

the final issue

Vol. 3

the final issue

#1

This is a publication of The Society for the Preservation of Robert Bloch.

(Praise his holy name!)

PICKLE BLOCH FOR POSTERITY!!!!

(Official club motto furnished by Walter A. Willis, himself a deity of stature.....over six feet the last time I heard.)

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All the above statements may be examined at will at our head offices in Weyauwega upon presentation of a certificate from your family doctor of insanity. And remember, statistics don't lie. In a nationwide test of over five hundred registered pharmacists, more than five out of six agreed! And you just can't argue with that kind of figures.

Remember, Bloch is the only true Ghod. PICKLE BLOCH FOR POSTERITY!



This is the last issue of REVIEW. Yes, I know I've said that once before and intimated it a couple of other times. But on the preceeding occasions outside forces were causing it, whereas this time I have a much better reason....the reason most fanzines fold. When I started REVIEW it was an engrossing activity. Now it has become a dreaded chore. Ironically, a very similar situation was the cause of REVIEW's birth. WASTEBASKET, which started out as a fairly simple little generalzine had, in four issues, mushroomed into an elaborate printed fanzine with each issue taking about six months to prepare and costing a minor fortune to produce. WASTEBASKET was designed to be just the opposite. It would be cheap and easy to produce on the road (I'd used hektography before and knew it was messy but never having used it for printed matter or on a mass production basis I was unaware of its fatal defects). It would be totally unpretentious. No illustrations, no lettered headings. I would not be at the mercy of contributors since I'd produce the whole of the text myself. And I could bring it out quickly and frequently since it would be quite small. Well the first issue was. Eight pages as I recall (I lack copies, myself of three or four of the first half dozen issues) and produced in its entirety within the space of one week. I'd figured on a two-weekly to monthly schedule.

Well, those who've stuck with me through thick and thin (I wonder if anyone still has all 13 issues) can see how little the REVIEW of today resembles that first issue. It still has the same title and fanzine review column but otherwise it's another magazine entirely. (For the benefit of future fan historians, REVIEW's first two issues appeared in 1952 hektographed. The next four in 1953, dittoed and run off by Charles Wells. The next five, dating from late 1953 to Fall, 1954 were mimeod and run off by Wells. The 12th issue was mimeod professionally and this final issue run off on the mimeo which has given me so much trouble and which is one of the lesser reasons for REVIEW's demise.)

This does not mean I'm exiting fandom. It does probably mean the end of my publishing in the general fan field. I might come back some day but I doubt it. I don't like mimeography and if I get another printing press ~~xxx~~ its output will probably be confined to FAPA. I'll remain active in FAPA, perhaps even become more active therein. I've dropped from SAPS and do not anticipate adding any other apa memberships to my FAPA activity, at present. My correspondence will continue as before. I hope (though no promises) that I'll be able to write more letters of comment to fanzine editors since I'll no longer be reviewing them. I will subscribe to more fanzines, now, but its best to warn you that I usually won't subscribe to any fanzine unless its demonstrated its staying power by appearing regularly for at least a year. The majority of fanzines fail to live long enough to fulfill a subscription and most of them aren't worth it in their early issues, anyway, so my policy with such zines has always been to get through trade or because of comment....not that it would really hurt me to lose the money, but there are times when I can live up to my surname and I find it easy to be very stingy when it comes to subscribing to fanzines. So be warned. Those of you who think such a policy unfair do not have to send me your fanzines.

It's probably not at all coincidental that G.M. Carr announced



a policy of non-activity almost identical to this in the latest GEMZINE. Gertrude and I entered fandom almost simultaneously and while I suspect she's been somewhat ahead of me in total activity our paces haven't been too dissimilar. Comes time now for a retreat to FAPA where old fans go to die.

Present plans are to take Bill Morse's column (perhaps the most successful innovation in REVILW's history) into my FAPAZINE BIRDSMITH. The readers column may go in a somewhat briefer form, also. With most readers commenting in their own FAPAZINES it depends on whether their are sufficient letters worth printing or not. It has been decided not to call the new altered BIRDSMITH The BIRDSMITH REVIEW. Just thought you'd like to know. The rest of the magazine will vanish into limbo. I am not available, now, to write a fanzine review column for someone else's fanzine.

\* \* \* \*

Blackmail pays!!!

Having recently threatened a certain Richard K. Verdan with revelation of his/her identity if I did not receive an article by same this cowed fan hastily complied with fear and trembling. Heh, heh....we feel villainous and successfully so. Nothing succeeds like success unless perhaps it is vice, which is its own reward.

Incidentally, Bob Silverberg, who printed this article's predecessor, managed to give the impression that Verdan was actually two people. Hah! You don't know the half of it. I have learned from a reliable source that at least twice that number of people (even I don't know the exact figure) are Verdan.

Though not always simultaneously.

Apologies for all the skipped spaces in the Verdan article.

\* \* \* \*

REVIEW is edited and published by:

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Box 458

Payette, Idaho.

Please, please, please.....  
note the above and substitute it for any earlier addresses you may be using. I'll be leaving Payette, shortly, also, but mail addressed to the above will still reach me. Mail going to the Nampa address no longer does and it is doubtful whether mail addressed to Kellogg will reach me after July 1st. So use this Payette address until you hear a newer one.

(Not that that notice will do any good. There are some fan editors who stubbornly refuse to tamper with mailing list entries no matter what the provocation. What was good enough for grandpa was good enough for them. Therefore no magazines mailed to the Nampa address have been reviewed in this issue.)



## LETTER FROM LONDON

by Bill Morse

No doubt the examples quoted last time of excitement on TV may have seemed a trifle tame to you all but the fact is that, for one thing, we have nothing which could rank level with your most famous example in that direction. In addition, there is the official ruling, agreed upon by leaders of all parties, that there should be no discussion of any subject likely to be debated in the House within the following two weeks. If the BBC tried it they would be liable to lose their precious charter--and the same goes for the coming Commercial TV people, too. So, we just cannot have it, much as we'd all love to watch a free-for-all between Bevan and his critics. Not because the BBC are scared, bless their hearts, but because they mustn't. They have done their best with other subjects of controversy, such as the two sessions on price-fixing rings; a talk on what the dear old lady who gave it called "Scientific Humanism" (it seemed to me like a rather woolly-headed atheism); and a televised enquiry into the growth of the color bar in the UK. And a nasty little color bar it is, too.

Sorry about those commas, Vern. It is mostly due to the fact that I get hypnotised by a typewriter keyboard, though the fact of my job does have some bearing on it. Before my bunch put out any report on the jobs we do, the outline is sent to me for editing in order that no Minister, Senior RAF Officer or any odd civil servant may misunderstand in any way what we are saying. You'd be surprised how useful the comma is. Especially when it is free.

As long as we are on the subject of typewriters and correspondence, I may as well make it public that I have scrapped my entire collection of fannish mail, with one exception, and that has been going for so long that I'd feel lost without it. Anyone who keeps carbon copies of his letters to me may now make any claims he likes--I'll just not believe it. Who the hell would keep carbon copies of his private mail, anyhow, apart from an enterprising piece of gold-diggery? And surely she would be more interested in saving the originals of those she received?

