generally do. The ratio of male to female on Cardigan is 20:100

Most adult Cardigan women grew up with their brothers in collective nurseries. They played together as children. Many have fond memories of little boys who rode with them over the great prairies, the floor of the green sky. The boys do useful work and contribute to the economy from age 9 to age 13 -- they track elands and cattle, sell goods in small village stores, run errands during afternoons when their sisters are in school.

There is almost a cult of the Young Boy among certain conservative groups of women. They keep photos and paintings of the brightest and most charming boy children. But boys grow up and begin to dream of themselves as...well, not as men, generally. There are no adult men as models on most of Cardigan. Let's say the boys dream of themselves as adults. That's when most of them are burned out by the plague.

The Cardigan women do not hate men. Why should they? They were not raised in our society, but in one where males were not rivals for adult power.

Fond memories of childhood, then the fever and nothing left but a photo and a labeled vial of frozen sperm. Due to the poor nutrition in some districts, puberty may be delayed for three or four years. Boys have been hit by fever as late as age 17, more than halfway to becoming adult.

Most children are conceived by artificial insemination. The birth-rate is low, since time out for pregnancy and nursing is often impossible when a subsistence economy must be kept going. Almost all women have at least one child if they can. The babies are raised in "affinity groups", households of 20 to 30 adults, who may be emotionally linked in pairs or trios, or who may be solitaires.



Where are the 10% of males who survive undamaged? They live isolated in separate colonies along with an equal number of women. There is limited place for non-female adults on Cardigan. For those women who are curious to try the old style of sex, there are towr parties to the monogamous villages where a few unattached males are willing to oblige. They sire a disproportionately large percentage of the next generation. This tends to select for males with resistance to plague, but natural selection is a long process. It also tends to select males with low androgen levels, who are often sterile.

Women unable to travel can try having relations with one of the brain-burned males in the back rooms. This is involved and seldom successful -- the stolid male strapped supine on a bench, the preliminary stimulation, the awkward climbing on top, the frequent lack of response. It's no surprise that most of the women stick to lesbian pair-bonds.

There is one other feature of Cardigan society which may be of not. That is the large class of neutered males. (10% of the population). Where did they come from?

Originally it was an attempt to save valuable talent. A boy who showed mathematical genius, who was naturally gifted with machinery, who had perfect pitch and a way with musical instruments -- it was a shame to risk losing all this to shadow fever. To save the talent, prevent the boy from producing the androgens of puberty.

There were enough burned out husks. Who needed more? The boys always agreed -- it gave them a chance to become adults. So they became eunuchs at age nine, and grew into fat beardless men. safe from fever. They fit into Cardigan society as solitaries. They flocked to the civil service. ---There should be no surprise at this. The papal choirs of the 18th century had an exquisite troupes of boy sopranos. They were castrated to make sure they stayed sopranos.

Actually, not all the boys agreed. Many from the monogamous villages preferred to take their chances with the plague, relying on their father's success in passing through unscathed.

Small numbers of undamaged males were unhappy in the villages. They signed up for surgery -- adding breasts, removing external gonads -- to resemble more closely the normal adults of Cardigan. A majority were able to "pass" into female society with their anomalous XY status unobserved.

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Cardigan is in for a real political crisis if the satellite crews ever get to work on the shadow virus. It would be simple for their medical technology to isolate and produce a vaccine against the plague. They have not done it -- they don't much care what happens on the surface of the planet. But they just might if altruistic political or religious doctrines become popular on the satellites.

After five generations of woman-run society, will Cardigan want to go back? The vaccine is presented as a gift. Several loads are dropped by shuttle to the derelict spaceport. Will they be used?

Two factions emerge. The Equalizers push for a return to 50-50

ratio of male and female in a society where neither sex dominates the other. Those hulks in the back room generate some guilt. The few remaining monogamous villages are losing population to the greater society; they want the vaccine if nobody else does. ---The Amazons see no reason to reverse direction. Things are going well enough. Thank the crew politely for the vaccine, then destroy it as a dangerous drug that could destroy society. Eliminate the monogamous villages and save the males as donors. Adjust the sex ratio until it is 1 male to 99 female and keep the male in a cellar someplace. (Lyranian, is it not?) We need only another 10 of 15 generations and we have Whilaway.

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Or it could be something else. The adult males could turn brutal and mean, unintelligent but still fast and strong, caged in stud sheds and controlled by shock rods. Visualize the nervous heifers watching a bull in pasture.

Or it could hit all adults, in which case the human colony dies out fast. Or maybe it affects only 60%, or only 30%. --Each set of numbers gives you a different society, a different set of rules.

Now take a look at Earth, where the shadow plague never hit and (God willing) is not in prospect. Equal numbers of men and women, distribution of intelligence the same in both sexes. Looks pretty good after some of the strange spaces I've been while writing this survey.

It isn't all fantasy. Some young girls do kill themselves rather than go through adolescence. What faces them on the other sidemust look as bad as the shadow plague. What is it they see? Life as an adult woman in our society?

There are villages in Egypt where everyone over age thirty is blind from trachoma -- a whole generation of invalids. The Mother houses, the stud sheds are not quite as far-fetched as they seem. How can a subsistence peasant village along the Nile support 40% of its population as invalids? Not easily.

Why write something like this? I think it is to work out the options, to see the alternatives. It is to come back to the place where we started -- our own time, our own place -- and look at it slightly from the outside and see it with new eyes.

# THE ART HUGOS

## A PROPOSAL by JIM HUDSON

The Science Fiction Achievement Awards (Hugos) should mean something -- they should recognize outstanding performance in the field, and they should recognize such performance in a way meaningful to the people nominated for the awards and receiving them. It's my opinion that the awards that work best for this purpose are the fiction awards -- they reward the authors directly for single special achievements, and (especially for the novel award) also in increased sales and royalties. Thus, Hugo-winning authors are also sought by publishers and editors, because they are known to be popular with the readers and this helps sell books.

The awards that seem to work least well are the fan awards, because the voters are often uninformed, and because of the wide range of distribution among fanzines, with some selling thousands of copies, and others only a few hundred. There is another reason for the weakness of the fan Hugos, though, and it's one that also applies to the editor Hugo, the art Hugos, etc.: voting for the person, not for the work done. This is a particular problem with the art Hugos, because the voting is done on the totality of a person's work, rather than on any particular item.

Science fiction art deserves something better than a single Hugo, ostensibly related to one person's professional work for a year (and an equivalent for fan art). While only a few of us would rate it as important as the fiction at this point, the art Hugos could clearly do with some expansion, if a way was available to make them meaningful to both the artists and the publishers. I'm not sure how to do this with fan art, because of the distribution problem, but there seems to be an opportunity for the professional art: Make the Hugos for Individual Pieces of Work, Just as is Done for Stories.

I'd like to suggest the following categories: Best Magazine Cover, Best Book Cover, Best Interior (or best Black & White, which is essentially equivalent). I feel that the two cover Hugos are important, if only because they offer different markets with different needs, and because the size of reproduction is different. There are good arguments the other way, since art is art, and since the Hugos should not be dependent on where a particular piece appears, but I feel they are weaker. Awards to an artist for a particular piece will be meaningful -- much more so than awards based on the totality of a person's work; they will help increase prices paid at art shows and by publishers more than the present awards do, they will recognize that some artists are specialists in black and white, and have essentially no chance at awards also allowing color, and they will make the nominations and voting much more interesting to fans in general -- it won't be a matter of the same five or six names, but instead will require thought, discussion, and consideration.

The mechanics will also be pretty straightforward, similar to the present voting policies. With committees able to request information on where the story appeared, they can also request similar data on the



(e.g. page 47-8 of May 1975 ANALOG; cover of DAM Book -----; May 1975 edition from Dell of -----). While it's impossible to be sure, I suspect that the balloting would also look like the story balloting; a large number of pieces getting a few nominations, and a number of standouts which obviously deserve to be on the final ballot. The final ballot should, of course, give data on where the piece appeared, as well as artist, but that's being done for the fiction too, so it shouldn't be any problem.

After I see the sorts of comments that this article receives, I'll be trying to put things in the correct legal language for adoption at Suncon, which would make the change effective in 1979. I'd be very interested in suggestions from people about such things as pieces done professionally but not for publication, 3-D work, and ways to similarly recognize fan art.

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## A LOVESONG FOR MICHELLE

I will take you to a far castle built upon the sand  
     the sands of time the lands of time  
 The safest lands and sands of all

You will always be eight and I will be christy

More silver and gold our hair  
     will flash in the gentle sun  
 Water and earth will shine from our eyes

An appletree world we will have  
     (the birches will bow as we pass)

kittens  
     will be everywhere

And I will see the bewildered gravity  
     of your small life  
         melt  
             in the silver waves  
                 waving grass  
                     treetops and  
                         light

---Chris Eblis  
     (summer, 1968, a respite)

# XENODIAGNOSIS

fanzine  
review  
column

...mike blake

During my association with this club it has often appeared to me that the majority of NESFA members simply are not interested in fanzines. If this is true it may make the hard work Sheila is putting into the revitalized PROPER BOSKONIAN seem like a wasted effort, and my own in writing this column doubly so.

However, I feel this lack of interest may be due more to ignorance of the vast scope of the hundreds of fanzines being published today than to some carefully-considered shunning of the fanzine field by members of NESFA. Many NESFans may simply be judging fanzines by the only example they ever have seen, namely some of the previous issues of THE PROPER BOSKONIAN. From this they may have concluded that all fanzines are well-reproduced and pretty to look at, but rather insubstantial in content and only tenuously related to science fiction.

In truth fanzines range from small-margined pages of solid type devoted to deep science fiction discussion to well-designed graphic packages of near-professional quality devoted to bad puns. Their sizes and methods of reproduction run from eight pages of faded spirit duplication to forty pages of impeccable lithography.

But it is in their contents that fanzines vary most widely. Personal introspection, serious constructive ("sercon") discourse on sf, manic humor (usually referred to as "fannish") and much more lurk within the pages of different zines. Some tend toward one type or the other, while many are mixtures of all of the above.

There are several basic types of fanzines, and most fall into a specific category depending on the objectives of the editor. Of course, the objectives of some editors are such that certain fanzines may cross categories or create one of their own, but with some zines their very ability to defy classification is what makes them enjoyable. This in fact is one of the major attractions of the entire fanzine field.

The categories of fan publishing I will be examining are commonly referred to as the clubzine, genzine, specialized genzine and personalzine. If these terms are puzzling to some of you, they will be further explained as we go along.

The basic definition of a club fanzine is: you're reading one. However, it does get more complicated than that, for the heading of clubzine itself can be divided into two subcategories, the club newszine and the club genzine.

The meaning of the term "newszine" should be obvious, and from there the definition of club newszine all members of NESFA should be familiar with is of course INSTANT MESSAGE. Even if you have never attended a NESFA meeting, the regular arrival of IM is an indication that the club still exists and is functioning fairly well.

