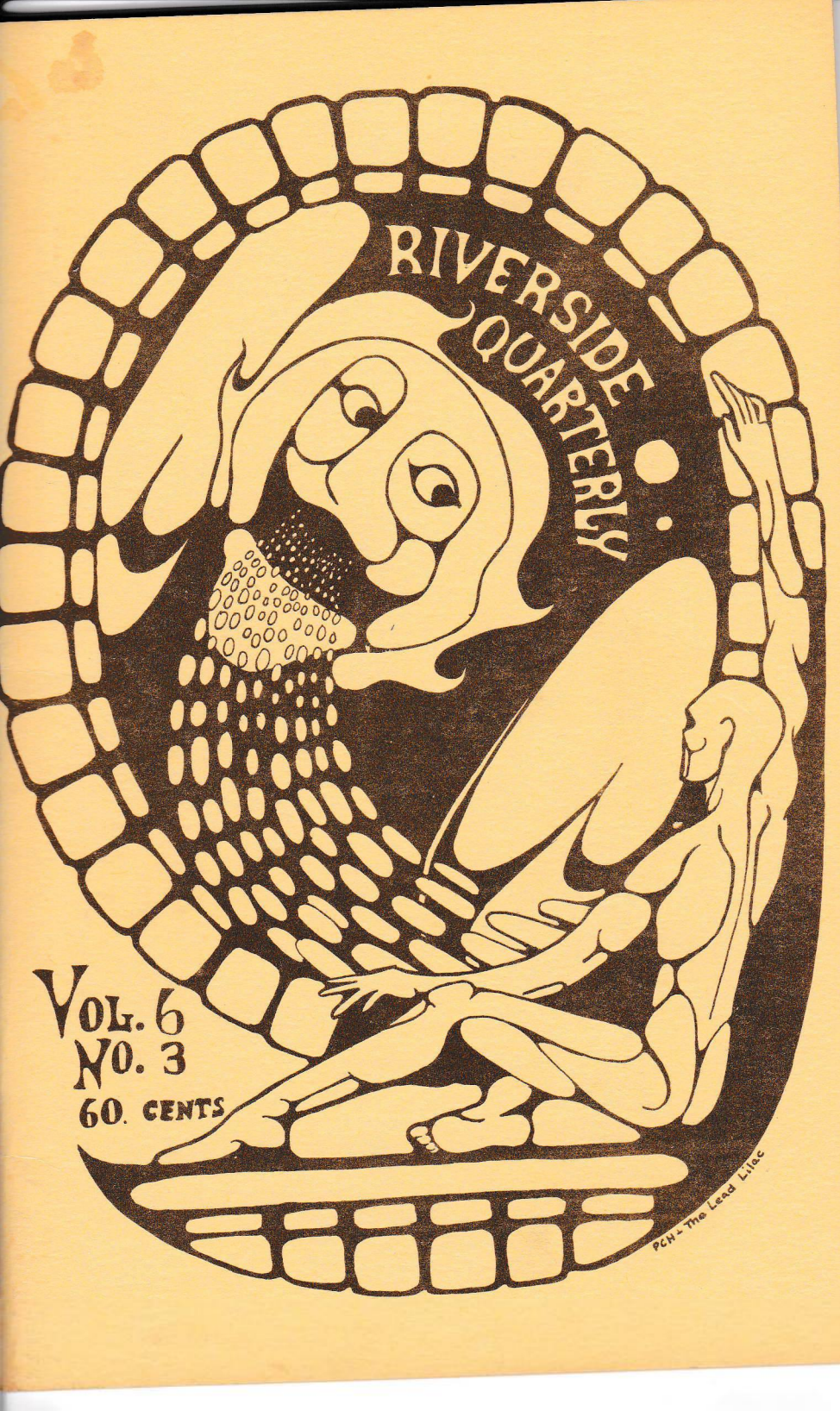
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Editor: Leland Sapiro

Associate Editor: Jim Harmon
Poetry Editor: Sheryl Smith
Art Editor: Jan Jonsson

Fiction Editor: Redd Boggs
Assistant Editors:
Bill Blackbeard, Jon White

Send poetry to Sheryl Smith, 1346 W. Howard St, Chicago, IL 60626; fiction to Redd Boggs, Box 1111, Berkeley, CA 94701; and send all other correspondence to Box 14451 Univ. Sta., Gainesville, FL 32604.

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RQ Miscellany

Copyright Slugfest: Round One

The trouble started last summer in the UCLA bookstore. Browsing through The Many Worlds of Poul Anderson, edited by Roger Elwood, and, in particular, an article,"Challenge and Response," I felt that old sensation of having done this some time before. The reason soon became clear: Challenge was a reprint (slightly expanded) from the 14th issue of my own magazine. That evening I complained to my brother Stanley (a lawyer), who sent to the publishers, Chilton Books, a letter pointing out that RQ was a copyrighted magazine from which something had been reprinted without permission.

It should be noted here that previous RQ reprints caused no trouble, since each author or publisher (with one exception) had asked permission, and everybody that asked, received--e.g., Alexei Panshin, Heinlein in Dimension (Advent), Jack Williamson, H.G. Wells: Critic of Progress (Mirage), and Kris Neville, "The Outcasts" (New Worlds).

After spending the rest of the summer in semi-tranquility, I returned to Florida. Here I was jolted by a friend, Mike Everling, who showed me a letter, from a Rhode Island fan (Don D'Ammassa), inquiring about a widespread rumour that I was suing the article's author, Sandra Miesel. Because Sandra had been a personal friend, my shock was that of somebody who learns that a scandal sheet had credited him with a plot to murder his sister. I wrote Sandra to ask if she had heard this story, and got from her lawyer, Larry Propp, a direct answer plus an open letter (saying essentially the same things), presumably to be sent to various fan editors:

> It has come to my attention that the rumor is circulating throughout fandom that Leland Sapiro has sued Sandra Miesel. As of/this/date...the rumor is false...Although Leland has never directly threatened suit against Sandra, the net effect...would be to force Sandra to defend. When Sandra sold the revised article to Elwood, a part of her contract was an indemnity agreement. Elwood signed a similar clause...in his contract with Chilton. If Leland sues Chilton, Chilton will file a third-party action against Roger Elwood...Elwood would quite properly third-party Sandra...To squelch all rumor, let me repeat that Leland has never directly threatened to sue Sandra...

My answer to Larry Propp was this:

> Roger Elwood did wrong in reprinting a copyrighted article without asking permission. You know this, I know it--and Roger Elwood knows it. Sandra Miesel's being forced to sign an indemnity clause--so she could be sued in case Elwood was sued--strikes me as just a cover-up...If copyright laws had been followed, no such indemnity clause would have been necessary...Before, I'd have settled out of court for a relatively modest sum: now I have to ask the maximum in order to be able to compensate Mrs. Miesel in case she actually is sued.

At that time I was unaware that an indemnity clause is standard in all such publishing contracts--and I also was unprepared for the bogus self-righteousness of the amateur press. Thus Linda Bushyager's Karass ran a headline, "Leland Sapiro Sues Sandra Miesel" and pontificated, "Fans may wish to cancel RQ subs or otherwise show disapproval," while Dick Geis (The Alien Critic) stated, "Until further information surfaces I will have no further comment"--and then proceeded to comment: "I do not at this time think very much of Leland Sapiro. But, then, I have never thought much of RQ." Of course, it was easy to guess the rumour's source. As I wrote Stanley, "This entire whispering campaign must have originated in Roger Elwood's office, since he and his Canadian publisher were the only ones to know of your original letter."

(continued on outside back cover)

The Atrocity Exhibition

by

Nick Perry and Roy Wilkie

(University of Strathclyde)

In 1970 Ballard published in the United Kingdom The Atrocity Exhibition (Jonathan Cape, London). We are informed that sections of the book had already appeared in such journals as Ambit, Encounter, ICA Eventsheet, International Times, and Transatlantic Review, which would at least indicate that Ballard was seeking a wider or different, audience for his short stories. Secondly, the idiosyncratic style Ballard was developing in The Terminal Beach and The Assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy Considered as a Downhill Motor Race is now confirmed into a format where paragraphs are titled, incidents described apparently at random, and characters behave in strange ways without being strongly located. And whereas The Wind from Nowhere, The Drowned World, and The Crystal World have a conventional layout, one can, with the advantage of hindsight, identify the beginnings of this formal innovation in The Drought (The Burning World, in the U.S. and Canada). Its 42 chapters provide a clear constrast to the other novels, which are of similar length but consist of 8, 15, and 14 chapters respectively. Ballard himself has asserted his dissatisfaction with "linear systems of narrative." In a Third Programme interview with George MacBeth, reprinted in The New S.F. (London: Hutchinson, 1969), he said:

> "I'd been using in my novels and in most of my short stories a conventional kind of linear narrative, but I found that the action and events of the novels in particular were breaking down as I wrote them, that the characterisation, the sequence of events, were beginning to crystallise out into a series of shorter and shorter images and situations...What I feel I've done in these pieces of mine is to rediscover the present for myself--I feel that one needs a non-linear technique, simply because our lives today are not conducted in linear terms. They are much more quantified, a whole stream of random events is taking place." (p. 46)

Thirdly, Ballard had by 1970 acquired enough of a literary reputation to be the subject of "one-off" reviews in the columns of the "heavy" British Sunday papers and the "quality" dailies. Hitherto, with the creditable exception of Kingsley Amis' appraisal of The Drowned World he had, like all other science-fiction authors, been reviewed along with a bundle of five or six other books. Science-fiction authors continue to be reviewed in batches but Ballard's publication by Encounter, Ambit, and Transatlantic Review appeared to be his rite de passage into the ranks of the literati.

The first nine "stories" in this collection convey a feeling of continuity--in fact, read like this and not as individual items in different magazines and journals, they almost suggest notes for a novel--by referring to characters, incidents, events, scenes, and images that appear and reappear. The central character is variously named Traven, Talbot, Tallis, Trabert, Travis, Talbert, Travers. (Some of these names had appeared in Ballard's previously published work.) At the interview quoted earlier, Ballard commented:

> "Yes, in effect they're the same character, but their role in the stories is not to be characters in the sense that Scobie, let's say, or any other character in the retrospective novel is a character, an identifiable human being rather like those we recognise among our friends, acquaintances, and so on." (p. 47)

But, of course, in this case, informing us of what the character is not, is not very helpful in explaining in what sense they are characters. Later in the interview Ballard explains the following passage:

> Kodachrome. Captain Kirby, M15 studied the prints. They showed: (1) a thick-set man in an Air Force jacket, unshaven face half-hidden by the dented hat-peak; (2) a transverse section through the spinal level T-12; (3) a crayon self-portrait by David Feary, a seven-year-old schizophrenic at the Belmont Asylum, Sutton; (4) radio-spectra from the quasar CTA 102; (5) an antero-posterior radiograph of a skull, estimated capacity 1,500 c.c.; (6) spectro-heliogram of the sun taken with the K line of calcium; (7) left and right hand-prints showing massive scarring between second and third metacarpal bones. To Dr. Nathan he said: "And all these make up one picture?" (p. 49)

Ballard holds that:

> "They make up a composite portrait of this man's identity. In this story I was examining the particular role that a twentieth-century Messiah might take, in the context of mid-twentieth century life, and I feel that he would reappear in a whole series of aspects and relationships, touching an enormous range of events; that he wouldn't have a single identity, in the sense that Jesus had--he would have a whole multiplex of contacts with various points." (p. 49)

There are a number of points here. There is, for example, the hoary problem of personal identity which relates directly to the main body of Ballard's work. However, here the clues to such an identity are not, to put it mildly, very clear. What, for example, does the word "he" refer to? Radio-spectra from the quasar CTA 102 are not normally offered as defining characteristics of a being, even if the being portrayed is a twentieth-century Messiah. The list, however, is not totally inexplicable, for example "radio-spectra from the quasar CTA 102" refers to a discovery of Soviet astronomers which was the subject of press comment during the mid-1960's. The first reports referred to the probability that the emissions from the quasar provided evidence of an intelligence at work. These claims were subsequently denied by the Soviet authorities. Or again, the "left and right hand-prints showing massive scarring between second and third metacarpal bones" is patently a reference to the crucifixion.

The central character, then, appears in many of these short stories in a composite role, and one might make a case for saying that the continual change in his name reflects his persisting uncertainties about his own identity. In the title story he appears as a scientist. In the second story, "The University of Death," he is a lecturer who is suffering extreme stress and anxiety. In "The Assassination Weapon" he is a former H-bomber pilot. In "You: Coma: Marilyn Munroe" he is someone recovering from a mental breakdown. In "Notes from a Mental Breakdown" he is connected with space flights. In "The Great American Nude" he again appears as an instructor in an institute. In "The Summer Cannibals" no reference is made to any occupation. In "Tolerances of the Human Face" he is again referred to as working in the institute.

The activities of this central character constitute the core of the book, and scattered throughout the text are interpretations of his behavior. For example:

> Talbot's belief--and this is confirmed by the logic of the scenario --is that automobile crashes play very different roles from the ones we assign them. Apart from its ontological function, redefining the elements of space and time in terms of our most potent consumer durable, the car crash may be perceived unconsciously as a fertilizing rather than a destructive event--a liberation of sexual energy--mediating the sexuality of those who have died with an intensity impossible in any other form: James Dean and Miss Mansfield, Camus and the late President.
>
> (p. 29)

In the world that Ballard's hero explores nothing is quite what it seems. For Travis, his wife and the patients at the hospital are "as unreal as the war the film companies had restarted in Vietnam" (p. 11). When a psychiatrist can claim that "the fact that an event has taken place is no proof of its valid occurrence" (p. 46) what is being challenged is our conventional notions of what constitutes a fact, an event, proof and validity. This is confirmed in the next chapter (story?) when the psychiatrist steps down from a silent helicopter, and begins to speak to Tallis:

> His mouth worked silently, eyes fixed on Tallis. He stopped and then began again with an effort, lips and jaw moving in exaggerated spasms as if he were trying to extricate some gum-like residue from his teeth. After several intervals, when he had failed to make a single audible sound, he turned and went back to the helicopter. Without any noise it took off into the sky. (p. 55)

A few pages later an exchange between a girl called Coma and Tallis includes the line, "I saw the helicopter this morning--it didn't land" (p. 58). Coma's matter-of-fact acceptance of a woman's dead body in the flat is acknowledged only by a glance at Tallis. His justification for the killing is his claim that "She was standing in the angle between the walls" (p. 58) and thus was "an unbearable intrusion into the time geometry of the room" (p. 57) 2 Such scenes and such prose are patently vulnerable to parody, but this silent helicopter and unconsummated conversation, like a film without the soundtrack, this matter-of-fact acceptance of a strange abstracted murder, are representative of the proliferation of bizarre scenes and events in The Atrocity Exhibition. Whereas in Ballard's earlier work the questionable status of conventional notions of reality was often a conclusion to be drawn, it here becomes a self-evident starting point, an accepted "fact" rather than an emergent property.

In the relationship between subject and object, between the knower and what he knows, Ballard's attention is on the subjective, on the knower. What he implies is that when advertising and the visual media in some meaningful sense are the world--then the concomitant multiplicity of images provides a challenge to conventional notions of an objective reality that has clear-cut and tangible attributes. Both the emphasis on the visual media and The Atrocity Exhibition's format indicate a tutelary nod in the direction of McLuhan, but a McLuhan transformed by a metaphysic that is peculiarly Ballard's.

For him the importance of the media is that they make possible a meeting and a fusion between the private fantasy and the public event--"a coincidence between inner and outer landscapes." The media transform the meaning of public events in ways that participants or onlookers might not recognise--this much has become a commonplace. Ballard's claim is that the private fantasy, the subjective, is not so much transformed as vindicated by the media. The disapprobation conventionally attached to subjectivism is thus misconceived, being predicated upon an unduly delimited conception of the objective for coping with the world in which we live. Although the book explores landscapes quite different from the steaming jungles and salt flats of his previous work, Ballard's epistemology remains constant.

In The Drowned World Kerans has been appalled by the re-emergence of the drowned city, a horror given voice by Beatrice's plaintive "It's like some imaginary city of Hell" (p. 121). Kerans had flooded the lagoon in an effort to reconcile his "inner" mental state with the external environment. Although Kerans inhabited a post-disaster planet and an imaginary future, whereas Travis lives in a pre-disaster world and a fictional present (however interpreted), Ballard's latest hero is driven by the same compulsions. His situation is identified in italics:

> In the suburbs of Hell Travis walked in the flaring lights of the petrochemical plants. The ruins of abandoned cinemas stood at the street corners, faded hoardings facing them across the empty streets." (p. 17)

Whereas the reappearance of London's long submerged streets was a temporary phenomenon, Travis' suburbs of Hell prove much more intransigent. Nature (and a few strategically placed sticks of dynamite) was on the side of Kerans, Travis has no such powerful ally, and is thus dependent upon the resources he can muster from within himself. A synopsis of the "psychologic" that this involves reads as follows:

1) The distinction between what is real and what is fictional in the outside world has broken down.
2) Owing to the absurdity of the world, the absence of fixed determinate values, the only relevant measure of meaning is subjective conviction. Traven is committed to a quest for some ontological fortress that can provide him with the certitude that the world cannot give.
3) He finds that certitude in the celebration of personal violence and sexual perversity.
4) Although the external world does not make sense, sense can be wrung from it by the selection and combination of apparently unrelated items in strange ways that confirm and exemplify Traven's subjective certainties. The artifacts, imagery and public events of the external world thus become the raw materials from which Traven constructs a private world.
5) The continuing recalcitrance of the external world, (including other people), its (and their) refusal to yield to such inner logic both disturbs Traven and provides his guide for conduct. Inner and outer worlds must be reconciled, and only the outer world can be modified.

What the reader is offered, therefore, is a grand tour around the central character's obsessions, expressed in what is almost a private code, a vocabulary of images organised in obscure combinations. Traven's efforts to make sense of the world find their special expression in the creation of "scenarios." The particular meaning assigned to that term by Herman Kahn and his associates no doubt accounts for its employment:

> A scenario results from an attempt to describe in more or less detail some hypothetical sequence of events. Scenarios can emphasize different aspects of "future history."[3]

Ballard is fond of such associations. It also suggests Genet. The sexual scenarios that are a specialty of the brothel in The Balcony have their counterpart in the world outside its walls. The private fantasies of Madam Irma's patrons, their masquerades as bishop, general, or judge are an innocuous mirror of public life--the "perversions" of the latter are much more disturbing, its illusions sustained at much greater cost. For Genet as for Ballard the meaning of public events, the trappings of responsibility must be re-evaluated and their connexion with private fantasies made manifest. Ballard's scenarios consist of a collage of events, objects, media images, and characters, with the staging of car-crashes as the characteristic method of apocalyptic unification. The extent to which Ballard's own sympathies lie with his central character is indicated by his readiness to act the part of Traven in a short film called Crash that the BBC screened in early 1971; during 1970 he had a sculpture exhibition at the London New Arts Laboratory Gallery on the theme of crashed cars; during 1969 he paid for a series of advertisements in Ambit that were similar to those which Trabert supposedly places in Vogue and Paris Match (p. 66). There was no doubt more than a hint of Dali-style publicity involved in this latter enterprise (Ballard has elsewhere claimed that the painter is a genius), but the links between author and character are willingly displayed.

Throughout most of the stories is a psychiatrist, Dr. Nathan, whose role is an interpretative one. Ballard said of him in the MacBeth interview:

> "He appears as a psychiatrist. He relates to the other psychiatrists in the other stories, who serve the role of analysing the events of the narrative from the point of view of the clinical implications." (p. 47)

By implication, Ballard is suggesting that Nathan's analysis is correct--at least in clinical terms. He is, however, a character about whom we are told very little, and yet references to his smoking habits occur time and time again. His "gold-tipped" taste is pointed out on at least six different occasions (pp.9, 25, 65, 73, 104, 117) and further references to his smoking supplement these (pp.13, 34, 42, 65, 107, 114). When the stories were separately published this kind of thing wasn't evident. When they are collected together and published as a novel it looks like an opportunity lost. If one wished to be coy about it, one could list the quotations, add a cigarette case and suggest that they make up a composite portrait of the psychiatrist's identity. Certainly the irony of The Atrocity Exhibition is the sheer sameness of it all. Nathan is not a well thought-out figure; his role is ambiguous and this emerges less as a function of the attempt to build a character, than of Ballard's unwillingness to pass up an opportunity to plead Traven's point of view. From the outset Nathan declares that he doubts whether the distinction between the doctor and patient is valid any longer (p. 13), but in the early sections of the book his interpretations of Travis' behavior do maintain a measure of academic detachment and disassociation (see, for example, "In Death, Yes" (p. 34) and "Einstein" (p. 48)). In the fourth chapter/story he makes an effort to communicate with Tallis, an effort that is singularly unsuccessful (as the quotation from p.55 given above indicates). But now he understands a little better, sees the world more nearly through Tallis' own eyes (for example, p. 65). Thus after a scenario has been staged, "Dr. Nathan decided not to speak to him. His own identity would seem little more than a summary of postures, the geometry of an accusation" (p. 80). By the time we have reached the eighth chapter/story Nathan considers Traven's "problem" is everyone's problem, and appears to approve of, or at least acquiesce to his solution. Thus:

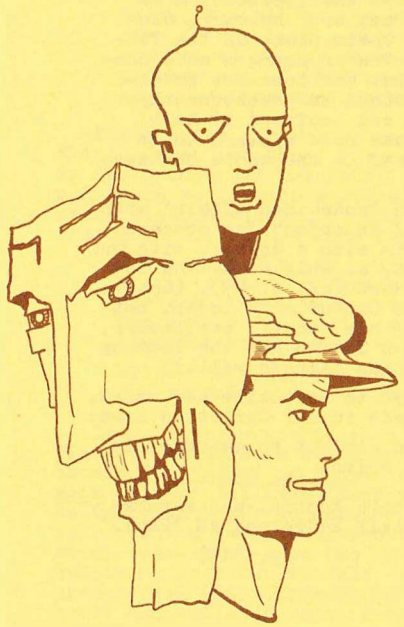
> "Traven's problem is how to come to terms with the violence that has pursued his life--not merely the violence of accident and bereavement, or the horrors of war, but the biomorphic horror of our own bodies, the awkward geometry of the postures we assume. Traven has at last realized that the real significance of these acts of violence lies elsewhere, in what we might term 'the death of affect.' Consider all our most real and tender pleasures--in the excitements of pain and mutilation; in sex as the perfect arena, like a culture bed of sterile pus, for all the veronicas of our own perversions, in voyeurism and self-disgust, in our moral freedom to pursue our own psychopathologies as a game, and in our ever greater powers of abstraction." (p. 104)

Nathan's subsequent argument that the Vietnam war does not repel us but in fact "appeals by virtue of its complex of polyperverse acts" (p. 107) and should, therefore, be recognised as socially beneficial, is an extension of this same theme.

Finally, chapters/stories 10, 11, 12, and 14 in the novel/collection express such ideas without the presence of a "character" at all. They employ the language of the scientific report, but each paragraph is prefigured by a phrase that refers to some aspect of Traven's fantasies or fears. Each chapter is about three or four pages long, with Traven's fantasies making up just one or at most two sentences. A typical paragraph begins:

> The optimum auto disaster. Panels consisting of drive-in theatre personnel, students and middle-income housewives were encouraged to devise the optimum auto-disaster. A wide choice of impact modes was available, including roll-over, roll-over followed by head-on collision, multiple pile-ups and motorcade attacks. The choice of death postures included (1) normal driving position (2) sleep, rear seat (3) acts of intercourse, by both driver and passenger (4) severe anginal spasm...(pp. 138-9)

Harold Rosenberg provides a somewhat relevant comment:



> America masks its terrors behind patterns of fact. Here the intolerable discloses its presence not in the grimaces of comedy or tragedy but in the bland citations of the scientific report. Since The War no novel or play has given body to the larger disturbances of the American consciousness. Literature, one hears, is dead, or too enfeebled to risk arduous adventures. Nevertheless, documents keep appearing that touch upon apprehensions equal to any in the history of men. Computations of the daily incidence of outlawed sex in America's bedrooms; records of scientific sadism practiced by governments and their programmes to transform the will of individuals; estimates by atomic technicians of the flimsiness of the earth and of the natural shape of the human body. When phenomena of this order are explored in a work of the imagination, its author tends to be exiled to the colony of "morbid intellectuals." Given the form of the report or survey, and authorized by the rhetoric of the professions, the most alarming topics overcome the handicap of their profundity and enter into the conversation of solid men of affairs.[4]

Ballard has recognised this tendency and is prepared to comment on it--"for Traven," comments Nathan, "science is the ultimate pornography" (p. 48)--for he shapes the authoritative character of such reports to his own purposes. By interweaving this style of narrative with the expression of Traven's subjective concerns, Ballard is insisting that Traven is the "representative" for psychological processes which are characteristic of our time. For the reports claim to refer to the responses of, amongst others, mental patients, witnesses of the Kennedy assassination, soldiers, housewives, students, and psychotic children. Typically, they are written so as to confirm Dr. Nathan's early assertion that the distinction between doctor and patient, between sane and insane, is no longer valid (p. 13) and his final claim that Traven is the forerunner of many others (p. 107). At times the language of the reports is almost interchangeable with what we have come to expect of Nathan in the first chapters. For example (p. 33):

> These studies confirm that it is only in terms of a psychosexual module such as provided by the Vietnam war that the United States public can enter into a relationship with the world generally characterised by the term "love."

Whether Nathan is supposed to be their author may appear to be largely idle speculation--except that it would imply that the book is more of a unity than its form suggests. Perhaps the central character is supposed to have written them, for Nathan does mention "Talbot's deliberate self-involvement in the narrative of the scenario" (p. 27) but then references to Nathan's report writing also occur on several occasions (for example, p. 15 and p. 45).

A number of women appear and reappear throughout the book. The central character has a wife, Margaret, who appears in three of the stories; there is a colleague of Nathan's who appears in six of them, four times as Catherine Austin, once as Claire Austin and once as Elizabeth Austin. Most frequent of all is Karen Novotny--she is in seven. None of them is to be identified by any distinguishable physical characteristics, although the implication is that they are all reasonably attractive They are, however, distinguished by the roles they play, and by their place in the fantasies of the central character. Margaret Traven emerges as a conventional wife caught up in a situation that she does not understand, initially unable to contact her husband and subsequently unable to communicate with him, irritated and confused by both Nathan (p. 68) and one Captain Webster whose role appears to be something akin to providing a watching brief on the whole business for the sake of the C.I.A.