VLM rightly lists "What Thin Partitions" as an example of the collaboration of Clifton and Apostolides. The little girl, Jenny, is one of Clifton's best studies, and he describes her and her actions and reactions with the perfection and compassion of a man who observes people carefully. The direct jump to the request for a "little boy poltergeist because I broke my little girl poltergeist" is hardly likely to stem from the same writer. There is no gradual shift at all, from the man who is likely to be haunted for years by the tormented face of the little girl, to the man who has great delight in seeing Army Brass taken in by his request for half a dozen poltergeists, male. And I doubt if even the highest of Army Brass would fall for that one, either, or that Clifton would of his own accord have ended his story on such a note of farce.

All the same, the ASF serial, "They'd Rather be Right", has the usual ending--the one we nowadays expect and tend to call High-Minded Flannel, rather than an ending which might have been better in detail. Tucker's "Wild Talent" came to a reasonable ending and so did Kornbluth's "Takeoff". Why is it that the idealist endings



to these stories never seem quite satisfactory? Is it because we are just too damned blasé to accept the fact that people may ever do a completely disinterested act for the greater good and no personal gain? When a man stands up and expresses his intention of devoting his life entirely to the alleviation of others' troubles and to living a good life, we automatically refer him to Billy Graham. Not that Mr. Graham is in any way deserving of ridicule, but we don't fancy ourselves being listed as ordinary common or garden Do-Gooders: it's a kind of an insult. Fairly obviously, "They'd Rather Be Right", like "Gunner Cade", was not a complete story because the ending took too much for granted.

Perhaps the feeling of incompleteness comes from the fact that the story ends with the Peepul being given the freedom of Bossy, on the pretext that Bossy can do just about anything for the Peepul. I'm not really convinced, that's all, despite the fact that there are more grounds than usual for believing that Bossy is as near as dammit omnipotent; I still have the feeling of doubt....just how WOULD they act, after Bossy had done her stuff.

Contrast this with, for example, "Earth Abides". Admitted that Stewart's is a vastly different story, but the ending leaves one with little doubt as to the future of what we may rather pompously term Mankind...it is going to be exciting. The trend is set for us before the book closes by showing us how the incredibly ancient Ish realizes, in his lucid moments, that all the loving care and fussing he has employed has put his little group on to the right lines for survival, down the ages. There's no dodging Stewart's point.

The purpose of a story-teller, after all, is to tell a story. His story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end, though I recall Kuttner reversing the process, once. Stewart's has an end, a satisfying exposition of what is to follow. The Clifton-Riley serial is more of a philosophical thesis, and when I read a philosophical thesis, I like it to be brought to its ultimate conclusion. Nonetheless, Riley makes a better job of collaboration than did Apostolides, because the story was happily devoid of those abrupt changes of pace.

I must admit that STF is finding a really firm place in British reading these days. When the more reputable of the Sunday papers not only review it in their regular columns but even go to the extent of initiating a competition to find new talent then we can really say that it has arrived. It is no longer a bastard outpost of thriller-fiction, obtainable only at the shops which devote most of their space to surgical goods and "rare books" and "Art Photography". May I be forgiven for suggesting that a large amount of this new-found respectability can be traced to the arrival of hard-cover Bradbury? True, whenever anyone hovering on the brink of "Discovering" stf for himself writes to any of the literary magazines mentioning Ray as being an example, he gets heavily jumped on by another reader (the same one, usually) who goes to great lengths to prove that not only does Bradbury not write anything even approaching stf, but that he cannot write at all, his plots have more holes than a griddle, and that his influence on literature can only be perverting. I often wonder if perhaps this guy's wife strangled his own struggles at space-opera by comparison with Ray? Whatever happens, Bradbury's books are selling well, all over the country.



No mistake about it, ~~etc~~ as it stands today is an all-American product, and it is changing the reading tastes of this country slowly but surely. Changing the styles of the writers, too. Since they have to keep the US market in mind these days, they have to trim their stories to a much greater extent than formerly and cut out the trips down the backstreets. All you have to do is read GALAXY in the afternoon and SCIENCE FANTASY in the evening and you will see the great difference there still is between the two styles. The American author is almost as far ahead of the Briton as the Briton is ahead of, say, the Briton of fifty years ago.

Sure, there are McIntosh, Wyndham, the Clarke's and Russel, but they have learned to adjust their styles to suit the greater audience, and we over here are grateful to them, even while we admit the fact that it is only for financial reasons they have done it.

This country seems to be modifying an immense number of ideas and manners under the influence of the great numbers of US troops now more or less resident. Most of it is long overdue, anyway, but needed just the extra impetus which the GI has given to carry it into effect. The people, where there are Yanks, are more direct and friendly in their manner than is usual, very often more polite, and certainly more helpful. One might almost think that the Good Neighbor policy has been retranslated back down to being a good neighbor. A point which may or may not be minor (it depends on which way you look at it) is the fact that a girl out with a GI is dead sure to have her stocking seams straight. As I said, it depends on which way you look at it, and I think it is an admirable change.

We also have cokes, baseball, packaged and sliced bread, crew-cuts, and "Britain's favorite American-style tailor." Ever read a specimen of the English gutter-press? Worse than anything ever produced in NY, though we have, as yet, no BRE Westbrook Pegler. And, while on the subject of the press, I often note how one or two dailies print excerpts, verbatim, from TIME without any sort of acknowledgment.

There are, of course, two major topics for discussion over here, other than the H-bomb. I'll avoid one of them, since I might otherwise say something I shouldn't. But our Aneurin Bevan seems to have first dug a trap, then fallen into it himself, flat on his face, and then to have dragged everyone else in his party in after him. This is presumably on the old thesis that it is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven, but shows a distressing lack of responsibility in a man of such potential. It looks as if Sir Anthony could hold an election at any time in the rest of this year, and feel quite confident of at least a similar majority, if not a bigger one still. One thing is for sure: a change of Prime Minister will mean a lot of changes in the list of Ministers. Butler will be more than ever the man to watch, with MacMillan close on his heels. Likewise Anthony Nutting. On the whole, the average age of the Ministers will fall, too, by anything up to fifteen years, I'd say. It won't FEEL the same, without the Old Pirate, though. He's been there for so long, and towered over them all from such a great height, that they, too, are liable to find the light a bit bright, and the wind strong, now that the Old Man is no longer there for a shelter.



Turning to the opposite corner, let me quote The Times. "The declining membership of the Communist Party, and the falling sales of the Daily Worker are causing concern at the party headquarters in London." To be exact, the circulation has fallen from 220,000 (some years back) to about 75,000 copies a day, counting all three editions as being the one paper. Discussions on the changes to be made in the hope of making (if not a profit) less of a deficit, have produced strong objections from the officials of the trade-unions most concerned with printing. Can it be that the working classes do not trust their most vociferous defenders? I think an answer may be provided in the fact that Attlee recently, in a speech, pointed out to the Conservative Party that the Russian leaders may make a lot of promises, but can be trusted only to break them.