The club genzine is an entirely different matter. At least in theory, the newszine is published for the membership of the club as a continuing source of information, and to keep the lines of communication open between the organization and its more isolated members, while the genzine is a generally available general interest magazine published by the members as a showcase for the club's talents. The genzine is an opportunity for as many members as possible to display their abilities and interests to fandom at large.

As I said, this is in theory. For no fan organization has such an overabundance of talent as to fill issue after issue of a genzine without assistance, and as a matter of course outside contributions are not only appreciated but sought after. But it is the local fandom that is at the core of the zine, and no matter how much of it is written by non-members the fanzine will have a flavor that reflects the tastes of the club.

Unfortunately, most club genzines do not have the reputation of coming out frequently or dependably. As the past history of THE PROPER BOSKONIAN proves, not to mention the length of time it's been since the last issue of the New Haven Science Fiction and Fantasy Society's ANOMALY, the Denver Area Science Fiction Association's DENFEN DRIPPINGS, or RISFA's FOUDROYANT.

The answer to this problem for many clubs has been to merge the newszine and the genzine format into one frequent publication, combining articles, book reviews, and a letter column with local fan news, meeting information, and club minutes. However, as response from outside fans builds up in the form of contributions, artwork, and letters, zines in this format have an inevitable tendency to look more and more like genzines and less like an overblown INSTANT MESSAGE. To the point where one such clubzine is considered by many to be one of the best genzines currently being published.

And that fanzine, its brightly colored pages standing above all other clubzines, is definitely the Minnesota Science Fiction Society's RUNE. Minn-stf, as the club is commonly referred to, has the decided advantage of having the best cartoonists in fandom working for it, crowding the pages of RUNE with fabulous stuff (sometimes I suspect they have them all chained to drawing boards in the basement of 343 East 19th Street).

RUNE gives new meaning to that old fannish phrase "those crazy Minneapolis fans". If what I said about local fandoms giving their clubzines a unique flavor is true, the flavor of RUNE is probably Crunchy Frog. What the Firesign Theater did to records, Saturday Night is doing to television, and Monty Python has done to both, Minn-stf and RUNE are doing to fanzines.

Of course whether this is a breakthrough or sets back fanzines forty years is a matter of taste. Many find the type of humor exemplified in RUNE unfunny, while many like myself look forward to the occasion every two months or so when I find the brown wrapping paper envelope (actually a fanzine-sized shopping bag) heralding a new



RUNE in the mailbos.

Don't make the mistake of thinking this means there is a dearth of serious material in RUNE, or that it religiously avoids mentioning science fiction in an attempt to be "fannish". As a look at the current issue, #48, will prove...

In evidence is the regular book review column in which various new releases are under the scrutiny of members of Minn-stf. In addition there is an article by Dave Wixon on the theme of the destiny of mankind in science fiction, and especially in the work of Clifford Simak. One of the highlights of each issue is the fanzine review column by David Emerson, who takes the opportunity this time to discuss different aspects of Minneapolis fandom. He also lists over 60 fanzines received since his last column, which is indicative of a lack of lethargy in the current fan-publishing scene, if not an upsurge.

With reports on the last Minicon by no less than Bob Tucker and Bob Vardeman, an interview with Phil Procter conducted by Jim Young and a twenty-five page lettercolumn, what we have here is a very successful fanzine. This state is due to the hard work of RUNE's editor for the last two years, Fred Haskell. It has been the efforts of Fred (with a little help from his friends) that have turned RUNE into the marvelous publication it is now. The sad note present in #48 is that it is the last issue of Fred's editorship, and he certainly deserves the congratulations he receives in the lettercolumn for a job well done. With the next issue David Emerson, who has ably proved his abilities in his column, takes over the reins.

I highly recommend RUNE. It is available for 50 cents an issue, or two dollars for a year's subscription, or what is commonly referred to in fanzines as "the usual": in trade for another publication, for contributions of articles or artwork, or for a letter of comment ("loc") on the previous issue (by which process, after paying for one sample issue, you can thereafter continue to get it free).

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Next, the genzine. This is either an abbreviation for a "general interest" fanzine or, more usually, one which is "generally available". But no matter in which phrase the word originates, the definition of this can more certifiably be stated as "you're reading one".

One excellent example of the genzine, or perhaps more properly, one example of an excellent genzine, is S.F. ECHO #25, published by Edward C. Connor. SFE is unique in its format of half-sized mimeo, which Ed does by hand in order to qualify each issue with the Post Office as being mailable Book Rate. It also enables him to publish a thick 99-page fanzine in a compact form.

Artwork may be sparse, but SFE is not designed as a graphic wonder, relying instead on its contents. The highlight of this issue is a 25-page piece by Paul Walker, consisting of long letters in response to his questions on various topics from Poul Anderson, Algis Budrys, L. Sprague deCamp, Kelly Freas, Frank Herbert, R.A. Lafferty, Ted White, and Terry Carr. They discuss the nature of being a writer, how they work, and the origins of some of their more famous works.

The rest of the zine is taken up by the assortment of articles and such that typify the genzine: a short editorial and a long lettercolumn, humor in the form of Walt Liebscher's spoonerized retelling of Das Rheingold, a lengthy in-depth book review section, and a trip report by Ben Indick, in which he does an excellent job of imparting what it was like for him to visit Israel for the first time.

I feel that S.F. ECHO is underappreciated by most fans. Ed has been publishing it for years and has done a consistently fine job. Other zines may sport more flash and style, but in issue after issue SFE has proved itself a dependable and above-average science fiction fan magazine, in the best sense of the term.

S.F. ECHO is obtainable for one dollar per copy, or 5 for \$4.00. It is also, to the best of my knowledge, available for the usual. I recommend it highly.

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Specialized genzines are exactly what the name implies. A certain specialization in subject matter, or slant in the way they consider sf, is what differentiates them from the ordinary genzine. JoeD Siclari's FANHISTORICA is an excellent example of the first type of specialized genzine mentioned, JANUS, edited by Janice Bogstad and Jeanne Gomoll, of the second.

FANHISTORICA, strangely enough, is concerned with the history of fandom. Admittedly this is a topic which does not interest everybody. While I find it fascinating and full of all sorts of intriguing sociological facets, another may think it the height of inconsequential trivia.

If you have a passing interest in the history and development of science fiction fandom, you will find FANHISTORICA engrossing reading. If your interest is more than slight, you will find it indispensable. The first issue includes "The Bluffer's Guide to Publishing a Fanzine" by Lee Hoffman, the fannish autobiography of the remarkable woman who edited one of the best as well as best-remembered fanzines of the fifties. There is also a large section devoted to the original articles that developed the idea of numbered fandoms, including the famous "First and Last Fen" by that well-known fifties fanwriter, Robert Silverberg.

In the next issue Joe will begin reprinting Francis Towner Laney's famous (some would say infamous) fannish memoir, Ah! Sweet Idiocy!, which raised a storm of controversy when it was first published in 1948 and remains legendary to this very day. Restoring this notable document to in-print status is indeed a fannish undertaking worthy of support.

JANUS, published by two women from Madison, Wisconsin, is a feminist-oriented fanzine. However, it is still a science fiction fanzine, simply one that views the traditionally male-dominated field of sf from an enlightened feminist stance. I must admit that it is largely due to my sympathy for this point of view that I find JANUS to be one of my favorite genzines. It is a large zine of varied content, admirably free of rhetoric and polemic.

One of the more interesting aspects of JANUS is the enthusiastic response it has been garnering from Harlan Ellison, mainly in the form of long and involved letters that have become one of the highlights

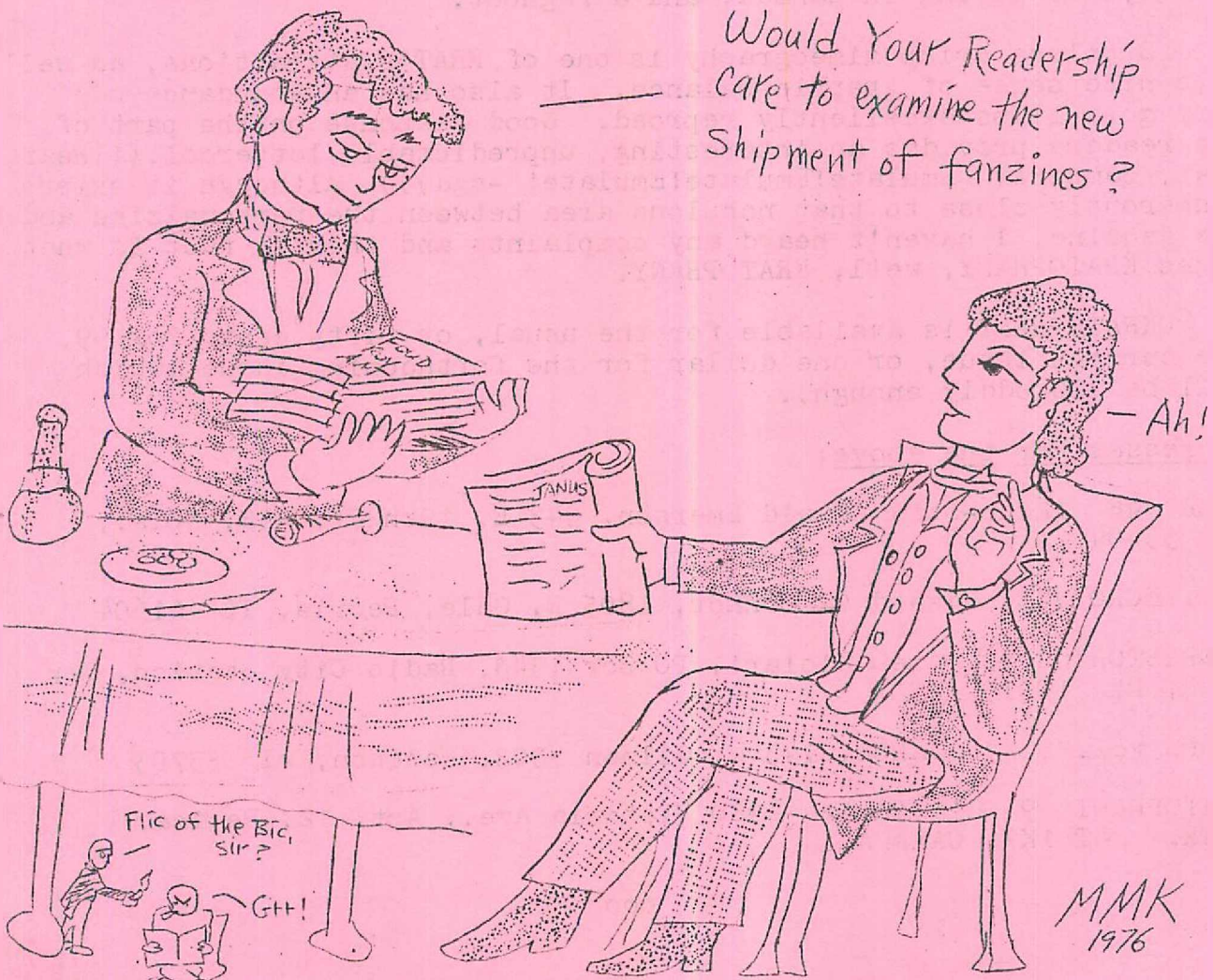


of the lettercolumn, and indeed each issue. As usual, Harlan is fascinating even when he is over-reacting.