Dr. Austin is Traven's lover; he has an "undecided affair" with her (p. 11) in which she has the status of an object "an obscene masturbatory appliance" (p. 24). But she is also a doctor, with the detachment that such an occupation implies, as well as having become the lover of Koester, a research student (cf. p. 79). (Koester disturbs Traven not only because he is Catherine's lover, but also because he is creating "scenarios" of his own--in particular, a kind of 20th century crucifixion in which Traven has the leading part. Koester is a research assistant who has learned well.)

Dr. Austin apparently finds it difficult to reconcile her roles, a difficulty given expression by the changes in her Christian name:

> Avoiding Claire Austin's embarrassed attempt to embrace him he stepped on to the lawn below the drive. (p. 93)

> Standing across the room from Elizabeth Austin, who watches him with guarded eyes, he hears himself addressed as "Paul." (p. 115)

If Margaret represents the wife who doesn't understand, and Catherine Austin an unfaithful academic mistress, Karen Novotny, the third woman of these stories, represents the sensual and the erotic.

> Talbot followed her about the apartment drawing chalk outlines on the floor around her chair, around the cups and utensils on the breakfast table, as she drank her coffee, and lastly around herself:
>
> (1) sitting, in the posture of Rodin's "Thinker," on the edge of the bidet, (2) watching from the balcony as she waited for Koester to catch up with them again, (3) making love to Talbot on the bed. He worked silently at the chalk outlines, now and then rearranging her limbs." (p. 32)

> Their period in the apartment together had been one of almost narcotic domesticity. In the planes of her body, in the contours of her breasts and thighs, he seemed to mimetize all his dreams and obsessions." (p. 64)

Typically, it is Karen who picks him up in an empty hotel cinema after a conference on space medicine, or on a motorway, or at a beach planetarium, or on top of a car park, or at a demonstration cinema on facial surgery.

In identifying what these three women "represent," we must bear in mind one point. It is what they represent to the central character that is important, and their places in his pattern of obsession. All of them are "killed" at least once, Karen Novotny most frequently of all, and both these deaths and the curious way in which their sexual activities are described are purportedly explicable in terms of Traven's efforts to make sense of the world--or more precisely his world. For example:

> Amatory elements: nil. The act of love became a vector in an applied geometry. (p. 75)

This is explained by Nathan thus:

> "Talbot has accepted in absolute terms the logic of sexual union. For him all junctions, whether of our own soft biologies or the hard geometries of these walls and ceilings are equivalent to one another. What Talbert is searching for is the primary act of intercourse, the first apposition of the dimensions of time and space." (p. 78)

There are a few other "characters" besides those mentioned, Kline, Coma, and Xero, for example--a trinity who appear to be wholly the product of Traven's fantasies. They usually appear together, and enjoy no objective status independent of the central character's perception, creatures of the imagination employed in, and the expressions of, his strange purposes:

> A watching Trinity. Personae of the unconscious: Xero: run hot with a million programmes, this terrifying figure seemed to Trabert like a vast neural switchboard...Coma: this beautiful but mute young woman, madonna of the time-ways, surveyed Trabert with maternal eyes.
>
> Kline: "Why must we await, and fear, a disaster in space in order to understand our own time?--Matta" (p. 64)

It is interesting to note that a character called Coma made her first appearance in a story that Ballard first published in 1960, namely The Voices of Time--included in The Four Dimensional Nightmare (Victor Gollancz, London, 1963)--and in the process of coming to terms with the strangeness of The Atrocity Exhibition one gradually becomes aware of its continuity with that earlier tale. In that story Coma relates to two other characters, Powers the surgeon who builds an enormous mandala, and his former patient Kaldren who is preoccupied with documenting the rundown of the universe and collects and collates radio messages from outer-space. Coma says of him to Powers:

"Sometimes I feel I'm just another of his insane terminal documents."

"What are those?"

"Haven't you heard? Kaldren's collection of final statements about homo sapiens. The complete works of Freud, Beethoven's blind quartets, transcripts of the Nuremberg trials, an automatic novel, and so on."[5]

While she is talking Powers doodles an elaborate mandala. Kaldran subsequently says of these documents:

"They're end prints, Powers, final statements, the products of total fragmentation. When I've got enough together I'll build a new world for myself out of them." (ibid., p. 32)

In The Atrocity Exhibition the collector of terminal documents and the "builder of mandalas" is Traven, and Coma's complaint about her role in relation to Kaldren might with justice be made by all of Traven's women. (Cf. the breakdown of the doctor/patient distinction.) In The Voices of Time the mandala was not a satisfactory vehicle for the ideas it was supposed to express (the resolution of psychic, temporal, and cosmic confusion). In the more successful Terminal Beach story Ballard found a pre-established mandala--in The Atrocity Exhibition he substitutes for the mandala the notion of the scenario with the car-crash as its focal point. What is still at work is the quest for some kind of mystical unity:

"This reluctance to accept the fact of his own consciousness" Dr. Nathan wrote, "may reflect certain positional difficulties in the immediate context of time and space. The right angle spiral of a stairwell may remind him of similar biases within the chemistry of the biological kingdom. This can be carried to remarkable lengths--for example, the jutting balconies of the Hilton Hotel have become identified with the lost gill-slits of the dying film actress, Elizabeth Taylor..." (p. 15)

The Atrocity Exhibition is by any standard a strange book but it does not represent a total break with his previous work The form is different and the specific elements that now make up the landscape are technological much more often than they are natural--Ballard is here concerned to come to terms with technology. The imaginary natural landscapes of the future have become the artificial landscapes of the present. And yet what is the "real" continues to be problematic. As Karen Novotny explains, "We're all in the movies."

FOOTNOTES

1) Cf. M. Rocheach's The Three Christs of Ypsilanti (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1964).

2) Occasional flashes of humour do occur, as in the suggestion that a botched Second Coming might be filmed as Fellini's "1½."

3) Herman Kahn, Thinking About the Unthinkable, London, 1962, p. 143).

4) "The Orgamerican Phantasy," The Tradition of the New, London: Thames and Hudson, 1962; Paladin 1970, p. 232.

5) The Four-Dimensional Nightmare (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965), p. 25.

Flying Saucers Attack Ohio

Diselenide disci
Magnetize Ohio farms,
Flood a pedestrian sky
With erotic arrows, swarms

Of Venerian aphrodisiacs
To skewer man & maid alike.
Sandusky to Cleveland is wack
Y with desire. Nuns wear slacks,

Saints embrace buck-eyed romance,
Even Lutherans fall prey
To lust. Baptists unzip pants
In public, quote Scripture to sway

Teen-aged girls to unbuckle,
An entire Midwest population
Perfuming itself with honeysuckle.
Random bodies are in collusion,

Inhibitions tossed to the winds
Not even sheep are safe.
In haystacks, unsteady couples find
No sleep & newly marrieds chafe

From hotel to motel. At last, saucers
Whirl away to Our Lady's Elliband
In Orion's Belt, abandoning acres
Of divorce, swamps of liasons, &

All havoc we dare call love.

-- Louis Phillips --

Lazarus, Come Forth From That Tomb!

by

Joe R. Christopher

(Tarleton State University)

Robert Heinlein, Time Enough for Love: The Lives of Lazarus Long, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1973, 605 pp., $7.95.

In 1941 Methuselah's Children was serialized (book form in 1958): in this novel, Heinlein introduced Lazarus Long, the mutant long-liver among the people encouraged to breed for longevity by the Howard Foundation. Lazarus Long (whose original name was Woodrow Wilson Smith and whose pseudonyms become legion) has now been revived by Heinlein for what may be, but need not be, the conclusion of the Future History series. As is well known, of the story titles in Heinlein's chart of this series six were never written, and one of those came at the end of the sequence: "Da Capo." The next-to-last section of Time Enough for Love bears that title.

Thirty-two years is a long wait for the second instalment about Lazarus, but a pertinent comment appears in the "Excerpts from the Notebooks of Lazarus Long" in this volume: "If you happen to be one of the fretful minority who can do creative work, never force an idea; you'll abort it if you do. Be patient and you'll give birth to it when the time is ripe. Learn to wait" (p. 270). Both the comment and the sexual imagery are appropriate for this book.

For the non-critical reader of Heinlein, this book will be a delight. Those who were moved by the sentimental story of "Noisy" Rhysling in "The Green Hills of Earth" as adolescents will find a much more mature story of his stay in a bawdy house on Mars (which Lazarus was running at the time) on pp. 145-151; but both versions agree that, in his blindness (to quote the short story), "All women became beautiful to him."

Those who read fiction for the sake of in-jokes or who delight in a roman à clef, will also find moments to satisfy their taste here. The most extended passage is Lazarus' story of David Lamb "in a school for training naval officers" (p. 74)--a chapter entitled "The Tale of the Man Who Was Too Lazy to Fail." Since Heinlein attended Annapolis and was the champion swordsman of his day, the explanation of David Lamb's decision to going out for fencing--to avoid such dangers as football and water polo--piques the biographer. Lamb is also from the Ozarks, by the way. Heinlein watchers will also be pleased with his standard use of waldoes (p. 174) and with Lazarus' casual reference to a man who had his brain put into a woman's body and died of alien tissue rejection (pp. 122-123), remembering the recent I Will Fear No Evil.

But the thirty years have led to inevitable changes in direction and emphasis in the Future History series. For example, in Methuselah's Children Marion Schmidt is born on the planet of the Little People as their improved example of human engineering; no mention is made of her or her descendents in this book, although Lazarus revisits the same planet (pp. 437-439)--the assumption is made that the humans remaining there died of discouragement (rather like the short-livers who visit Ireland in Shaw's Back to Methuselah), but surely Marion's attributes made her less discouragable.

Other ties to the earlier material are sometimes tossed in without much more than a passing ironic point, such as the discovery of the descendents of the Proxima Centauri Expedition of "Common Sense" (pp. 410-412). Some are impossible to reconcile with the earlier material. In Methuselah's Children the Jockaira gods are housed in separate temples (and are telepathic and telekinetic to boot); here, Lazarus and Andrew Libby are said to have wiped them out with "a Mark Nineteen Remington Blaster at full charge" (pp. 408-409). Admittedly, Lazarus' sisters defend this "fifth" version of Lazarus' meeting with the gods as being a parable. I have no objection to parables being non-historic; I am simply making the point that this one is, if one can call the earlier novel "history"!

I must confess that I have been certain that the direction Heinlein was heading in Methuselah's Children was toward the development of telepathic and other mental abilities by humans, and that this was what "Da Capo" was to show. The musical term suggested non-verbal communication. This direction in the development of races is suggested by both the Little People and the Jockaira gods. (Perhaps, I thought, Heinlein was going to go as far as Shaw in Back to Methuselah, which ends with human beings giving up bodily forms altogether and existing as non-corporal mental energy.) But I should have been warned by "Da Capo"--repeat from the beginning--that Heinlein was going into to play with time travel; yet I assumed the "new beginning" was going to be mental. In Time Enough for Love Heinlein elaborates the musical motif with sections titled "Prelude," "Counterpoint," "Variations on a Theme," "Intermission," and "Coda." The last seven subsections--the last three of "Da Capo" and all of "Coda"--are "titled" with lines of music, which upon inspection turn out to be bugle calls from World War I. Despite these musical motifs, the development of mankind (as might be expected from the later Heinlein) turns out to be sexual rather than mental. Ultimately, Time Enough for Love is a Freudian parable.

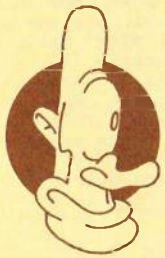
One final comment about the relationship of this book to the Future History: Andrew Jackson Libby of "Misfit" and Methuselah's Children is much mentioned. He invented "hypnoencyclopedic techniques," which solved one of Lazarus' worries in the earlier novel about remembering things as he grew centuries older (p. 42), for example. But his main purpose in this novel is to prepare for the time travel in the final sections of the book. Lazarus says that after Libby's death, he had put his corpse in orbit around "the last planet" they discovered together, planning to return and take the body to Earth for burial in the Ozarks--but, a hundred years later, he was unable to locate the remains (p. 145). Later, post time travel, Lazarus tells his sisters to pick up Libby's body and return it to Earth, during the period between his leaving it and returning for it (p.455). The reason for this summary is that the sisters are never said to have returned the body to Earth. On the basis of the conclusion of the novel, I like to conjecture that Libby was returned to life by the future medicinal techniques (or was cloned perhaps), and thus in another book, thirty-two years from now, Lazarus and Libby will reappear as companions.

II An Anatomy of an Anatomy

In Northrop Frye's classification of four fiction types, science-fiction usually belongs to the anatomy class: Frye's definition says that this type is extroverted (i.e., dealing with society) and intellectual (i.e., dealing with it in terms of ideas). This is not to say that the three other types do not exist in s-f: I simply suggest that they are not the majority. Many s-f works have romance elements (the adventure story plots); others, like Zenna Henderson's People, stories, are confessional; and a few--Edgar Pangborn's Davy comes to mind--are novelistic. But the intellectual treatment of future developments in society is basic.

Further, Frye says that the short form of the anatomy is the dialogue. Just as Plato's Republic is a fairly long example of this "short form," so also are the first 466 pages of Time Enough for Love. "Prelude" (pp. 23-55) begins the discussion, with Ira Weatherall attempting to dissuade Lazarus from suicide. The five sections entitled "Variations on a Theme" develop these discussions, with a number of long anecdotes (inserted short stories) from Lazarus. On p. 103 a third conversationalist is introduced, a computer named Minerva, and the topic of love comes up, which turns out to be the main subject, although there is a running discussion of something new for Lazarus to do, which leads to several of the cloning variations in the book and ultimately to the time travel. Meanwhile Lazarus' rejuvenators, Ishtar Hardy and Galahad Jones, join the discussions; then Ira's daughter, Hamadryad (p. 138)--by which point Lazarus is thinking of them as his family. Still later, Justin Foote 45th (p. 373), a computer named Pallas Athene (p. 374), and Tamara Sperling (p. 405) join, not to mention Lazarus' sisters.

A few examples may illustrate the method of these discussions further. In the chapter entitled "Love" (pp. 138-155), which is also the whole of the second "Variations" section, Lazarus begins from Hamadryad's question about love, wanders off into his account of Rhysling to illustrate that the whores loved the musician while he was only fond of them, and ends up refusing Hamadryad's offer of marriage. A longer passage follows something of the same pattern, the six chapters in the third "Variations." The framework is an all-night discussion between Lazarus and the computer Minerva, which has as its insert a three-chapter account of diploid twins who were sold to Lazarus as breeding slaves (perhaps the most anatomical section of the whole book--in Frye's sense--in the passage on pp. 201-209 which sets up the genetic dangers, or lack of them, in the twin's interbreeding). By the way, the reason for Lazarus' desire to stay awake all night is not revealed until much later (p. 429).



The final "Variations" section, laid on a different planet from the earlier conversations and containing such chapter titles as "Bacchanalia," "Agape," "Eros," and "Narcissus," is basically an example of love, of types of love, and of the goal of life (so far as Lazarus understands it). I can here use "Narcissus" as an example of Heinlein's development of his colloquy on love. In this chapter (pp. 451-466), Lazarus' teenage sisters talk him into doing what he desires to do: to have sexual relations with them. There is good reason for this chapter to be entitled "Narcissus" instead of "Incest," however. These sisters are his identical clones (developed from his X chromosomes only, and hence feminine), one of them carried by Hamadryad and one by Ishtar, and neither started with Lazarus' knowledge or approval. In loving them, Lazarus is loving himself. Lapis Lazuli, one of the sisters, puts it this way: "Coupling with us might be masturbation, but it can't be incest because we aren't your sisters. We aren't your kin in any normal sense; we're you" (p. 465). (Despite her argument, for linguistic reasons I will continue to call them his sisters.) In Lazarus' terms, these unions are acceptable, are "moral" (although that term is not used in the chapter), because both Lazarus and his sisters have clean gene charts--no defectives will be born to their unions. This emphasis on genetic dangers has run throughout the novel: not only the passage about the diploid twins' union, but also one about teaching children a card game of "Let's Make a Healthy Baby" (p. 242). The incest motif (to ignore also Lapis' argument about masturbation) has been prepared for, not only in the marriage of the diploid twins but in the extended, two-chapter "Tale of the Adopted Daughter (pp. 271-304), in which Lazarus marries a short-lived, non-Howard woman whom he rescues as a baby from a burning house; it foreshadows another example at the end of the book. I stress the recurrent theme of incest to suggest one of Heinlein's unifying concerns in this book (perhaps one should compare it to Nabokov's Ada), but the concern with genetics demonstrates a slightly different point, I believe.

Lazarus' assumption that only bad genes make unions wrong seems to me a clearly utilitarian, humanistic belief. In Charles Williams' Arthurian poems, the incest of King Arthur and his half-sister Morgause (which produces Mordred) is taken as a symbol of the greatest of the Christian sins, pride: Arthur loves himself, and thus produces his own destruction. Heinlein, in his chapter title and characters references, also sees the episode as self-love ("Narcissus"), but his characters do not find it evil. This episode is thus an excellent example of the gap between the Christian world-view and the humanistic.

These comments on the organization of Heinlein's anatomy would not be complete without some notes on lesser matters of organization. Alexei Panshin writes that simple structures of stories "can be complicated greatly by various narrative techniques--flashbacks, multiple plots, and the like. Generally, however, Heinlein hasn't used them. He has always told his stories in the most straightforward possible manner..."[1] (Panshin excludes Starship Troopers from this statement.) One would almost suspect Heinlein of reading this and deciding to use flashbacks all through this book. Equally interesting is Heinlein's use of varying points of view. For example, "Prelude" is told in the third person, while the first "Variations" is told by Ira (with Lazarus telling of David Lamb in the middle); the second "Variations" is in the third person again. (The two "Counterpoint" sections between these three groups are also third person, but their focus is on Ishtar and Galahad, not Lazarus.) Later, the three chapters about "the Twins Who Weren't" and "The Tale of the Adopted Daughter" are told in alternate sections of Lazarus' first-person narration to Minerva and third-person narration about Captain Sheffield and Ernest Gibbons-Woodrow Wilson Smith (Lazarus' pseudonyms in these two adventures, except that the last is his original name). "Bacchanalia" is told by Justin Foote. "Da Capo" alternates between third-person narration and epistles from Lazarus, with a brief passage in Maureen Smith's thoughts (p. 591). (No computer point of view and, given Heinlein's rational s-f, no stream of consciousness.) All of this with a preface on the writing of history by Justin Foote and occasional footnotes explaining obsolete twentieth century terms.

Especially indicative of the nature of Time Enough for Love as an anatomy is the way in which "The Tale of the Adopted Daughter," the most romantic episode of the book (romantic in Frye's sense as well as being a love story), is framed by the most anatomical of all devices: a collection of aphorisms--"Excerpts from the Notebooks of Lazarus Long" (pp. 256-270 and 363-372)--setting forth ideas without a framework of fictional discussion (cf. "Maxims for Revolutionists" at the end of Shaw's Man and Superman). A structural element connecting this episode with a later chapter, "Eros," is the decision of Dora to make love with Lazarus for the first time in "that little stand of trees," because it is closer than any rooms they have available to them (p. 298), echoed by Minerva's decision (after she had transferred her personality from the computer to a cloned body)for "this little stand of trees" in a similar situation (p. 450). This episode is complicated by Minerva's appearance having been chosen to match Lazarus' memories of Dora (cf. pp. 167, 253-254), but I think the purpose of the parallel is not that Lazarus gets a long-lived version of his short-lived love, for Minerva is mainly in love with Ira, but a demonstration of the repetition of experiences over the centuries, the sameness with differences. (Possibly Heinlein put in the episode without meaning anything by it, simply to see what critics would make of it, but once we start assuming that the writers are playing that sort of games with their readers, the fiction no longer has meaning as fiction.)

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1) Alexei Panshin, "Heinlein in Dimension: Part III, Construction," Riverside Quarterly, 2 (June 1966), p. 102.

But this anatomy of love is not limited in topic or example to sexual relationships or to incest. Heinlein's novel also has much to say about children and family life. First about children, in this aphorism:

> All societies are based on rules to protect pregnant women and young children. All else is surplusage, excrescence, adornment, luxury, or folly which can--and must--be dumped in emergency to preserve this prime function. As racial survival is the only universal morality, no other basic is possible. (p. 259)

(Lazarus' morality is much like Weston's, in C.S. Lewis' Out of the Silent Planet.) Another aphorism:

> A zygote is a gamete's way of producing more gametes. This may be the purpose of the universe. (p. 262)

Another:

> If the universe has any purpose more important than topping a woman you love and making a baby with her hearty help, I've never heard of it. (p. 268; cf. p. 142)

These three quotations, from the first group of excerpts from Lazarus' notebooks, set the theme of Lazarus' concern with children clearly. The chapter entitled "Agape" (in the final "Variations" section) reflects Lazarus' understanding of the goal of life. More specifically, here Galahad offers Justin Foote marriage into Lazarus' family (group marriage, in our terminology). Somewhat after this offer (pp. 419-429), Lazarus explains his concept more fully: "What you are joining is a family. What you are committed to is the welfare of the children. All of them, not just any that you may sire...It's not a lifetime commitment; that's not practical for a Howard. This family may outlive us all--I hope so" (p. 433).

Lazarus does not discuss the possibility of the family getting too large to be functional, nor are the children--Undine, Elf, and Andrew Jackson (p. 434)--shown, probably because they are not yet rational enough, nor are they satiric enough, to take part in an anatomy. No doubt most readers will find the surface description of the varying sexual partners most interesting (it has been prepared for by the tradition of term marriages in the Howard families), but the essential morality is not based on sexual activity, which could take place without marriage at all, but on the creation of and caring for children. A very bourgeois activity perhaps, but one which follows from the assumption that preserving the race is the ultimate morality. And the emphasis on sleeping with the children--"the cuddle watch" (p. 419)--and playing with them shows how this ties into the earlier discussions of love: agape, spiritual love, is here domesticated. Finally, the society which the anatomy discusses is here exemplified in the basis of society, the family.

II The Shavian Methuselah

In the first chapter of A Specter Is Haunting Texas, Fritz Leiber has his protagonist refer to an actress playing "Eve in Shaw's Back to Methuselah or Mary Sperling in Heinlein's Children of Methuselah." I take this to be an in-joke, indicating Heinlein's borrowing of ideas from Shaw's play for his novel; Heinlein's knowledge of Shaw is assumed in what follows.[2]

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2) For a fuller discussion of Heinlein's indebtedness to Shaw, see my article, "Methuselah, Out of Heinlein by Shaw," The Shaw Review, 16 (1973), pp. 79-88.

I mentioned earlier the non-physical end of evolution in Shaw's work. Heinlein suggests the mental qualities of the Little People by means of a projection of a Doppelganger and telepathy (p. 437), and Lazarus says, "Maybe they are perfect, Justin. Maybe they are what the human race can become...in another million years. Or ten million. But when I say that their Utopia frightens me, that I think it is deadly to human beings, and that they themselves look like a dead end to me, I am not running them down...I can't imagine fighting them because it wouldn't be a fight; they would already have won against anything we could attempt" (p. 438). Thus, by 4272 (two thousand three hundred years from now) mankind has not evolved new mental powers, which is reasonable, since we have not changed much since Thebes defeated Sparta in the Battle of Leuctra, which is about the same number of years in the opposite direction. (Shaw's date for this development is 31,920 A.D.)

But if the conclusion of Back to Methuselah has little to do with the humans in this book, I should like to suggest that some things about Shaw's fifth playlet seem to have influenced Heinlein. I am thinking partly of Shaw's setting: "...the steps and columned porch of a dainty little classic temple" are on his stage. When Justin Foote arrives on Tertius from New Rome, Secondus, he finds Lazarus Long and his family in a house modeled on that once owned by "the political boss of Pompeii" (p. 399). In Shaw, the characters on stage at the first are dressed in the "Grecian /style/ of the fourth century B.C., freely handled." At the "Bacchanalia" Justin Foote and Tamara Sperling are dressed in gowns with "a Golden-Age-of-Hellas flavor" (p. 407). Indeed, all but Lazarus and his sisters are dressed in "colorful, pseudo-Grecian garments" (p. 408). I doubt that it is an accident that the Ancient who shows up on Shaw's stage immediately after the opening dance is wearing a "linen kilt" with "a sporran" and that Lazarus and his sisters, Lazarus sometimes being called "the Senior," wear "the kilt, bonnet, sporran" of Scottish chieftains (p. 408).

In Shaw, the youngsters turn out to have such names as Strophon, Acis, Ecrasia, Arjillax, Martellus, and Pygmalion. In Heinlein, as we have already seen, some of the characters are named Ishtar, Galahad, Hamadryad, Minerva, Pallas Athene, and (to mention for the first time the name of Lazarus' other sister) Lorelei Lee. Also, Galahad is compared to Ganymede when he kisses Justin (p. 400) and Lazarus' sisters to Hebe in their serving at the dinner (p. 407).

A final comparison with Shaw can be more briefly stated. In that last playlet of Back to Methuselah, some of the emphasis is on children--the teenager born from the egg--and some on the artistic creation of life--the "automata" who call themselves Ozymandias and Cleopatra-Semiramis. The fuller emphasis in Heinlein on children has already been mentioned. The creation of life is like the cloning, and especially the development of Minerva's body. (That the automata turn out to be poor creations does not alter the point.)

Thus this Utopian moment in Heinlein's book, when the family is established and celebrated, is reminiscent of Shaw's depiction of the heighth of human history, before physical form was given up altogether.

II The Archetypal Romance

But no one answer, no one Utopian moment, is complete in Time Enough for Love: the truth is complicated as it is in life. And, for that matter, no one fiction type is satisfactory. The book is not only an anatomy but a romance. After Lazarus established his family in his Shavian looking "As Far as Thought Can Reach," then he goes in a quest for his original family, through time, to Earth.

In his Anatomy of Criticism Fry calls the romance-anatomy "a rare and fitful combination." His example is Melville's Moby-Dick, the quest for the white whale combined with chapters on the materials of the nineteenth-century whaling industry. In Heinlein the discussions of the first part of the book give way, first, to the establishment of the group family and, second, to a further search for love. The chapter titles of "Da Capo," before language is abandoned for bugle calls, suggests the material here: "The Green Hills," "The End of an Era," "Maureen," and "Home." (The realistic detail of Frye's fictional type of "novel" also appears in this section, just as, considering the biographical nature of the book as a whole, one finds the confession present.(I am not playing an idle game with Frye's terms here, but suggesting instead the generic complexity of the volume. I still believe the anatomy to be the major type.)