If any of you have missed seeing the English cartoon film "Animal Farm", I suggest you try to see it before it finishes its run in the US. It sticks to the story with most commendable fidelity, with the exception of the ending, and of that I heartily approved. It took the story just two steps farther than did Orwell, who finished with an unutterable despair. I'm not a fanatic about the movies, seeing maybe twelve new pictures a year, and the reviews of this particular film were mixed, to say the least, and I went to see it when I did because it so happened that I was near the theatre at the early showing, when seat prices are uniformly low, so I knew I'd be losing little if I went in. The only thing I have against the pictures is that the characters are almost all stock drawings and only a couple, Napoleon and Squaler have any visible difference, physically, from any other of their species. It's a very little quibble, isn't it? The picture itself is bright, there are ample touches to relieve the all-pervading gloom, and there is no slackening of the pace of the development of the story. Whatmore could one ask? On the whole, I feel I had my money's worth and a little more.

Coming in the opposite direction across the Atlantic we have a phenomenon named Eartha Kitt. I managed to hear one or two of her recordings before I left Canada, and wanted right away to hear more. After some years of waiting we get the film "New Faces" over here, which has nothing in the way of advance build-up, no major West-end release, yet the critics, to a man, gave it rave reviews. I went, myself, to see what Eartha Kitt looks like, and saw the show round twice, although the rest of it was only so-so, for the sake of indulging in the company of a singer who has been described variously as having "all the attributes of a sex-starved cobra" and the "soft, yet savage quality of a lynx modelled in beeswax". Pick which you like. Her singing is described as running "the gamut, from the purr of satiety to hunger's full-throated roar". I've stopped trying to analyse her, myself. Does a mouse stop to decide why it is frozen in its tracks on sight of a Siamese cat or a wheep when it is faced with a mountain lion? Not that I feel particularly mouse-like in the presence of Eartha Kitt (no sir!) but she can stop me dead with a glance.

The other No 1 import from stateside, in my eyes, was Carmen Jones. I'm not fond of musicals, see maybe one in ten years, but this was told to me as being a must, so I saw it. Took a gorgeous piece of frippery with me, who is a case-hardened opera-addict, and she was all but converted to the revised version. I thought it was



pretty damned good, myself. The original words, translated directly into English sound emasculated after seeing that film. The continuity had one or two rather patchy spots, but if you balance the rough spots against the general quality and life of the thing the adaptation wins hands down over the original.

Now that British Railways are intent on scrapping all their steam locomotives for diesels and the electric traction, one of my other pleasures is coming to an end. For generations the old steam engine has had an irresistible glamour for Englishment, though we have always admitted that the presence of engine sheds within a mile of Piccadilly has had a strong part in the formation of the pall of smoke which has hung over London for so long. It will be hard to think of the Night Ferry from Victoria to Paris as being drawn by a diesel, after having watched and heard a Bulleid Pacific storming up the Grosvenor Banking regularly with the load of sleeping cars. I believe you had a similar revolution over there some years ago, so some of you may understand and sympathise, especially those who live in the vicinity of the Norfolk and Western, which has not yet completed the changeover to the new power. A diesel or electric engine is a dull looking thing, which has to be painted in garish colors to hide the fact of its essential monotony, whereas a steam locomotive always appears to be alive, and pulsating with energy, a fine and enthralling sight, when giving of its best. Unfortunately, it is only about eight percent efficient, thermally; the electric loco. about twenty percent, and the diesel about twenty five percent efficient. So the old steamer has to go. I hear there is talk of an atomic railroad engine over your side. That will be worth seeing.

Roll on the start of the baseball. Without Allie Reynolds, but Roll on, for all that. I wonder if the American League will have learned its lesson last year and be able to have the Yankees represent it in the World Series? One can but hope.-----HORSE.

You mean you're the only woman who ever understood him TOO?

-- Stolen from FEMIZINE

FOR WHOM THE JOE BLOWS-----

-----by Richard K. Verden

An article under the above byline appeared back in November of 1954 in Bob Silverberg's amateur publication, SPACESHIP. It appears to have caused a certain amount of wailing, hair-tearing and taboring at the bosoms among divers people who appear to have read it, or at least, scanned through it.

Interested parties have brought these comments to the byliner's attention and some sort of rejoinder seems to be indicated. The original piece seemed innocuous enough, being written with innocuity as one of its objectives. It reviewed three novels: "Player Piano", "Space Merchants" and "Limbo", praising the efforts of the respective authors and commenting enthusiastically on the fact that all were issued by major publishers.

The sole major criticism (to which most of the umbrage seems to have been taken) was directed at the tendency toward name-dropping; viz, the exposition of a future civilization in such a fashion that



the reader is led to believe it is merely a convenient backdrop for cavorting ... of the hero with the Top Brass of his era.

It was just the kind of article a fanzine editor is likely to print when he temporarily runs out of enough interlineations, Little Willie poems and Thoreau-quotes to fill his pages. As such, in all modesty, the byliner thought the article served its purpose.

It was duly noted that the tendency toward name-dropping crops out not only in these three books but in the majority of "future civilization" novels. As such, the article contended, it serves to destroy the illusion of reality for the average reader.

A general critique of the idea, as it appears throughout current science fiction offerings rather in these three books, was offered. But the general tone of the article wasn't intended to be unduly harsh. No advocacy was offered to the effect that it should become verboten to write about protagonists whose worldly position was higher than that of a junior foreman in a flowerpot factory.

Of the different reactions to this article which were passed on, the one largely responsible for the present effusion was that authored by Phyllis H. Economou. Miss (Mrs.?) Economou seems almost to have taken personal affront at the idea of dwelling upon the doings of nonentities in her science fiction.

She labors under a misapprehension which should be hastily corrected. Richard K. Verden is not Bob Silverberg. The converse is equally true. Since this is tentatively scheduled for publication by Idaho's foremost science-fictionist, it might be well to affirm that RKV and VLMcC are diverse and non-congruent entities. So much for that.

Her second, and much more (as they say in Vatican City, ornithological and baseball-playing circles) cardinal error lies in her belief that this byliner was "Dictating what an author should have written about, from the standpoint of your own personal tastes and prejudices." She aligns the criticism with a "reverse sort of snob-bism" which consists of "deifying Joe Blow and deriding the man of accomplishment."

By way of refutation, let's refer back to the article in question in which a discussion of the Key-Figure obsession is followed by this statement:

"It is certainly not a criminal offense, but to some extent it is a literary offense in these particular instances -- because in each case the writer is promising the reader, in effect, "Come with me and I'll show you how the world of the future will be, how it operates, what it does to people." In "1984" Orwell did just that. But in these efforts, the author's discriminative casting arbitrarily limits the reader to glimpses of Important Officials Guiding Destiny and Revealing Their Philosophy. The heroes and their peers seem just a bit larger than life-sized as a result.

"And that's the point. The authors do, by every conceivable inference, and by their choice of subject-matter and vehicle, pretend or presume to be presenting and objective, overall picture of a possible future. The jacket blurbs of all three



of the books, and of many more, state as much. The books themselves are supposedly "social satire". And yet none of these writers seem able to project the actual feel of life in such a future; instead they rely upon the old gimmick of a Hero attempting Revolt while at the same time hobnobbing with the Wicked Rulers."

Your byliner submits that this is not always necessary or desirable...that it is the easy way out. Your bylinersubmits that a novel such as "The Long Loud Silence" artistically conveys the reality of what life might be like in an imaginary future without a single standard plot-gimmick or a formula whereby a Hero Sees The Light and Determines to Overthrow Tyranny.

Of course, if the average reader of science fiction is just an escapist (a statement the average reader of science fiction is apt to vociferously deny) then he will be completely satisfied with the usual run-of-the-mill "future civilization" novel in which the Hero Meets (or is) the Ruling Class.