If JANUS has any faults they lie in the prose of some of the contributors, who tend to be stiff and pedantic. This is best exemplified by the title of an article in the latest issue (vol.2, #3) by Thomas J Murn. "The Search For Humane Heterotopia: Visionary Experiences in Contemporary Science Fiction". See what I mean? Some of the writing in JANUS would be improved if the authors could loosen up a bit and make their articles sound less like a college thesis.

On the whole, however, JANUS is an enjoyable and thought-provoking zine. It's still growing and developing at this point, and improving, and is highly recommended as worthy of your readership.

JANUS is available for 75 cents an issue, five for \$3.50, or the usual. FANHISTORICA #1 is available for 50 cents; the next issue, in which Ah! Sweet Idiocy! begins serialization, will be 75 cents. It may also be had for the usual, as well as in trade for copies of old fanzines.





Finally, let us briefly consider personalzines. The personally-oriented fanzine is one in which the majority of the material is written by the editor/publisher, and reflects the concerns of his or her present life. This may take the form of anything from page after page of soul-searching self-introspection, light humor, political commentary, or a daily journal.

One of the best personalzines currently being published is Eli Cohen's KRATOPHANY. A recent immigrant from New York City to the wilds of Regina, Saskatchewan, Eli has in past issues been intriguing us with incredible tales of Canadian bureaucracy, which he has encountered both in his job with the provincial corrections system and in his efforts to become a legal resident of the country. His tales of being tangled in northern red tape have been mind-boggling, but fortunately his troubles seem to be over for the time being, at least as far as his continued residency is concerned. The latest issue, number 9, is his first as an official Canadian "landed Immigrant", a status that can be best described as somewhere between tourist and citizen.

In this issue Eli also talks about his recent trip to Seattle for a performance by that city's opera of the entire Ring Cycle of Wagner, as well as his latest adventures as a Corrections Research Officer. He also has a fascinating article detailing his involvement with Taoism, and the nature of it and his Zen philosophy. In addition there is a humorous article by Susan Wood welcoming Eli to the joys of living in Canada, and a feghoot.

Spotless crisp mimeography is one of KRAT's attractions, as well as a nice sense of graphic balance. It also has an abundance of very good illos excellently reproed. Good response on the part of the readers provides an interesting, unpredictable lettercol.(((Hear that, campers? Emulate!Emulate!Emulate! -sgd))) Although it skirts dangerously close to that nebulous area between the personalzine and the genzine, I haven't heard any complaints and this in fact is what makes KRATOPHANY, well, KRATOPHANY.

KRATOPHANY is available for the usual, or fifty cents for #9, the current issue, or one dollar for the forthcoming issue (which will be #10 oddly enough).

Addresses for the above:

RUNE #48 (Minn-stf) David Emerson, 343 E. 19th St. #1B, Mpls., MN 55404

S.F. ECHO #25 Edward C. Connor, 1805 N. Gale, Peoria, IL 61604

FANHISTORICA #1 JoeD Siclari, PO Box 1343, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10019

JANUS vol.2, #3 JANUS, 143 W. Gilman #303, Madison, WI 53703

KRATOPHANY #9 Eli Cohen, 2920 Victoria Ave., Apt. 12, Regina, Sask. S4T 1K7, CANADA

The preceding were only a fraction of the tip of the iceberg. What I was attempting to do basically was briefly to define the major types of fanzine and describe at least one example of an above-average zine in each category. Hopefully this has given you some idea of the vast diversity of fanzines. There is a fanzine for every taste, and whether your tastes lean toward broad humor or serious science fictional discussion by well-known pros, there is at least one being published somewhere that will suit you. And once you find it, read it, and enjoy it, you will be one step closer to being seduced into becoming a fanzine fan. It's a lovely affliction.

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### Brief Mentions: Other Recently Recieved Fanzines

#### Genzines

ALVEGA 3 from Alyson L. Abramowitz, 4921 Forbes Ave., Apt. 205E, Pittsburgh, PA 15213; 75¢ or the usual. 45 pages, offset.

GRANFALLOON 20, from Linda E. Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave, Prospect Park, PA 19076; for \$1, trades, contributions, or as part of a subscription to her newszine, KARASS. Special inadvertant fanhistory issue, it would appear. Articles by Harry Warner and Bob Tucker. Recommended. 52 pages, mimeo.

MAYA 11, Robert Jackson, 21 Lyndhurst Rd., Benton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE12 9NT, U.K. For the usual from him or by subscription with his American agent (Sam Long, Box 4946, Patrick AFB, FL 32925) for \$1, or 4/\$3. Excellent people-oriented British fanzine. Peter Weston on how he discovered fandom, Walt Willis on his return to fandom after eleven years' absence, an amusing GoH speech by Bob Shaw on a radical new way to power spaceships, and a very funny article by Tom Perry on ways to improve fandom's image in the news media. Good Lettercolumn with locs from Brian Aldiss and Ursula LeGuin, among others. Highly recommended. 20 oversized pages, offset.

SECONDARY GROWTH #1, Mark M. Keller, 101 South Angell St., Providence, RI 02906. Available for the usual or just for the asking. A former APA:NESFA zine goes public. Articles by Don D'Ammassa, Faye Ringel, myself, and the editor. Off to a good start. 21 pages, mimeo.

SPECULATION 33, edited by Peter Weston, 72 Beeches Drive, Erdington, Birmingham B24 ODT, U.K. Came with MAYA 11; availability unknown, but you can write and ask. Good twenty-two page article on Cordwainer Smith by John J. Pierce originally serialized in his RENAISSANCE back in 1971, and interesting letters from Robert Silverberg, David Gerrold, Ted White, et. al. Unfortunately, with this fine final issue Pete folds the fanzine (try saying that three times fast). It will be missed, but I wish Pete the best of luck with his new original paperback sf anthology series, ANDROMEDA. 33 pages, offset.

STAR FIRE 7, by Bill Breiding, 151 Arkansas St., San Francisco, CA 94107. \$1.50 or the usual. With the exception of some crooked letter-set, Bill shows surprising skill at putting together an attractive-appearing offset fanzine, with artwork ranging from average to excellent. The contents vary in quality. Don D'Ammassa has part two of a continuing examination of the works of Clifford Simak, there are scattered reviews, and a rather wandering pointless interview with George Barr that doesn't really say anything. However, the real

problem with the issue is Bill's continual troubles with spelling. He has improved considerably since he started, but errors still abound in this issue. For example, in the paired reviews of SHARDIK he spells it SHARDIC in the table of contents, SHARDIK in the first review, and SHARDICK throughout the second. At the beginning of Don's article his name is misspelled. And the title of the zine itself changes from STAR FIRE to STARFIRE without warning. If Bill can ever get his spelling together he'll publish a very good zine. 66 pages, offset.

### Clubzines

IN THE SHADOW OF THE MONOLITH 60, edited by Eric L. Larsen, Box 16369 NCSU, Raleigh, NC 27607. Published every four weeks by the Nameless Order of R'lyeh, a North Carolina fan club. Available for 35¢, 3/\$1, or trades. Dependable as clockwork each month and frequently interesting, though hardly in the same class as RUNE. Lots of letters, quite a few devoted to ILLUMINATUS!, which is always fascinating. 33 pages, mimeo.

### Specialized Genzines

STARLING 34, from Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell, 525 W. Main, Madison, WI 53703. 50¢, 5/\$2, or the usual. This is the closest thing to the proper category for STARLING, which is unique. The orientation of STARLING has best been described as "popular culture" (to which the usual response has become, "whatever that is..."). This zine is basically an outgrowth of sf fans' interests in forms of entertainment media other than science fiction. Thus one issue may have articles on favorite mystery writers, another on movie musicals, or others on such comic books and strips as Carl Barks' Scrooge McDuck and John Stanley's Little Lulu. This particular issue is devoted to music, both popular and unpopular. Highly recommended for those interested in the above. 35 pages, mimeo.

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Fanzines to be reviewed should be marked as such and sent to me at 168 Rhode Island Avenue, Pawtucket, RI 02860. If space does not permit a full review you will at least be mentioned briefly. Promise.

---Mike Blake

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# BOOK REVIEWS:

THE SENTINEL by Jeffrey Konvitz  
Ballantine Books, 1976, 278 pp, \$1.75  
---Reviewed by Don D'Amassa

It is clear that the supernatural novel is back with us, at least for a while. The popularity of the genre has never been spectacular in this country, but the recent successes of novels such as ROSEMARY'S BABY, THE EXORCIST, and THE OTHER clearly indicated that the US public is not immune to the thrill of horror. Unfortunately, most horror novels written recently are imitative of either the standard supernatural plots - vampires, ghosts, occult visions, etc. - or of the commercially successful novels mentioned above. And so it is that we can find dozens of paperbacks about strange births, demonic possession, or malevolent children.

But there are occasional exceptions. Jeffrey Konvitz, a writer about whom I know nothing, has produced a mystical horror novel in a contemporary setting that achieves unique atmospheric effects. Allison Parker is the focal point for battles the nature of which she is never to grasp. Her mental stability has never been good, the result of her childhood with a perverse father whose adultery and alcoholism destroyed the lives of everyone he touched. Despite advice to the contrary, she rents an apartment in a less than reputable neighborhood, and soon discovers that the other tenants in her building are a mixture of misfits, psychopaths, and misogynists.

Allison's lover, Michael, is a man with a clouded past. His wife died under circumstances which the police still believe to be suspicious, although there was no hard evidence of his involvement. Michael becomes convinced that Allison is exaggerating the incidents she describes to him, because he knows of her psychological problems. He is buttressed in his belief when he learns that Allison and an invalid priest are the only residents of the apartment building, that all of the other rooms are empty. It is only later, when it is too late, that he discovers a number of disturbing facts.

For example, the invalid priest, Father Halliran, seems to be involved in some mysterious activity which the Roman Catholic hierarchy wishes to conceal. The priest never leaves his room, never has visitors, never seems to receive food or medical aid, yet he clearly is real and alive. Michael's investigation of the other apartments in the building reveals that although they are obviously not in use, neither were they ever meant to be; the furnishings are mere props. Then, shortly after what is apparently a vivid dream in which Allison is convinced she has murdered her father, the mutilated body of a gangster is found near the apartment building.