The romantic strain in the book was apparent earlier, in the symbolic names of most of Lazarus' family--Ishtar and Galahad take their names, officially, after they begin their love affair (pp. 62-63); Justin Foote remarks that Galahad's original name was Obadiah (p. 400), and Lazarus observes how reversed the symbolism of Galahad is for the amorous nature of he who uses it (p. 69). Hamadryad is beautiful (p. 138). And Minerva and Pallas Athene are obviously suitable for computers. But the name that functions in an essential way in the story, as more than just a clue or reversed clue to personality, is Lazarus. At the first of the book he is trying to quietly commit suicide, but Ira saves him--raises him from the dead, if you wish. At the end of the book, he is killed in World War I, only to be rescued and revived (from the dead) by his sisters, Tamara, and the rest of his family. For Tamara's role here, compare her song on p. 418. (The curious death vision on p. 602 echoes such earlier comments as that when Lazarus says he is "a solipsist at heart" (p. 73) and it perhaps replaces the Shavian vision of Lilith at the end of his play.) But the essential point is that Lazarus "cannot die" (p. 605); for Lazarus Long, the archetypal pattern is true.

"Da Capo" has also another archetypal plot--one which is not Biblical but psychoanalytic: that is, it fits the great myth of our time in which Oedipus is King, and Freud is his prophet. To prepare for this, we need to note part of the earlier discussion, just after Lazarus' tale of Noisy Rhysling and the whores:

> "...Olga had been one of the first to mother him, had helped bathe him and had stolen some of my clothes for him while I slept.
>
> "But they all mothered him and never fought over him. I have not deviated from our subject in this rambling account of Noisy; we're still defining 'love.' Anybody want to take a whack at it now?"
>
> .....
>
> "Mother love," said Ira, and added gruffly, "Lazarus, are you trying to tell us that 'mother love' is the only love there is? Man, you're out of your mind!"
>
> "Probably. But not that far out. I said they mothered him; I did not say a word about 'mother love.'"
>
> .....
>
> Hamadryad said to her father, "Ira, 'mother love' can't be what we're trying to define; it is often only a sense of duty. Two of my brats I was tempted to drown..." (p. 151)

Exactly what is a boy's relationship to his mother? (Note the twice repeated clause on p. 504, "Oh, sure, a son loves his mother." The second time it is followed up with "But this was not what Lazarus felt toward Maureen Johnson Smith, lovely young matron, just his 'own' age.")

To be explicit here, Lazarus and his mother are sexually attracted to each other and physically consummate their desire. (Stapledon's Odd John would appreciate the need.) Maureen explains that her husband, off in the army at the time, is understanding (pp. 565-567). This episode is preceded by one in which Lazarus meets his father, Captain Brian Smith, who arranges for him to be transferred to France, believing that is what Private Theodore Bronson (i.e., Lazarus) wants (pp. 542-545). The episode of incest and adultery (see pp. 506-507 for Lazarus' analysis of the concept of sin) is followed by one in which a lieutenant orders Lazarus beyond the front lines to cut wire, which leads to Lazarus' death (pp. 597-601--note the image of the wild geese at the death, which has appeared earlier, in Lazarus' words, p. 155, and Tamara's song, p. 418, and elsewhere).

If we draw back, distance ourselves from the book, and consider the ending as a dream, we see an obvious pattern. Lazarus is doubly present, of course--as Woody Smith, a boy who loves his mother, and as Theodore Bronson, who sexually enjoys her. This splitting of one person is common in dreams. The long episode in which Woody keeps Maureen and Theodore from their consummation (pp. 551-580) may be read either as an Oedipal subplot, in which Theodore is the father-figure, or (more correctly, I believe) as an image of Lazarus' ambivalence about committing incest. He thinks he knows himself--"He knew that 'incest' was a religious concept, not a scientific one, and the last twenty years had washed away in his mind almost the last trace of his tribal taboo. What was left...made Maureen more enticingly forbidden..." (p. 506)--but his id and superego may be more at odds than he imagines.

Does Lazarus compete with his father for his mother's favours? Maureen, interestingly enough, does not see any conflict. (Freud never did understand women.) She comments, "Beloved, my idea of heaven would be to take both you and Brian to bed at once--and do my best to make you both happy. Not that I ever can. But I can dream about it...and will" (p. 576). The final word in that sentence may be considered a pun (with a triple meaning, if its Renaissance meaning is counted in)--again, typical of psychoanalytic dream analysis.

However, the double consummation does not take place. I would like to suggest that not only the son is doubled in this dream but also the father. One father, Captain Smith, is an ambivalent figure, both good and bad, and thus close to real fathers: he gives the pass that allows Private Bronson the incest, but he also arranges for his lusting son to be sent to France and the war. The second father, the Lieutenant, is wholly angry, for by this point the incest has been committed. That commanding officers are father figures is obvious, that one gives place to the other in this dream is also clear, that Lazarus is punishing himself, that he is the only dreamer, is implied by the solipsistic vision which follows his death.

Is that the end of the myth? No, for Oedipus blinds himself and then is sent forth to wander. Perhaps Lazarus' death is the equivalent here of the blinding. But Lazarus is raised from the dead. His sisters rescue him--his sisters, who are also derived from him and, hence, are in the sense his daughters--Ismene and Antigone in the myth, Lapis and Lorelei in the novel. Lazarus has fulfilled his Oedipal desire for his mother; Thebes has been ravaged by plague, or World War I has been fought, but Lazarus has survived mysteriously, from a grove in Colonus or from the French battlefield. All true gods, or solipsistic dreamers, die and are reborn.

Thus it seems to me that Time Enough for Love should be read by anyone who wants to find the delayed but impressive climax--the sexual climax--of John W. Campbell's golden age of science-fiction.

The Promise

Don't buy her purple.
Even a purple flower on a
Birthday
Card. She says it eats
The message right away. And purple
Veins are repellent, too close to
Death, too close to Life, to the cord,
The door, the final
Strangulation.

Even the wine in the glass
Bottom. The faint
Innocence of that nearly
Purple border of the
Artichoke
Heart.
The diagrams of digestive
Tracts. They make her shudder,
Remember
Something to do with a baby,
Something to do with a new dress.
There was this bargain,
This choice.

Don't buy her purple,
Nothing at all. If you do
And if it's a dress, she will give it
To Salvation Army collectors, put it
In their box, let it bleed on them
And leave herself
Alone
To wash.

-- Christene Cosgriffe Meyers --

The Translator

I am looking for something
Without asking I
walk into a mouth not

my own
over a tongue
whose taste buds

are as large
as cabbages
I step carefully

among them
as if in between
the narrow rows

of a garden
I kneel
beside two thin rows

which have grown together
Gently I slip
my hands between them

Parting them
I expose
a small stone

the heart
of what can't be said

-- Fredric Matteson --

MF: A Separable Meaning

by

Jean Kennard

(University of New Hampshire)

> Communication has been the whatness of the communication. For separable meaning go to the professors, whose job it is to make a meaning out of anything.
>
> Anthony Burgess, MF.

In his novel, MF (New York, 1971), Anthony Burgess uses fantasy to dramatize the basic unity of a complex universe. At the time of an interview with Thomas Churchill, Burgess was working on MF. He described the novel in this way:

> I want to write a structuralist novel. The first of the structuralist novels, I hope, based on the Lévi-Strauss theatre of the correlation between language and social forms. So that I want to exploit the Algonquin legend, the boy who was bound to commit incest because he could answer all the riddles correctly, which is a direct tie-up with Oedipus.[1]

Burgess' myth is the story of Miles Faber whose search for the works of a little known poet, Sib Legeru, leads him to answering riddles set by monsters and birds, and ultimately to incest. As the double connotation of his initials suggests, the two implications are interwoven from the beginning. The initials stand for Miles Faber, which, if taken as Latin and translated, could be read to mean a "soldier in the service of the craftsman," perhaps a way of describing a riddle-solver, and also, of course, for mother-fucker.

MF is an incredibly difficult book; Burgess has more than fulfilled the prophecy he made to Jim Hicks in 1968:

> The sort of things I write will be more and more involuted, more and more difficult, less and less salable. This just has to be. You get fed up with existing technique. You have to do something more daring.[2]

Burgess has dared to put the reader in the position of solving a whole series of riddles; not just those that Miles has to solve, but the riddles of the book itself. The reader is obviously intended to be placed in a position parallel to that of Miles. MF is full of scraps of foreign languages: Sanskrit, Welsh, Italian, Indonesian; of conundrums, some of which Burgess has invented and some of which belong in folklore; of palinlogues; of every possible kind of word game.

To understand what Burgess is attempting here it is helpful to refer to two comments in his book on Joyce, who, after all, practiced many of these games before him. The first concerns the significance of riddles, and talks of the relationship between the mystereies of the cosmos and those of language. To Burgess, as to Joyce, there is more than a metaphorical connexion between them:

> The difficulties of Ulysses and, very much more, of Finnegans Wake are not so many tricks and puzzles and deliberate obscurities to be hacked at like jungle lianas: they represent those elements which surround the immediate simplicities of human society; they stand for history, myth, and the cosmos. Thus we have not merely to accept them but to regard them as integral, just as the stars overhead are integral to the life of the man who, micturating in the open air, happens to look up at them. What is difficult in Ulysses and Tristram Shandy is meant to be difficult; the author is not coyly withholding a key.[3]

The second is a comment about himself and the relationship between languages:

> Waking literature (that is literature that bows to time and space) is the exploitation of a single language. Dream-literature, breaking down all boundaries, may be more concerned with the phenomenon of language in general. Living in the West, I have little occasion to use Malay, a tongue I know at least as well as I know French. In dreams, I am no longer in the West; with the collapse of space, compass-points have no meaning. Hence English and Malay frequently dance together, merging, becoming not two languages conjoined but an emblem of language in general.
>
> (ibid., p. 342)

In MF Burgess uses many languages as an indication of a fundamental structure basic to all languages. That the reader does not need a translation itself illustrates Burgess' point.

The relationship between apparently dissimilar languages, like the relationship between linguistic and social structures, is explained by Burgess in terms of the Levi-Strauss theory that the human mind has always operated in the same pattern. This theory is obviously in opposition to the Sartrean denial of inherent structure in man or the universe and can very easily include the possibility of, though does not necessarily imply, what Burgess calls in The Wanting Seed "a pattern-making demiurge." As Merleau-Ponty points out,

> Society itself is a structure of structures: how could there be absolutely no relationship between the linguistic system, the economic system, and the kinship system it employs?[4]

In the novel Burgess indicates the link between language and social forms by the similarity of the pronunciation of Keteki, name of the professor whose riddle Miles solves and who sends him on his journey, and Kitty Kee, nickname of Miles's sister whom he is forced to marry. Hence a parallelism is established between solving riddles and sleeping with one's sister. Throughout the novel Burgess draws together the two concepts, "postures and languages" (p.3). Pardaleos explains:

> "We condemn incest because it's the negation of social communion. It's like writing a book in which every sentence is a tautology." (p.48)

Man's drive to reproduce himself is described as one of the "great structural machines throbbing away, those messages in code" (p.37). As Burgess explains at the end of the novel: "Communication has been the whatness of the communication" (p. 241).

That the structure of two myths can be the same in two very separate cultures is in itself a confirmation of the structuralist theory. The significance of the myth used by Burgess here, a combination of the Algonquin legend and the Oedipus myth, is described by Lévi-Strauss:

> The myth has to do with the inability, for a culture which holds the belief that mankind is autochthonous, to find a satisfactory transition between this theory and the knowledge that human beings are actually born from the union of man and woman. Although the problem obviously cannot be solved, the Oedipus myth provides a kind of logical tool which relates the original problem--born from one or born from two?--to the derivative problem: born from different or born from same? By a correlation of this type, the overrating of blood relations is to the underrating of blood relations as the attempt to escape autochthony is to the impossibility to succeed in it. Although experience contradicts theory, social life validates cosmology by its similarity of structure. Hence cosmology is true.[5]

The myth cannot determine whether man is free or whether he is bounnd by the structures that parental inheritance imply. Myths do not solve a dilemma, but by creating a balance between its opposing forces, provide a way of dealing with it.

Although Burgess' own comments on MF are a convenient way into any discussion of the novel, they are not necessary in order to understand his purpose. Clues that lead back to the two myths occur throughout the novel, but are particularly numerous in the first few chapters. Three epigraphs begin the novel. The first --

> In his Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada Hans Karath recognizes no isogloss coincident with the political border along Latitude 49°N. (Simon Potter)

-- both links the ideas of language and culture together and, as we learn some pages into the novel, is a comment on the fact that the Iroquois and Algonquin tribes recognized no such border.

The second is probably a reference to Lévi-Strauss:

> C'est embêtant, dit Dieu. Quand il n'y aura plus ces Français / Il y a des choses que je fais, il n'y aura plus personne pour les comprendre.
> (Charles Péguy)

It is annoying, said God: when these French people no longer exist there won't be anybody left to understand certain things that I do.

The third is a stage direction adapted from Much Ado about Nothing:

> Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio, and Jacke Wilson

-- which is a reference to Burgess' real name, John Anthony Burgess Wilson, and presumably a comic reference to this novel.

When the novel opens Miles is staying at the Algonquin hotel; on television he hears an Indian talking about the Weskerini and the Nipissing tribes, which he remembers "are members of the great Algonquin family"(p. 14); he dreams of a toothless squaw surrounded by owls; he drinks a new soft drink called a Coco-Coho, meaning owl, which comes in an owl-shaped bottle; Kitty, his sister, keeps her money in a little china owl; the name of the woman Aderyn, who has a bird act in the circus, means owl in Welsh; her birds, who ask riddles, are named after contemporary novelists: Iris, Angus, Charles, Pamela, John, Penelope, Brigid, Anthony, Muriel, Mary, Norman, Saul, Philip, Ivy (p. 110), presumably all askers of riddles.

There are equally many references to the Oedipus myth: Loewe talks of a cocktail called a Clubfoot; Mr. Pardaleos refers to cultural taboos on incest, "Oedipus, Electra, all that" (p. 45), "This house of Atreus nonsense" (p. 50); Llew tells Miles about the time Aderyn had a man from the audience answering the birds' questions "...and if he got the answer wrong they'd all fly on to him like to peck his fucking jellies out" (p. 112); Miles smokes Dji Sam Soe cigarettes which actually exist in Indonesia and have "2, 3, 4" on the package, a translation of Dji Sam Soe; Aspinwall drinks Azzopardis' White Cane Rum, a reference to both lameness and blindness; and in case the reader has missed all this, Burgess has Miles at the end of the novel refer to Swellfoot the Tyrant, "a man with a clubfoot" who "had once answered the unanswerable and moved on to sleep with his mother" (p. 213). There are various references to people called Strauss, to Richard and Johann through titles of their compositions, and later to "Strauss and the Romantic School" (p. 219).

Burgess trains the reader to solve the riddles by demonstrating how. "Up, I am a rolling river; Down a scent - and - color giver" (p. 10) gives flower, we are told. As the novel progresses Burgess expects the reader to solve them himself, but invariably gives the answer obliquely in the following sentence. For example three riddles, the answers to which are Breath, Mouth, and Heart, are followed by the sentence, "The breath grew sour in my mouth, and my heart pumped hard" (p. 76). This is one of Burgess' methods of keeping the reader parallel to Miles, in the same relation to the experience of the novel.

In a conversation with the monstrous Gonzi halfway through the novel, Miles learns the purpose of myths.

> "Ugliness is defined in terms of beauty...But when...one is made to seem to pass out of one's own kingdom, when no normal aesthetic standard can be made to apply...Only by entry into myth can reconciliation be effected." (p. 85)

MF is the story of Miles's entry into myth and his reconciliation with the structural pattern of the great duality. In order to suggest the idea of resurrection which this implies, Burgess employs yet another myth, the Christian one. Miles was born on Christmas Eve; his twin's name is Llew or Noel; the miracle of Senta Euphorbia, which involves the emission of blood from the penis of the statue of Jesus, is foreshadowed when Miles earlier suffers the same problem on board the plane; the dead body of Llew mysteriously disappears from its hiding place; the final section of the novel contains an image of the hanged man, "That poor Greek kid hanging from a tree by a twig thrust through his foot" (p. 241).

Miles's entry into reality is defined primarily, however, in terms of freedom versus structure. The basic method of each Burgess novel is to present the reader with two visions, sometimes two antithetical world views, as in The Wanting Seed, sometimes two apparently opposed aspects of one personality, as in A Clockwork Orange, and to invite him to make a choice. The choice often proves to be a false one; the two visions are inseparable parts of the one reality. Sometimes the choice lies elsewhere, between this duality and another negative value. The great evil, in Burgess' view, is to see life as unstructured: thw world is not neutral, not simply there, but a unity composed of both good and evil.

The first vision of this novel is of Miles in New York. He has just taken part in a protest demonstration that involved having sexual intercourse in the open air with a fellow student called Carlotta Tukang. He views this as a gesture of freedom, and in a conversation with his lawyer, Loewe, the first of many lions in the novel, expresses in Existentialist terms his belief in his own freedom. "I'm a free man"(p. 10), he says to Loewe; later to himself "I could, like the imagined work of Sib Legeru, be wholly free" (p. 55). He wants "the death of form and the shipwreck of order" (p. 64) and expects to find it in the work of Sib Legeru, poet of free verse. The works of Sib Legeru are supposedly in Castita where they have been placed by Sir James Pismire. Miles is also trying to avoid a marriage with a Miss Ang, arranged by his father whose own incestuous background has led him to believe in creative miscegnation. What to his father is a way of avoiding incestuous bondage is a restriction to Miles. The careful reader is suspicious of Miles's search for reality and meaning in Sib Legeru (Sibyl Guru), from the beginning. The name Pismire and the name of Miles's substitute mother, Miss Emmett, are names of ants, those models of social organization.

Nevertheless Miles at the beginning of the novel believes he can create his own world; at this point he invents the riddles, creating word puzzles on the names of Loewe and Pardaleos. He does not appear to notice the synthetic nature of the world where man is in control, where the soup is instant, where no one enjoys violence, gets "no kicks from mugging" (p. 20), where emotions are "not to be engaged" and we must "school ourselves to new modes of feeling, unfeeling rather" (p. 21). Here the sexual impulse is perverted as in the scene with the impotent Chester and his girl Irma. It is an Electronic Village where the link between people is artificial:

> ...so the Electronic Village would become a reality, there would be no strangers; performer would greet presumed viewer in acknowledgment of electronic contact, and there would be no one-sidedness, since viewer and performer were readily interchangeable (p. 19)

This world is the lifeless neutrality that Burgess wished us to reject in A Clockwork Orange, The Wanting Seed, and Tremor of Intent.

The second vision of MF is the world of Grencjita (Green City) in Castita (Chastity), the world of doubles, paradoxes, and riddles where Miles learns the truth. It is undoubtedly significant that there are so many references to Shakespeare in the novel, for this second world functions much as the world of Shakespeare's comedies, as a place where all is put right. Miles travels to this country on a "Pluribus" run by "Unum" airlines, ex pluribus unum being a way of expressing Burgess' view of reality, and on a boat belonging to two homosexuals, Pine Chandeleur and Aspinwall. They seem to be examples of the two worlds, New York and Castita: as homosexuals in a Burgess novel they belong to the neutral world; yet they also represent the world of paradox. Burgess makes a point of stressing how different the two men are, says they "were free, though in desperate sexual bondage to each other" (p. 55), and has Pine Chandeleur wear a shirt upon which are printed such religious paradoxes as "The more God is in all things, the more He is outside them" (p. 58).

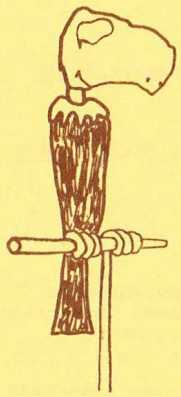
Castita is more obviously a fantasy world. Here a religious procession turns into a circus, monsters ask riddles, mem meet their doubles. Hints, clues, and the fact of the fantasy itself keep the reader in position of riddle solver. The most important doubles in Castita are the two men, Z. Fonanta and Mr. Gonzi, who ask Miles riddles at the end of an open-air meeting soon after his arrival in the city. The answers to the riddles they ask are the male and female sex organs, the yin/yang of reality. and these two men are representatives of the opposing halves of the duality.

Zoon Fonanta, we learn, means the talking animal, man. In the novel he is Miles's grandfather, the boss who is in control of everything: "Dr. Fonanta sets the pattern like" (p. 220). The pattern of the mind of man, In Lévi-Strauss terms, is universal and is the origin of all. Mr. Gonzi, Italian for fool, is the representative of darkness, Mr. Dunkel in the novel. Leonine and deformed, he is obviously intended to take the place of the sphinx in the myth; the riddle that Miles is finally forced to answer in his own name, "Gonzi," perhaps suggesting the complete self-absorption, that inward turning, incest partly represents.

The other important set of doubles Miles meets is his own brother and sister, Llew and Kitty. Miss Emmett calls Llew "The bad Miles" (p. 168). Miles, like Alex in A Clockwork Orange, has both good and bad within him. Llew, another Lion, is identical to Miles in appearance, different only in voice and background. Miles dislikes the similarity because of Llew's violence and vulgarity, and welcomes the minor differences: "To me his voice...was the hateful blessed key to a return to the total variousness of life against which he and I were blaspheming" (p. 102). Ironically Llew shares Miles's philosophy of life, is son of Aderyn, the bird woman in the circus, and does an escape act for which he is billed "Llew the Free." Miles and Llew become interchangeable after Miles has murdered Llew for attempting to rape his sister and thus is forced to sleep with his sister himself. According to the myth, the underrating of blood relations, the murder of kin, is balanced by the overrating of blood relations, incest:

> "You," Aderyn said, "are Miles Faber. That girl is your sister. You have committed the most deadly sin, and it must be only to cover up the twin of that sin which is murder." (p. 220)

Meanwhile Miles has discovered the works of Sib Legeru, coincidentally concealed by Sir James Pismire in the house where his sister is staying. Coincidence in MF is indicative of a patterned universe, not of a universe ruled by chance. The poems of Sib Legeru appear to Miles to illustrate complete freedom, as he had expected them to. But, as Fonanta explains later to Miles, they are in fact structured "on the meanest and most irrelevant of taxonomies, they derive their structures from the alphabetic arrangements of encyclopedias and dictionaries" (p. 234). They are also creations of Fonanta. The very name Sib Legeru means in Anglo Saxon to sleep with one's kin, or incest, so Miles in search of freedom had been also in search of incest. Incest as taboo breaking is a false freedom, just as the works of Sib Legeru are pseudo-literary works. "It is man's job to impose manifest order on the universe, not to yearn for Chapter Zero of the Book of Genesis" (p. 235).



Miles learns also that Tukang means craftsman, as does Faber, so that his initial act of protest with Carlotta Tukang was in a sense incestuous too. "The whole of the stupid past is our father" (p.57), so in a sense exogamy is incest. Miles finally recognizes that "nobody's free" (p. 10), "Meaning not free, not wholly free" (p.236). He accepts marriage with Miss Ang, who is presumably the Ethel of the final chapter of the novel, and the reader learns that Miles is black. Their marriage, then, is an example of "creative miscegnation."

The statement of the book is a statement about the duality and mystery of the structure of the universe. The nature of a paradox is its unanswerability:

> For order has both to be and not to be challenged, this being the anomalous condition of the sustention of the cosmos. Rebel becomes hero; witch becomes saint. Exogamy means disruption and also stability; incest means stability and also disruption. You've got to have it both ways. (p. 214)

The universe is meaningful; man in search of total liberty will only find prison.

Burgess says, "...the story I've told is more true than plausible" (p. 240), and he reverses the self-conscious art technique to ask us to believe in the fantasy. "Believe that I said what follows" (p.3) says Miles at the beginning, later adding, "I recognize the difficulty my reader is now going to experience in accepting what I wish to be accepted as a phenomenon of real life and not as a mere property of fiction" (p. 100). Burgess, like Joyce, has used his novel to show that the disparate parts of human experience are one. There are no borders between language, behavior, geography, anatomy. There are also hints that MF, like Joyce's Portrait, follows other structural schemes. There are a suspiciously large number of trees referred to. There is a suggestion of the life cycle: we start with figs (the big-bosomed lady, F. Carica) and progress to milk producers (Euphorbia). And what of all the lions? The parts of the body? Some riddles, as Burgess warns, must be left unanswered.

FOOTNOTES

1) Thomas Churchill, "An Interview with Anthony Burgess," The Malahat Review, January 1971, pp. 103-127.

2) Jim Hicks, "Eclectic Author of his own Five-Foot Shelf," Life, 25 October, 1968, pp. 89-98.

3) Anthony Burgess, Rejoyce (New York, 1966), pp. 26-27.

4) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "From Mauss to Claude Lévi-Strauss," Signs, Richard Claverton McCleary, trans. (Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 118.

5) Structural Anthropology, Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grandfest Schoepf, trans. (New York. 1963), p. 216.

Editor's note: This article, based on a chapter in Jean Kennard's Number and Nightmare (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1975), is used by permission of author and publisher.

Mid-Winter:

madness, the snow
thickens, the sky
disappears in gruel there
is only the grey
speckled now, the flakes
of seconds falling
around us . we do
not enjoy this weather

who could blame us? grey
flaked, everything
hidden inside

& out .

Kohoutek Falling

Kohoutek falling
grazed our sun
then went the other way

a boomerang thrown out to play
by some celestial gamesman
thrown awry
across our sky
to what end
that we bend
our eyes to ancient script
the fabric of our universe ript

again?

-- Douglas Barbour --

A Friend Of The Indians Gets His Facts Wrong

by

Richard Brenzo

A. Hyatt Verrill: The Real Americans, New York: Putnam Co., 1974.

Recently, in an article entitled "American Writers vs. American Indians" (Margins, October-November, 1974), I stated that A. Hyatt Verrill's The Real Americans used "many gross inaccuracies to make whites look even worse than they were." This statement was questioned by the editor of the present journal (a reader of Verrill's science-fiction), who doubted the possibility of portraying the white man as worse than he actually was. His question made me rethink my criticism of the book, and although my opinion of it is still low, I realize my assertion was vague and probably inaccurate itself. I hope the following explanation of the errors in Verrill's view of history will clarify my statement and also shed some light on current white-Indian relations.