In much the same way, the average movie-goer is satisfied when Jeff Chandler, as an obscure Roman officer in an outpost, suddenly becomes Captain of the Guards for the Emperor's sister and -- for no legitimate reason -- is the indirect cause of the downfall of Attila the Hun.

Such movie-goers can perhaps attend "Sign of the Pagan" and come away with the comforting notion that they now understand what life was like in the last days of the Roman Empire, and that they now know something about life in the ranks of the Barbarian Hordes.

Readers of this ilk can derive the same satisfaction from the average science fiction novel, too.

But "Sign of the Pagan" is not history, and the Big Name Plot is not honest satire or honest prophecy. Hollywood makes only the most perfunctory pretense that it is being "historical", and hence deserves less criticism. It is this byliner's opinion that most science fiction writers do make a good deal of noise concerning the "objective significance" of their satirical concepts. It is for this reason that they can be taken to task.

Again, it must be reiterated that in the case of "Player Piano", "Limbo", and "The Space Merchants", an entertaining and mature job was done...but it remains to be seen whether or not a much more convincing and valuable piece of work might have been created by utilizing a different plot-framework for the concepts.

Again, as the article stated, "I believe this to be the reason that the books failed to grip the imagination of the general public."

And that is the sole reason for criticism. When science fiction can boast of such able representatives as Pohl, Kornbluth, Wolfe, and Vonnegut, it seems a shame that they -- and consequently, the genre -- do not receive deserved acclaim. But somehow, the encounters of the Hero with Top-Level Names just isn't convincing.



Particularly when the Top-Level Names are, of necessity, fictional creations.

Here is where Thyllis, save the mark, goes Philistine. She wants to "catch fire from Columbus, Magellan, Henry Ford, and the Man who Sold the Moon."

A writer who deals with a known historical figure always starts with an initial advantage. It is always possible to invest such a figure with the usual appurtenances of glamor and legend and "accept" him as a symbol. Even though that figure in actuality may be a rather shabby one, the reader is willing to indulge in Coleridge's "temporary suspension of disbelief" and take on a fictional portrait of a Great Man. He knows that, even if the guy has a beard, that won't interfere when the time comes for Tyrone Power to take over the role in the movie version.

A fictional portrait of Columbus can therefore be altogether different than that of the Columbus depicted in such a scholarly and objective biography as "Admiral of the Ocean Sea." But, I submit, the schoolbook Columbus striking a heroic pose to defy the mutineers is as much less convincing a picture than the real Columbus -- and if you truly want to know something about what life was like in 15th-century Spain or the early days of transatlantic explorers you have to consider a lot more than what went on in the minds of Isabella and Chris.

It is easy to be misled by the "simplified history" of the Parson Weems school and the "historical novels" derived from the same pattern of thought. But I assure you, you'll get a lot closer to the Civil War by reading a novel such as Evelyn Scott's "The Wave" than in any one of a hundred confections where the hero is rigged into a post as Abraham Lincoln's dashing young bodyguard and just misses foiling the assassination-plot. In the same way, you'll get a feeling from reading "Reveille in Washington" which you'll never obtain from a high-school text on The War Between the States.

It finally comes down to this: if the quality you seek in a novel is that it must serve as a sort of ready-to-wear daydream, with a protagonist whose eyes you slip behind to revel in exaggerated grandeur with him, then you are apt to prefer the sort of plot which may be roughly outlined as follows. This appears to be the basic prototype of the science fiction novel in the Year of Our Lord, 1955.

First of all, it must be remembered that the novel will be read mainly by middle-class Americans orientated to the status quo of middle-class America in 1955 and a few years to follow. Very rich and very poor Americans have other things to do besides the digesting of science fiction.

This means that the desired norm to which the hero must restore things will conform to the mores and customs of middle-class America in 1955. In order to have something to work with, you must postulate a culture which we--the byliner and the reader--would find utterly intolerable in the light of our personal tastes and experience, e.g., the robot-manned factories and vast throngs of displaced workers of "Player Piano" or the down-trodden consumer-class of "The Space Merchants" or Damon Knight's "Hell's Pavement".



Having arrived at a state of affairs that Must Be Altered, you must shape your protagonist in such a wise that his atavistic instincts (harking ever back to the benchmark of MCA in 1955, but no further -- you'll have no readers in middle-class America of 1906 or upper-crust Johannesburg of 1936) will make him pine for the status quo of the reader's viewpoint. It is unthinkable that the hero's eyes, which serve as a peephole to the future -- for the reader, might not see eye to eye with the eye of the reader.

Now that we've pin-pointed the necessary tastes of the hero, keeping clearly in mind that if he were satisfied with the status quo we couldn't consider him as a hero but would have to select another in his stead, let us consider a few other necessary qualifications he must have. Age must be between, say, about 20 and 35 because most of your readers fall in that bracket and we must, above all things, maintain that ease of identification. Sex must be male because, although many contemporary novelists have had success with female protagonists, it is simply not de rigueur to build science fiction novels around a heroine...the majority of science fiction readers continue to be males, ergo: the feminine aficionados must perforce accept a temporary conversion for the tale's duration.

Summing up to this point, we have (1.) a milieu intolerable to our hypothetical reader and (2.) a youthful hero, clear-eyed and personable whose inclinations, either natural or latent, will be to change that milieu to one more to the h.r.'s liking.

For credibility's sake, we'll start him off tacitly approving the intolerable state of affairs. What incentive can we dream up to set his feet on the proper path...money? Mercy no -- how crass! Eureka! -- we'll have him do it for Love of the Girl of His Dreams. She will be in some sort of impossible position and, if things were under the MCA/1955 setup, she'd be all right.

So -- moving quickly now, for it's best if we can keep it down to 25% or not over 35% a copy -- the Clean-cut Hero and Clear-eyed Lass pace through the process of Overthrowing Tyranny...a process which has grown almost as formalized as the steps of the minuet.

They fall in with The Underground -- usually supplied ready-cut to save pages -- and, once there, their manifest worth is immediately apparent...in fact, it appears that it was all the Undergrounders were waiting for...and they rapidly soar right on up there to posts second only to the Leaders Themselves. Usually they don't become the leaders but they are right there watching when all the tense action takes place.

So there's your plot. Fill it in and you, too, can appear in paperback editions. Dozens of authors have and dozens more will in the future. It matters not that millions of people comprising the population-at-large may be reasonably contented with their lot. After the revolution-routine, they will all give a sigh of relief and revert back to good old middle-class America, year of 1955.

Okay, summed up baldly like that, it sounds pretty damned silly, doesn't it? Would you find anything credible in a story written about 1770 which dealt with an accurate civilization of 1955 wherein a Hero Who Sees the Light, by adroit action, whips everything back to status quo of middle-class Boston, circa 1770? Doggone right you wouldn't. ((Maybe it might not be credible, but it sounds like it would make one helluvan amusing science-fiction story. -- v.l.m.))



That appears to be one of the main differences between contemporary science fiction and contemporary mainstream novels. The mundane novel, usually at least depicts a protagonist at the mercy of his environment...being shaped by it, resisting it, being crushed by it, adapting to it but almost never significantly changing the overall form of it.