Before the novel is over, the reader is carried along on a roller coaster ride of revelations. The basement of the apartment house is revealed as the literal entrance to Hell, guarded only by the blind priest, a supernatural figure in his own right. Similarly, the other "residents" are damned souls attempting to find egress to the world of man. The priest is an occult metamorphosis of a mortal being into a

mystical sentinel warding off the minions of the underworld. And both Michael and Allison are destined to play pivotal roles in this eternal conflict.

THE SENTINEL takes a very ambivalent attitude toward religion. Clearly the basic assumption of the novel is that Christianity is the true religion. At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church is forced to use the very techniques of the Devil in order to hold him at bay. This seeming contradiction is never reconciled, nor are we really shown the metaphysical basis of the Sentinel's existence. Nevertheless, the novel remains outstanding because of its originality of approach, the skillful manner in which the reader is swept toward the ultimate confrontation, and its unusually fine characterization.

SALEM'S LOT by Stephen King

Signet, 1976, 427 pp, \$1.95

---Reviewed by Don D'Amassa

Stephen King is an extraordinarily talented writer whose first novel, CARRIE, was a well done novel length version of an idea first developed successfully in C.L. Cottrell's "Danger! Child at Large". An immature young girl runs amok with psychokinetic powers. In his second novel, SALEM'S LOT, King makes use of the traditional vampire theme to write a very untraditional novel of horror.

There are all of the well known trappings of vampire novels - the thousand year old vampire coming to a small town (in Maine) where it is unlikely that his presence will be suspected until it is too late. His strengths and weaknesses are pretty much as legend has painted them; he cannot appear in daylight, can be killed by means of a stake through the heart, and can transmit his disease to his victims. But there are unusual features as well.

For one thing, King has gone to great lengths to prepare the setting by peopling it with thoroughly drawn characters and allowing sufficient time to build the setting before introducing the menace. Over one hundred pages are spent just on initial character development, before any direct hint of vampirism is introduced. King also avoids the standard cliches. On the one occasion where the heroine is directly menaced by the vampire, the hero does not rescue her; in fact, the heroine is killed early in the novel.

Even more noteworthy is that King has recognized the major flaw in traditional vampire stories. Given vampirism as a transmittable disease, a vampire could make himself virtually invulnerable by infecting a large number of people in rapid succession. Since the number of vampires would then proceed to increase geometrically, and with all subsidiary vampires subject utterly to the will of the one original carrier, it would be easy for the vampires to thus make their position unassailable. King develops this idea to its logical, and rather overwhelming conclusion.

SALEM'S LOT is not a pretty novel. The ending is neither upbeat nor downbeat, but a little bit of both. If Matheson's I AM LEGEND is the ultimate vampire novel, as I believe it is, then SALEM'S LOT is the ultimate traditional vampire novel.

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*part one*



PERPETRATORS: ATTACK FROM THE THIRD DIMENSION

Richard S. Holmes (Instigator)  
 David T. Wolff (Editor)  
 Annemarie Bernard  
 Albert J. Corda  
 Mary L. Hainsworth  
 Christine Ingalls  
 Steven B. Kovner  
 John A. Major

CHAPTER ONE

Cougar Carson was aboard his one-man patrol craft, the Lost Cause, when the call came in from the United Space Patrol Service. This does not mean that he was alone; however, he was the only man on board.

General Frumble's face scowled from the visiplat. "Carson?" he said.

Carson swallowed a mouthful of his liverwurst and potato chip sandwich and replied, "Yessir?"

"Carson, we've got an emergency here. You're the only man who can help."

"Right, boss," Cougar yawned.

"We've lost contact with three of our best troop-carriers -- the Milhaus, the Agnew, and the Gerald R. Ford. They seem to have just vanished!"

"Those are our best troop carriers?" Carson muttered incredulously.

"They were in orbit around the planet Merdeball last Tuesday, and on Wednesday they didn't respond to our signals. They should have been back at Terra yesterday!"

"So?" asked Carson nonchalantly.

"SO?" shouted General Frumble. "Three troop carriers vanish and you say 'So'?"

"That's not what I meant, Colonel -- er, excuse me, General. What I mean is, what's so amazing about losing contact with them? Or Don't you watch the Tri-D news?"

"What do you mean?"

Carson gestured impatiently. "I mean, on Wednesday Merdeball

became the third planet in the Imperial Terran Earth Empire to legalize prostitution."

"Oh," said General Frumble. "That explains that, then..."

"And I can assure you," Carson continued, "the women on Merdeball are the most gorgeous, wildest broads in the starways. Why, I remember one night I was on Merdeball, and me and these two blondes..."

"Never mind, Carson, we still have other emergencies for you. For example, the Emperor's daughter has been kidnapped!"

"So?" asked Carson nonchalantly.



The next morning, Carson's ship sprang out into the vastness of interstellar space. His orders were to find and rescue the Princess Vanessa, daughter of the venerable Emperor Uberhung; his destination was the planet Landfill, where Vanessa had last been seen.

Six days out of Terra, and three before his scheduled landfall on Landfill, Carson was studying a holograph of Vanessa. Her heart-shaped face was highlighted by her small, upturned nose and her flashing, intense blue eyes. Her hair was a soft, shining cascade of tawny brown as it hung loosely over her bare shoulders, and her delicately structured cheekbones set off the two small dimples that showed when she smiled. Her eyelashes were long and silky. Her teeth were white as ivory, although slightly uneven, and she had a small mole at the base of her neck. One of her eyebrows was slightly longer than the other. Altogether, she struck Carson as being perhaps the eighth most beautiful woman he had yet seen.

Suddenly Cougar's concentration was broken by the voice of his Internal Guidance and Observation Robot.

"Master?" it asked. "I have an emergency, Master."

"Yes, IGOR?" replied Carson as he headed for the control panel of his ship. "What is it?"

"There is a ship approaching us, Master. The operator does not respond to my attempts to make contact."

"Thank you, IGOR. Have you tried all of the standard communications devices? Radio? Laser? Semaphore? Neutrino modulator?"

"Yes, Master. All of them. There was no reply."

By now Carson was at the control panel, gazing intently into the trimensional viewing screen. The other ship was a tiny white speck, moving toward the Lost Cause against the still backdrop of stars. Carson, watching the intruder's menacing approach, felt an emptiness in the pit of his stomach. But it was too late for sandwiches.

"Looks like space pirates to me, IGOR. Prepare for Battle!"

"Yes, Master!"

Cougar strapped himself into his acceleration couch. The viewing screen was directly in front of him. To his left and right was a plethora of meters, lights, dials, and indicators which told him everything he needed to know about the status of his vessel: available fuel, velocity indicator, distance travelled, thruster operation rate, lubricant level, elapsed time. Most important were the weapons readiness indicators which allowed him to keep tabs on his offensive mechanisms: lasers, photoelectric torpedoes, and Sawyer Antimatter Disruptors. All systems were primed and ready.

And so was Carson.



There were three men aboard the other vessel. At the right-hand side of the controls was the navigator, who at that moment was keeping a nervous eye Carson's USPS patrol craft. With deft movements of his feet he kept the nose of the Black Dove pointed toward Cougar's ship.

On the left was the weapons officer. A short, swarthy, toothless man, he kept a sinister grin on his face as he held his hands expectantly above the laser controls. Other weapons, similar to Carson's were also at his disposal.

In the center was the captain.

"How close are we?" he asked.

"One million kilometers." the young navigator responded meekly. "Closing rapidly."

The captain smiled. "How are our weapons?"

The weapons man ran the tip of his tongue across his lips. "Ready for the kill, sir," he replied.

The captain frowned and shook his head. "No, Attila," he scolded. "We're not going to kill Carson. We must take him alive."

"Aw, gee," said Attila.

"If Carson dies because of you," the captain continued, "I shall have your worthless head. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Once we have Carson, we'll be invincible! After he's been through my Subliminal Reeducator he won't even remember the days when he fought for the Empire. Then watch that old twit of an Emperor try and stop the Landfill Unified Movement of the Proletariat!"

The captain was smiling again. The Black Dove closed in on Cougar Carson.



Aboard his ship, Carson was poised and ready for the upcoming melee. In his right hand he held the attitude thruster control;



in his left was the weapons firing box. His right foot was pressed lightly on the main engine control pedal.

As he watched the other ship's approach, he thought for the hundredth time of Vanessa's kidnapping. The Princess had been on Landfill only nine days before, vacationing in one of the planet's famous pleasure houses with her guardian and mentor, Dr. Malachi Zinn. The two had had an exhilarating evening of entertainment, and after pouring Vanessa into bed, Dr. Zinn had himself gone to sleep. When he awoke the next morning, the Princess was gone without a trace.

Two days later there arrived in the mail an envelope containing a photograph of the girl, bound and gagged but apparently unhurt; some toenail clippings, which proved to be the same type as Vanessa's, as further proof that she was indeed in the hands of the evildoers who had sent the envelope; and a letter:

DEar sIr/,

We Have thw princiss, do not cauze  
Troubel for US if you evwr wan to see  
her alivv again. you will hear fRom  
us again shorlty.

But nothing further had been heard from Vanessa's kidnappers. Carson was puzzled. Why would someone try to kidnap the Emperor's twenty-one year old daughter unless he was trying to get ransom? Unless... But Carson banished the horrifying thought from his mind.

"IGOR?" he said. "How far away are the pirates?"

"Six hundred thousand kilometers, Master," IGOR replied.

"Have they responded to our calls yet?"

"No, Master...Wait, sir! I have just received a reply!"

"What do they say?"

"Master, they say, auote, Sorry,Carson, you're dialing the wrong number, unquote."

"A queer message," Cougar mused. "What do you suppose they mean by 'dial'... --Hold it! Did they say 'Carson'?"

"Yes, Master."

"How could they have known my name? Did you tell them?"

"No, Master!"

"Holy moley, IGOR! Those can't be pirates! They must be--"

But Carson's babbling was cut off as the Lost Cause was shaken like a rag doll by the force of a nearby photoelectric torpedo explosion. The Black Dove had begun its attack!

Carson's ship swung to starboard as he turned to meet his attacker head on. Main engines screaming almost as loudly as himself, Cougar launched a salvo of torpedoes and brought his laser to bear on the encroaching ship. He waited for the charges to go off.

They never did.

Carson muttered a Vegan oath. "Knew I should have had those things insp--"

Another explosion jarred the craft. Carson fired his laser, twice, three times. He thought he scored a hit, but he couldn't be sure.

The enemy ship slowed, then came to a stop. It was just outside the range of Carson's disruptor. Then there came a burst of brilliant red as the Black Dove's lasers fired. Carson checked the status panels -- and saw to his dismay that the green light labeled "Main Engine" was out!

With a deft, smooth motion, Carson raised his foot and kicked the display just below the darkened bulb. The light flickered, slowed. Carson smiled and returned his attention to the viewing screen.