Since Verrill is "officially and by Indian rules" (vii) an Indian, since his book is very sympathetic to Indians, and since there is no doubt that Indians have been cruelly mistreated and deceived, how could anyone criticize a book which espoused this view? The answer is that historical truth always teaches us something valuable. However, half- and untruths "sympathetic" to our position are more dangerous than hostile lies; if we believe our own propaganda, we are unable to deal with reality.

The sheer scope of the book creates problems. Verrill claims it "is not intended to be a scientific ethnological work but is for the purpose of conveying a better understanding of the Indians of the United States, to tell of their lives, customs, arts, and industries, their psychology and mental reactions, their religious myths and their legends..." (vii). Unfortunately, he tries to cover all of this, plus history and anthropology, in one volume of 301 pages. As a source for any information, the book is highly incomplete, the only things not handled better in other works being accounts of the author's own experiences and friendships with other Indians. However, lack of space does not explain why Verrill, in an appendix of "Brief Biographies of Famous Indians," includes many obscure persons, but excludes the Mohawk Joseph Brant, probably the greatest Indian leader of the eighteenth century; John Ross, leader of the Cherokees during their removal; the Creek Alexander McGillivray; or the Delaware Teedyuscung. Nor does lack of space explain or excuse the historical discrepancies, since only a page more of print could have cleared up all the errors.

Although Verrill is definitely a partisan of the Indians, he tries to present a balanced account of history. He admits Indian atrocities, and points out how intertribal rivalries have always been exploited by Europians in their conquests. Cortez in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru, for example, were given essential aid by native tribes in their conquests of the Aztec and Inca empires. However, the author maintains that most Indian cruelty and torture merely followed the example of whites (a questionable statement), while white scalp bounties encouraged what was once a very limited practice (undoubtedly true). But Verrill's partisanship leads him to seize upon untruths that dramatize white cruelty and Indian innocence. To criticize this does not excuse white cruelty or deceit, since the truth, rather than weakening Verrill's argument, would have made it stronger and far more relevant.

Some of Verrill's mistakes are simply confusions of separate events. It is not true, for instance, that King Philip was killed during an attack on an Indian fort by the English, an attack that was supposedly the decisive battle of King Philip's war. Nor did the Seminole War begin because Osceola was seized by the Americans after agreeing to parley under a flag of truce; this outrageous abuse of the white truce flag actually happened two years after the beginning of the war.

Some of the errors are based on misconceptions many writers have shared with Verrill. He claims that Chief Joseph was the leader of the Nez Perce band which repeatedly defeated and outmaneuvered forces of soldiers and civilians during its famous flight to Canada in 1877. This view was dramatized in a recent television show. We know now that although Joseph was a leader within this band, he was not its overall chief and did not plan its military strategy. By the time the Nez Perces were forced to surrender, however, the most powerful chiefs--Looking Glass, Rainbow, Ollokot, Toohoolhoolzote--had been killed. Since only Joseph was left to surrender his people, and since he worked for their rights until his death, it has been assumed he was their main chief throughout the flight. Certainly the truth does not detract from the accomplishment of the Nez Perces nor does it lessen the stature of Joseph, yet it does emphasize the enormous leadership drain suffered by Indians in their conflicts with white men.

Other passages that come to mind are more ideologically charged. In the chapter "Atrocities, Tortures, and Massacres," which contains Verrill's most glaring misinterpretations of history, he relates how ninety Christian Delawares were murdered in Ohio by an American force led by Colonel William Crawford. Later, while leading another expedition, Crawford was captured and tortured by other Delawares, which "seems fitting retribution for his deeds" (36). In fact, Crawford was not with the first force, which committed the massacre. No other writer I have read but Verrill ever claimed Crawford was the leader, and the author seems to be ignorant of what everyone knew in 1782, the year of the massacre. The Colonel was no liberal, but was hardly the brute Verrill portrays. Actually, the only man who bore any real responsibility for the genocide directed against Indians and who ever suffered a "fitting retribution" was George Armstrong Custer. Verrill's attempt to show how Crawford got his obscures the fact that all the wars Indians have fought against white men have only once succeeded in killing someone whose death could have mattered. Indian leaders, like the Nez Perce chiefs, must be on the line of battle to fulfil their roles, but American leaders usually work from offices far behind the lines. There was little poetic justice in our Indian wars.

This brings me to another error, relating to Custer's reckless attack on Black Kettle's camp on the Washita in 1868. Verrill correctly reports that the Seventh Cavalry killed over "one hundred men, women, and children" in its attack, but then claims that "not a shot was fired or an arrow discharged by an Indian" (35). Now although Custer had not been attacked first, having taken the Indian camp completely by surprise, the warriors rallied quickly, surrounding and eventually annihilating nineteen soldiers under Captain Joel Elliot, who had gotten detached from the main force. Custer made no serious effort to rescue Elliot, perhaps feeling he should retreat while he had an overwhelming victory and fearing that to go after him would mean riding into an ambush. Custer's retreat certainly spared himself any further dangerous fighting. Later, one of Custer's officers, Captain Frederick Benteen, wrote a newspaper article denouncing Custer's betrayal of Elliot. Benteen was on the Little Big Horn expedition with Custer in 1876, despising his commander as heartily as ever.

The true story of Washita is highly significant in a story of American history and current events. Verrill's picture of an unresisting band of Indians slaughtered by whites focuses sympathy on Black Kettle's innocent Cheyennes, but the simple picture is misleading. First, the truth confirms the military talent and presence of mind of Indian Warriors, who responded to surprise far more quickly than white soldiers. The American government has always expected superior technology will demoralize and crush primitive savages, and its armies have repeatedly been surprised by the fast reactions and adaptability of Indians. To suppose that Wounded Knee Church or the Alexian novitiate in Gresham, Wisconsin could have been stormed with few casualties among the attacking forces is dangerous reasoning; Indians were and are expected to fight to the death, and to inflict heavy casualties. Custer himself was killed because he could not learn a lesson from Elliot's fate.

Second, Custer's actions at the Washita show that racism springs from hatred, fear, and egotism, which are ultimately colourblind. Custer gloried in being a member of the white race, but his behavior towards Elliot proves that he valued his own prestige more than loyalty to other white men. White efforts to subjugate Indians (or Blacks) roll blindly over any other whites unfortunate enough to get in the way. To an extent, Colonel Crawford was a victim of this phenomenon; he suffered the brunt of Delaware fury because he was the first American leader captured after the massacre of the Christian Indians. A National Guardsman on duty at Gresham reported to me that his fellow soldiers were more afraid of an attack by local whites than by the Indians inside the novitiate. He realized that the Guard was seen as a tool of the Menomonee Warrior's Society, and would not have been spared in an attack by white vigilantes. Leaders who seek to rally whites against other races are usually self-aggrandizing; for their personal triumphs they are willing members of any race.

Specific historical errors can be refuted specifically, but the largest failing of Verrill's book is really one of emphasis. Writers often get caught up in the debate of "which side behaved the worse?" Did Indians always practice sadistic tortures or did they learn them from white men? Were whites driven to committing atrocities only after provocation by Indian murders? Which race was more treacherous? Wouldn't it have eliminated a lot of problems just to kill off all those savages and have done with it? Ultimately such questions are unanswerable. No matter who committed what atrocities, our treatment of Indians today is criminal and inexcusable. We've forgiven Italy, Germany, and Japan for World War Two, and we're willing to work for detente with China and the Soviet Union, but we haven't forgiven the Indians for resisting our claim to our "homeland."

History concentrates on the wars, yet most Indian defeats were not military. The wars usually came after the Indian cause was already lost. White men have used political, economic and biological weapons (often with an implicit threat of force) to conquer Indians, and it is necessary to realize that these are the weapons used overwhelmingly in the present. The political and legal weapons were and are legal chicanery, the bending and breaking of treaties, playing off of tribal factions against each other, and manipulation of land, water, and hunting rights. Alcohol has been a major biological weapon used to demoralize and weaken Indians. And epidemics, spread deliberately or accidentally, decimated many tribes at precisely the moment it was most advantageous to white advancement. We have crippled Indians economically by destroying their food supplies and settling them on the poorest leftover land. At its most dramatic and cinematically appealing, the conquest of the Indian meant scalps, warfare, massacre, pillage, and rape. That picture is not false, but it omits the more insidious aspects of the struggle, the non-military issues that were decisive then and provide the most important battlefield for Indian militants today. We have no motivation to appreciate the subleties of the issues with which Native Americans deal today; we prefer to reduce everything to "noble Indian vs. greedy white man," which conceals the essential details of the truth.

This point may seem far removed from Verrill's subject, but it is not. Verrill wrote at a time when Americans were more interested in the Indians' colourful past than in the harshness of the present. His chapter "Facts and Figures" discusses contemporary conditions, noting Indian poverty with sorrow, but presenting the statistics generally without comment while looking hopefully to the future. Verrill is morally indignant about much of the past, but is silent on the abuses of the present. The reader interested in information on current (and past) non-military aspects of white-Indian relations should read one of Vine DeLoria's books (Custer Died for Your Sins; Trail of Broken Treaties; We Talk, You Listen), Dale Van Every's Disinherited, N. Scott Momaday's House Made of Dawn, or Akwasasne Notes, a bimonthly newspaper that is the very best source of information about current activities and problems among all tribes in the United States, Canada, and Latin America.

True, Verrill's book is not scholarly. But then neither are most of the books that have influenced and shaped white American attitudes towards Indians. I would not expect from Verrill more than he can deliver; however, the scope of his book suggests he feels capable of delivering far more than he actually can. And it is always fair to expect a writer to deliver the truth.

The Red and the Black

by

Yogi Borel

Perley Poore Sheehan, The One Gift, North Hollywood: Fantasy House, 1974.

Here again is the theme of primitive virtue vs. civilized degeneracy, exemplified in a tale of an Indian rescuing a kidnapped white girl in the Florida swamps. Thus we have the "high code of morals" practiced by a Seminole tribe, as contrasted with the "immorality" of party-going dilettantes--and even our civilized criminals, the "manicured crooks" of Miami and Palm Beach, are viewed as inferior to the rough-hewn but ethically pure bank-robbers that hide in the Everglades. "I'll tell you, sir, that they are men"--i.e., exemplars of virtue who would not harm an unprotected girl.

Mr. Sheehan's Indians, of the 19th century story-book variety, utter phrases like "I no do it" and "No 'flaid. You well," and refer to modern technology--cars, motorboats, etc.--as "white man's magic." The kidnapper is one Prince Shuiski (from his description as "oily" we know at once that he can't be trusted), who is not, the author emphasizes, a genuine prince and so presumably lacks that noblesse oblige granted to persons of high birth. The white hero, Lieutenant Lathrop, appears near the middle of the story to deliver the aforementioned pronouncement on the ethical varieties of crooks and at the very end to fly the girl out of danger. His seaplane, initially stuck in the mud, is released through courtesy of the Indian hero, Blue Otter, who uses his One Gift to induce a Jehovah-like spewing of the waters to float the plane for a takeoff.

This story is the first in a series of facsimile reprints from Fantasy House, but its only fantastic element--if we discount Blue Otter's spiritual communion with his tribal medicine man--is the watery miracle at the end. Indeed, the author's most conspicuous "fantasy," his mixture of old and new-world religions, seems accidental. I can't believe that the Hebraic Creator of All was intended to coexist with the Indian snake god, "the great serpent," that is invoked for the Big Flood.

Gift contains at least one good scene--Blue Otter's detection of white men, before he actually sees them, from the furtive behavior of animals in his immediate area--but in general it just deplicates what has been said more completely by a long series of writers from James Fenimore Cooper to Edgar Rice Burroughs. I regret not being able to endorse this booklet, since the project that it apparently represents--reprints from Argosy, All Story, etc.--would seem to be worthwhile. But from this particular item one might infer that these magazines already have been so thoroughly searched that nothing of value is left over.

Editor's note: The preceding was written for Mike Everling's Moonrigger, but its temporary co-editor, George Ness, suddenly left town, taking all MSS and artwork with him. (Mike received only a postcard explaining that the world didn't need still another fanzine.) The review is dated--Fantasy House also having been discontinued--but I decided to print it for its Irish view of American Indians--and because Yogi is a friend of mine.

Speaking Worlds to Each Other

by

Douglas Barbour

(University of Alberta)

Ian Watson, The Embedding, London: Gollancz, 1973 / New York: Scribner's, 1975.

Ian Watson is a young British writer who, with his very first novel, The Embedding, has staked a place for himself at the very forefront of s-f today. For once, Mr. Blurb is correct: this is "an astonishingly accomplished first novel," and not just for s-f either.

Set only a few decades in the future, The Embedding plays with more concepts, and does so more daringly, than many authors cover in an entire career. Mr. Watson has taken the linguistic theories of Noam Chomsky, the anthropological studies of mythic thinking of the great French anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strausse, as well as current political theory and practice, especially that of the great powers, and extrapolated them in some very interesting and strange directions.

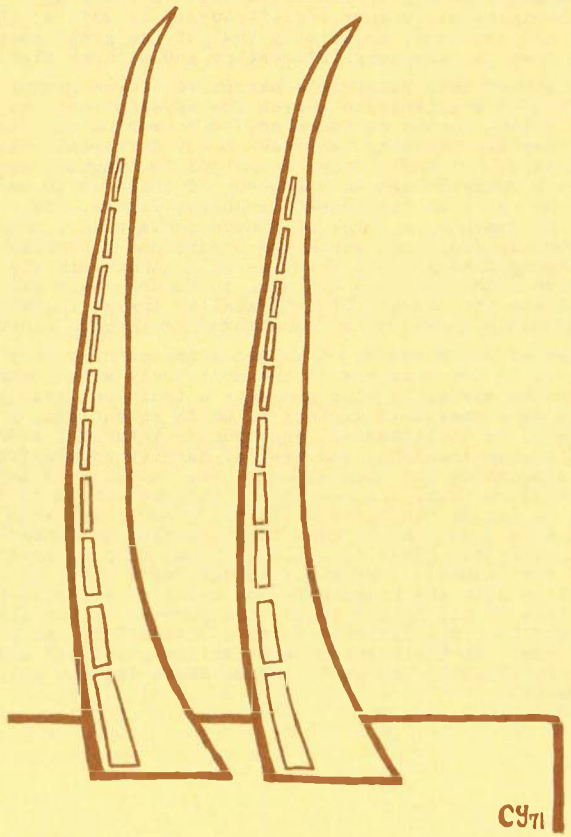
Here is the basis of this remarkable narrative: three groups of people are absorbed in a scientific search for ways to reach beyond words and the conscious levels of the mind, to some kind of ultimate reality, though they are pursuing this search for different reasons and in different ways. So: Chris Sole, whose job is linguistics, is trying to achieve a breakthrough with a group of children to whom he is teaching what he calls an "embedded" language; Pierre, his friend, is working with the Xemahoa, a tribe of Amazon Indians who, under the influence of a certain drug, can speak and understand a complex language normally incomprehensible to them; as well, there are the Sp'thra, who arrive from the stars and who, to ensure their own survival, offer to trade the secrets of interstellar travel in return for the widest possible knowledge of communication through language.

I am astonished at the sureness of Watson's grasp in so many fields. For even as he presents one of the most truly alien-seeming aliens from among the stars, he also presents a truly believable Amazon tribe as well as a realistic variety of white scientists, politicians, military men, revolutionaries, and counter-insurgent sadistic secret police. His understanding, and use, of Marxist revolutionary thinking is as interesting and comprehensive as, though less important to the whole story than, his scientific extrapolations on the use of new drugs to induce new modes of thinking and communication. And, unsatisfied with just the one idea of attempting to "embed" new language structures in the kinds of children brought up in specially designed "alien" environments (certainly enough for a novel by itself), he ties it in with the linguistic and mythical importance of the ritual practices of his Amazon tribe, the purpose of the alien Signal Traders, and the imperialistic tactics of the U.S. and U.S.S.R., especially the former, in their attempts to stifle political unrest in South America by flooding the whole Amazon Basin for the military government of Brazil.

What is so good about this book is that he succeeds in welding all these disparate elements into a single, extremely thought-provoking whole. I don't want to give away the ending, but in many ways Watson appears to agree with Robert Heinlein's definition of man as an indefatigable conqueror-type. He tends to see this, however, as tragic rather than noble, possibly quite evil rather than basically good (if only for survival purposes). His handling of the theme of political expedience on the parts of the great powers in the face of a self-generated crisis is appallingly realistic and guaranteed to keep you awake thinking about the implications.

This is not a perfect book by any means. I hope Ian Watson will endeavour to improve his style, pushing it well beyond mere "good writing." I'm sure he can. I think some of his characterizations lack depth, but in the swirl of ideas the characters live through this is hardly noticeable. These are areas for improvement, then, but he already handles them better than 90% of his s-f confreres.

The Embedding is damned good s-f, but more than that it is a well-written, extremely provocative fiction that deserves to be read by anyone interested in thoughtful writing. Its insights are salutary reminders to us all of just how wide the range of human behavior is. Ian Watson, if he can continue to mature as a writer, moving upwards from this remarkable beginning, will long be a writer to pay attention to. And even if he never writes another word, The Embedding will remain a very fine s-f novel, indeed.



Take Twenty

by

Darrel Schweitzer

I'm told that when movie makers botch a scene they stop, go back, and do it again. "Take two!" the director yells, and if it doesn't work that time it's take three, take four, and so on. Eventually they get it right. A lot of commercial writers do very much the same thing with their fiction, with the slight exception that they publish all the intermediate versions. They aren't trying to get the thing right as much as they want to make money and sell as many stories as possible.

At the very worst this causes the author's product to be a dull rehash that has long since lost the inspiration of the original work. But at best the basic story can grow and improve itself, so that the result is a polished, thoroughly rehearsed work, akin to the scene the director finally got right. For example, Clark Ashton Smith wrote many stories about a man who encounters a malevolent supernatural or otherwise unusual force, and is destroyed by it, after a futile attempt to flee which is thwarted by his own fascination with the agent of his demise. Smith's characters were drawn to their dooms like moths to a flame. (And in one of his best stories, "The City of the Singing Flame," things were this way literally.) "The End of the Story" and "The Vaults of Yoh Vombis" were both identical, even though one was set in 18th century France and the other on Mars.

Michael Moorcock didn't start this way, but he is allowing himself to become a writer of this sort. With The Bull and the Spear he once again tells the story of the Eternal Champion, whose story began with the Elric stories of the early 1960s. Quickly, and probably because of economic necessity, Moorcock allowed himself to become typed. A Moorcock Hero is easily spotted: he is an outcast, usually the last of a lost race superior to normal mankind, who has some kind of physical disability, plus grave doubts about the rightness of his deeds. He broods a lot, but when he's not brooding he's out saving the universe from Chaos and the minions thereof, usually with the aid of a magical weapon, the first of which was Elric's semi-sentient blade Stormbringer. Moorcock must be aware of what he's doing, since he has even gone through the trouble of trying to whitewash the whole thing by having all his heroes be reincarnations of one another, but it still doesn't work. Edgar Rice Burroughs could have just as well tried to make John Carter, Carson Napier, and everyone else reincarnations of one another.

The Bull and the Spear is a Moorcock fantasy, and it has all the stock elements of one. The hero, in addition to being yet another manifestation of the Eternal Champion who is fated to fight mankind's battles everywhere, is Prince Corum Jhaelen Irsei, the protagonist of an earlier trilogy, The King of Swords, The Queen of Swords, and The Knight of Swords, and he's off saving the world again. Since he already dispatched Chaos in his first trilogy, he begins his second by taking on the Fyoi Myore, the Cold Folk, a group of seven giants who accidentally dropped out of another dimension onto the earth. (Not necessarily our earth, just one of the many among the Fifteen Planes.) They are conquering everything with the aid of vegetable men, zombies, and the monstrous Hounds of Herenos.

Everywhere they go they bring eternal winter. At least one of the Cold Folk can literally freeze a man in his tracks by merely gazing at him. Corum is called into this world, which is his future and possibly another time track, where he is believed in as a legendary hero. He goes on a quest in search of the spear Bryionak, the Bull of Grinanaz, and the dread isle of Hy-Breasil, where he must meet the dwarf-smith Goffanon (who is eight feet tall, by the way. "You're a dwarf?" remarks Corum) and in the long run he sets things right. Of course there is more brooding. The role of the Eternal Champion is a hard one...

Moorcock, I think, could be a genuinely great fantasy writer. Even when he's not working hard he is far superior to most Sword and Sorcery scribblers. The Bull and the Spear may not be a masterpiece, but so far it is the best of the many rewrites of the same story. All you have to do is read this one, not the numerous other drafts of the same thing by Moorcock and the hundred abortions by the likes of Gardner F. Fox. Damn it, I wish that Moorcock would strike oil in his back yard, or the British Arts Council would grant him a million poinds, so he could take his time and write what he is capable of. If he spent a decade rather than a month on one of his books, he might be able to produce a fantasy as important as Gormenghast or Lord of the Rings. Great work requires time, though, and commercial writers have to write quickly in order to keep food on the table. After all these rehearsals Moorcock has produced a thoroughly streamlined version of his basic story, which is quick and easy to read. (I was amazed at how fast I was reading it, a tribute to both clear writing and lack of intellectual depth) and offers only glimmerings of what it might have been.

Moorcock presents wonders, epic journeys, and battles, but they seem superficial. The main flaw in all his fantasy is lack of mythic depth. The scenes of invocation, where Corum is summoned to aid the people against the Cold Folk can't help but remind us of the myth of the sleeping Arthur, who will return at the time of his country's greatest need. Yet how vast and how rich is the Arthurian cycle compared to a Moorcock quickie!

What we have here is a book that falls about halfway between Hack the Barbarian and an important work of fantasy. Moorcock shows the basic sense required to write good fantasy. He can assume a different, more primitive and animistic worldview, and he knows how to give men, beasts, and events an archetypal quality. In The Bull and the Spear he does all that to the point of dabbling. He doesn't seem to be intensely involved with the story, and it all lacks any real conviction. There is one brilliant scene at the end which shows what Moorcock is capable of doing. After the Bull of Crinanass (about which we know nothing save that it is a big bovine and that it has a vaguely hinted at marvelous history) has clobbered the Fyoi Myore the beast bids Corum slay it with the spear, that the land might be renewed. So Corum drives Bryionak into the side of the Bull and the creature runs off, its blood pouring over the earth. Everywhere it passes, the world is then restored to greenery, as the winter of the Fyoi Myore is dispelled and summer comes again. Basically what we have here is the classic fertility sacrifice found in virtually all cultures. Moorcock realizes the importance of the Bull as a fertility symbol, but he makes no use of it beyond that single scene. He also incorporates elements of the Welsh mythology (there is even a race called Sidhi involved), plus a concept very similar to the Hindu maya, but all these elements, which would have been the main driving forces of a great fantasy, are superficial hangers-on.

I suppose such a book might have resulted if Tolkien, Peake, or Eddison had been commercial writers. Don't you wish Moorcock weren't?

Pulp on the Rocks

by

Steven Dimeo

The Ice People, René Barjavel. Pyramid, 1973.

René Barjavel in his recently translated The Ice People strains to unearth the Rip Van Winkle motif and succeeds only in resurrecting a story that would have been better had it remained buried. The book is not only scientifically but literarily imbecilic.

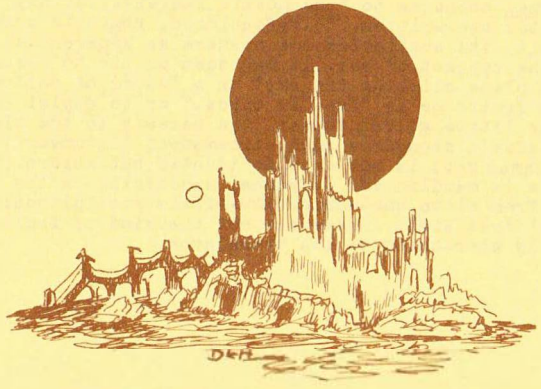
In trying to write a story about a couple from an advanced civilization who are brought back to life after spending 900,000 years beneath the Antarctic ice, Barjavel isn't content merely to demonstrate his ignorance about cryogenics but also feels an inexplicable compulsion to show off how little he knows about the fundamentals of good writing. Bouncing courageously back and forth from point of view to point of view with an abandon that for all its carelessness deserves a rather curious kind of admiration, he begins by focusing on the appearance and character of Dr. Simon, a physician on duty at Camp Victor who is the first to see the frozen couple. Even the italicized first person insertions in the third person narrative suggest the concentration will be primarily on him. But all hopes for a characteristically modern in-depth character portrayal melt away when like so much pulp science-fiction, the author draws back too far to encompass not only other characters at the base but invariably the entire world which naturally means one of those obligatory sessions at the U.N. In the end even Barjavel's potentially interesting gimmick of switching to the Vignont family in France which operates as a kind of Greek chorus echoing public sentiment, merely underscores the shotgun effect of his narration. When the revived Gondawan female Elea visually relates her own story, these inconsistencies strain even the most tolerant imagination. By means of a device that allows everyone to see her own mental images, she chronologically recounts her life up to and including the time she is rendered unconscious and frozen. In effect Barjavel ignores the literary heritage of mainstream fiction that has found such detailed sequential rembrances, complete with dialogue and all, foreign to normal consciousness. He merely wanted to include another story and chose the most awkward way to introduce it. But when Elea begins seeing with "unconscious eyes" what happens just before she succumbs to near absolute zero, he overextends himself beyond the more relative zeroes of poetic license.

In addition to such technical inadequacies, the descriptions that Library Journal compares to "the poetic imagery...of Ray Bradbury" are vastly overwritten. "Old-fashioned, romantic science-fiction" to a fault, its subtleties are nowhere as apparent as when Barjavel treats the subject of sex. It may seem poetic to describe an erection as "a plane climbing the sky" or a "sword of desire," to see breasts as fruits or as "free as birds," or to depict female pubescence as "the little golden forest, the gateway to the closed valley"--but by today's standards such circumspect circumvention (and from a Frenchman yet) is not only antiquated but absurd. Every profession of love is maudlin and overdone, especially in the first person fragments from Simon who--naturally--falls precipitously in love with Elea on first sight. These are not the kind of faults that can be readily attributed to the translator.

Every profession of love is maudlin and overdone, especially in the first person fragments from Simon who--naturally--falls precipitously in love with Elea on first sight. These are not the kind of faults that can be readily attributed to the translator.