Science fiction, in the majority of cases -- or so it seems to the byliner -- dwells on the protagonist who, by means more impressive than credible, shapes his environment to suit his (and his reader's) tastes with cold disregard for the desires of his millions of fellow-humans. It matters not that they are happy with things as they are. No, they must hurl the dictator from his cruel throne and uproot the lives of millions to keep humanity for all time to come at precisely the same point it has reached at the date of writing. One gets the impression that a hero who doesn't violently re-arrange his world isn't really worth doing more than a 3000-word story about.

It's all very well to pine for science fiction about the Columbus's, Magellans, Henry Fords and D. D. Harrimans, Phyllis. But -- and here is the very crux of the byliner's contention -- how many contemporary science fiction writers can turn out a convincing Key Figure? For every D. D. Harriman, convincingly portrayed, we are confronted with a battalion of Key Figures who could scarcely convince a thoughtful 12-year old.

It is this easy ascension to power that sticks in the throat of your byliner. The road to the top is a gantlet, to be run between two ranks of others with the same objective in mind. Your average of hero is so steeped in and preoccupied with the basic precepts of fair play and clean living that, in real life, he'd have trouble getting and keeping a post as office boy.

It is fatally easy for the writer of science fiction, at a loss as to how to command the attention of his readers, to say in effect, "You'll be enthralled by this hero for he is the most important man in his world." Better a sketch of the king, they feel, than a Karsh portrait of the court jester. By giving the hero enough importance, they are relieved of the necessity of doing anything else to make him interesting.

You may well argue that it is not germane to the issue at hand to equate science fiction in terms of mundane literature of the past and present. However, in case you have forgotten, this discussion started out to explore the question of why the best of our contemporary science fiction doesn't sell better than it does.

Let us consider briefly the mundane works which have and still do sell well. The predominant majority of them, it seems to the byliner, are not built around significant people. Interesting people, certainly, but shapers of the world's destiny they are not, for the most part.

Scarlett O'Hara, in a science fiction novel, would have invented a disintegrator and won the war -- single-handed, if necessary. Oliver Twist would have organized a conspiracy to take over the orphanage...and if he'd been in a space-opera, he'd have made it, too.



Tom Sawyer would have been the president's son, or at least the son of Missouri's governor, and he would have discovered uranium in that cave instead of mere gold and would have introduced atomic power and woman's suffrage years ahead of his time. He would have accomplished all this just in the nick of time so as to save Becky Thatcher from a fate worse than death at the hands of Injun Joe who would have been the country's foremost manufacturer of steam-engines, prepared to go to any length to keep Tom from ruining him with cheap atomic power. Tom and Becky would, of course, be around 20 to 25 years old in any right-thinking sf novel.

Huck Finn, on the other hand, wouldn't have been content to tag along with a pair of mountebank actors. He'd have invented the motion-picture camera years ahead of Eadward Muybridge and, rather than just trying to help Jim, he would have miraculously become John Brown's lieutenant and right-hand man, abolishing slavery altogether. The list could go on forever.

But Mark Twain did write one book dealing with a man of stature who quickly got in with the Top Brass, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court". Ironically enough, this is about the only one of Twain's works usually classed as science fiction. You just can't buck the system. It seems probable that The Boss, while a literary figure of undoubted stature, is nevertheless overshadowed by Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, neither of whom ever got to be on terms of first-name intimacy with kings and presidents.

Phyllis asks, "where is the old fire, the challenge, the suffering and the living? Where is the glory?" And she partially answers her own question before asking it by saying that the life of the "average man" contains little to excite, inspire or even abhor.

Now comparing Big Name historical novels of the remote past with Big Name science fiction novels of the far future is perhaps a rather arbitrary matter at best; none of us know the future and Phyllis, to give her every benefit of possible doubt, was probably not alive at the time of the Civil War.

A much easier way of testing the thesis that really worthwhile works deal with the most important people would be to examine the works dealing with our own times -- the days of the Depression and of World War II.

Who has written a convincing novel about the Depression which centred around big names?

Who has done the same job for World War II, an era in which propaganda was scattering Big Names around with the same easy facility as its instigators scattered money and human lives?

Does the life of the "average man" really contain so little to excite, inspire, or even abhor? Read "The Grapes of Wrath" and then determine whether or not this picture of the Dust Bowl Tragedy would have been improved if it had been written about the efforts of the Secretary of Agriculture to relocate Okies, aided by ~~the~~ a dashing young hero who discusses National Economics with him and is then kidnapped by the villainous fruit-ranchers, dis-



guises himself as an Okie, and confronts the wicked overseers; ending up by winning the girl and building government camps with clean toilets.

Which gives you a better picture of World War II -- "The Naked and the Dead" or Upton Sinclair's "Lanny Budd" series? We get a General in "The Naked and the Dead", but we also get a lot of dog-faces; good, bad and indifferent. I believe that "The Naked and the Dead" contains plenty of "fire" and "challenge" and "suffering" and "living".

On the other hand we have Lanny Budd, interpreting the late thirties and early forties in typical science fiction novel fashion. Budd is the intimate confidante of Roosevelt; he is constantly playing footsie with Hitler, Churchill, Stalin and a variety of fascinating femmes. And anyone reading his "series" of "adventures" will come away with about as much of a feeling of reality or understanding of the times as the science fiction reader gets from similar material projected in terms of future-civilization novels.

It is not a case of "glossifying" the common man. But neither is it a case of putting some fancy underwear on Clark Kent and watching him leap tall buildings at a single bound...pretending all the while that Clark Kent-alias-Superman is either a "typical young newspaperman" or the only kind of newspaperman worth writing about. An account of Superman's adventures and his noble motives is not going to afford a valid and realistic picture of the culture against which he moves.

It's a moot point whether anyone's opinions will have been altered by the reading of this article. Perhaps the byliner has laid undue stress upon the point that science fiction should leave the reader with some impression, however vague, of what it would be like if he (the reader) were living in the time of the story. A beautiful opening is left for the opposition to snort that they like stories about people, not things or ideas. It well may be that the byliner is unduly sensitive to tales written by college sophomores about Galactic Co-ordinators who are pathetically and unmistakably Galactic Co-ordinators out of a college play as played by college sophomores.

A Galactic Co-ordinator, portrayed with fair credibility, makes a fascinating and memorable character -- that much is freely granted. But a steady diet of GC's and personable young revolutionists can be damnably dull...particularly when their creators (as Kimball Kinnison might say) haven't the jets to swing it.

Credibility -- in the final analysis, that's the keynote. Give us stories we can believe in and we will enjoy them. The American book-buying public will believe and back their faith with bright green dollars, boosting science fiction to the position of respectability for which so many voices have cried. And, if it carries sufficient power and conviction, even though it concerns a Blind Singer of the Spaceways instead of a man who saves the Universe, it will sell. Even Phyllis Economou may enjoy it.

As for the observation by one Redd Boggs that he is "so sick of reading of the trivial incidents in the lives of insignificant people,"



how does he reconcile this complaint with his passion for Thoreau's "Walden", an account of the less-than-world-shaking doings of a man whose name would be lost to history had he not written the book which Boggs professes to enjoy?

Given the choice of two sea-captains, which would Boggs prefer: Captain Ahab or Horatio Hornblower? The latter dominates his entire weary saga. The cursory reader (and most Hornblower readers are cursory readers) is hard-put to name a single other member of the supporting cast.