The other ship was still dead ahead, still motionless. "Still recharging his lasers?" Carson wondered. He decided to risk another attempt to use his torpedoes. He launched five.

One of them worked. If only it had gone closer to the other ship...

"That," said Carson, "is the last time I buy my torpedoes surp..."

A volley of enemy torpedoes caught Carson by surprise. Lights on the display panel flickered. Some went out, and kicking didn't bring them back.

Carson was moving now, firing his laser. The Black Dove was evading him every step of the way, and Carson couldn't seem to hit him. Cougar tried the torpedoes again. 0 for 5.

The enemy scored a direct hit with the laser.

"Damage report, Master," said IGOR. "Attitude thrusters, backup fuel cell, and kitchenette facilities have been permanently disabled.

Carson snarled a Betelgeusian curse. He couldn't manerver! The next torpedo would probably go right up his throat. Or perhaps the enemy would get close enough to use his disruptor...

Another explosion came and knocked out Cougar's main engine, laser control, and hot water heater.

There was nothing Carson could do. He couldn't fire his lasers. He had expended his torpedoes. The Black Dove was out of disruptor range. His engine was gone; he couldn't retreat.

The enemy's laser fired again, and the light above "Life Support" went out.

Carson waited to die.



At that very moment, on the planet Earth, in the capitol city of Troy, Horace van derHoot, the Imperial Secretary for the Sciences, was standing in the throne room and addressing His Royal Magnificence, Emperor Uberhuns XVI. He used the title "Your Magnificence" sparingly, since the Emperor had become so bored with it.

"Your Magnificence," he said as he knelt and kissed the Emperor's toes, "I bring you news of a monumental scientific discovery that could be either the death or the salvation of Mankind."

"So?" asked the Emperor nonchalantly.

"If I may explain, Your Magnitude...?"

"Go ahead..." The Emperor seemed distracted.

"Sir, do you know what a quasar is?"

"Of course I know what a quasar is! Don't you remember? I'm an antique collector!"

"No, Your Magnavox. Not the television. The celestial object."

"The who?"

"Celestial objects. They are strange, extragalactic sources of huge amounts of electromagnetic radiation. They have been a puzzle to astronomers and physicists for 350 years."

"Oh?"

"One of the most puzzling things about them is their huge red shift, which tends to indicate that they are travelling away from Earth at incredible velocities."

"Good idea," muttered the Emperor.

"Or rather... they were."

"Were?"

"That is correct, your Magnification. While the other galaxies still show a pronounced red shift due to the Hubble expansion, the quasars do not. Look at these quasar spectra. The first is from a year ago. Do you see the large redshift?"

"Yes..."

"Now this one. Six months ago, virtually no shift."

"Hmmm." The Emperor studied the two spectra carefully. The difference was unmistakable.

"And now this one. Taken last night. The biggest blue shift ever recorded. And all of the quasars are doing the same thing."

"What does it mean?" The old Emperor's face looked even older as he stared with open-mouthed senility at van derHoot.

"Your Magnetron," the secretary said, "the evidence is clear



and undeniable. We have collected data for months. We have run dozens of computer models. We have spent hundreds of man-years making, developing, and studying these spectra. We have tried and rejected all other theories. We have --"

"Oh, shut up," said the Emperor irritably. "Give me the bottom line."

"Every single quasar in the Universe," said van derHoot, is heading directly toward the Milky Way Galaxy at speeds approaching that of light."

"Dear me," said Emperor Uberhung.



## CHAPTER TWO

Carson felt like a condemned man. His stomach, however, was sure they would survive somehow. So, with the aid of a welding torch from his toolkit, he began to heat an anchovy, liverwurst, potato chip, and peanut butter pizza. Moments later he felt his ship shudder.

"What's that?" he cried, as the dropped torch burned his hand.

"Master, the other ship has attached magnetic grapples to us. It is now within disruptor range," IGOR replied.

"So? If I blow it up, I'll never get anywhere. Just play dead for a while, IGOR."

"Yes, Master."

Then the airlock door burst open, and Attila jumped in, dressed in a spacesuit and brandishing a hand blaster. "Awright, hands up!"

"Sure, sure. Can I finish this pizza first?"

Attila glanced at it. Ugh! No!" he shuddered at the thought of anyone eating it. "Come with me!"

"Gee, I'm not dressed for a night out on the town--" Attila pulled out his blaster, scowling. "Okay! Okay! I'm coming!" Carson blurted.

"Put it on, c'mon, hurry up. We gotta go outside." Carson complied, and Attila fastened a monomolecular line to the spacesuit fitting. (The monomolecular line was Carson's own: it made a very dangerous weapon in trained hands. Carson had almost lost three fingers once while using it.)

The ships were still several hundred meters apart, and Carson got his first good look at the Black Dove and at the damage done to his own craft. The main engine had been neatly chopped off. Not

too difficult to repair, if he could get it to a shipyard.

The pirate ship blended in with the limitless black universe. It was painted black, and on its side was a drawing of a hand, one finger uplifted. "I've never seen an emblem like that before," thought Carson.

Suddenly he was at the pirate ship. A door opened, and Carson was pulled in.

"Take off yer helmet," came the command over the suit radio. Carson complied, even though none of the pirates took off theirs. Then he passed out.

When he came to, he was in a small cabin. He looked it over. It was painted thundercloud gray, and had only one door. He tried it -- locked. Of course. He spotted the lens of a video monitor and waved to it. A few minutes later, Attila sauntered in with a malicious grin.

"Glad to see you're up, Carson. Here have some slop." He opened a pot of some vile-smelling stew.

"Yecccch! Can't you give me some decent food? How about a pizza? I'll settle for just anchovies," Carson pleaded.

"This is all you get until we reach Landfill."

Landfill! So they must be the people who had kidnapped the Princess! Carson decided to check his hunch.

"Did you kidnap the Princess?" he asked.

"Whatever gave you that idea?" Attila replied. He neatly spat on Carson's right foot, then left.

"Well, the direct approach didn't work. Guess I'll have to try something a bit more subtle," Carson mused to himself. "And I guess I'd better eat this. Yech."



"It wasn't that bad," Carson thought foggily as he regained consciousness. He found himself strapped to a cot. As he stirred, someone called "He's coming to."

Carson looked up. A dark, familiar face with a pointed black beard and almost hypnotic eyes stared back with a demoniacal expression. "No! It couldn't be!" he cried in astonishment.

"But it is. Though you'll never tell anyone, Mister Cougar Carson. Ha ha haaa!"

"You traitor!" Carson screamed. "Who would think you would kidnap your own pupil! The Empire gave you everything, and now you turn around and stab it in the back!"

"But the Empire didn't give me everything. And now, it will have to pay! Ha Ha Haaa!" Peals of laughter echoed in the cavernous room.

Carson thought, "Doctor Malachi Zinn! Who would've thought he'd turn traitor like this! I'd better..." His thoughts were cut short by Dr. Zinn's voice.

"Attila! Wheel our guest into... the Subliminal Reeducator!"

Carson wondered to himself, "Subliminal reeducator? What in the nine billion names of God is that? Then he saw it. Against the wall of the room was a row of huge panels, dwarfing the white-coated technician who was furiously adjusting knobs and throwing 1 levers. At the top was a nameplate reading:

THE ZINN CORPORATION, Nova, Landfill.

"Before I start the treatment, why don't I tell you what I'm about to do to you, the evil doctor began. "This," he said, waving his hand to indicate the immense machine, "is my Subliminal Reeducator. It will make any man, or woman, what I want him or her (heh, heh) to be. And I want you to be my agent, Carson. You will be sent back to the Emperor with Vanessa in your own ship, which is now being fixed, and then... I will know every move the Empire is planning through my two spies. And they'll never suspect the Emperor's own daughter, or their most trusted agent, the famous Mister Cougar Carson! HA HA HAAA! ...Enough! Start the treatment!"

A copper helmet was lowered over Carson's head, and he fainted as the treatment began.

Back on Earth, His Royal Magnificence, Emperor Uberhung XVI was interrogating a spy the United Space Patrol Service had just captured. This was no ordinary spy...

"I'll never tell! But your Empire is doomed! And it's too late to save it!"

"If you won't talk, we'll have to use... the Truth Ray!"

"It won't... work... It's... too... la...!"

"Quick! Get a doctor!"

"Right away, Your Magnetism!"

A doctor came and examined the erstwhile spy. "He's dead. I think."

"You THINK! You're supposed to KNOW!" the Emperor roared.

"I'm a human doctor, Your Magnificence, but this --" he gestured to indicate the body of the spy, "--isn't human."





## CHAPTER THREE

In a locked room in the spaceship Black Dove, the Princess Vanessa was idly chipping insulation off the wall and wondering if she would ever see her home again.

"Those slobs sure don't know how to treat a lady," she said to herself. "The food here stinks, and I haven't had a smoke since I sneaked that last one before they put me in this crummy little closet. And I had to throw that one away when I heard they coming back, and it blew up a tank of cyclopropane... Yeah, this ain't no place for a lady. I gotta get out of this hole!"

She took a bobby pin out of her hair and began poking at the lock on the door. It sprang open and she stepped outside. There was a door open at the other end of the hall with a plaque that read:

SUBLIMINAL REEDUCATOR  
Attila, Manager of Operations

A file card below the plaque said "Sharing time with Dr. Malachi Zinn of the Zinn Corporation."

The men were concentrating on a dark figure strapped to a metal cot connected to a panel covered with dials and meters. Vanessa saw that the men were Attila and Dr. Zinn, and that the dark figure was none other than the famous Cougar Carson!

"Got himself into another jam," she thought. "Well, that figures!"

Beside her was another of the series of panels that controlled the Reeducator. She removed another bobby pin, carefully dropped it across two wires in the back of the panel, and covered her ears. There was a sound as if thousands and thousands of beads had suddenly fallen on to the metal floor of the room. Dr. Zinn turned around and screamed.

"NO! Not after all the work I've done!! Not this!"

Then he collapsed, sobbing piteously and mumbling about starting over with a new six trillion dollar grant...

Taking advantage of the disorder in the Reeducator room, Vanessa walked through it into the ship's control room. There she tried, with only her ground effect machine driving experience, to direct the ship back toward Earth. She turned what looked like a direct ion control, and the ship seemed to start rotating slowly about its central axis. She grabbed a lever on the panel to hang on to as the ship turned upside down (or the gravity simulator reversed, whichever had really happened). Several red lights lit up on the main panel as the ship rolled around to its normal position. Then the retro rockets at the front of the ship fired, putting the ship into reverse.