When characterization amounts to nothing more than one person being totally in love with another or someone being violently evil and all of them indiscriminately marked by a lot of distinctively individual sweating, it's clear that plot was meant to dominate. But even here Barjavel shows an embarrassing amateurishness. Following a standard unwittingly observed by A.E. van Vogt who is at least more imaginative, he never ties up loose ends like a mysterious case of measles referred to at the beginning but never mentioned again. A universal translator that at one point translates the epithet "Nuts!" as "Bolts!" can still transcend inevitable idiomatic idiosyncracies enough to translate--with considerable convenience to the novelist--Gondawan into every contemporary language. And always the story is rank with gratuitous sex and violence. (For some reason, while Barjavel will poetically pull away from detailed sexual descriptions, he is not adverse to providing us with a lengthy paragraph devoted to the grotesqueness of someone freezing instantly to death.) When the nations discover that Elea's as yet unfrozen companion knows the secret of "Zoran's universal equation" (creating energy out of nothing), the subsequent scrambling of spies reads like a poor imitation of Alistair Maclean. And when Coban's computer dating service chooses Elea as his companion to survive the imminent obliteration of the opposing civilizations of Gondawa and Elainor, she and her lover Paikan wreak havoc trying to escape. Their superhuman talents are almost more of a force to reckon with than the nuclear explosion which, many s-f film buffs will be happy to hear, predictably purifies Camp Victor off the face of the ice at the end. Before that, there is a neat "surprise" twist, though nothing like what Ira Levin of Rosemary's Baby fame does at the climax of This Perfect Day. It's hardly compensation for Barjavel's overt attempt to exploit contemporaneity (the civilization of 900,000 years ago even features a battle between police and long-haired university students) and to convey a message that sounds more than vaguely familiar: "They've repopulated the world," says the American scientist Hoover, "and now they've achieved the same state of idiocy they were in before, ready to blow themselves up all over again. Great, isn't it! That's the human race!"

A straightforward writing style that at least offers suspense for all its failings during the first hundred pages or so ultimately flounders in such tripe. What might have at the very least been an interesting tale exploring the discrepancies of Darwinian discoveries and the whys of human existence, what could have been a more chilling than chilled tale of scientific discovery, becomes simply a waste of time. If this import from the same France that once gave us Jules Verne represents the reason America imports more than it exports, we are far more than economically desperate.



Silent City

transferring muted comrades
to other scholarships
as the stage manager ordered
they had come
to believe in
being lost
their generation sliding
into easy tales
of grandeur
manhattan panorama
the masses
knit earthen covers
for their books
& dream
of later stories
that never ever happen
the authors
stuck down
in georgia clay
with tara-songs
the laboratory reporting
no turning back
people
rivers
& little hills
caught in the charade
of dazzling dawn
departing.

-- Errol Miller --

The Endless Art

Warped with Fancy, Woofed with Dreams: The Literature of the Comic Strip

a work in progress, by

Bill Blackbeard

The Board

Typical Dickens comic characters as drawn by Hablot Knight Browne (Phiz), from Martin Chuzzlewit (1844).

The Victorian paterfamilias, stern, starched, side-whiskered, and all-sufficient, was a stock figure in nineteenth-century satire, and a very real fixture of the time. (Short-lived, he was already largely gone from life and art by the turn of the century: there was a last, ghostly glimpse of the type in Charles Dana Gibson's cartoons and in Buster Brown's frowning father, then he survived only as a figure of fey fantasy in George Herriman's valiant martinet, Offisa B. Pupp.) He lived by the book as the tide of the time told it, and he read aloud from it on Sunday to his assembled family. He was master of his brood, provider, and spiritual leader. He was also not infrequently the entertainer, and the books he read his family during the long, chill weekday evenings, often with florid gestures and varied intonations, were the popular novels of the day, sanctified by respectable acclaim. And when he would turn the final page of a triple-decker novel, by Dickens or Bulwer-Lytton or Reade, and say firmly: "That is the end of it," there were more than a few tears of real bereavement in the eyes of the household-hair-bouyed family about him.

Inarguably, the single entertainment device most desired by the general reader (or listener) of the nineteenth century as an abstract, almost impossible ideal, was the endless good novel, preferably fitted out with multitudinous fine illustrations. Readers sharply regretted the ending of long narratives, with the attendant separation from loved characters. While in chapter two of Oliver Twist, Oliver all alone timidly asks his master for more gruel, thousands of Dickens' readers vigorously petitioned their master through his lifetime for more Oliver, more Pickwick, more Pecksniff, more Micawber, more Traddles, more Gamp--only (except for gaining brief second bows by Pickwick and Gamp) to fail in their request as utterly as Oliver in his. Unfortunately, novelists' functional behavior in the nineteenth century, like that of Oliver's workhouse, all too often worked to forbid their readers and themselves excessive indulgence in good things. Most writers of fiction then tended to regard their books as hermit crabs' habitats: once the novelist had grown through a few hundred pages to fit his current imaginative dwelling, it had to be discarded, with all its trappings, for a larger, different one.

But the reading public pined. And a succession of busy hacks like the redoubtable Thomas Peckett Prest tried to comfort them and collect their shillings with fat books featuring more escapades of a pirated Pickwick or a cautiously misspelled Martin Guzzlewit, as well as through unauthorized stage adaptions bringing the disfigured images of Jingle, Mr. Bumble, Squeers, Dick Swiveller, Major Bagstock, and the others to glowing if temporary life on the boards. Royal Academy artists painted portraits of the famed characters, while cheap prints featuring them were circulated by the tens of thousands, all without the commission or supervision of Dickens or his illustrator, Hablot Knight Browne. The intelligent public, however, was not satisfied, for it was Dickens' and Browne's own inimitable data about Mr. Toots, Sam Weller, Quilp, and Mr. Mantalini that the avid readers wanted enlarged, not the tawdry inventions or images of other hands.

Dickens' figures, of course, simply represented the fever-pitch of the public's desire for more. Earlier, thousands of readers would have swum the Thames (as a manner of speaking, of course) to obtain a sequel to Tom Jones or Peregrine Pickle by the original authors. And here and there, some writers yielded to popular importunings: William Combe spun several book-length narrative poems around his perapatetic Dr. Syntax; Thackeray extended more than one novel into a sequel, and reintroduced favourite characters into later works, while Trollope based whole series of novels on sets of characters he and the public loved. But it was not nearly enough: readers' desires were insatiable, and even the deliberate, somewhat unwilling catering of such later and busy authors as Rider Haggard (his phantasm-seeking Allen Quatermain figured in some two dozen novels) and Conan Doyle (whose Sherlock Holmes was the one literary creation to loom as large in the general imagination as the major characters of Dickens) did not begin to assuage their followers' thirst.

This popular demand did not, of course, reflect critical opinion in general. Writers who created larger-than-life characters that excited widespread reader adulation were automatically suspect in critical eyes as gimcrack entertainers. Dickens was widely denigrated in his time and after for his "flat," supposedly unreal caricatures of human beings, while such astute non-shapers of popular mythos as Henry James and George Meredith were inordinately praised in the disagreeable shadow of their great predecessor. And those authors contemptible enough to fling themselves wholly after public acclaim by devoting the bulk of their lives to writing about the activities of one or more widely relished characters were sure candidates for critical Coventry. (Writers such as Proust and Faulkner who later pursued the same characters from novel to novel without popular acclaim were, of course, felt to be another pot of ink altogether.) But generally speaking, no one read the critics except other critics and their academic echoes. The public simply and sensibly wanted to be entertained, preferably by familiar figures, in narratives that ideally would go on forever.

The extant Victorian fictional forms, in which narratives went on only to fill roughly preconceived numbers of pages, with an ending always in sight (even in the case of serial novels written by the instalment), were obviously incapable of meeting the general reader's amorphous, but sharply felt need for the sort of daily ration of open-ended narrative with recurring characters, reassuringly capable of spinning on endlessly, which radio and television would give the public in such abundance decades later. Book and magazine publishers of the time could not distribute a continuing work by any author, whether as a novel in parts or a serial in a story paper, at less than seven-day intervals (a situation still generally true), while inveterate readers could easily knock such units off in an afternoon, or save several for a single monthly evening's reading. The cloud-cuckoo-land dream of daily-fresh releases of good fiction running on without end, in easy reach of the public, was simply beyond the means and inclination of the traditional forms of narrative publishing.

Nevertheless, two major attempts were made to meet the public demand for longer fiction and more frequent access to popular characters in the nineteenth century--both by initially marginal and rather rascally publishing groups. The first, seeking sales through sensation, and peaking in the eighteen-forties, provided readers with a broad selection of virtually identical and nominally endless stories, all published weekly. Rambling on for year after year, these bloody and horrific novels in parts were strung together by such hyperactive and dedicated hacks as the grubby social crusader, G.W.M. Reynolds, and his less pretentious ilk. Profusely illustrated with vivid plates of hangings, knifings, attempted rapes, and similar attractions, the Reynolds variety of many-parted fiction (some of the more popular titles, such as The Mysteries of London, Varney the Vampire, and Spring-Heeled Jack, could run for a decade or better) was aimed at a generally tasteless, ill-educated portion of the new mass reading public, where it found its mark with enormous success, declining only with the marginally increased literary sophistication of the general reader brought about by the proliferation of Mudie's Lending Library and its profitable imitators in England and America. A second innovative venture later in the century was aimed at juvenile readers with spare change in both countries, and consisted of innumerable series of weekly, twenty thousand word thrillers (variously termed dime novels, nickle libraries, shilling shockers, etc.) in several sizes, featuring such paragons of derring-do as Nick Carter, Diamond Dick, Old Sleuth, Sexton Blake, and Jack Harkaway, many decorated with violence-ridden four-colour covers that represented at least half the appeal of the publications.

Neither of these low-aimed ventures appealed greatly to the adult, educated reading public, of course, which found itself appalled by the frantic, stereotyped products of perspiring authors ferociously scribbling to gain the fraction of a cent a word their creaking productions earned them; and it seemed to many an intelligent reader that the faster narrative prose was written, the less likely it would be able to convey the quality of imaginative fiction and characterization he wanted, so that his daydream of a fine, frequent, endless narrative always at hand seemed gossamer spume beyond pursuit, best forgotten when thought of.

Yet a number of authors, then as now, wrote both rapidly and well; and one wonders what might have subsequently happened to the standard methods of fictional publication if Anthony Trollope and (say) the London Telegraph, together with one or two major American newspapers, had combined forces to publish Trollope's famous daily stint of 2,500 words each and every day as he wrote them, focussing on the Barsetshire Chronicles and turning them into a single, continuing chronicle from the mid-1850s until his death in 1882. A new prose narrative form would have been founded then and there, and would almost certainly have been entered into by numerous other writers, envious of the wide, instant audience and the regular income: Dickens and Twain among others would very likely have given the form a try, and perhaps Nobody's Fault (Little Dorrit) and Huckleberry Finn might have been written on to several times their extant length. The critically minded might well be dismayed at the concept, but the general reader (dream realized) would have been delighted at the prospect of daily fragments of Huck, Jim, the King and the Duke, Mr. Dorrit, Flora Finching, and Mr. F.'s Aunt, both appearing regularly and promised into the far future.

It never happened, of course. Despite the increasing serialization of completed novels in newspapers toward the close of the nineteenth century, no one seems to have thought of simply assigning one competently prolific author to turning out one or two thousand words a day (or even just five thousand a week for Sunday publication) as newsprint segments from an endlessly ongoing narrative for home delivery and newsstand sale to tens of thousands of immediate readers. It remained for an embryo newspaper titan of San Francisco and New York named William Randolph Hearst to grasp in the 1890s how eagerly his audience would welcome the sight and words of familiar characters in their weekly and daily papers and to commence building a publishing empire on the fact, but even he did not understand the logical commercial utilization of such popular figures in maintaining day to day newspaper sales--here it took another individual of rare foresight and genius, Harry Conway (Bud) Fisher, creator of Mutt and Jeff, to comprehend this vital element and put it to work in San Francisco one November day in 1907.

Both of these innovative San Franciscans were tap roots for the swift growth of what was the only new printed narrative art form since the short story: the rumbustious, fanciful, doorstep medium of the comic strip. (Another new, turn-of-the-century narrative form, on celluloid, was the equally fast-growing cinema, which paralled the comic strip in its vital concern with narration in pictures and dialogue.) The comic strip, which might definitively be described as "a serially published, episodic, open-ended dramatic narrative or series of linked anecdotes about recurrent identified characters, told in successive drawings centred on ballooned dialogue and enclosing minimal but essential narrative text," was self-evidently the widely popular format finally developed by everyreaders' dream of the unending serial story about delightful characters, which had been waiting in the literary wings so long for some kind of birth. The new strip form, with its early unreeling of the Katzenjammer Kids and Buster Brown, and its later framing of Popeye, Dick Tracy, and Terry Lee, laden with memorable and quickly famed figures, running its narratives so long as reader and artist interest remained, and appearing daily and Sunday in newspapers in every city in the English-speaking world, was indeed the apotheosis of the endless art.

The word "art" would have been spat derisively at the time, for the comic strip was not greeted with critical applause. Like the cinema, its initial disrepute was all but universal beyond the simple millions who enjoyed it shamelessly. In literary circles and among critics of the graphic arts, the comic strip was seen as an antic buffoon at best, fit only for the rubbishy Hearst press and its readers; while darker views saw it as a vicious corrupter of youth and an anarchic assault on the established social structure. Here and there, a few perceptive voices tried to speak against the tide of intellectual misconception and scorn: the American Bookman in 1902, Harry Estey Dounce in the New York Post in 1920, the noted but purblind Gilbert Seldes in 1924, William Bolitho in the New York World in 1928, August Derleth in a university thesis in the late 1920s; but to little avail: received attitudes prevailed, as usual. Those who felt themselves to be intelligent and well-read at the turn of the century never bought or looked at the popular press where the best of the new comic strips were running, so they rarely had first-hand experience with the new form, while their children, denied comics-bearing papers at home, and sent to private schools where their fellow students had been similarly deprived, grew up to share the assumed prejudices of their parents. This peculiar schism of experience, between the better-off and the well-educated, and the bulk of the comics-reading populace, held up through World War II and well into the 1950s, so that it is only in recent years that the comic strip, like the cinema, has begun --just begun--to come into its critical own.

Criticism must, however, be based on knowledge. A major comic strip can no more be responsibly discussed without having been read in full than a major novel: familiarity with only a book reprint of, say, Pogo for 1955, is about like an awareness of just two chapters from Middlemarch. Yet there is no generally accessible source of complete strip runs for the interested reader and analyst. No sizable, conveniently indexed and titularly separated body of strip material is available anywhere except for that located at the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, founded in 1967 to provide a research and study centre in the art of the comic strip. Elsewhere (aside from voluminous newspaper files) there is nothing. Only a small portion of the newsprint Niagara represented by strips has ever been scooped up in book form, and the fraction that did see boards or paper covers was sold largely at newsstands and rarely stocked in library collections. Magazine serializations of reprinted strips in such publications as Famous Funnies and Popular Comics, numerous in the 1930s and 1940s, are today as scarce as the original newspaper pages themselves. The resulting research impasse (barring innumerable cross-country treks to San Francisco) seems unlikely to be broken until a serious and long-overdue step is taken by the nation's university presses to underwrite the reprinting of complete collections of the most important strips since 1893 in book form (avoiding any use of that glaring bludgeon of relaxed contemplation called microfilm).

In the case of some important strips calling for reprint, the sociological reference value may well be higher than the artistic (as with certain working-girl strips of the early part of the century, etc.), while with others, the relationship to a body of genre prose literature already under intensive study may outweigh intrinsic worth (as in the cases of several science-fiction and crime fiction strips); but the chief initial emphasis in reprinting, certainly, should be on the relatively few but episodically bulky group of creatively meritorious strips, from George Herriman's masterpiece, Krazy Kat, through such famed features as Little Nemo, Thimble Theatre, Buck Rogers, Terry and the Pirates, The Katzenjammer Kids (and The Captain and the Kids), Wash Tubbs, Dick Tracy, and Bringing Up Father,* to the less well-known but memorable Polly and Her Pals, Alley Oop, The Bungle Family, Moon Mullins, Scribbly, Jack Swift, Baron Bean, White Boy, Little Joe, Everett True, Hairbreadth Harry, Nipper, Just Boy, Abie the Agent, Nize Baby, etc. It is a rich lode.

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*Unless otherwise indicated, strip titles mentioned in passing refer only to the founding artists' versions of the works.

Political cartoon from July, 1912, by H.T. Webster, poking fun at Hearst's supposed support for Champ Clark, with group of Hearst's famed comic strip characters in the rear.

One need not exaggerate tne worth of some of these strips relative to work in other areas of the narrative arts: while Krazy Kat, Thimble Theatre, Polly, The Bungle Family, and a few others are inarguably creations of a high level of comic imagination, easily equal to the work of Chaplin and Keaton in the cinema, or to that of Waugh and Lardner in fiction (certain of the characters swaggering and rambling through the epic poetry of E.C. Segar's Thimble Theatre are, in fact, so stunningly realized that they can be measured without embarrassment against the best of Dickens' figures), most of the interesting and accomplished strip work extant--perhaps a quarter of the total number of strip titles published--is essentially on a level with what might be called good to superior work in the popular fiction genres; while the worst comic strip output (the bulk of magazine strip work, from The Blue Beetle to Swamp Thing; much of the material circulated by minor syndicates; total disasters in unexpected places, such as the Chicago Tribune's own Deathless Deare, etc.) can reach depths of creative incompetence plumbed elsewhere only by the dime novels, pornographic story films, and the poetry of Edgar Guest. On balance, however, the amount of solid, memorable work executed within the purlieu of the new endless art has been easily the equal of that found in similarly fresh-winded art forms, such as broadcasting and the cinema.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the obvious creative virtues of the comic strip (like those of Edgar Allen Poe, William Faulkner, and the American motion picture) were first extensively perceived on an intellectual level in France, where in the last decade a major exhibit of strip art has been held at the Louvre's Musée des Arts Décoratifs, and serious critical journals devoted to the comic strip have multiplied, as they have in the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, and Italy. Much of the European writing about their own strips (often sharply individual and imaginatively conceived works of graphic narrative, from Spirou to Saga de Xam) is perceptive and acute, but their critical discussion of American strips, equally discerning, can be gratingly ill-informed, due in considerable part to the lack of valid reference works from the United States itself.

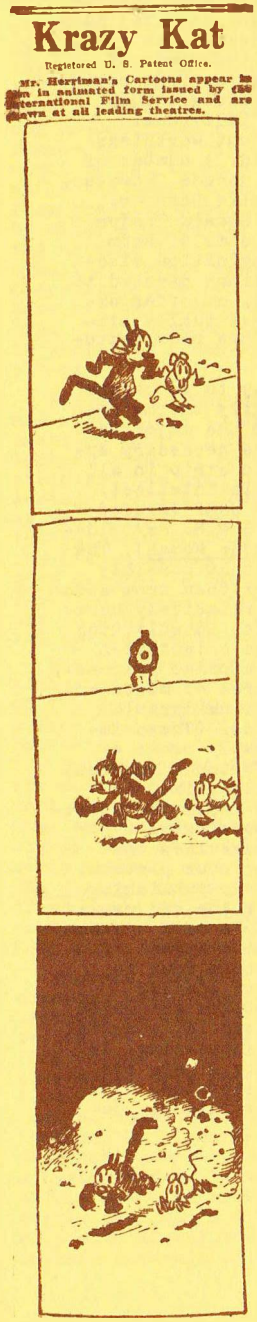
American reference books of a sort exist, of course. The pages and plates are there, and text and titles: Comic Art in America, The Art of the Comic Strip, The Comics, etc. What is lacking is the goddamned horse, reliability. In a void of sound data, these dozen or so American texts have been used as the basis of encyclopedia entries from the Britannica to the World Book, for hundreds of graduate theses, for most European scholarship in the American sphere, and for much of what has passed in the United States for critical writing. Sadly, one does not have to look far for the cause: it is, tout simple, the eighty-year status of the comic strip in this country. Only old-time strip artists with a mild flair for writing (Coulton Waugh, who wrote The Comics) or temporarily-ill novelists (Stephen Becker, who supervised Comic Art in America), cared to tackle a subject that more established literary figures (whatever their private interest) often felt might compromise their reputation.

The raw research material has always been present, in the form of numerous bound newspaper runs and microfilm copies in central libraries, as well as large private collections of the strip spinoff called the comic book. An imaginative and assiduous researcher, willing to put in the years of jigsaw retrieval of data involved, might have mined this material at any time for its trove of vital information about the comic strip. Nevertheless, all of the American chronological summations of strip history to data, whether in the form of booklength "histories," or as part of how-to-cartoon texts, syndicate puff publications, cartoonist biographies, etc., have been hasty, scissors-and-paste edifices largely derived from two initial and very shakey American works published in the 1940s (Waugh's The Comics and Martin Sheridan's Comics and Their Creators), which were themselves rife with misinformation, hearsay, guesswork, and ruinous gaps in assumed coverage of data.

None of the writers concerned with the early or later books seem to have done more than the most rudimentary original spadework, to have checked out dubious or contradictory data, nailed down the vital origins of various strip developments, or read and analyzed much actual strip content from the past (I have the impression, in fact, that not one of the authors who tackled an art with thousands of titles had read even one newspaper strip of any duration from beginning to end). The result has been a miasma of third-rate writing, near-total lack of critical differentiation between individual strips, and a half-shelf of books and pamphlets all but worthless for dependable, serious research into the strip field. A number of short articles appearing here and there in the last decade, however, by such competent strip critics and researchers as Mike Barrier, Denis Gifford, Maurice Horn, Jim Ivey, Dick Lupoff, Donald Phelps, Don Thompson, Maggie Thompson, and Martin Williams (some of whom have been forced to write, for lack of editorial imagination elsewhere, in an exuberant weedpatch of amateur publications devoted to the obsessive celebration of comic book superheroes), do offer exhilarating hope of a change, and the promise of an eventually sizable body of responsible literature in a field that has been textually moribund too long.

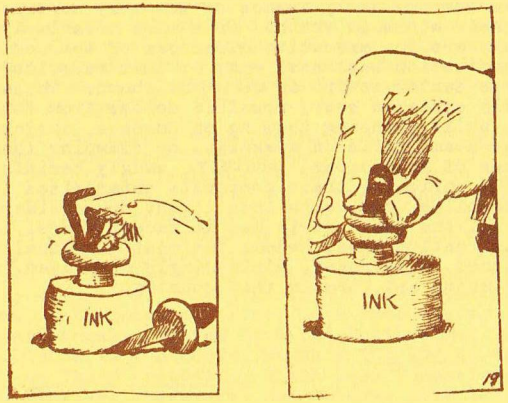
Nevertheless, the endless art still has a long way to go before it can expect to gain so-called academic respectability on the one hand (with credit courses and tenured instructors in the major universities) and reader awareness, on the other, of the necessary applicability of normal critical standards to the comic strip in all its avatars (there are too many people of considerable intellect, even in literary fields, who have reached adult life self-assured of the imaginative and narrative excellence of such G.W.M. Reynolds-level sensationalism as Spiderman, Superman, and Wonder Woman). The comic strip, too, like jazz, has become an art form that possibly needs saving more from certain of its alleged friends than from such avowed enemies as still exist. On an irritating but relatively harmless level, there are the hordes of superhero fanatics constituting much of American "comics fandom," mostly young, whose orientation to the comic strip is almost entirely in terms of pictorial response, running the gamut from erotic involvement with pictures of muscular thews to a ruinous ambition to warp their own often considerable graphic talents into extant comic-book superhero molds. (These immensely gregarious and active people ravage the assembly-rooms of hotels in jampacked conventions; often spend small fortunes publishing and buying garish amateur magazines, all virtually alike, in which countless drawings of union-suited superheroes crowd the pointlessly costly pages; and swindle each other with preposterous overcharges for the early issues of the very superhero magazines that took their minds in youth.) On a more creatively dangerous plateau, however, are the executive directors of the comic strip publishing and syndication business, many of them recruited from the sad ranks of those denied strips in their childhood. These people have systematically squeezed every possible dollar from the public appeal of comics while chopping them up on Sundays, shrinking them down to postage-stamp rolls on weekdays, or cramping them into stapled clutches of pulp paper monthly, smugly certain that the art which is daily enriching their corporate enterprises is essentially drivel for imbeciles, not worth intelligent or considerate showcasing. As a result, the comic strip has in recent years, largely within its own publication area, become the most continually mistreated, misunderstood, mismanaged, misleadingly displayed, and virulently demeaned major art form in this country.

(June 19, 1917)



Outside the strip business, still other "friends" have helped matters along on their own. As a result, the comic strip has been insipidly promoted as an art form by Armoury Show-inculcated academics with little critical awareness of competence in art or literature, who send forth touring shows of original strip art in hit-or-miss, catch-all assemblies of material without evaluative critical labelling of any kind. Elsewhere, aside from the fine but limited work done by a small group of dedicated and financially strapped publishers, such as Nostalgia Press and Luna Press in New York, major comic strips have been opportunistically edited for quickie collections issued by established publishing houses to meet the current nostalgia craze, all in a slapdash, destructively non-representative manner. (In the cases of two such publications, Dick Tracy and Little Orphan Annie, every seventh daily episode was systematically omitted without word to the reader, merely to "simplify" the editorial format.) And in the nation's libraries, the comic strip is being regularly destroyed in its original form by librarians bent on relieving their crowded shelves of weighty, yellowing bound newspaper files by transporting them to the city dump when the replacement microfilm comes in.

Despite the activities of all these dedicated and tireless Jack Ketches in its own camp, the comic strip has managed to flower stubbornly and often brilliantly in a hundred bright nooks and crannies of an unfriendly mass media over the past eighty years, demonstrating in a rich variety of styles and content the realizable potential that the form has always held for the gifted, understanding, and reasonably free-handed artist. These chapters are about that continual, uneven, but always provocative flowering, and, regrettably, about the poisoned soil as well.



OPERE CITATO

BY HARRY WARNER JR.

Work on a new fan history book has caused a catatonic interim for this column. So it's almost the end of 1974, I haven't reviewed any fanzines since 1973, and this provides a special opportunity. Instead of the customary inspection of five or six fanzines, this time I'd like to do some trend-spotting. Several genuine trends seem to have been under way during 1974 in the fanzine field, and one or two of them might assume growing importance in 1975 and thereafter. Because I'll be mentioning many fanzines, and because some of their editors aren't anxious to expand circulation, I'll skip the usual set of names, addresses, and prices at the finish.