But "Moby Dick" is as much Ishmael's book as it is Captain Ahab's. Ishmael is not all chummy-buddy with Ahab yet his Captain emerges with vastly greater stature from the outside view. Is the pedagogue-gone-to-sea, Ishmael, one of the "insignificant people" who "trivial incidents" bedeck the Boggsian features with boredom? Doubtful.

Does Boggs feel that "Ulysses" would take on greater stature if it had concerned 24 hours in the life of, say, Eamon de Valera instead of Poldy Bloom?

Or will he concede that there is room beside Hamlet for Sir John Falstaff; that science fiction can now and then concern itself with the Tom Sawyers as well as the Hank Morgans? In the hands of a really skilled writer, even the Queequegs can be interesting.

-- Richard K. Verdan

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I can remember when 'Monroe' meant Vaughn.

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#### READER'S INDIGESTION

WRAI BALLARD--Blanchard, N.D.

Agree with you on the use of fannish names in the Tucker novels. If he stops the practice, it will remove some of the enjoyment received when hitting them. They never bothered me when I was reading the story for I never have to hold onto a story with such grim determination, that I'm easily distracted, or bothered by any distractions. Life may be earnest and real, but those books are for entertainment and not any test of one sided one track thinking.

ROBERT BLOCH--Weyauwega, Wis.

So I walked into the front room with my copy of REVIEW #12 and slapped it down in front of my wife and daughter.

"Read what McCain says here," I commanded. "Bloch is the only true Ghod."

Instantly both of them were down on their knees. I started to smile with gratification until I realized they were kicking me in the shins. The dog, sensing its opportunity, ran up and bit me in the ankle.

You and your religious fervor!



The truth of the matter is, Vernon, that the only Ghods who endure are bachelors. Cf. Jehova, Buddha, and Allah. Married Ghods, like Zeus, soon topple from their thrones.

However, while I was taping up my ankles, I did read the rest of the issue and liked what I saw...although I winced when you referred to my fanzine efforts. Not because of false modesty, but just out of apprehension, to say nothing of sore ankles. It's always bad to be pegged that way: very few people can maintain a consistent standard of output and I'm certainly not one of them. And the next time somebody reads a particularly cruddy offering of mine in a fanzine they are going to be mad. Not at you, but at me. Either that, or they'll claim it was written by Francis Bacon. I've had that trouble before.

REDD BOGGS--Minneapolis, Minn.

I particularly disagree with the estimate of Terry Carr's Face Critturs. I agree ~~mf~~ that 9 pages of them was 8 pages too many, but I think the Critturs themselves are pretty clever and often show an incisive insight into human nature. Artistically they aren't too much, but certainly equal Shelvy's puffins ((disagree!!! v.l.m.)) and Wells' whateverhecallsthem.

Yours and Morse's enthusiasm for "The Cold Equations" amazes me. Agreed, it was a good story, and I liked it too. But I can't understand voting it one of the best stories of the year or comparing it with Sturgeon. It was probably the best story of that particular issue, and the human interest was a great contrast to the technological interest to the average ASF story, but beyond that I cannot go.

Morse's comments on Pogo were interesting, though it must be three years since I saw an episode of the comic strip. The Sunday paper carried Pogo for a while but dropped it when one of those public opinion surveys I mentioned "proved" that few people read it. I haven't seen Pogo since. I really don't miss it too much..... I trust that if Review is folding, you retain Morse as columnist for your fapazine. He's good enough to write Letter from London for The New Yorker. ((That's the present plan. This letter column may be partially transferred, too. v.l.m.))

SGT J.W. CARR--c/o RAIS Sgt's Mess - Maida Camp - MELF 17 - c/o GPO, England.

I was surprised to see you had printed Bentcliffe's account of his actions at the Con. I wasn't there myself, but I have seen this same thing mentioned time after time both in letters and fanzines. It almost looks as though the boy has a one track mind - but very. Or maybe turning the taps on in a hotel is a tremendously funny trufannish ploy such that I - in my ignorance - cannot see?

((Sorry, Joan, but I have yet to see that particular incident recounted anywhere outside REVIEW. Wasn't aware I was printing any umpteenth rehash. However, its inclusion was on a repertorial basis only, not necessarily an endorsement. For Bloch's sake, girl, can you picture the results if I had to supply moral support for every view expressed in this letter column?))v.l.m.



RON ELLIK--Long Beach, Calif.

As you must have expected, here is the official reply from the staff of FALtastic Story Mag concerning the reprinting of QUANDRY. We hope it satisfied Mr. Harris.

No, I'm not trying to be sarcastic or sercon. It's just that an official report is the best thing I could think of to answer Chuck.

You see, it all started this-a-way.... April 12th, when I returned home from a NAPA meeting, I found the day's mail waiting for me. While shoveling a belated dinner down my throat, I perused one of Shelby Vick's "lazy letters".

Sez Shelby, "I would like to become your ass't editor". Further, "I've got a new policy to suggest". Further yet "Why don't we reprint QUANDRY first of all?"

Now, regardless of what some fen will say, I very seldom have ever reprinted anything without permission, if such permission was available. Obviously, since Lee was still in FAPA, she was still in fandom to some extent; so without any hesitation I sat down and wrote her a letter.

In this letter I explained that Shelby and I wanted to reprint from QUANDRY. I explained that while Shelby knew quite a bit about it, I was totally in the dark--I came into actifandom just as QUANDRY went out. I have seen a few issues at Balint's, hot out of the mailbox, but have never read any.

I expected, of course, the legendary Hoffman good humor and condescending aid to the neo-fen. Well, I got the good humor, all right. Aid their were none. It seems that Leeh's collection of QUANDRY, of all things, was not available. From what I have gathered, Chuck Wells has it. Leeh obviously did not see her way clear to scratch back into her memory for information which I might have used to make a really good ish out of that one.

Then, all of a sudden, I couldn't get a damned word out of Vick. He was as incommun as any oado that's ever lived. All summer, from March till late July, I didn't hear a thing from him. The issue came out in July. The middle of July. That issue was put out completely by the author of this letter, not by the assistant editor whose name appeared on the contents page.

This might appear to be a "blast" at Leeh and ShelVy. It isn't... Stating the facts, I have wound myself completely around coincidence--that's things how they happened, not how I twisted them.

ShelVy is still my ass't ed. As far as I know, he's helping to put out my Annish (even though, due to me this time, it's six months late). He's already sent me a four-colored mimeod cover. Terrific.

Leeh and I have traded no more letters. That doesn't bother me--she's far too far about me for it too bother me. ((Huh?! v.l.m.)) BNF's and I don't mix; never have.



Relations between neos and BNFs are constantly strained, as you can see by the preceeding. We don't understand BNFs motives, and they laugh at ours. That is to say...to us: they seem to be laughing at us. I'm morally certain that the average BNF doesn't get to where he is by laughing at people.

Sure, he gets there by being considerate. . .

Somebody should write a book explaining BNFs to neos. Then I shall write a book explaining neos to BNFs. Once this is done, fandom will be twice as much fun as before--the confusion will be even greater.

"What every young neo should know."

"Neofandom Confidential."

"Can't you just see courses in inter-fandomnial relationships being taught at all high-schools throughout the nation? Ghaaa.