While the ship was rolling over, the machinery in the Reeducator room had fallen to the ceiling (so to speak) and broken open. Now, as the ship reversed, thousands of tiny, clear spheres rolled into

the room, forming a nearly frictionless layer on the floor. Vanessa didn't notice them until she stepped away from the panel and slid back into the Reeducator room, falling onto the floor by the cot where Carson was still tied. More hurt than surprised, she began brushing the beads off her clothes and out of her hair, but quickly realized the futility of the effort. The beads carried a remarkable charge of static electricity and stuck like taffy. Besides, Attila and Dr. Zinn had by now composed themselves and were glaring at her with undisguised contempt.

"How could anybody possibly screw up our course like that?" cried Attila. "When I bought this piece of junk, they told me it was foolproof. You just proved it isn't!"

"So get your money back, I don't care," shot back Vanessa. She picked a few more of the tiny beads out of her hair.

"Now listen, it's time we got a few things straightened out around here!" shouted Attila, his hands clenched.

"Hadn't you better straighten out the ship first of all?" asked a small voice. Attila looked over and saw the navigator, Harold Mischer, formerly of the planet Earth. "Right now we're backing up at ninety percent of the speed of light toward the planet Skatole. I don't have to tell you that we don't want to go anywhere neat that place!"

At the mention of that infamous planet, Attila's face blanched. Everyone well remembered the day the first explorers returned from there, bringing back horrifying diseases unheard of in any other part of the galaxy. The first unmanned probe sent there by Earth had reported that no disease from there would be contagious except by very intimate contact, so the Emperor had authorized the exploration. He learned to his sorrow that that type of disease not only would be contracted by every member of the exploration team, but would be brought back and spread all over the home planets as well. The plague had since been more or less quarantined, but no one wanted to take any chances.

"You're right, Harold," said Dr. Zinn. "Set the controls for Landfill again right now."

Harold shuffled out to do his master's bidding, cursing under his breath as he slipped and slid on the beads.

"Now back to our problem," said Attila. "Vanessa, of all the persons, and for that matter, of all the creatures of an species, that I have kidnapped, you are absolutely the worst. You're just supposed to lie around helplessly until someone comes to rescue you. Just like Carson here..." He pointed to the cot where Carson had been. It was empty.



Back on the planet Earth, the Emperor Hberhung was spending his lunch hour looking through his daughter's room for any clue as to what had become of her. He waded through the piles of bootleg microtapes, rare old magnetic tapes that she played at deafening volume through her antique Akai, bottles of imported and Terran-made fruit punch of many types, and the maze of wires and sound

equipment connected to her mandolin synthesizer. If there were any clues in the room, which there weren't, it was a safe bet he'd never find them.

The Emperor really wasn't too concerned about the quasars -- it had taken them billions of years to get as far away as they were, and he was quite certain it would take them at least that long to come back. Anyway, he wasn't going to argue with anything that could swallow his entire Empire in a single "comp." Let them alone and they'd leave him alone, he figured. Little did he know...

Moreover, it was time for him to get back to work. He returned to the room where they had left the spy. He, or it, as the case might be, was lying with his head on the pizza they had left beside him for his lunch, in case he wasn't actually dead. He wasn't. When the Emperor entered, the spy stood up in salute, dropping anchovies and tuna fish into the shag carpet.

The doctor and the Truth Ray technician returned, a little shaky from their lunch at the Pizza and Fruit Punch Spa.

"Okay, Emp, we'll get him to talk," said the technician. "We'll give him a taste of the Truth Punch... I mean the Fruit Ray... you know what I mean..." He plugged in the machine and began to attach it to the spy at what he thought were the right places, although really certain. This spy was certainly not human. Not even close.

After attaching all the wires to the spy, they began the questioning.

"What is it you know that's so important?"

"I'll never tell! No matter what you do!"

The technician turned the Truth Ray to its lowest setting (the lowest above "Off," that is.)

"Owwww," whimpered the spy. "I didn't know it meant that much to you! Honest! What I know is this: Your three troop carriers never reached Merdeball. They were captured by the people of the planet Cerium, in the Lanthanide series."

"What? I thought those people were all extinct by now!" said the Emperor. "After General Albert destroyed Terbium and Erbium in the last war, I didn't expect we'd have any trouble from them for at least another millenium!"

"Wrong again," hiccupped the technician.



Meanwhile, on the planet Cerium, a native interrogator was trying to talk to Sergeant Sargent, a crewman on the USPS Agnew and fanatic Texan. All the sergeant was trying to do was communicate the fact that Terrans eat two or three times a day, not once a month as Cerians do.

"Don't you even have any cereal?" he asked. After he explained the joke, the interrogator left in disgust. "No sense of humor,"



muttered the sergeant. "He'd nevuh make it in Texas, no suh."

When the Cerian did return, after a day or so, he brought two of his superiors with him.

"It's time to get down to business here. You and your friends know more about the Terran military forces than any other group we could have captured. When we know it all, too, we shall have our revenge for Terbium and Erbium!"

"Ah'll nevuh tell! No matter what you do!" boomed the sergeant.

Famous last words...



#### CHAPTER FOUR

During a lull, Emperor Uberhung's thoughts wandered to the reasons behind the century-long quarrel between the people of Cerium and the Empire. It had all started when, in the year 2213, a shipment of the vital compound Kerygmite was mis-directed by a USPS perimeter patrol ship. Kerygmite was the only compound in existence which could turn the barren deserts of Cerium into lush, fertile farmland. For many years Kerygmite had been mined on Cerium, but due to the vast amounts needed to keep the Lanthanide series active, Cerium's supply had been almost totally exhausted. Thus they turned to the Empire.

At first, Terran ships were only too happy to trade with them, but problems soon emerged. The Terrans noticed two very annoying characteristics of the Cerians. First, they were perfect specimens of the bioclass Homo Superior; that is, they were "perfect" people, in that their men compared favorably with Atlas and their women made Terran pilots drool. And second, they were dumb. Not merely "slow" or "cautious". Just dumb. After a few months of trading, Terran ships began to take advantage of the Cerians. It started with little things, like mis-directing a Cerian trader into a waste disintegrator instead of the washroom. Or asking a passing Cerian Border Patrol ship to investigate a bright light (which, unfortunately for the Cerians, turned out to be Betelgeuse). Still, everyone realized that these were just spacemen's pranks and both parties laughed them off.

But, in 2213, the Terran ship Santa Maria made the fatal mistake of playing a practical joke on the Ogots which, unknown to them, was carrying a vital shipment of Kerygmite. The Santa Maria, upon seeing the Ogots, decided to convince her crew and captain that she was flying upside down. After rotating their own ship 180 degrees, they radioed their victims and asked if they needed any help. When the Cerians queried, they sent a prepared text, and the ultimate result of the whole matter was that the Cerians rotated 180 degrees and then tried to dock with the cargo station. The result was catastrophic.

After this the Cerians could no longer laugh the matter off. Therefore, that afternoon (Cerian time) a declaration of war was passed. Upon receiving the declaration the Empire dispatched the warships Incredible and Ridiculous to destroy the Cerians. The Cerian defenses were totally untried, since they had never been able to think of a reason to fight before -- even among themselves. Thus the Empire's ships were unprepared for what they found at Terbium. The Cerians had generated a Nucleonic Resonance field of some forty trillion cubic miles between the ships and the planet. General Albert, in charge of the task force, directed his ships in a large arc around the field to see what the Cerians would do when he approached from the other side of the planet. The Cerians frantically inverted their main defensive screens, knowing that this would cause the field to appear on the other side of the planet.

What they failed to see was that the field would naturally sweep through the shortest possible path. Terbium disappeared. The same thing happened on Erbium. For all practical purposes, the war was over.

The Cerians never forgave the Imperial Terran Earth Empire for the loss of two of their most productive planets, and broke off all communications. Common opinion indicated that, after such a long period of silence, the Cerians must certainly be extinct. And thus the situation had stood.

The Emperor was aware of all this, as were the doctor and the technician. It was common history, taught in the lower grades; thus the Emperor's shock when the spy revealed his horrible secret.

"But how can the Cerians ever hope to win another fight?" mumbled the Emperor.

"They're dumb!" said the doctor, the technician, and the spy in unison.

"Oh..."



Back on the Black Dove, things were beginning to get a bit nasty. Vanessa was having a heated argument with Attila.

"Now listen, you hairy little ape! If you think I'm going to stay in a crummy place like this for another day then you've got a lot to --"

"Aw, shaddup, you give me a headache!" shouted Attila. "Go eat a pizza and keep out of my hair!"

"Why, you little --" Just as Vanessa started to enjoy the argument, Dr. Zinn's Neural Paralyzer sent her back into dream-world...

"Why do you let her bully you like that, Attila?" asked the Doctor. "Don't you realize that she's the prisoner, and you're the jailer? You should be ashamed of yourself!"

"Oh, you shaddup too! If it's not her yapping down my back all the time then it's you trying to tell me how to do --"

"ATTILA!"

Attila cringed. Doctor Zinn took a deep breath to calm down.

"All right, Attila. Let's get her back in the closet and find Carson before he does something funny."

They dragged Vanessa back into the closet and locked it.

"There! That should take care of the little..." began Attila. Suddenly the ship gave a great lurch and tilted its gravity reference.

"Whaaa... what's happening?" shouted Dr. Zinn, as he slipped on the myriad little plastic beads, fell, and collided with something that made a splash in the bathroom.

"How should I know?" cried Attila as he tried to get to the control room.

Cougar Carson knew, and he was chuckling to himself as his newly repaired ship quickly drew out of torpedo range.

"It was nice of Dr. Zinn to repair my ship for me," he thought to himself as he inserted a salami grinder into the portaserve warmer. Suddenly his appetite disappeared as he realized -- the girl he had left behind might have been the Princess!

"No, it couldn't have been. Could it?" He fished out Vanessa's picture, studied it as he had done so many times in the past.

"No! It's just not possible! How many Princesses go around smelling like cyclopropane? ...It just can't be!"

He had to make sure. Dropping his copy of Rendezvous With Rachael into a week-old satellite pizza, he activated the Portacom in the corner.

"Attention! All ships within hailing distance, this is a code three alert! Break!"

Knowing that there was only one ship within reach, he sat back and waited. Suddenly an automatic response started clattering on the display.

#### I G O R System Black Dove Emergency Response

Carson smiled and congratulated himself for having talked the Emperor into giving him a master communications unit. The device allowed the operator to gain temporary control of any automatic warning system in the immediate vicinity. Its main use was to warn ships of impending danger, such as large concentrations of meteors. However, he would only be able to use it once; then the crew of the Black Dove would discover him and turn off the automatic warning system. Quickly he shouted his request.

"IGOR! Get me the crew status!"

Almost immediately the display began spewing information.