If there was one dominant trend during 1974 in the fanzine field, it must have been the negative-type tendency away from extremely large, extraordinarily fancy fanzines. There were a few giants during the year in number of pages per issue, and an occasional fanzine was resplendent in professional-looking layout, lots of colour, high-quality paper, and other luxurious aspects. But the years-long trend to fatter and more expensive issues seem to have halted during 1974, possibly shifted into reverse gear. I imagine that mundane considerations are responsible, rather than any philosophical reconsiderations of the fanzine as a special entity. Fanzine production costs climbed steadily during the year, whether the editor bought supplies and did his own duplicating work or turned copy in to a professional printshop. Endless increases in postal rates have made it very expensive to mail out a 100-page fanzine, unless the editor can browbeat his local postmaster into giving him one of those dirt-cheap special rates. Here and there a fanzine editor continues to give large hunks of money or time to produce a fanzine that is dazzling in appearance and swarming with words, like Andy Porter's Algol and Bill Bowers' Outworlds. Tom Reamy resurfaced with a resurrected The Trumpet. But there weren't many such fannish equivalents of the coffee table book in 1974, unless you reach into related fields like comics fanzines.

Allied to this first trend was another that influenced several dozen fanzine editors to begin or improve small, generally circulated fanzines of an intensely personal nature. A decade ago, fanzines like these, whose material is mostly provided by the editor, rarely structured into formal separation of articles, editorials, and letter sections, would have been issued for FAPA or SAPS. Now the tendency is for the editor to choose his own mailing list. In general, these personalized fanzines discourage or refuse subscriptions, try to restrain themselves to the 12 or 14 pages that can be mailed for a dime as third class matter, range far afield for subject material, and possess a clear personality because of the editor's dominance. In many cases, the editor is a mature person, physically at least.

Examples of the breed that don't conform to all the tenets just mentioned, however, might be Don Thompson's DON-o-SAUR, which has offered fandom's first good look at an isolated fan; Mae Strelkov's complicated series of personalzines which are named Tink, Tonk, and several other things, possess the unique material that comes from the only active Argentine fan, and will some day drive a bibliographer mad because different sets of pages are contained in various copies of the same issue, which are to some extent custom-collated for the individual recipient; and Mike Gorra's Random, which uses more outside material than most fanzines of this type, and is strongly evocative of the kind of fanzines which thrived in the late 1950's and early 1960's.

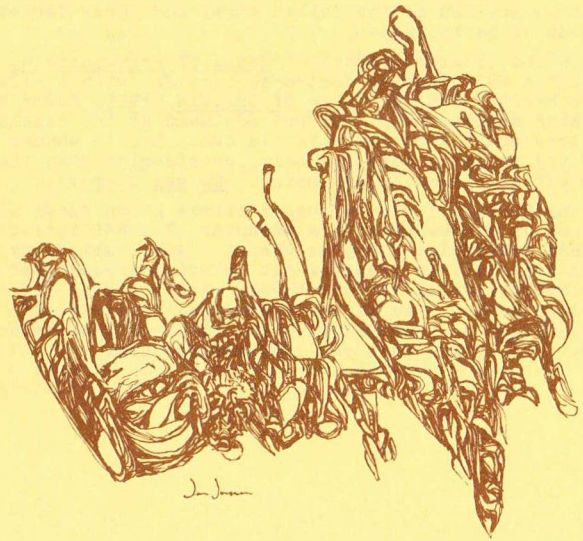
Another trend of 1974 involved increasing use of photo-offset and related processes for reproducing fanzines. In some cases, fanzine editors apparently abandoned their mimeographs in order to avoid the nuisance of cranking and collating, because they made no attempt to cash in on the special benefits of the more sophisticated reproduction medium. Others managed to handle type, illustrations, and inks in a way that made their fanzines absolutely distinctive. Amra, which probably was the pioneer in attaining beauty of appearance through restraint in the medium, continues to thrive. P.W. Frames uses the humblest paper and the finest writing you'll find anywhere, interspersed with wild drawings, to make Wild Fennel a fannish equivalent of The New Yorker.

I mentioned earlier the failure of the old-fashioned apas to hold the fanzines they used to offer in great quantities. In the past year, while those big, quarterly apas grew sicker, the new breed slowly gained strength. Most of them fall into two main types: the municipal apa, most of whose material comes from local fans, with distributions at intervals ranging from weekly to monthly; and the monthly secret and semi-secret national apas with rotating editorship, plus a limit of a dozen or so active members. APA L, the weekly Los Angeles organization, and the Cult are examples of the two types. Their increasing popularity is a mixed bag of blessings and misfortunes to fandom as a whole. Because most contributions are limited to a few pages per distribution, they attract into fanzine fandom a lot of people who have no time or money to produce large-scale fanzines. Their circulations are so rigidly controlled that frankness and freedom of speech are carried to a splendid extreme; they're the ideal place to publish a detailed first person account of an abortion or an unexpurgated description of a worldcon. But there's no doubt that fandom at large is being deprived of a great deal of pleasure, simply because so many talented writers are content to restrict themselves to one or two of these small apas, even when they turn out material that is suitable for the eyes of all fandom. There's also the danger that some important fannish writing may be totally lost if no copies survive of some distributions of the smallest, most ephemeral apas.

If there was a dominant trend in the material published in fanzines this year, it consisted of the increased attention paid to fandom's growth and to the breakdown of its old segregation from the mundane world. Dr. Wertham's A World of Fanzines, increasing numbers of university and high school science-fiction clubs, registration in excess of 4,000 at the worldcon in Washington, and various other factors have been working to bring fandom to the attention of tens of thousands of people. Issue after issue of 1974's fanzines contained editorials and articles resulting from the change.

Topics involved such matters as how to prevent worldcons from becoming impossibly big, what to do if the Planet of the Apes series creates a subfandom as large and avid as Star Trek did a few years back, why educators must be careful not to make science-fiction seem an ordeal as distasteful to teen-agers as the Lake Poets by bad teaching of curriculum courses in science-fiction, and the breakdown of the old distinctions between a fanzine and a prozine through the growth in circulation and limited newsstand display of certain publications that started as unchallanged fanzines.

What lies ahead? I don't know, but there are two possibilities that could have major impact on fanzines in 1975 and thereafter. One is the hard time underground magazines are having, because of new ways of handling censorship after a Supreme Court decision. Some underground magazines are actually going underground. Others are folding. If this continues, will many publishers and readers of underground magazines turn their attention to fanzines for the similarity of spirit? Then there's Roger Elwood's contract to edit vast quantities of science-fiction titles for Harlequin Books. These paperbacks have a devoted mass following in other types of fiction. Will the eruption of science-fiction from this publishing house create huge new numbers of science-fiction readers, and if so, will this new audience discover fanzines and start publishing, reading, and writing for them?



the Seasonal Fan
Jim Harmon

The Untold Story of the Wolf Man

Editor's Note: The following originally was written for Monsters of the Movies, which Mr. Harmon edits -- but it was rejected by Marvel Publications' editorial director because of the literal mindedness of those young readers who dislike such fantasizing about their favourite creatures. RQ's editor, however, lacks the scholarly inhibitions of Marvel's readers and the circulation worries of its director--and so thinks Wolf Man & Company fun under any circumstances.

Crazed by the moon, the Wolf Man bared his fangs in a mindless, killing rage and leaped at the Gypsy girl, Ilonka. But she was prepared. She knew that this werewolf was in reality Larry Talbot, the man she loved, the man who wanted the peace of death to release him from the terrible curse that made him kill, even to kill her. Ilonka raised the antique pistol loaded with the silver bullet she had fashioned herself. She fired.

Too late!

The silver bullet struck home, but the Wolf Man's final lunge carried through and his claws were at the girl's throat. In his final agony, the frenzy of lycanthropy took the girl's life. Snarling, the hairy creature sank to the ground. With her final strength, Ilonka crawled to the fallen form, and threw herself across the body of Larry Talbot.

That was in the closing moments of House of Frankenstein, Universal, 1944. The Wolf Man was destroyed forever, with a silver bullet in his heart. Yet, in House of Dracula, 1945, Larry Talbot was seen seeking medical help from Dr. Edelmann at the castle the King of Vampires would soon claim as his own. Little wonder that Talbot would try to get a doctor's help, considering that there was a silver bullet lodged in his heart. Or was there?

In these chronicles, I have divulged little known facts about such personages as Frankenstein and Dracula. I don't insist that the reader take everything I say as gospel. After all, many historical facts are still in dispute. It is still argued just how Custer got himself involved in the Battle of the Little Big Horn, and how he died there. I am merely presenting a case about how certain things might have happened in the lives of Dracula and the Wolf Man. I only ask that you consider my case.

My evidence indicates that certain events occurred between the shooting of the Wolf Man in House of Frankenstein and his reappearence at the House of Dracula.

We know that the villagers pursued the Frankenstein Monster and the injured Dr. Niemann to the swamp, where both sank into quicksand, and out of human view. Grumbling, the villagers treaced their way back to the ruined castle (after the final "The End" credit of the film).

At the castle, the villagers discovered the place littered with corpses. There was the body of hunchbacked Daniel, strangled and thrown from a high window by the Monster, broken like the doll of some giant child in a temper tantrum. Searching further, the village people found the lovely Ilonka, who had died at the hands of the Wolf Man. Daniel had taken her from the arms of the slain Talbot, but the townsfolk found Talbot's body shortly after.

Some of the villagers suspected Talbot of being the werewolf, but he had reverted to human form. The village officials gathered up Talbot's body along with the others and took them to the local coroner's office.

Inside the dimly lit examining room, white-haired Dr. Franz began the routine post mortem of the deceased. Soon he established that Daniel had died of a broken neck, and that the Gypsy girl had succumbed to the attack of some large animal. As for the man, Talbot, he appeared to have a bullet wound in the chest, but medical reports had to be precise. If there was a bullet in the body, Franz had to remove it to verify the calibre and other characteristics...

A great pounding came at Franz's door. More trouble? Reluctantly, the old doctor drew back the bolt and cautiously peered out. He saw a tall, dark man past middle years.

"Who are you, Sir?" Franz demanded.

"I am Mr. Wilkes," the stranger said. "Have you yet operated on the man called Talbot?"

"What business is that of yours?"

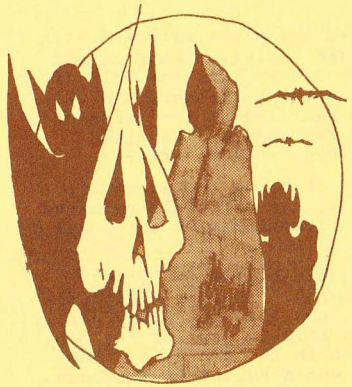
The tall, dark Wilkes pushed through the door. "I have made the suppression of all evil my life's work. I tall you if you remove what must be a silver bullet from that body, you will be unleashing untold evil this night."

The old doctor was sceptical, but how disbelieving can a man be who has lived in a town plagued by the Frankenstein Monster, Dracula, and the Wolf Man? Wilkes convinced Dr. Franz that Larry Talbot was the Wolf Man and if the silver bullet were removed from his heart, he would revert to his lycanthropic form the first full moon.

"The case is similar to that of Dracula," Wilkes explained. "Some years ago a certain private investigator drove a silver needle through the King Vampire's heart. But the needle was removed by Dracula's daughter, who made a show of burning a figure in her father's likeness while he went out again into the night. Only a few days ago, Dracula was again struck down--this time by the full rays of the sun. I knew that the so-called 'destruction' would not last when word reached me in the capitol city of this province. Not unless certain precautions were taken with the skeleton. I headed for the village--but I was too late. The dust of Dracula has regathered. Once more he is loose. The Wolf Man must not join him."

The doctor's acceptance faltered. "Ah, what do you know of bullets? Especially silver bullets?"

Wilkes said nothing. But he knew much on these subjects. He was in reality John Wilkes Booth, the man who had slain President Abraham Lincoln, the murderer long thought dead but who had escaped to roam the world. John Wilkes Booth knew of bullets, such as the one he had used to assassinate Lincoln.



As for silver bullets, there was an irony there. Over thirty years ago in the Western United States, John Wilkes Booth had met a man who had used silver bullets. The man appeared to be an ordinary rancher, although Booth had heard that this fellow sometimes wore a mask. But he was no ordinary vigilante. There was something about the man -- a spiritual quality -- that caused Booth to change his whole life. He no longer tried to forget his crime in drink, but attempted to atone for it, in his travels through Asia, Africa, South America, and Europe.

"Swear to me that you will not remove that silver bullet," the mysterious "Wilkes" demanded of the doctor. "I must be off in my search for Dracula. I have wired a certain Dr. van Helsing to meet me at the capitol."

Dr. Franz agreed readily. Anything to get rid of this strange visitor whose sanity he was beginning to doubt. The tall man left as quickly as he came.

The doctor looked at Lawrence Talbot's body on his operating table. The moon was full again this night. According to the stranger's story if he but removed the silver bullet from the chest wound, Talbot would revert to life and change into some snarling beast with a death lust.

Many years ago, Franz had met the famous -- or infamous -- Dr. Frankenstein. Both had been young men then and they had laughed at the saying, "There are things that Man was not meant to know..." Dr. Franz was a man of science. His strange visitor had almost dared him to probe into the unknown.

So, Franz mused to himself, if he were but to remove the silver bullet, Larry Talbot would turn into a living Wolf Man once again. He would just see about that...

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The news of Dr. Franz's horrible fate soon reached the man calling himself Wilkes at the capitol. He left information for Dr. van Helsing on the whereabouts of Count Dracula and struck out on the trail of the Wolf Man by himself.

######

Talbot had found himself alive again, with the same killing madness coming upon him during the full moon. So many incredible things had happened to him that he could no longer be surprised at anything.

The one constant thing was the desire to find release in death from this terrible curse. That desire eventually led him to the castle occupied by Dr. Edelmann.

Eventually, Edelmann performed a delicate brain operation on Talbot that was supposed to relieve the pressure on his brain that caused him to change into wolf form. Edelmann was a very materialistic man, who saw the cause and cure of such ancient curses as vampirism and lycanthropy in purely physical terms. Even after the seemingly successful brain operation, Talbot wondered if a supernatural curse could be lifted by such modern medical science.

But as the days went by, even Talbot's usual gloomy mood began to improve. He was thinking seriously of marrying the attractive nurse, Miliza, who had worked for the late Dr. Edelmann.

One night, as he relaxed at his room at the inn, reading some imported British newspapers, a knock came at his door. He opened up to reveal a tall, dark man. "You are Lawrence Talbot?" the visitor demanded.

"Yes. But who are you?"

"You may know me as Wilkes. Not that you will know me for long. I am here to kill you, Talbot -- kill you with this silver bullet given to me by a friend so many years ago."

Talbot stared at the revolver in the man's hand. He could not doubt the truth of the stranger's words.

"Why do you want to kill me when you -- wait! A silver bullet! You know!"

"Yes, I know," Wilkes said. "Do you think you can escape paying for your crimes so easily?"

"But I was insane," Talbot cried. "I was helpless in the grip of a supernatural curse. If a jury could be convinced of the facts you must know they would find me innocent because of temporary insanity. I am cured of that madness now."

Wilkes raised the gun. "It is my mission to destroy evil. I accept no excuses."

"You fanatic -- " Talbot shouted.

Larry Talbot pounced on the stranger with the speed somehow learned from his many attacks in his other form. The two wrestled. Talbot gripped Wilkes's gun hand and forced it down. The gun with its single silver bullet charge exploded harmlessly into the floor.

With a howl of animal-like fury at this waste of his precious ammunition, Wilkes hurled Talbot from him. As Talbot slipped and fell to one knee, Wilkes brought the empty gun on the other man's head.

Talbot saw a brilliant light and felt pressure on his skull, pressure on his mind -- the familiar pressure...Talbot realized Wilkes's blow had undone the effects of Edelmann's operation! That was the last thing he could remember...

With the gray light of dawn, Talbot came to, came back to himself. The man he attacked in his cursed Wolf Man form was still alive, but just barely.

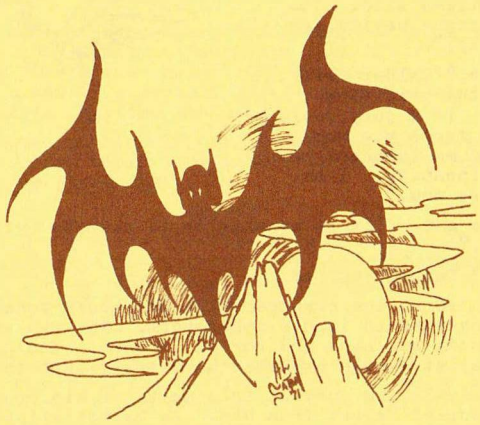
With no time to curse his fate even, Talbot went to the terribly injured man.

Wilkes's eyes were becoming glazed, but he could still talk. "I brought this on myself, Talbot...I should have left you alone... but I can't leave the others alone. I have learned that Dracula is going to seek out the dormant body of the Frankenstein Monster, to revive it. The world must be saved from the horror of such an alliance. You must take up my work, Talbot...You must find them..."

"I promise..." Talbot said, but he was never sure if the man who called himself Wilkes had heard him.

It took many years for the ageless Talbot to find out that Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster were in America. How the accursed Lawrence Talbot found those other monsters has been related in the film titled Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein. It was no laughing matter for Talbot, especially at the end when in his Wolf Man form he dived from a high balcony to grasp Dracula in his bat-form and to plunge into the depths of a tossing sea with the fiend locked in his furred claws.

But such a plunge beneath the waves could not actually destroy either a vampire or a werewolf. What became of Dracula and the Wolf Man after these events? I am looking into this matter.



Theatre of the Fantastic

by

Peter Bernhardt

Truckin' through Munchkin Land

After three films (two were silents), an operetta, a spate of cartoons, and an uncountable number of amateur stage productions, you'd think the last thing Broadway would need was an all Black musical version of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. Apparently Glinda's magic is not confined to that hidden continent. The Wiz is a boisterous joyful musical comedy that is a fine tribute to both L. Frank Baum and Director Geoffrey Holder. The Wiz is based on the original fantasy classic and not on the 1939 film. It is the closest adaptation of Baum's book I have ever seen. By combining the prose Oz with contemporary Black music and culture Holder has produced a happy vibrant hybrid that has toured the country and now resides in the Majestic theatre on West 44th Street off Broadway.

Purists of the Judy Garland musical version or of the novel may not care for the replacement of the original dialogue with ghetto-lingo. However, The Wiz does quote directly from the book at times. Anyway, how many audiences could sit through nearly two hours of Baum's puns?

The Wiz has two major weaknesses. Charles Small's score is rather insipid. I'd say that only four songs rise above the relatively bland series of musical pieces that pepper the show. Secondly, The Wiz has the worst collection of acoustical equipment of any Broadway show I've ever heard. The microphones squeal or shut off entirely. Halfway through one song the voice modulator began to transmit police bulletins from a passing squad car. What was it C.S. Lewis said about all magic dying at a touch of the commonplace?

The Wiz does have a marvelous multi-talented cast, electrifying dance numbers, and delightfully imaginative costumes. The chorus is relatively small, which seems to be the current custom in Broadway shows. These members of the cast do many roles throughout the performance that includes storm clouds, poppies, field mice, Winkies, flying monkeys, etc., etc.

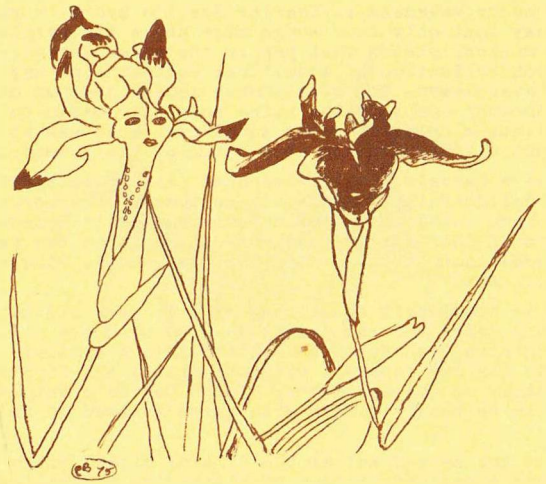
Stephanie Mills is completely convincing as a 15 year old Dorothy. She has a strong voice and can easily keep up with the older dancers. Andre De Shields transforms the wizard into a cynical schemer who conducts his own farewell with the frenzy and fire of an old revival meeting. As the Scarecrow, Hinton Battle's triple jointed body seems to be really filled with straw instead of flesh and blood.

Mabel King steals the second act as the bileful Wicked Witch of the West. She is such a perfect picture of slathering uncomplicated cruelty that she totally restores my faith in theatrical villainy. Her song, "No Bad News," is possibly the best one in the entire production, and she milks it of all its nasty humour, even to the point of commanding the audience to give her more applause.

With the exception of some fancy lighting and a few clever fire and smoke tricks The Wiz wisely leaves the more sophisticated technological magic to cinema fantasy. The magic is well conveyed through George Faison's choreography. One of the best numbers is the cyclone ballet. Dorothy's house is spun off to Oz by a slinky female cyclone (Evelyn Thomas), who comes complete with a long winding silk spout and an army of frenetic wind people. Equally good is a piece called "The Lion's Dream," where the Cowardly Lion (drolly played by Ted Ross) is drugged into never-never land by a quartet of seductive poppies who strangely resemble the more professional ladies of the evening still patrolling the theatre district outside.

Holder has wisely maintained the one country one colour rule present in Baum's book. This allows for a series of startling costumes that appear to be exotic odes to red, blue, and green. Most of them are so suggestive and creative they do the original Denslow illustrations to shame, as well as many of the best film fantasy costumes.

Above all, The Wiz restores the tasteful opulence that vanished from the Broadway stage over ten years ago. One may compare it to such favourites as Camelot and Hello Dolly with impunity. New York critics gave The Wiz mixed reviews and regarded it coolly. I'm not surprised. Some professed faithfulness to the 1939 movie with a nearly neurotic fervour, damning any new version that dared to approach it and steal the crown. Devotees of science-fiction will know better. The Wonderful Wizard of Oz is a timeless fantasy that has inspired such fine writers as Laumer, Bradbury, and Vonnegut. It will continue to be redone as long as the American public is capable of enjoying it. It's true that The Wiz isn't perfect, but then we love an emerald city for its flaws.



Balloon

If I had a deflated balloon of you
I'd take it to Woolworth's helium machine

and tell the man to pump:
No- No you've got too much air in the forehead
squeeze a little out of that wrist
Ah yes you've done that second toe perfectly.
The genitals: How the hell am I supposed to
know--work on it and I'll be back in a half hour.

Sears Sears
Directly to the reindeer sweater counter.
Outfit for one extraordinary honky please;
Good God Penny loafers on sale Dare I?
Whatever exists is alike just and unjust, and in
both cases equally justified--Wrap them up!

Hmmm can I attach something to the hand
an extra identification?
I'm late-something quick
A Book? But what?
Vitamins But which?
A ring? maybe it won't fit.
That's it. A ring.

Hi I'm back Oh beautiful. They're--They're individual.
One more thing I want. A slight indentation
on the temple area. Why?
That's between me and the balloon mister.

Well that's the way it would go
and high high up on miles of nylon string
you would be. And when people asked me
Where's your better half I could point up
and smile.

Maybe on a clear day--a vivid day
even you will see your image
fluttering magically above my soul.

-- Tracy Smith --

Selected Letters

46 Highland Ave.
Binghampton, NY 13905

Dear Leland Sapiro:

Tom Clareson called my attention to Lloyd Biggle's 1973 speech at the New Orleans Nebula Award banquet, and I also noted RQ in the Knights' at the latest Milford Conference (in Florida). I would like to reply to something that so aggravatingly mingles what I know to be true with what I know to be false.

I would first like to call to both your attention and Mr. Biggle's Florence Howe's MLA speech of last December in which she notes that in 1883 the founders of the MLA tactfully proposed that a young man ought to have the option of studying "any language he pleases," even his own, and not only Greek and Latin. The fuss that ensued must have been very like what is going on now in Academe. Lloyd Biggle is in the odd position of defending s-f against the academy--but also vice versa. Myself, I believe in an immediate return to the quadrivium, which would put an end to musicological nonsense, but such an outcome doesn't seem to be on the horizon.

Without having been at the Popular Culture Association conference (so far as I can tell from the misquoting of paper titles), Lloyd just knows that the academicians are slumming. Some of them may have been. I heard indignant remarks to that effect from--of all people--the two groups most derided in the Bigglian speech: women's studies and s-f. If ever academicians were serious about their work, these two groups are. Of "Culture and the Beer Can" I know nothing, as I did not hear the paper, but I can testify that Tom Clareson's paper (which Biggle gets all wrong) was extremely good, and that (for example) "The Uses of Obesity in Advertising" was brilliant. The question is not the Talmudic boggling of what popular culture is, or whether academics ought to study it. The question is the realignment of disciplinary lines (and much efflorescence of cross-disciplinary work) and the simple question of who is going to pay whom for studying what. "Popular culture" is at present a home for subjects which nobody else will touch with a ten-foot pole. I have just lost tenure at the University in which I am teaching because I have polluted the atmosphere of the English Department with s-f and precisely because I refuse to teach it in the way Biggle so rightly condemns. The "fad" of academic papers on s-f--if it comes from any one source--comes from students' insistent demand for courses, not academics' "easy" brownie points. I suggest Mr. Biggle read "Subjunctivity of Science Fiction" to find out just how easy it is--not that the credit is all mine; I took off on a seminar paper delivered by Samuel Delany at the MLA in 1968; in fact, I wrote the paper in 1969. It was a labor of love, if anything ever was.

How on earth can Biggle tell whether the PCA is merely "poking fun"? From paper titles? Anyone who thinks those at the convention were there on an all-expense-paid vacation would believe anything! "Scholarship without doing any"--has Biggle read recent papers in the Journal of Popular Culture? And compared their over-all quality with, say, PMLA?

About a paleontologist studying live cows--a good point. But what about a biologist or an ecologist doing the same thing? According to the Bigglian canon, you can't study anything unless it's dead--precisely the point the MLA challenged in 1883 and the fuss rising in University after University across the land right now. Popular culture may attract a few sad souls to it because they think it a fad, but certainly in s-f, the people who ignored it in the 1960's are still ignoring it. The people who pay attention to s-f (and women's studies, too, by the way) are not the same people. They are, by and large, people who have come into academia in the last few years. Their interests were formed before they discovered the PCA. They are, in fact, following their interests.