((And now, as a special bonus for all those fans who've yelled about REVI W's covers.))

FRED MALZEL--41 21 Monticello Road, Napa County, Calif.

I like, very much, the way REVIEW is handled. It gives the impression of a highly literate magazine, especially with the cover which, I think, is stunning. Well, if not stunning, it has that engraved, expensive look. I think it would look even better if you left the inside front cover blank, and the outside back cover blank.

((Which winds up the shortest letter column this mag's had in quite a while. Plenty of comments but most of them were too personal, too confidential, or too mundane for reproduction.

In conclusion, may I say that the picture of Bloch's womenfolk down on bended knees and simultaneously kicking him in the shins is the most fascinating since the mad dogs kneed Ellison in the groin.))

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Gather ye rosebuds while it's May.

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final installment      FANZINES AT MIDNIGHT      final installment

ANDROIEDA--Pete Campbell, 60 Calgarth Rd, Windermere, England

A normal sized fanzine which somehow leaves the impression behind that it was terribly thin. Maybe because the current issue, which is fairly typical features a long article "Course Computers for Spaceships" which appears to be one of those detailed technical articles. It might be a humorous takeoff. I wouldn't know. I didn't get beyond the second paragraph. Then there's some fan-fiction which leaves the letter column as the sole readable portion of the magazine.

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All right, Boyd, I'm sorry.  
I can't help it if I mislaid A BAS before I got around to typing the review section, can I?

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Anyway, it's one of the top half-dozen current magazines in case anyone besides Boggs and Carr were unaware of the fact.



I just found it!

A BAS--#6, 25¢, Boyd Raeburn, 9 Glenvalley Drive, Toronto 9, Canada.

A scrumptious cover, lip-smacking "Derelicti Derogation" (#4), a reprint of the most controversial record album notes in history, which do not merit all the fuss, even if their highly-overrated author did put several things in print that most people don't ordinarily say in public while sober, reprint of a souped-up fairy tale from some hot rodders bible, a G. Steward column, a very poor satire on con reports (far inferior to the rest of the contents of this mag), incredible (and slightly fishy sounding) memoirs by Richalex Kirs (the best thing in the issue) and record reviews of modern sounds. Topped off with a pretty maraschino letter column. You don't get it? Run, do not walk, to your nearest mailbox.

CANFAN--March, William D. Grant, 11 Burton Road, Toronto 10, Ont.

This mag has been laboring under the disadvantage of dual editorship for some time and usually was as dull as its (more or less) sister mag, A BAS, was fascinating. But Steward has struck out on his own and with only one editor CANFAN is highly improved and shows signs of a real editorial policy for the first time since Beak Taylor. Best item is a Dean Grennell puncturing of the UNKNOWN myth. 'Twon't work, Dean. With the exception of two issues I did all my UNKNOWN reading just four years ago and while there were a few bum tales in the early issues it still made all the current competition look pretty lacklustre.

ECLIPSE--Ray Thompson, 410 South 4th St. Norfolk, Nebr.

Little relation to the old mag of that name. Really a retitled BIBBILTY. Informal and should be worth while once Thompson's improving mimeography becomes readily readable.

EPITOME--#5, Mike May, 9428 Hobart St. Dallas 18, Tex. 5¢

Neat, unpretentious, attractive. Book reviews by Noah McLeod, letters by everybody, and fanzine reviews. Not apt to ~~be~~ ever be #1 mag, but a very nice magazine to find in your mailbox. It's making real strides.

FAN FICTION--Ronald Voight, no address or price to be found.

The first issue was a monstrosity, illegible and unreadable. #2 is legible. With that editorial policy, what more can you expect?

FEMIZINE--Feb. '55, Sgt. J.W. Carr - c/o RAPC Sgt's Mess - Maida Camp IELF 17 (c/o GPO, England)

A fat and sassy zine from Britain's femme fans. Chief drawback to these American eyes is a failing I find in many British fanzines, which operate on the personal intimate level. 90% of the time I have no idea who or what they're talking about. I no sooner get one British fan firmly ensconced on a mental peg than five more pop up whose names leave me completely blank but who are apparently intimately known to everyone in British fandom. Yes, I know it doubtless works the other way round.///This issue has undoubtedly the most repulsive nude ever to grace any fanzine cover and that is going some since if there is one thing fans know how to draw it is



unattractive nudes. (I understand they're subsidized by the anti-nudist lobby.) A little poem below informs us that this is the Space Mother....an unlikely story if I ever heard one. If this female ever had any offspring I'm afraid their genetic makeup would be fault, with possibilities of mental instability. Obviously no man in his right mind would ever get anyplace near close enough to this beast to serve the function necessary to making her a mother... space or any other kind. However, with long experiences on the pros you can tear off the cover and enjoy the rest of the mag. Has some very amusing interlineations, one of which you'll find filched, elsewhere in this magazine. Recommended.

GASP--166 McRoberts Ave. Toronto 10, Ontario

A SAPSazine. May be available for trade. Just as CAN FAN is much better without Steward, so is Steward far better away from CAN FAN. Amusing throughout, highspot being a hoax article which I suspect has somewhat dampened the Raeburn-Steward friendship. At least if I were Raeburn and the difficulties I envision as probably result, it certainly would have.

GRUE--#23, Dean A. Grennell, 402 Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, Wis. 25¢

This mag is too big to be described with one word, so we'll use two. Stup-endous. Leads off with a brief but classic article by James Blish on amateur writers. So now you know how it looks from the other end of the telescope. Anyone else wriggle uncomfortably while reading this? Ahhandsome reprint of one of the classic Speer pieces....his white paper on Degler.. These are only the high spots. As a matter of fact there's a little of everything in this 53 page mag which is probably the most fannish of all fanzines.

GEMZINE--G.M. Carr 5319 Ballard Ave. Seattle 7, Wash.

An exceedingly mundane issue sounds the death knell for GMC's non-FAPA activity. As it must to all of us, gafia has come to 5319 Ballard Ave. And that's not the only place the little bundle from heaven alighted at, as you've probably discovered from the editorial.

GHUEG HO--#3 Larry Anderson, 2716 Smoky Lane, Billings, Mont.

And still another format for Anderson. He seems still groping for a format (ironically he had a good mimeod format for a couple of issues early in SCINTILLA's life). This is the best in quite some time and could stand expansion. However undoubtedly this is the last time we'll see it. Mostly letters....not very bad, but not very good. Quite legible, though.

HYPHEN--#13, March 1955. Walt Willis 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, N.Ireland. One issue of HYPHEN mailed to Rog Phillips will bring you two copies of OTHER WORLDS.

I see HYPHEN and REVIEW have been pacing each other. Both had their initial issues simultaneously and the thirteenth REVIEW is appearing shortly after the thirteenth HYPHEN. Of course, HYPHEN has always been quite a bit fatter, and modesty (Willis's, that is) forbids comparing the quality. George Charters pulls a James White on us and after years of basking in Willis' reflected glory suddenly



emerges as a humorous writer of a quality to rival Willis himself. And, besides that, he's had his name in hard covers! Madelaine Willis (oddly familiar surname, that) does what she insists is her maiden piece for a fanzine though I still remember with ecstasy the item she did for SFD in which she labelled herself the world's laziest fan. By the way, Madelaine, whatever happened to Max Keasler? There's a Terry Carr piece which is not of HYPHEN calibre (incidentally, since I've criticized Carr before, I should mention he did one really fine article for FOG a few months back which I never happened to review, and I wish he'd do more of the same, despite the fact only lack of time prevented me from writing a five page rebuttal disputing every single thing he said). But I got the most enjoyment, this issue, from "Rust in Peace". The NEW YORKER (or PUNCH, if you prefer....I prefer brandy, myself) of fanzines.