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| Job        | Who        | Where  | When  | Size  | State   | Sex        |
|------------|------------|--------|-------|-------|---------|------------|
| 1 Captain  | Captain    | ReedRm | 12:15 | 5'11" | Mad     | Male       |
| 2 Armorer  | H. Attila  | CtrlRm | 12:15 | 4'1"  | Run     | Male       |
| 3 Assist.  | H. Mischer | ReedRm | 12:15 | 5'8"  | Weak    | Nil        |
| 4 Prisoner | Vanessa    | Closet | 12:15 | 5'10" | OutCold | Definitely |

SHIPSTAT STOPPED BY PILOT

Carson muttered an Antarean profanity to himself. "They caught me! But at least I know where she is." Suddenly IGOR broke into his thoughts.

"Master, another ship approaches."

"But they didn't respond to the override, so they don't have an automatic warning system. That's impossible! It's a requirement for getting a license! How --"

He never got a chance to finish his sentence, for a Nucleonic Resonance Beam shot out from the antique interloper and with blinding speed diced up both the Black Dove and the Lost Cause.

"There's only one civilization that could still use a weapon as unstable as a resonator..." Carson thought to himself as he started to black out. "It must be... the..."

He never got a chance to finish his thought. The Cerians had returned.

TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE

# LETTERS

(((( My comments hide inside these triple parentheses. I will omit paragraphs from letters but will leave paragraphs I print intact. Exceptions will be marked by ellipses... Response to last issue has been gratifying, and I have this nice fat folder of letters, for which I thank you. Keep them coming! )--sgd)))

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ROBERT A. LOWNDES  
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Don D'Amassa's article was, particularly interesting, since it had not occurred to me that high school kids of the post-Sputnik age still are likely to encounter hostility from teachers in respect to reading and appreciating science fiction. In my day (1929-1933) at high school, that was par for the course. And not being the aggressive sort, I took a conspiratorial rather than a crusading attitude; I said nothing overtly about science fiction, or reading it, except to the one or two I encountered who were also enthusiasts -- and as I recall, they kept their enthusiasm generally under cover, too. I did, however, write reviews of science fiction novels I'd read -- including a current Ray Cummings serial in Astounding Stories ("Wandl, the Invader", which, many years later, I would edit for the Ace Books edition--

and which Jim Blish, never a Cummings fan, found most enjoyable) -- whenever we were assigned a "free" review. The only difficulty I got into was a small one; the teacher took me aside one day and noted that all my reviews were of fiction; she urged me to read a good non-fiction book for my next one, and left the selection up to me. And that turned out to be a good thing, because finding one travel book that fascinated me (it was about India, I recall) led me farther away from what had been an all-fiction diet aside from required reading. My parents tolerated my science fiction reading, but not too patiently; as I noted at the Boskone, they decided that it would keep my mind off sex. Now that I've been on my own for awhile, look what's happened: I'm the senior associate at Sexology magazine, and read very little science fiction any more -- but I'm working for Gernsback Publications!

I haven't seen the story he's talking about ("Benjy"), but Harry Warner brings up a fascinating point about the proper use of illiteracy when one wants to write a story as if written by an intelligent person of such stripe. I've forgotten who it was, but a long time ago there was either a well known mainstream novel or longish story which brought forth Harry's same objections. (It may have been memoirs by a well-known sports figure.) The point, anyway, was that the guy wasn't dumb or stupid; he was just generally uneducated. He knew he didn't know how to spell the big words, so he painstakingly looked them all up, and all the hard words were spelled correctly. But it just never occurred to him that he was misspelling the easy ones! So I'd mark that as a plus factor, rather than a flaw in the story.

So far as the use of slang, swear words, etc., in a story goes,

I'd say it depends upon whether you're writing journalism or fiction. If it's essentially journalism, then you follow reality scrupulously. But if you're making a fictional portrait of such a person, it isn't necessary -- it's poor art -- to bombard the reader incessantly. I learned this not only from my own overdoing of dialect in stories I wrote long ago, or rereading stories where it was overdone, but from acting. How do you put over a foreign accent on the stage? I was affecting a German one, and at first I did it so heavily that the director noted I was just unintelligible. So I cut it down to a very few gestures. I wasn't trying to speak with a German (actually Austrian) accent; I was an Austrian immigrant trying to speak good English as well as I could. But for all my efforts, the letter "w" always came out as "v", and occasionally a sentence would be constructed so that it sounded more German than English. Once or twice in a moment of excitement I used a common German phrase. Result? A considerable number of those who saw the play, and did not know me, were sure that I was Viennese. (I think that Sprague de Camp has made this point, too, in a different way.)

Which leads me into my final comment, the perennial matter of an author's beliefs in relation to the characters in any particular story. The good writer, like the good actor, comes across by putting a fragment of himself or herself into the part, whether it be a stage portrayal or fiction. If what you're expressing coincides with your beliefs at the moment, that makes the task easier. But what if there's a conflict? Well, I ask myself, honestly, have I ever felt that way?

Hmm, how did I behave when I did? If not, have I ever known of or been thrown in with a person who felt that way? Think back: how did this or that person express the feelings. (In some cases I I've been able to remember such a person very well.) Good: now let's pretend I agree with that person. And I can either try to render that person as well as I can, or render myself as I am, except for the one difference of belief. (How would holding that belief affect other areas of my feeling and behavior?) It's still a matter of using fragments of oneself, because all our knowledge of others is filtered through our personal beliefs and the sort of perceptions these lead to. We can't help but distort, because our viewpoint will lead us to overlook a lot which does not conform with the image of the person we presently hold.

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ELLIOT SHORTER  
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I have just finished PB #14 and a few comments come to mind.

Covers: Good Wally Wood is pervasive. You can tell at a glance when an artist has been working with or taking lessons from him, as Al Sirolis has. I must say that unlike many others, Al's personal style has not been submerged in Woodisms, and still comes out strongly.

As to the back cover, Al, the answer is "Yes!" The more important question is: "Knowing our faults as a race, will we be able to surmount them with wisdom and prudence? I personally think we will.

Letter Column: Harry Warner Jr. -- "Sireen" is correct for "A Harlem black" to use. That pronunciation, down on the flats, has been in use



as far back as I can remember, and I'm 37 years old. My early years were spent on 129th St. between St. Nicholas Ave. and Convent Ave., just where Convent is beginning its rise to City College and Hamilton Grange. My grandparents lived at the other end of Convent Ave. where it joins St. Nicholas after it made itself the ramp leading from the flats of Harlem to Washington Heights at Coogan's Bluff. Harlem is basically a flat river flood plain formed before the Harlem River was captured by the Jerome Creek and its course shifted eastward, but I digress.

The dialect of Benjy for the most part rang true for one of his age group. There are social and age related dialects among the Negroes of Harlem. The media presents, mostly, the dialects appearing in the 17-35 yr. age groups and even that is mostly confined to militants, pimps, pushers, and street people. So, by necessity, the average person's view is wrong.

The use of swear words is strange. It need not be heavy among equals. However they will not be replaced by milder euphemisms like "sugar" or "rats". (An aside: "sireen" is analagous, in form, to the pronunciation of "shit" as "shi-eeet" Shi as usual, eeet long and drawn out. Used in this form as a sign of exasperation.)

Keep An Eye On That Fringe Stuff - Mark Keller - I hope this is only a beginning of a series of articles in this vein. Mark, you are building a rep for Esoterica that is spreading far beyond the confines of New England.

Otherwise, Don's article was both sad and humorous, sad in that his actions were so necessary, and in that some some failed. Suford's critique of Tanith Lee of interest because I had read Storm Lord and enjoyed it, but...Ann McCutchen's Peter Pan Was Right intrigued me because I'm still not sure if she likes children's books, is she realizes what gems are hidden there, if she realizes how much the field is part of our own field of Imaginative Fiction or what.

About Sue Anderson's HPL I will say nothing except: do not assume that every reader is aware of the musical source for your parodies. Please indicate.

((Sue specifically asked me not to print the name of any song that HPL happened to fit the meter of, purely by chance.)))

MELISSA DOWD  
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Best of luck with your virgin editing project. I am totally unfamiliar with fanzines -- never knew they existed until I attended my first convention in (I think) 1970. But then, I had been reading SF for six years before I realized tat there were actually monthly magazines -- and I probably still wouldn't know if a kind friend hadn't started to send me his old issues of Analog in 1965. So anyway, I enjoyed Boskonian, and look forward to seeing the next one.

I found "Learning the Hard way" very interesting -- but I don't agree with it. My experience has been completely different. I was introduced to science fiction in the fifth grade (at the proverbial optimum age) by a pudgy red-haired boy I was madly in love with at the time. The book was Storm Over Warlock, and I was instantly

hooked. I read through all the Norton, and started on the Heinlein. My parents expressed no opinion about my new enthusiasm -- except that my mother began stealing books out of my room to read them. She was very fond of Cat's Eye, as I recall. I can recall no interaction from school, until the seventh grade, when I took a book to show to my science teacher (whom I also had a crush on. Hmmm.) To my surprise, he said that HE read the stuff too -- and immediately brought me a cardboard box full of paperbacks.

In tenth grade English, I fulfilled a journal requirement by writing an SF story. Got an A, too. I cannot recall one single instance of any teacher, in any grade, discouraging an interest in SF. And, I have introduced many people to the genre, even a few who insisted they didn't like science fiction. Of course what they meant was they didn't like space opera; too most people the two terms are synonymous.

I think SF will pick up more and more readers as present children mature. Science fiction and fantasy themes dominate children's television these days -- of course, I am assuming that some of these little nippers will actually learn to read somewhere in the course of their school careers...

((((I too have done my bit for the prostylization of SF, and a very gratifying way, too. Some years ago I worked as assistant librarian at a boys' prep school, a very athletics-oriented prep school with a mouldering library (the new head librarian and I counted 47 separate copies of Lives of the Saints... the former librarian had been an eightyish nun and somewhat odd.) and many many students who thought that reading was for sissies (Eddie Brzyzinski, football coach and freshman English teacher was officially in charge of ridding them of that notion. He had a reputation for being able to pick any known freshman by the scruff of the neck and a fondness for the Cavalier poets.) and who had never actually read a book in their lives. As the new head librarian was also coach of the golf team and hence rather busy, I got to do all the ordering...thousands of books one glorious order. I got every SF title in the catalogs. They proved quite popular. One day Father Olewin brought his freshmen down to do a book report. He asked me to pick out a book for one particularly recalcitrant boy, who apparently believed that books gave one warts. I picked out one of the Heinlein juveniles, removed the dust jacket at his teacher's insistence to make it harder to fake a book report, and he left with Fr. O's warnings about no book report, no passing grade, no basketball team ringing in his ears. About ten days later he slunk into the library furtively, ducked behind a file cabinet so that he could not be seen from the door, and asked me in an awestruck voice if there were any other books like that, and could I please slip him one and please please not tell his friends? I tell you, it made my gear.)))