Of course there is a danger that stupid criticism will hurt s-f. Why shouldn't it? It's hurt everything else. I am being fired because of it. But as a writer of fiction I would be a damned fool in the Biblical sense of both those words to pay attention to any criticism or critical theories except my own--which, like Shaw's, are polemical and ex post facto.

Fiction, by the way, lost its audience during World War II, as any publisher (ask Betty Ballantine) will tell you. Poets have not lost their audiences, anyway; after the Baroque Dreadful of the 1950's poetry left the campus, by and large, and can now be found in some very odd places, New York and London, mostly.

If Biggle thinks PCA "scholarship" is easy (eek, the vernacular!) let him try reading 14 Modern Gothics. The title of my paper was, by the way, "Somebody's Trying to Kill Me and I Think It's My Husband: The Modern Gothic." Title suggested by Terry Carr.

The inaccuracies and the element of personal animosity seem to come from the same place. Tom Clareson notes the "intense personal involvement in s-f." I--since I am myself--take exception to Lloyd Biggle's personal remarks about me. On the second page of his paper, to prove the idiocy of the topics discussed, he lists seven "thrilling events," of which three are about women (a topic one can safely assume to be trivial?) and two papers of mine, which somehow complete the assurance that this is all nonsense, especially if you add papers on s-f that don't exist. The same oddities appear on p. 108--out of six papers, four deal with either sex or sexism.

No, I do not like jokes about Miss--er sorry, Ms. Science Fiction. If Mr. Biggle envies us for dealing with live material instead of 15th century smudges, he can change his field. If he envies writers for writing novels, he can perfect his own art. If he dislikes feminism, feminists, sex, and women, there's very little anybody can do about it.

In the most recent issue of Extrapolation, Tom Clareson talks about the preciosity of lit. crit. in one paragraph and much more to the point than Biggle's peculiar double annoyance: that critics do not take s-f seriously (like fifteenth-century mss.) and that, paradoxically, they take it too seriously and that this will kill it.

Like that "legendary soul who complained that the audience now preferred the novel to the epic" Lloyd Biggle wants us to prefer the novel--but not to talk about it because somehow that will ruin it.

Pope thought bad critics worse than bad writers. Yet J. Popular Culture has one article at least per issue that's genuinely worthwhile, and often two or three, a vast improvement over almost all other literary journals I've ever had the misfortune to read.

The defensiveness of many s-f readers is indeed an interesting phenomenon. I certainly agree that s-f is not one of the mass madia (except in movie form) but here again, we seem to be moving backwards toward a definition of "popular culture" as folklore--in which case the Tennessee Fiddlers' Association ought to be welcome.

But nothing pleases Mr. Biggle. Until the heat behind his disapproval is somehow brought into the open--and I agree with Mr. Clareson: this is a common matter in s-f and not a personal defect on Lloyd Biggle's part--we will simply be talking past each other.

And I do become offended when any consideration of women, re advertising, children's books, Modern Gothics (which are phenomenally popular, totally ritualistic, and provide, as one colleague of mine in Sociology put it, insight into the patterns in people's heads which the people themselves can't tell you about directly) are automatically assumed to be silly or mirth-provoking. Especially when there seems to be personal animus toward me included.

Sincerely,
Joanna Russ

In order to meet student demand for s-f courses a university often keeps on its staff one member of the Lunatic Fringe; but when such courses are taught so as to increase the demand, the responsible party has to be dumped. Academic contempt for s-f is obvious to anybody who applies to a literary foundation. To quote a recent letter from the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines: "Since Riverside Quarterly is a magazine whose emphasis is science fiction...it will have to be examined by our Executive Committee for eligibility for a CCLM grant." It's not a question of merit, then, but eligibility, which, of course, s-f lacks. So it'd be more accurate to say that Dr. Russ was fired (denied tenure, to state it politely) not for teaching or failing to teach s-f in a certain way, but for the very act of teaching it at all.

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525 S. 6th--Apt.11
Terre Haute, IN 47807

Dear Leland:

RQ 22 was up to your usual high standard. I thoroughly enjoyed the articles by Casey Fredericks, Doug Barbour, and Joe Christopher, and even the one by Lloyd Biggle, with whose position on popular culture I have considerable sympathy, even though he did, without mentioning my name, make me the principle subject of a page-and-a half diatribe (pp. 104-5). Perhaps you will allow me to make a few points in defense of myself and my profession.

1) As to my need to "acquire some rudimentary knowledge of s-f": since I have been reading s-f for 49 years, it is quite possible that my familiarity with the books and magazines in the field is more extensive than Dr. Biggle's.

2) If Dr. Biggle had censured me for the rudundancy of "representative specimen," I would have granted his point, but I must deny that there is anything inaccurate or invidious in the application of the word to a member of the novel class; consult your dictionary.

3) The meaning of the adjective "popular" in phrases like "popular music," "popular science," or "popular fiction" is similar to that of the adjective "lay": of or for the people; that is, people in general as opposed to those with special training or special interests. Any book published with a label like "detective story" or"science fiction" is aimed at an audience vastly different from the readership of the critical reviews, and vastly larger and more diffuse than s-f fandom; in sum, a popular audience. (This should not be news to any reader of RQ; for a recent statement on the matter, see Frederik Pohl's article in the new book by Reginald Bretnor.) Although there is no necessary difference in quality, there are technical and quantitative differences between serious popular fiction and serious mainstream fiction which are clearly apparent though not yet well defined in literary criticism--for a good introduction to the problem, see John G. Cawelti, "Notes Toward an Aesthetic of Popular Culture," JPC 5 (1971):255-68. In this sense of the term, Childhood's End does belong to popular fiction. Furthermore, it is representative of popular s-f at its best: I would not have published an article as long as the one Dr. Biggle refers to (the one by David Samuelson in SFS #1) if it had dealt with a mediocre or below-average novel.

4) Scholarly articles on popular s-f, including my own, have tended to be short and one-dimensional, for the simple reason that literary scholars have not yet learned how to bring the full weight of their learning to bear on popular fiction. No other book from popular s-f has yet been examined, in a published article, as thoroughly, and from so many different angles, as Childhood's End in Samuelson's article. I do take writers like Clarke, Heinlein, Asimov, Aldiss, and Blish seriously enough to think that their books deserve this kind of study, and only wish that I could find more articles as thorough as Samuelson's. (On the other hand, "noble" and "tragically neglected" are not words that I would use of any "branch of literature," however worthwhile or unduly neglected.)

5) Professors of English are no more than human--but also no less. The sentence quoted by Dr. Biggle near the end of p. 104 comes from my attempt to make a good-natured reply to the rather ill-natured note that accompanied his subscription-order. While I do not share the sentiment of the well-known lines by Wordsworth ("Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;/ Our meddling intellect/ Misshapes the beauteous form of things;--/ We murder to dissect."), whether applied to "those barren leaves" of "Science" or "Art" or literary scholarship, still I do know of and sympathize with the widespread feeling that all the beauty of a poem or story is destroyed when subjected to detailed analysis, and so was willing to grant Dr. Biggle a point or two against literary scholarship in the name of cordiality--a willingness which it is now apparent he did not share.

6) It is absurd to say that English professors in the 1940s were "still unaware that Brave New World was an important novel." Huxley has been one of my favorite authors since adolescence, and the same is true of many of my older colleagues (he is no longer as fashionable as he once was); satire, whether or not couched in science-fictional terms, has always been regarded as a major literary form; the first anthology I taught in the English survey contained a story by Huxley, with a headnote listing BNW among other books and commenting on Huxley as a leading satirist of our time; the two texts for my qualifying exam at the University of Chicago in 1951 were BNW and 1984. My own complaint is that professors of English have been all too aware of the book ever since its publication in 1932, for it has been one of the main props of that anti-scientific attitude that is still too prevelant in the humane disciplines.

7) It is invidious to say that professors of English wait around for someone to tell them whether or not a book is important. In independence, courage, and integrity, professors of English probably vary as much as those in any other field, or as lawyers, physicians, or writers of s-f; but if Dr. Biggle imagines that we do not have our favorite books, or our strong individual opinions on subjects of every kind, or that we do not vigorously debate among ourselves on all matters pertaining to our discipline, than he is ignorant not only of us but of the very things that make a man or woman an intellectual of any kind.

8) I have read hundreds of "theses, dissertations, and articles" in English studies (how many has Dr. Biggle read?), but never one, even though my special field is the Elizabethan drama, devoted to "how much better Shakespeare was than his contemporary playwrights Chapman and Webster." Literary scholarship is not concerned with arguing that major authors are better than minor authors--you are much more likely to find an article in which the scholar complains that his favorite obscure poet has been unduly neglected and deserves a place, though of course not in the first rank, at least in the second or third. It is instead concerned, first, with the search for factual knowledge that will enable us to understand better the texts of our canon; second, with the explication of texts on the basis of all the knowledge we have been able to accumulate; and third, with the elaboration of theory that will perhaps enable us to organize better what we have been doing.

9) Among other things my profession has taught me something about the temptations of rehtoric and the ease with which one can slip into excesses when driving a point home. I hope that Dr. Biggle does not seriously believe that his motives are nobler than mine, or his command of the language vastly superior, or that professors of English constitute an inferior breed. If he does there is of course no common ground on which we can meet to discuss our common interests. For many years now we have been hearing, on the one hand, that s-f is at last respectable, and on the other, that professors of English are really no smarter than anyone else. It is high time that we granted both points. put them behind us, and got on with our work.

As ever,
Dale Mullen

"Specimen" does carry unpleasant connotations--for example, "urine specimen"--that were used deliberately in my own Cliché article a few issues back.// I wonder if the split between "high" and "low" culture is correlated with the post-Elizabethan "dissociation of sensibility." After all, Macbeth was written and performed as popular entertainment. A thousand phooeys on Aldous Huxley, whose anti-scientific bias (as noted by our correspondent) has been transmitted so widely. Compare, e.g., the number of scientists familiar with the New Poetry to the number of poets (Paul Valery being the only one I can think of) who have learned the New Science.

Box 3186 Wooster College
Wooster, OH 44691

Dear Leland,

...Thanks for the variety of the articles, and thanks particularly for publishing Lloyd Biggle's exploration of the "morasses of academe." I had heard that he had amused the Nebula banquet...

Some things he says I agree with completely, as I have said in the SFWA Forum, the Bulletin, the May issue of Extrapolation, and most recently in a letter to Ben Bova regarding his editorial, "Teaching Science Fiction" (Analog, June '74). The most obvious problem is the need for qualified teachers; the greatest problem, the dangers of some of the more precious critical approaches such as Freudian analysis.

I have been told that there are writers out there who disapprove of the so-called academic intrusion, but until now I have seen nothing to match what seems to me the bitterness and bad temper of Lloyd Biggle... I'm afraid that I must take exception to some of Biggle's remarks.

To begin with, the edition of Thrall and Hibbard he used in those halcyon days of the late 1940's was published in 1936. I have lost my copy of it somewhere, but as I recall it defined surrealism as "chaos in art"--or words to that effect. The 1960 edition, revised by C. Hugh Holman, contains a one paragraph definition of s-f: "A form of fantasy" (p. 444). Let's not get into that one tonight; but let's note the significance of the date, 1960. That was seven years before the appearance of The Journal of Popular Culture and two years after the first MLA Seminar on s-f.

Secondly, if I may, Arthur Conan Doyle did not write an "important science-fiction novel, The Lost Continent." His marvelous account of Professor Challenger's discovery of a prehistoric world in South America was entitled The Lost World (1912). The former was the title Don Wollheim gave to the Ace edition of Burroughs' Beyond Thirty, copyright 1916 by Street and Smith. Nor is it probable that Thrall and Hibbard listed that "trivial little novel" Brave New World as a major literary event of 1933 since its first edition was published by Chatto and Windus in 1932. I am fortunate enough to have a copy of that edition...

His repeated remarks that PCA "has condescended to take an occasional look at s-f" are particularly disturbing. Since the late 1960's I have had the pleasure of working closely with Ray Browne in the PCA coverage of s-f. PCA has published several books in the field, will issue a new collection of essays on such s-f writers as Clarke, Simak, Heinlein, and Asimov by early '75, and several other titles are in the planning stages. It has given considerable attention to this area of the broad and diverse field of popular culture in the journal, and each year there has been at least one session on s-f at the annual meeting.

Indeed, I chaired the session at Indianapolis in 1973...Had /Lloyd Biggle/ attended the session he would ...have discovered that Dale Mullen did not prepare a paper on "Edgar Rice Burroughs' Heroes as Primitives"; instead I gave a paper entitled "Lost Lands, Lost Races: A Pagan Princess of His Very Own," in which I drew heavily on Haggard and Burroughs, suggesting that although the idiom was very different from our own, the "lost race" novel provided the end of the 19th century with its "respectable" erotica. That paper was given, with some revision, at the Ohio College English Association meeting late in April, 1973, and will appear in JPC. (Incidentally, I have just read the parodies of Haggard, He and It, and they support my basic premise.)

...Biggle also seems unacquainted with the facts of academic life when he assumes that we all had an "all expenses paid vacation in sunny Indianapolis." There are a number of other points that need to be made quickly and can perhaps be made best by asking questions.

1) On what evidence does Biggle assert that PCA is "merely poking fun at /popular culture/?" So far as I can see he has not participated in any PCA sessions on s-f or anything else, nor does his article suggest he has read the journal. Nor has he ever participated in the MLA or SFRA meetings.

2) If s-f is not a form of popular literature (or popular culture), what is it? Here again the problem of definition. I submit that one characteristic of popular literature is that it is published in the magazines of its period. Thus, for example, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, H.G. Wells, Scott Fitzgerald, and others were among the writers of popular literature in their own periods.

3) Agreed that literary criticism of contemporary works is a difficult task (look at the reception during the 1930's of William Faulkner, or at the reception of Bulwer Lytton during the 19th century). Are we, then, to ignore contemporary fiction completely or merely indulge in reviews aimed, hopefully, at selling more copies of each book? Such a view is ridiculous. Jerry Pournelle challenged academic critics to write reviews/ analyses which would be of value to the writers; Gordie Dickson asked that the craftsmanship of the writer be emphasized. To these, I would add that once written, a work becomes public property, and one task of the literary historian-critic is to place the work in both the literary and intellectual tradition of its culture. S-F may have its greatest importance, as I have said elsewhere, as an index to the changing attitudes toward science and technology during the past century or two.

Biggle himself raises a question, asking why popular culture did not emerge until the late '60's. Once again he has either not done his homework or has a short memory. When he was on campus in the late'40's he may have missed the battle which was going on regarding whether or not American Studies was a legitimate field of study. At Pennsylvania Robert Spiller recalled incidents from the period of World War One when American literature itself was questioned as a legitimate area for study. This does not beg the question; it merely emphasizes that the interests of academe change--broaden--from period to period, just as s-f itself changes from period to period. Have you noticed, for example, how few Utopias have been portrayed since 1945? How, despite Wells's warnings, s-f remained optimistic through World War Two?

I do not write this out of anger, nor do I wish to attack Lloyd Biggle as a person. But his speech...epitomizes to my mind the basically uninformed attacks on the academic interest in s-f...I hope that at some convention (or academic conference) in the future we have opportunity to discuss the whole matter. I would welcome that opportunity because, as I said at the beginning, I agree with some of the basic points he makes.

What I cannot understand, however, is why he singles out PCA and Ray Browne. I infer that, for whatever reasons, he attacks the "morasses of academe" on a personal and emotional level.And I write this letter not to quarrel with him as an individual, but to attempt to raise certain points which I think need making. Finally, I write it because I anticipate the deluge of letters you will receive praising his article and calling for "academe" to go, at least, elsewhere and leave s-f to those who love it tenderly. I would remind those who hold such a view that many of us now teaching s-f courses and writing about it began to read s-f in the '20's and '30's--long before Lloyd Biggle discovered it "after /he/ had become a selling writer."

And all of this leads to several questions: why are certain s-f writers and fans so defensive in their attitudes toward s-f? It is almost as though they expect someone to scold them for liking something just a bit illegal, immoral, or fattening. Why do some enthusiasts of s-f have such a seeming dread of literary critics or evaluation by someone whom they may not know intimately? Why do writers and critics alike talk of new criteria and separate standards for judging s-f? Is it because so many individuals have devoted their lives to sustaining a field that was already very much alive by the turn of the century? And if Rider Haggard, Frank Stockton, and Jack London did not write s-f, what did they write? What is the cause of this intense personal involvement in s-f?

...I look forward to many another excellent issue of RQ. Thanks, too, for the illustrations going with Mullen's article on Burroughs and Haggard...

Tom Clareson

By his reminder that Dickens and Thackeray were popular entertainers our correspondent forces me to update my reply to Dale Mullen's letter: T.S. Eliot's "dissociation" wasn't just post-Elizabethan, but post-Victorian.// If Biggle and Clareson ever get together, as suggested above, I could only stand between them and recite the familiar litany of the referee: "OK you guys know da rules. I don't wanna see no kidney punches. Take one step back when I tells ya to break. Shake hands and make it a clean fight."

10808 75th Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada

Dear Leland:

I enjoyed your comments on LOCs as usual. Especially your note to David Ketterer's letter. Faar out. But, of course, the centre of controversy (I hope) in the zine is Lloyd Biggle's inane and chiched attack on academe, in which he manages (how could he miss?) to make the relevant points against the Sturgeonian 90% while simultaneously quite unfairly kicking the other 10% in the groin. That he does so with the usual heavyhanded sarcasm of those who can't be bothered to comprehend what's going on around them is only to be expected...I don't know if they /the Popular Culture Association/ are up to what Roland Barthes did back in the middle Fifties with his Mythologies, but if they're trying to read the signs of the times (which can be found most often in popular culture) then they are studying important stuff.

But it's his nasty putdown of /Joanna Russ/ that really rubs me the wrong way. Joanna Russ is right to attack sexism in s-f, and elsewhere in popular culture, and she does so with a savage wit that reminds (one of her own favourite writer, G.B.Shaw. I enjoy her stuff, but it never fails to make me think. Biggle boggles me in this piece, and that's about it. Sure there are assholes in the academy; there are assholes in prodom too. So what? The good critical writing on s-f will, I hope, be appreciated by the writers. The sense of camaraderie I felt at the secondary universe/conference at Penn State a few years ago, where the writers told us that they were worried--a bit--but not scared, and where we found we could talk to each other, because most of the academics there really did care about s-f, and weren't just jumping on a new publish or perish bandwagon (though there'll be enough of those, I'm not denying that), seemed to me to represent a much more fruitful approach to the situation by the writers than Biggle's does. No one can quarrel with his penultimate paragraph, no one would want to; it's just that I didn't find very much excellence in the ad hominem arguments that preceded it.

In response to Jeff Clark, I have to admit that I hadn't read all the early Malzberg when I made the statement he takes umbrage to. Especially the erotica. I've read Screen since, and it's fucking brilliant. On the other hand, I still feel that The Falling Astronauts and Overlay, and Universe Day mark the beginning of his real excellence in s-f. Beyond Apollo and Herovit's World (about which I agree with Harlan Ellison) are really fine, and I haven't had time to read all the ones since, but I do love the man's quirky, black sense of humour in everything I have read. And I really love his two novels on fan conventions, though I know a lot of /fans/ who don't.

Peace,
Doug Barbour

Well, it's easier (and more fun!) to damn the 90% than to praise the 10%, just as it's easier to swat a hippopotamus than to spank a mouse. Of course, it's also a bit more dangerous, as witness the "massive retaliation" in this issue.

Classics Dept., Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47401

Dear Leland,

I enjoyed Biggle's tirade. It is perhaps too easy to do what he did with the Pop Culture conference because those were indeed second rate professors...I have only two corrections of his views. The first is that we are no longer in the Fat Cat class; we have to pay our way to conferences like everybody else now. None of us receives support from our home institutions for travel and lodging, let alone get it from outside institutions or from sources in our fields of specialty (for sure we in Classics don't). Can I argue devil's advocate, though, and say that I think it's good that money for trips isn't so free any more? Conferences and conventions should be a labor of love and loose money just perverts their purpose by letting a lot of people just go somewhere for free. With tight funds we'll really see who are interested in a subject. Second, a good number of academics who are vitally interested in s-f receive no advantage from publishing on that subject because our universities do not regard it as an authentic academic subject. I hate to say it, but old Indiana U. is one of these; it doesn't particularly bother me because s-f is a lifelong love affair, but Biggle is only sometimes correct in his view that writing in this new area is a way to publication and a way to get ahead, or Academic Gamesmanship again. The important thing is that there are enough of us across the country who are going to see to it that one way or another s-f is as respectable as anything else --I hope this is idealistic and altruistic; I can't really believe it's an ego-trip or mere self-assertion.

As ever,
Casey Fredericks

The essence of a convention is not the formal reading of papers but the informal person-to-person exchanges of views and conjectures. Such "gossip," as Robert Oppenheimer said, is the very "life blood of physics," and the same statement applies to other branches of the "Arts and Sciences." So the philistine refusal--at IU and elsewhere--to pay convention expenses is inexcusable.

2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Dear Leland:

RQ 22's chef d'oeuvre is undoubtedly the transcript of Lloyd Biggle, Jr.'s speech on Academolition. It occurs to me, however, that we can never hope to correct the situation he so graphically delineates merely by adopting a holier-than-thou attitude, or even an unholier-than-thou posture. The only practical remedy, as I see it, is one of infiltration--to go on campus--make talks, conduct seminars and rap-sessions, and thus fight the enemy on his or her own grounds. Admittedly, some of our colleagues can do our image more harm than good by their efforts, but if enough s-f writers become active in scholastic circles, that image can be put into proper perspective, warts and all. But we'll correct nothing merely by "dropping out"--and we must be realistic enough to acknowledge that as long as this academic interest exists, we must defend ourselves from the kind of witless misinterpretation which Biggle so succinctly cites.

As always,
Robert Bloch

The question is: do we infiltrate them or they infiltrate us? Of course it goes both ways, but it's better for us to get there first --and also a lot tougher: as noted by Russ and Fredericks, the uppity-snoopity institutions don't regard s-f as a legitimate academic subject.

English Dept., Tarleton State Univ.
Stephenville, TX 76401

Dear Leland--

I enjoyed particularly Lloyd Biggle's "Science-Fiction Goes to College"--probably because I just finished teaching a graduate course in s-f this past spring. The head of my department has in the past tended to ignore my interest in s-f, but junior college administrators of the area had asked if we were going to prepare our graduates to teach popular literature, so he gave in. The course itself was great fun for me, even though I had to go back through my list of texts and cut down the number of books from the fifties--it was then I was an undergraduate and had the time to do the most of my s-f reading. I hadn't realized until I took a second look at my list how unconsciously biased I was toward that period.

Like Biggle, I'm not certain how popular s-f is as "popular literature"--but I tried to include that aspect by teaching Burroughs' Princess of Mars. I also taught Stapledon's Odd John, and lost a grade-school teacher at that point, who insisted she couldn't get through the book. Ah well...

Re H.G. Lewis's query on my failure to mention Heinlein's "Magic Inc." in my review of Anderson's Operation Chaos: Anderson's dedication of the book to Heinlein makes the relationship clear, and I did not happen to be tracing the history of the genre inside the s-f field. I agree, however, that it would be a quite legitimate approach.

Best regards,
Joe Christopher

I am obliged to confess that my sympathies are with the schoolteacher--though Odd John is surely the least bad of this author's works.//Quiz question: "What definition of popular culture is implicit in (1) the j.c. request about s-f (in general) as an example of it, (2) J.C.'s choice of Princess of Mars (in particular) as an example? Which definition is closer to the so-called Bigglian canon, and why?"// By yielding, however reluctantly, to community demands for s-f, Tarleton State makes itself less objectionable (in this respect, at least) than schools like Indiana University and Cornell that refuse to teach it or fire anybody who does.

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306 E. Gatehouse, Apt #11
Metairie, LA 70001

Dear Mr. Sapiro,

Congratulations, and very many thanks for #22, particularly Lloyd Biggle's piece flogging the denizens of academe. No doubt he read it to an appreciative audience and garnered his collection of belly-yuks. But the wages of heroism is death, and at the end he withdrew to a more tenable position, and said that some of his best friends played the game of Publish or Perish.

A brouhaha among hardy intellectuals is an exciting spectator sport, but it is no fun at all unless the combatants are skilled and sturdy. Mr. Biggle's effort is a rather cheap thing, probably scratched off in a casual moment, written for "effect." It is puff-ballery for a safe audience, and while it may play in Peoria for the lumpen proles it is unlikely to please a metropolitan audience. Mr. Biggle drags in the Pop Cult Asso as a straw-figure to play the role of his demolished man. His paper would have been more interesting had he set up a Grendel or a Nathless from the Liber Monstrorum upon which to do his doughty deed of deadly enmity.

Among the writers of s-f and fantasy there appears to be a horrid, trembling fear that the goblins of academia, those spiteful spirits of the class-room and dark death-shadows of the library, will destroy all that is fine in the pulp and paperback culture.

Let these distraught composers of curiosa halt their fear and loose their uneasy futility. For literary scientifica was born out of academic wedlock, and has proved to be a vigorous and healthy creature. The wardens of the groves of academe will insure that this illegitimate from the parc des monstres will not intrude, or at least to a dangerous extent. But, even should worse become worst and the eidos of s-f and fantasy fall within the purview of apparatus criticus, no harm would be done. Who in fandom reads PLMA and similar zines? Our youth will remain uncorrupted and their elders, strong with unsurpassed strength and wisdom, will display their usual exemplary courage. But merely to show that academic criticism is not all bad, let me suggest J.R.R. Tolkien's "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," for he could not possibly be a corrupt influence.

Very cordially yours,
Alexander Doniphan Wallace

Here's one fan who reads PMLA, though I do it so as to be a scholar by physical association--just as I became (or felt I was becoming) a big wheel in financial circles because my college room mate subscribed to the Wall Street Journal.

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250 Coligni Avenue
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Dear Mr. Sapiro:

I commend Lloyd Biggle, Jr. for his article on "S-F Goes to College," and I suggest that all your contributors read it (he said nastily). It has been said that if the anti-sex people really knew what they were doing, they would demand sex education in the schools, since if it were taught as badly as everything else is, maybe the kids would stop doing it.