OBLIQUE --April '55, Clifford I. Gould, 1559 Cable St. San Diego 7, Calif.

A highly promising zine, and no patronization intended. This probably won't be PSYCHOTIC's successor but it is the only new zine yet in appearance which could even possibly assume the mantle handed down in direct succession from VAMPIRE, and possibly even further back....that of fandom's (shhh, dirty word) focal point. "More than you, Man" a tremendously funny piece, best of the many recent takeoffs on Sturgeon, which was written as a sequel to the first issues "Born Into Fandom" which drew tremendous praise. Oddly I thought the first article pretty pitiful but its sequel is delightful. The rest of the magazine's material is of a far lower calibre. There is a putrid column by Larry Walker, a putrid one by Larry Bourne (and here I'd mentally framed the comment that evidently no one named Larry can write a decent column, when I turned the page and discovered a third column by Larry Anderson which prevented the comment. It isn't putrid. Just undistinguished.) This fanzine has that magic 'feel' to it though which, in the early issues, can surpass any amount of cruddy material. Super-neat mimeography. A magazine to watch.

ONOMONATA--Spring 1955 #1, L.J. Touzinsky 25¢, 2911 Minnesota Ave. St Louis 18, Mo.

A crowded unattractive fanzine with little of interest. It's a clubzine with an impressive staff which may explain its lack of quality. Touzinsky can certainly do better than this on his own. Odds are it never gets by the second issue.

OOPSLA--#162817 Eleventh St., Santa Monica, Calif. 15¢

This mag rivals FAPA as the place where old fans go to die. Maybe the reason Calkins has never acclimated himself to FAPA is jealousy. FAPA has more contributors (altho no bigger names) than OOPSLA. Willis and Grennell are the high spots this issue. Worth at least twice the asking price.

ORION--April 1955, Paul Enever, 9 Churchill Ave., Hillingdon, Middx. ENGLAND.

Sober, steady, upright, and true. Well that's a fairly good description. It'll never rival HYPHEN for the HYPHEN reader's enthusiasm



but it typifies what we in the U.S. like to regard (probably quite erroneously) as all the universal British virtues. England's most reliable zine (HYPHEN's from Ireland, remember?) and one of its best, if not most brilliant.

OUTSIDERS--#19, Wrai Ballard, Blanchard, N.D.

This is the SKYHOOK, HORIZONS, and LIGHT of SAPS all rolled into one. This hardy perennial goes on and on. Always fascinating. The only SAPS zine to be listed in my votes for fandom's top ten zines, last year (two or three FARAZINES got my vote, tho.) Available for limited trade.)

PSYCHOTIC--#19 Richard Geis, 2631 N. Mississippi, Portland 12, Oregon.  
20¢ a copy.

It seems kind of pointless to review this next to the last issue of the king. It's too late to sub now and chances are you already get it, anyway, and are as sad as I about its impending demise. Best item this issue is a marvelous Bloch piece of doggerel "A Non-Lewis Carol" with equally marvelous Kellogg illustrations. Kellogg grows on you, like Partch or Addams. Too bad PSY is folding just as it finally has broken in an artist whose style matches it. Vive le Kellogg...and weep for PSY.

SATELLITE--Don Allen, 3, Arkle St, Gateshead 8, Co. Durham, England one prozine (why not pick something besides OTHER WORLDS or AMAZING, huh?) brings you two issues.

A most un-British British fanzine. My goodness, margins, and spaces between paragraphs, and layout and even chunks of white space not being used for anything. NIRVANA will turn over in its grave. What is British fandom coming to. Surely not a desire to put out attractive looking fanzines as well as hilariously reading ones! Good material, throughout, although Warren F. Link hardly seems a representative (or at least the right type of representative) American fan.

SCHNERDLITES--Nigel Lindsay, 311 Babbacombe Rd. Torquay, Devon, England.

An unpretentious, relaxed little OMPazine. Limited trades only.

TYPEO (and that is....it should be TYPO)--306 E. Hickory, Enid, Okla. editors name elusive.

An offset zine which seems unsure of its goals as yet. Good fanzine reviews.

TRIODE--Eric Bentcliffe, 47 Alldis St., Greatmoor, Stockport, Chesh. England

The product of several well-known and experienced fans this zine suffers the usual curse of multiple editorship, lack of editorial personality. With their background naturally they've raked in an unusually outstanding assortment of material but it seems assembled not edited. There's a good serial story about future fan history, told each issue by a different fan.



UMBRA--March John Hitchcock, 15 Arbutus Avenue, Baltimore 28, Maryland.

The one-time bad boy of fanzines, UMBRA, now on its good behavior for some six months has achieved legibility almost throughout in this issue. There are one or two bad spots but it practically glistens elsewhere. It's the mixture as before. Good McLeod reviews, fair letters and fanzine reviews and the rest strictly unspeakable.

VAGABOND--#1 Spring 1955, John W. Murdock, c/o Henry Moore Studio 214 East 11th St., Kansas city 6, Missouri.

Like most first issues this large well-mineed 47 pager hasn't yet discovered the distinction between that which is worth printing and that which isn't. The former is chiefly represented here by a round robin story "Martha and the Genii" which is the product of five femme-fans. It starts out like a typical G.M. Carr story, not surprisingly since she writes the first chapter...and then Olive Morgan builds well upon that foundation. Then two regrettable interludes by Emily Thompson and Isabelle Dinwiddie follow, which ruin the unity of the story. Orma McCormick manages to salvage part of the debris and G.M. Carr's firm hand returns in the sixth chapter to tidy the story up as best she can (which is pretty damn good considering what Thompson and Dinwiddie did to it.) I'd like to see more round-robin stories. These are fascinating.

VARIOSO--#13, John Magnus, 203 Noah, Oberling Ohio. 10¢

A typical Magnus zine, containing an interesting editorial, good article by Robert Madle and a silly Jim Harmon story.

WENDIGO--#2, Georgina Ellis, 1423-15th Street East, Calgary, Alta.

Almost entirely letters this time and therefore partaking of the very considerable virtues of the letterzine.

YOBBER--#2, 229 W. College St., Oberlin, Ohio, Andy & Jean Young.

A very pretty fanzine with practically no contents. It's a little hard to see why the editors bothered although what little there was was welcome. There's a two page documented attack on Harlan Ellison (and it couldn't happen to a more deserving person) and the rest of the magazine is devoted to a detailed set of instructions on how to live a life of crime and get away with it. Sounds like work to me.

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And very happy am I to finish my last fanzine review, too!!!!!!  
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I got tired of writing this column about a year and a half ago but continued as it was consistently about twice as popular as anything else in the magazine.

And now I'm (sigh...gurgles) free.

Thus endeth REVIEW #13 and this stencil is typed on Friday the 13th. Your opinions of REVIEW will govern whether you consider the date lucky or unlucky.

Ad revoir, you all.