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HARRY WARNER JR.  
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You did a fine job on the first PB under your direction. The only complaint I might offer is that most of its reviews deal with books I haven't yet read, making it difficult to use those reviews as inspiration for comments. But it's probably a good idea to put

lots of reviews in a fanzine which you intend to use for missionary purposes in NESFA. Hook those people who pay little attention to fanzines with material about science fiction, and then when you've won their confidence, start to sneak really fannish stuff in, and before you know it they'll all be asking you to stop running reviews so you'll have more room for what they really want, articles about Courtney's boat and Norman G. Wansborough and the great debate over friction belt buckles.

I'm tempted to speculate about whether Don D'Ammassa's whole career in fandom might be the inadvertant consequence of his determination to rebel against Thomas Skahan. If so, that gentleman should be made guest of honor at a con someday for accidentally creating such favorable consequences to fandom. Curiously, I had very few experiences like those Don kept encountering as a result of my reading so much science fiction. Part of the explanation might involve my inclination to do things privately, for the most part; I didn't carry prozines around with me and didn't talk much about my reading tastes with acquaintances. One crisis occurred when I must have been only eight or nine years old and an aunt who taught school found a collection of Poe which I'd wanted among the presents from my parents one Christmas. She insisted that I wasn't old enough to be reading that book. I should be grateful to her, because my first effort to dive into the book had discouraged me. Maybe I wouldn't have tried again for a long time if she hadn't made me so angry by sticking her nose into my reading business. So I plowed through every page of that book in the days that followed, learning to like Poe and also gaining practice in the important discipline of forcing oneself to persist with difficult reading matter long enough for it to grow less difficult.

Both covers are very fine, although I'm worried about the safety of the condescending human on the back cover. His shadow goes one way and the shadow of the little critter goes another while the light on the large rocks seems to be coming from a different direction altogether. So it's pretty obvious that something unprecedented is about to happen to the earthman who is too preoccupied by his intention to put himself into the masterful situation to realize that ominous light-emitting entities are hovering around him.

((Mike Symes tells me he has his own ideas about the immediate fate of that human; he's promised to draw it for the next issue. I foresee a cartoon war coming... I am trying to teach myself to read things that are good for me, or that I think will be good for me, even when my first attempt failed. I've liked some very long dull difficult books, but I've never been able to force myself through many of the classic novels of our times. I'm sure I'm missing a great deal by not finishing a book that doesn't interest me withing the first few chapters, but cultivating discipline this point is slow going.)))

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LAURINE WHITE  
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Conditions described in "Learning the Hard Way" probably aren't



true now. Some high schools are wasting students' time with sf courses, taught by people who may know little about the subject. Are those kids who can't believe in anything that is not "real", the ones whose parents wouldn't expose them to fairy tales when they were little? I wonder. Don's account of retaliating against those "Anti-sf" teachers was great.

What I learned from Tanith Lee's three paperbacks is that her fat books are worth buying. Forget the thin ones. Does Suford Lewis know about Tanith Lee's earlier books: THE DRAGON HOARD, COMPANIONS ON THE ROAD, and three others?

Mark Keller's reviews are enjoyable. EATERS OF THE DEAD was reviewed in another fanzine, but I don't remember Beowulf. Cecelia Holland's first novel was highly praised. Being a reader of historical adventure, I got it from the library and read it. Without the detailed descriptions of costumes, customs, scenery, the background was bleak. So was the ending. I haven't read any more books by her. ECOTOPIA sounds like a good book. I don't remember it in bookstores, but I wasn't looking. A few Californians may behave like the people in ECOTOPIA, but I don't think the majority would. ....

Didn't NESFA get my loc to PB 13? My name wasn't in the WAHF column.

((Your loc isn't in the files, so I assume we didn't get it. Don and I figure that about one in twenty letters, packages, or fanzines going to or from us goes astray these days. If these proportions hold true for the rest of fandom there must be a lot of frustrated fans around...)))

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This loc on PB 14 should be just under the wire. (The main reason for delay was that I didn't get around to reading The Storm Lord until this week.) Yes, I enjoyed the results.

Don's reminiscence is interesting. I didn't run into that particular problem in high school, partly because there wasn't much SF around to read. (I do remember, though, that in the 4th grade I was reading some fantasy or other from the school library, and the teacher ridiculed me for being too old to read "fairy tales" At age 8. Curiously, that's the only thing I remember about that particular teacher.) But in high school I was mainly into non-fiction, especially history: I must have read just about all of Churchill's Second World War in study halls, and that was of course eminently respectable. (((I read the same set in doctor's offices --sgd))) I'd devoured what little SF the local library had at the earliest opportunity, and it wasn't until I was in college that I could afford to start buying my own. Wonder what would have happened if I'd found fandom then instead of 15 years later.

I have a lot to say on (or at least inspired by ) Suford's essay on Tanith Lee. To begin with, the protagonist of The Birthgrave is Karrakaz (the perils of handwritten manuscripts). Largely I agree with Suford's conclusions; taken it as given that Lee is a fine (and

improving) writer, let me go off on my own tangent. This is a quibble about her "ability to make...her cultures hang together." In fact I've noticed a consistent flaw in just this area of background (well, not just cultures). In The Birthgrave there's the problem Suford mentions of how long Karrakaz was under the mountain. As I read it, it was for centuries, during which she aged just 16 years; I suppose this could be rationalized, but no attempt has been made to do so. In Don't Bite the Sun, the culture of the Cities apparently developed from the desert nomads the archeologist is studying; but then when and how did the atmosphere become unbreathable? And in The Storm Lord, it does seem plausible that the Vis aren't native to the world (since there's nowhere on it they could have come from); but then how did they develop a rutting cycle tied to its calendar? And why does Dorthar have such an unstable system as ultimogeniture? It's true about the inadequacy of the map: for a long time I couldn't figure out the geography and climate (Vis is in the Southern Hemisphere, the other continent in the northern), largely because the sea voyage is described so vaguely. Again, all these things probably could be made plausible; are they left unexplained out of neglect, or to deliberately create a mystery? It's a tribute to the reality of Lee's worlds that one cares about such details. But if the reason is mystery, I think it's weakened by the uneasy balance between SF and fantasy in The Birthgrave and The Storm Lord; in The Storm Lord especially, sure, one can "culturally reinterpret" the mythic elements, but it requires assuming some incredibly powerful psi forces - it's almost easier to accept the reality of the Goddess. And once you put real gods into a story (or "forces" with the same ability to defy probability), then in effect anything can happen, and much of the effort to make things "hang together" is wasted. I'm afraid that for me a story in which characters see true visions is as much a fantasy as one in which overt "magic" occurs. Anyway, it will certainly be fascinating to see where Tanith Lee goes from here.

The lack of reviews of the fringe-SF books Mark describes is probably due, as much as anything, to the fact that so few of them have appeared in paperback. There are so many books around, not many people are going to check out for SF elements books which are both disguised as mainstream and expensive. Unless someone tells them, of course. (In particular, who's going to pay for Agnew's book?) -- And shame on you, Mark, for revealing both the big secrets of Eaters of the Dead. -- I wouldn't be so hard on stories with chunks from the "Encyclopedia Galactica" or whatnot: after all, in reading a historical novel one always can go to the encyclopedia for additional detail, but in future-fiction this option is not available. -- Hmm, the third or fourth time lately that Mark's discussed the supposed emotional characteristics of Californians. All that I can say is that it doesn't seem to show in the California politicians most familiar to us all. -- With regard to The Medici Guns, did Leonardo actually design such guns?

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We also heard from John S. Pettengill, Val Novak, and Chris Tucker.

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Many thanks for sending the copy of Proper Boskonian 13 with Don's excellent essay on my stuff...

There is a temptation to comment at length on Don's comments which I shall mostly resist, feeling that unless a critic has made some plain error of fact or logic -- which he certainly has not -- a writer should let his or her works speak for themselves. However, a few remarks of a general nature might be of some interest, even though I don't venture to say what any colleagues have had in mind and must therefore use personal illustrations.

Let me say at the outset that Don has not committed any of the errors to be discussed, and indeed the fact that they are errors must be obvious to him. But many more critics seem to commit them than don't, so you may enjoy seeing how they appear from the writer's side of the fence.

First, a character's opinions, actions, etc. in a story may have absolutely nothing to do with the author's. They are oftener there merely because they serve the purpose of characterization and/or narration. For example, I am not myself a Catholic like Nicholas van Rijn, a Zen Buddhist like Trygve Yamamura, or a royalist like Prince Rupert; unlike Skafloc, I have never viked in my life and have no ambitions to do so; males have no sexual appeal to me the way they do to Philon or Iason Philippou; the prairies which Donya of Hervar loves are to me a thousand miles of boredom; and so on indefinitely. Shucks, a couple of times I have portrayed a Communist sympathetically!

Second, the very postulates on which a story is based may not be ones with which the author necessarily agrees. I refer less to far-out pseudoscientific notions like time travel than to social theories. For example, in effect "No Truce With Kings" declared that some kind of feudalism is the best form of government we humans can hope for in the long run, and therefore we're wisest not to try to rise above it, but to accept it and try to take the roughest edges off. This may or may not be true -- nobody knows -- but is not a sociological theory of my own: simply a suggestion which struck me as interesting to play with.

To be sure, being mortal, writers inevitably work from a limited philosophical platform and have available to them a limited set of ideas and motifs. From a whole body of work, no doubt a close reader can make valid inferences about some of an author's beliefs, biases, predilections, tastes, and whatnot else. Sometimes a point he is trying to make is just about unmistakably his own. For instance, there was no reason to put FIRE TIME in the same universe as THE STAR FOX, a generation later, except to say not very indirectly that, while some wars may have to be fought, others are unjustifiable, and those which are proclaimed as great idealistic crusades are apt to be the most unnecessary and cruel.

But this method has its own drawbacks, notably the danger of assuming that the body of work makes a consistent statement. So, third point: people do change their views and sometimes even their personalities in the course of time, and if they are writers, this



may well show in what they are producing. I was a political liberal, i.e. an elitist who advocated reforming society at gunpoint (for what else is government but that organization which claims the right to kill anybody who doesn't obey?), for several years after first starting to publish, and it shows. There is no reason here to discuss subsequent opinions of mine, except to remark that they are still mutating.

No doubt some very basic feelings normally last throughout most people's lives. But the form of their expression may well vary tremendously through time, or even in two different works produced at approximately the same time, for any of the several reasons mentioned above. And occasionally the emphasis is so different as to make it almost unbelievable that the same person created it all. This is especially true of the few real geniuses the world has known -- for example, Kipling, whom most nowadays remember only for a few jingoistic jingles, completely unaware of his emotional, philosophical, and artistic range. Science fiction has its own cases of this; two who spring to my mind are Gordon Dickson and Jack Vance. They're popular enough, but except for a preliminary study of the former by Sandra Miesel, I don't know of any appreciation of their real depth. Maybe Don would be interested in exploring this sometime.

Now I've run on at several times the length planned, doubtless with far too much use of the vertical pronoun, so this had better stop, with best wishes to everybody.

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