Of course, the way literature is usually taught, the student gets the feeling that reading is something you do only because the teacher tells you to. One sign of this feeling is the Student-Guide syndrome, in which the student uses little pamphlets designed to protect him from actually having to read the assigned books. Since there is now a Cliff's Notes Introduction to Science Fiction as well as at least one book written to spare students the ordeal of struggling through the works of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., it would appear that s-f is being taught the same way. (Indeed, I suspect that if someone had gotten to me before I had read any s-f and told me that it was "a literature of cognitive estrangement," I might have refrained from reading the stuff unless I had to.)

Actually, I would say that Mr. Biggle's article...is 90% good. In the other 10% I would include his use of Joanna Russ as a Horrible Example. Surely there are far more tedious writers in the academic world, and from what I know of her writing, I would suspect that even if she starts off with a title like "The Subjunctivity of Science Fiction," she would say something interesting. Also, I would say that "representative specimen of the popular s-f novel" is a perfectly reasonable description of Childhood's End. It is "representative" because it deals with some of the basic themes of s-f, such as alien invasion and man's future evolution; and it is "popular" because it is one of the best-selling s-f books ever. The word "specimen" may be a bit pejorative, but it beats Darko Suvin's comparison of s-f study to cancer research (F&SF, May '72).

See you later, Gator,

Arthur Hlavaty

I agree that if the Guardians of Morality possessed intelligence, they would insist that sex be taught in the classroom. Recall T.S. Eliot's unhappiness on learning that his poems were being included in the curriculum, since he didn't want them to be "required reading."

Dept. of Language, Literature, & Communication
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Troy, NY 12181

Dear Leland,

Please protect us from the slings and arrows of Lloyd Biggle, Jr. His article, "Science Fiction Goes to College" needs answering. Mr. Biggle's total lack of understanding of popular culture, of s-f's place in popular culture, and of the nature of the Popular Culture Association conventions represents the sort of elitism we are trying to overcome.

The sort of dust-covered scholarship to which Mr. Biggle claims allegiance--nicely presented in Hedda Gabler--is unhealthy for both the "scholar" and those upon whom the scholarship is thrust. What Mr. Biggle seems to want done to s-f is probably what the American Film Institute is trying to do to film--and this is sad.

To suggest--apparently without attending the PCA convention or reading the papers--that members of the PCA do not really study popular culture shows surprising ignorance, and such comments seem out of place in RQ. Even RQ does not have a perfect record of impressively scholarly papers, especially now.

What is worse, to deny that s-f is a part of popular culture, as Mr. Biggle does...is to misrepresent the genre again in an unhealthy way.

Whatever the reason for Mr. Biggle's outburst, RQ seems to be the wrong soapbox. Richard Mullen's article on Haggard and Burroughs and S.C. Fredericks' article, both in issue 22, would be most welcome at a PCA convention, as would many past articles.

I have presented papers at the last two PCA conventions, have taught several popular culture courses, and, most recently, a s-f film course. I apologise for not being sorry for offering such courses, even if this is academic prostitution. I apologise for not being sufficiently covered with library dust to please Mr. Biggle, and I apologise for the lack of footnotes to this letter.

But, of course, s-f does belong in the classroom, even if only moderately well taught. Why should RQ help widen an already existing gulf?

Sincerely,

Wayne Losano

RQ makes no pretence at consistency in the sense of deleting from one portion of the magazine what is stigmatized--or appears to be stigmatized--in another. Nor is there any claim to scholarship in the PMLA sense: such is left to the academic fanzines, Tom Clareson's Extrapolation, and Dale Mullen's and Darko Suvin's Science Fiction Studies. Finally, there is no gulf-widening intended: I just like a good fight!

---

3 Las Palomas
Orinda, CA 94563

Dear Leland,

Hurrah for Lloyd Biggle! He has said exactly what needed to be said, with truth and precision.

However, I don't think academe poses any threat to s-f. At worst, for a while longer we'll be afflicted with a few young graduates of creative writing courses who know everything about writing except how to tell a story. But lack of sales will pretty soon confine them to the literary quarterlies, except for those whose talent is real enough that they go on to learn what people actually want to read.

Even this outcome seems unlikely. As Lloyd points out, the teaching and analyzing of s-f is merely part of a fad for so-called pop culture in general. Fads have a way of dying rather rapidly. While this one lasts, those writers who are so inclined may as well pick up a few extra bucks giving lectures.

Eventually we'll have just a few professors engaged with the field, just because they love and understand it: people like Jack Williamson, to give a single example. Meanwhile, s-f ought to have sufficient vitality to survive the present unwholesome attention it is getting, even as it survived earlier neglect.

Regards,

Poul Anderson

That Lloyd Biggle told the truth is not disputed, but our present correspondent is almost the only one that thinks he told the entire truth, i.e., who thinks that his arguments on s-f for love vs. s-f for profit applies to virtually all academics. But in any case his generalizations won't apply to writers like Jack Williamson, Joanna Russ, and James Gunn--who should be considered not as academics in s-f but as s-f representatives in academia. So at present no single concept, like current fashion ("fads") or academic prestige ("profit") will generate a complete solution.

4106 Davon Lane
Peoria, IL 61614

Dear Leland:

Thanks very much for the last 2 RQ. On reading the first part of Dr. Mullen's article on Haggard/ERB, I wrote a long critique of his critique (though his is actually more a listing than a critical article). But I decided to wait until I'd read the first three before sending in my comments.

We should all be grateful for Mullen's lists and for your printing of it. Future articles on ERB will undoubtedly rely heavily on this handy reference. And I notice that Leslie A. Fiedler has read the listing Mullen did in a previous issue (can't lay my hands on it just now to give title and date of publication). Fiedler referred to the scholar who did it, without naming him, in his recent article on Tarzan in the New York Times Book Review section...

I have some hopes that the final article by Mullen will do more than list ERB's and Haggard's faults. I hope he isn't one of those critics who think it's the critic's function to ignore a writer's virtues. Such critics are, figuratively, and perhaps literally, half-assed. I rather think, though, that Mullen finds no merit whatever in these two authors, and so we will not learn from him that Jung, Henry Miller, and others have paid tribute to the abidingness of Haggard as a shower-forth of immortal archetypes. Nor will Mullen have perceived (as Fiedler does) why ERB's Tarzan is an immortal literary figure. But I may be wrong. Let's hope so.

Fiedler mentioned me in the article as the world's greatest authority on Burroughs. If he'd said I was the greatest authority on Tarzan, he'd have been right. But I disclaim and deny any statement that I am the world's greatest authority on Burroughs. There are others, John Roy, Reverend Heins, Reverend Richardson, Frank Brueckel, Coriell, Cazadessus, and Mullen, who have made a far closer study of the complete works of Burroughs.

Also, when I say that I know more of Tarzan than anybody else, I must qualify even that statement. Lord Greystoke himself, and his family and a few close friends, know more about him than I do. However, some of the truth about him was revealed in my biography of Greystoke. And more is about to be revealed. From time to time, I get a package in the mails. They're always from the same person, but the mailing addresses are different, and there is no return address. These contain extracts from Greystoke's memoirs, the first batch of which will be in my anthology, Mother Was a Lovely Beast, Chilton Press, Oct., 1974. One of the interesting items in the extracts is the explanation of how Greystoke was able to assume his cousin's title without any publicity whatsoever. It's such a simple explanation, and an inevitable one, too, yet no one had ever guessed it.

This revelation, by the way, is going to force me to revise certain parts of my biography of Greystoke.

I also reveal that my interview with Lord Greystoke did not actually take place in Libreville, Gabon, as stated in the Esquire article. Greystoke had asked me to give this city as the interview site, instead of Chicago, where it actually took place. He did not explain why he wished me to put the interview in Libreville nor did he explain why he will now allow me to give the true place. Apparently, he had good reasons, but it's not up to me to ask him what they are. Especially since I don't have his address.

I now have the latest extracts, which describe what really happened between him and La (or the woman whom Burroughs calls La). The two versions, alas, differ considerably, and Greystoke himself is not bound by any of Burroughs' Victorian-Edwardian inhibitions and conventions.

You might be amused by a forthcoming book of mine, a pastiche in which Watson and Holmes meet Greystoke. And encounter G-8 and the Shadow on the way to Cairo to capture Von Bork. It also describes how Holmes solves the mystery of what happened to the Zu-Vendis civilization shortly after Allan Quatermain's MS was received by his agent, H. Rider Haggard. Not to mention Holmes's anticipation of von Frisch's discovery of bee "language." The Adventure of the Peerless Peer, The Aspen Press, September, 1974.

I got a letter from Bill Blackbeard some months ago. Among other matters he mentioned that a lot of people didn't like my theory (in Tarzan Alive) that G-8, the Shadow, and the Spider were three different personalities of...Richard Wentworth. For those who are interested I've reconsidered the evidence (especially the chronological) and have abandoned that theory (which was actually more speculation than theory). But I cling steadfastly to my belief that G-8 was mad as Alice's hatter. However, he did have his lucid moments.

Also, I get many letters from people who want to know where they can get copies of my Essex House books. These have long been out of print, but Vernell Coriell is going to reprint A Feast Unknown, probably sometime this year. Later, The Image of the Beast and Blown. These will be illustrated by Richard Corben and will be issued by the Fokker D-LXIX Press, a subsidiary of the Acme Zeppelin Company.

Thanks again for the RQ, and I'll send my comments on Mullen's articles after I get the third part.

Best,
Philip Jose Farmer

Expectations of a part three were raised, perhaps, by the conclusion's being given at the very start, which left an apparent gap in the final pages (of part two) where a conclusion usually belongs.// On the failure to list virtues--there was no claim to a "complete" appraisal, just a discussion of the "Victorian-Edwardian inhibitions and conventions" (in Mr. Farmer's phrase) that restricted--or failed to restrict--each author. Dr. Mullen stated that the fin de siècle audience was less inhibited than that of the early 20th century, but to me this seemed a purely rhetorical device: the essay convinced me, at least, that ERB was totally bounded by the genteel tradition and that HRH was not.

Library Service Center
HQ, US 8th Army
APO, San Francisco, CA 96301

Dear Mr. Sapiro:

The letter from Adrienne Fein which suggests that the concept of shiftgrethor in Mrs. LeGuin's novel, The Left Hand of Darkness, is similar to the Oriental idea of "face" is intriguing, but having lived for 15 years in the Orient, I may be forgiven perhaps for pontificating that it is actually similar to what Westerners of superficial acquaintance imagine "face" to be like.

Actually, face is seldom or never involved in any duel of wits or deliberate obfuscation to put down the other party, which seems to be what shiftgrethor is mostly about.

Another difference is this: in Darkness, on several occasions during momentous discussions, Mrs. LeGuin makes the mistake of having her characters say, "I waive shiftgrethor," or words to that effect, so that some straight talk is introduced into the dialogue.

Now this is exactly what any culture that would develop a concept like shiftgrethor would most strongly forbid. In fact, it would be unthinkable, like an Oriental forgetting face: it's so ingrained that he doesn't even know there is such a thing, or its alternative, doesn't even have a name for it. (When an Oriental...oversteps the bounds of face, he becomes an outcaste and a non-person.)

The idea of "waiving shiftgrethor" is a lapse on the part of the author who has created a clever convention that she finds too difficult to carry through with consistency. She has a story to tell and all of a sudden in order to get it told her characters have to start saying things they would never say, so she breaks her own rule for the sake of convenience--a rare lapse in a remarkably sustained imaginative creation...

Cordially,
James Wade

Recall Kris Neville's remark (in an earlier issue) about "face" being a Western concept that we project onto the Orientals. All this explains the domestic significance of the Mayaguez affair: after the final humiliation in Indo-China the U.S. regains self-esteem by saying,"At least we licked 'em that time!"

2301 E. Foothill Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Dear Editor:

R.D. Mullen appears to have made a slight error in /section/ 6 of his article. The cosmic Fire he mentions on p. 141 has a local equivalent in the novel Ayesha; hence the hero and heroine are not "thousands of miles away" from a means to make contact safe for Leo. Furthermore, the Fire had been described before the fatal opportunity to embrace prematurely. Unlike the African phenomenon, it appears more available for exploitation. Therefore, it is mainly impatience (and a little hybris) that ruins Leo's chances again.

I take up the challenge given by Mr. McGuire about the significance of letter names in Zamiatin's We. I regret my tardiness. When I started I had only the Russian. Now I have the translations and two outside references.

To tell the truth, I'm not so sure about his query. But I do have a surprising amount of material, leaving out the questions why some letters are Cyrillic. We is rich in that small features often have a complex background; in some ways the text approaches poetry.

McGuire overlooked the fact that all the letters so used in original (R, S, I, O, D, U, F) are still used by Russian printers (except for "S.")Roman numerals are widely used--hence "I." "R" occurs as sign of Recipe; it does not need a bar through it, unlike English. Indeed, "R" and "N" probably look the strangest of all our letters to them: physically just two of theirs turned around. There is a tradition of using "N" associated with Gogol. Perhaps Zamiatin shied away from our "N" because of this use for something deliberately given a code-name.

I begin with "S-4711" the easiest name to connect with other features. Abundantly, Zamiatin describes the character S as having some S-shaped features. For my references, let G denote the Mirra Ginsburg translation of We (1972) and Z the Zilboorg translation (1924)...

The first time D meets S is in G pp. 31-32, Z pp. 32-33. Zamiatin has given S a name that lets D associate S's name with the shape of his head and ears. But the author makes D record that D had unconsciously associated his acquaintance with "S" shape because of seeing his name badge, absent-mindedly.

But just before that, the author covertly introduces another association. D-503 is day-dreaming and calculating for his brain-child: the spaceship Integral. (Very similar in Russian). The mathematical symbol for integral looks like, and stems from, a large "S." D describes this fused perception as a head partaking of motion, like the craft in his calculations. The author slyly avoids the obvious; he makes a third association--he does use the word "association" itself, but not for the name "S" at this point. Three birds with one stone--pretty good for an ex-engineer.

A footnote on p. 161 of The Life and Works of Evgenij Zamiatin (1968) by Alex Shane stresses the forethought behind the letter names; choice of sound and letter association thorough-going with Zamiatin. The woman O (Z p.6) is round and pregnant; I, the romantic passion of D is thin, and oppositely built to O (Z 8, G 8).

R-13 speaks in an abrupt, splashing, liquid manner associated with that letter. Allegedly the three Cyrillic names, D, F, U are echoes of other symbols. Shane's connection of "F" with figa or fico (G 193) seems far-fetched to me. "F" appears only on pink assignation-slips used in the One State to pair mates in controlled sexual communism. Thus the word "lover" requires interpretation; F does not appear in /the/ story, only hinted at by pink slips in I's apartment. I heartily agree with his observation that "U" in Russian looks like "I" joined to "O." U, the police agent monitoring D-503, fails to win his desires toward her, unlike the amorous O and I.

Shane also catches the connection between the name of the ship, "Integral," and the symbol D for differentiation, the opposite of integration, mathematically. However, I see every integration must be of some expression ending in a differential (with a "d"); and intuitively, the value of the integral is built by repeated application of tiny increments of it, just as D feels himself the generator and architect of the ship "Integral."

Likewise, I see that at the very start of the novel D calls his diary a "derivative," a mathematical allusion uncongenial to the literary, and one masked in English by the triteness of usage. The same word is used in both senses more often than in Russian.

A derivative gives a function that analyzes, abstracts from the general trend of original function. This metaphor suits D's jerky chronicle and fate. The derivative emphasizes every little deviation and jog. D-503 acts in an arbitrary, individual manner against his intentions. Thus he is fittingly symbolized as a contrary to an "Integral" that comes from collective effort and is to serve as a fetish of unity a la Durkheim. Integration does the reverse--smoothing, averaging--and the word"average"is used several times in reference /to/ the One State policy of levelling all individual quirks.

D harps on a "splinter in his brain." Small spikes or discontinuities in a graph become gaps and infinite jumps under differentiation. Curiously, the metaphor ties in with the spikes of epileptic seizure; though the encephalogram was introduced after this novel. Dostoevsky was epileptic and his influence on the book is heavy.

Mathematical integrals are also referred to by "I." D strives to be an agent in building the ship, totally. Yet his unconscious drive is towards a different kind of creation and integration, with his lover, I. Thus the two obsessions of his days find analogous names.

Zamiatin uses vowels for names of women, consonants for names of men. Of the ten Russian vowels, one has no ordinary separate form. Of the rest, exclude three common words spelled as a single vowel. Zamiatin uses only one such, "O," and it does not occur initially (hence capitalized) as often as the three excluded. Another rarely is set in type as a capital, and it has a name other than its sound. The author uses two of the four remaining and employs one extra:"I." He shuns the two forms of "E," possibly because their shape does not seem "feminine."

Turning to a reminiscence of Zamiatin by his artist friend Yury Annenkov in the journal Grani #51, 1962 (in Russian) I find that Zamiatin apparently suffered (or enjoyed) an affliction of synesthesia. Different vowel and consonant sounds were tied to qualities.

The vowel O: "high, deep, the sea, the lap." Note the last. The Russian for "lap" (bosom) has two o's. The vowel I (soft): "near, low, hugging (or squeezing)." Need one look further for lovers names? The two U's are not listed.

For L: "pale, light-blue, cold, smooth, light." Both D and T: "stifling, heavy, of the fog, of darkness, musty." a strange association indeed for the heroic D-503! But is it so far off? After all, he volunteers to be a slave of the State at the end.

Neither S nor F is described.

For sound of R: "clearly speaks to me of something loud, bright, splendid, fiery, quick." All the adjectives apply to R-13 except "bright." An anomaly. R is pictured as dark, with "thick Negro lips" (Z 38, G37; Z 45, G43 and elsewhere).

Zamiatin continually describes him as a poet with rushing, splashing speech. But when he splashes a consonant (Z 38, G37, Z59 and the original) it is not "r" that explodes but "p," --"poets--a fountain."

Why the p's and Negro lips? Now I make a bold guess about the significance of R-13. R-13 is a subtle echo of the greatest Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin. Pushkin was proud of his...African ancestor, used in his story,"The Negro of Peter the Great." Pushkin was fiery, liberal, eloquent. Both R and Pushkin served as state poet, yet were rebels at heart and met death from friction in the social order.

The two letters fail to match. After some thought, I think I see the chain of association. Let Greek letters stand for the Russian ones, since they happily coincide for my readers. Than I form these two pairs: pi, P; rho, R. The second letters are Roman. This chain of four passes from Russian pi in "Pushkin" to English R in We. The link is the "P" and "rho" have the same shape. Within a pair, sounds equivalent.

Very Fannishly Yours,
John W. Andrews

Synesthesia isn't quite what our correspondent thinks it is--but I just hope he's right on everything else: his letter, which arrived several months late amidst this issue's space shortage, made me cut four shorter letters originally scheduled for this section.

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269 Y Street
Newburgh, NY 12550

Dear Leland,

Congratulations on number 22, an outstanding issue, from Derek Carter's fine portrait of the editor to the latest chapter in Richard Dale Mullen's continuing exposé of Victorian sexual fantasies. I especially enjoyed J.R. Christopher's essay, "Moore Meaning: In Fact, a Lot." I concur with his evaluation of Jimmon's incompetence in "Lot's Daughter"; it is too exaggerated to be realistically believable. It seems to me that Jimmon has given up too easily, that he is, in fact, indifferent to his own and his family's welfare. This ties in with Christopher's comment on p. 131 that Jimmon's failure to react normally to his bad luck/extreme clumsiness while hunting indicates some psychological problem which Ward Moore has not seen fit to elucidate.

Incidentally, although Anthony Boucher did not reprint "Lot's Daughter," it eventually appeared in A Decade of Fantasy and Science Fiction, edited by Robert F. Mills, 1960.

Best wishes,
Edward V. Moore

If Captain Moore thinks Jimmon's mechanical ineptitude--his general inability to fix and build--is unbelievable, he should have seen me in my high school metal-shop class, where I spent an entire semester trying to make a simple flower-pot holder. By my standards, Jimmon was efficient indeed.

1346 W. Howard
Chicago, IL 60626

Dear Leland,

It looks like RQ has finally found a critic who doesn't seem to foreshadow the coming age of academic overkill! S.C. Fredericks (a blessing on his literacy!) has in his "Antique Axemanship: Hardboiled Cliche" produced the first critical piece I've seen in RQ that I can endorse with unqualified enthusiasm. Fredericks by God can read, and he writes "beautiful analysis"! He is not overawed by scholarly and historical pretenses and is well aware that period research does not preclude literary puerility. It is lucid, illuminant writing like Fredericks' that keeps literary criticism from being a totally useless function. Bravo, for a change!

Unfortunately--but not surprisingly--the issue reverts thereafter to critical business at the usual uninspired levels. Douglas Barbour's article on LeGuin's Wizard of Earthsea seemed to me literate but unilluminating. I do not understand why Mr. Barbour thinks it necessary to demonstrate in writing that the novel "is a pure version of the narrative quest" (i.e., an obvious rendering of what's the basic plot of all novels), that the society of the work is essentially feudal (as the typical S&S society generally is), and that the most prevalent imagery is of a light and darkness dichotomy; all this is mere belaboring of the obvious. Furthermore, Barbour does Ms. LeGuin a disservice by quoting her didactic remarks out of context; the novel did not strike me as being so cluttered with instruction as all that--on the contrary, I rather enjoyed it.

As for J.R. Christopher's article: I do not recall reading the Ward Moore stories in question (though God knows I have read and forgotten reams of undistinguished s-f). But I hesitate to respect the judgment of a critic who, in the paragraph beginning "If my analysis is correct, Jimmon's personality is more complex than that of most s-f characters and thus more realistic," seems to confound the aesthetic approach called "realism" with general verisimilitude. As characters who intellectualize/ analyze/ rationalize their life processes in Freudian catch phrases seldom seem real to me I find Mr. Christopher's basic assumption unwarranted.

"Prudish Prurience," part II--Richard Dale Mullen's epochal discovery of soft-core porn in the unlikeliest places--continued the delightful reading of the first part: and with what invaluable scholarship! Statistics such as "the oldest maidenhead in the universe" are fun to know, and they're the ones Guinness never tells you!

Mort Castle's "Saturday in the Park" (which I assume was meant as an example rather than a satire of the institutionalized violence story told in semi-obligatory "future" slang, shows a professional quality rarely found in fanzine fiction. Did Castle mistake you for Galaxy too?) In fact, despite its thematic commonplaces, I'm surprised the piece didn't find a professional publisher: plenty of worse things have!

Steve Dimeo's "Will the Real Belief Please Part the Waters?" (gorgeous title) is an aptly level-headed objection to an area of pseudoscience that is easily and respectably objected to: the misguided attempt to give myth a material basis, on the deluded premise that it needs one. (There is generally adequate correlation in myth with natural and psychological truth, for its events to require an historical explanation; but for so many folk a specifically factual explanation is the only one possible.) If nothing else, Dimeo's review shows that Clifford Wilson's rebuttal to von Däniken was written by a mind of similar literary ineptitude as that which produced the original theories, but prone to more traditional prejudices. Therefore Wilson may well prove convincing to the same audience that swallowed von Däniken in the first place: which perhaps is as it should be.

I was not so enthralled by Sleeper as Peter Bernhardt was--the humor seemed too self-conscious, the triumph of contrivance over spontaneity--but I'm not enough at odds to dispute him broadside. It was a pleasant flick.

And a final word on David Ketterer: it is obvious he still does not see that this "displaced mythic structure...the mythic pattern of death and rebirth" he keeps complaining about in Left Hand of Darkness as damaging to the plot is merely a variant of the basic Bildungsroman structure that is common to every novel in the world! Novels always involve a maturing experience, and this always comes about through a symbolic death, a sojourn in a more-or-less mythological underworld, and a rebirth into a new adulthood. So if this structure is what is disrupting the "surface coherence" and "inner momentum" of Ms. LeGuin's plot, it is a disruption common to every novel in the world. I would suggest to Mr. Ketterer that when dealing with a particular novel he confine his critique to its particular faults and virtues.

As for his objection to the digressive mythological material--really, I begin to suspect the misguided gentleman takes Agatha Christie as his standard of excellence for plot construction. However, the novel is not a marathon race, and the most illuminating route is not always the direct one. Greater novelists than Ms. Le Guin--such as Fielding and Melville, for openers--have made digression a part of their structures, and had it praised as an enhancement. I find Ms. LeGuin's culture myths to be the same...

Meantime--happy (written) brickbats to you!

Sheryl Smith

Messrs. Barbour and Christopher will have to defend themselves this time, since I've no room to do it.// One generalization implies another: a maturing experience is the difference between the novel and the adventure story, between drama and melodrama, & etc., conflicts in these last groups being purely external, so that characters at the end are the same as at the beginning.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM.....

John Alderson (Box 72, Maryborough, Vic. 3465, Australia), a personal acquaintance of Clifford Wilson, author of Crash Go the Chariots. "Regrettably he is a born preacher and a little editorial work on his book would have improved it no end...I always skip sermons, an automatic reflex. It is a pity Wilson did not take more notice of the Bible. With the sole exception of two books by the same author, the Bible does not sermonize." The family relationship among Abraham's children (discussed last issue), says our correspondent, is "capable of further interpretation":

> It appears that the story of the patriarchs is the story of the change from a matriarchy to a patriarchy (in both cases it was the woman who had the young man sent back "home" for a wife) and Jacob's name was changed to Israel when he married Rachael, which as Graves in The White Goddess points out, means Rachael's Man. Secondly the change is from a cult of priestesses to priests. Thirdly, if Graves is right about the gods Rachael stole as being the mummified heads of her ancestors, then the theological change was from ancestor worship to the beginnings of monotheism. Thus in the light of a cult of priestesses preserving their family by marriage within a small clan, the story of Lot's daughters takes interesting significance.

While still our best source book in anthropology, psychology, etc., the Bible makes a physiological error in the episode originally discussed here, since getting their father drunk would avail Lot's daughters exactly nothing. To quote Shakespeare's gatekeeper on the effects of booze: "Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes; it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance..."

Pat Bizzell (102 Montgomery St #3D, Highland Park, NJ 08904), who thinks that "...the method the academic community customarily uses to 'legitimize' a genre justifies Lloyd Biggle's amused dismay. S-F, alone of all contemporary fiction, explores the mind of a citizen of our technological civilization--fears, habits, prophetic dreams."

> Wordsworth said, "The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us..." Theoretical science is familiar to few of us, but its manifestations in technology certainly are. An art that treats these things should not be treated as an artefact.

Jim Maloan (1022 Victoria Dr., Port Coquitlam, B.C.), with this qualification on the last issue: "R.D. Mullen's conclusion of his Burroughs/ Haggard essay was funny and well-written, but couldn't he have found something good in s-f to write about?"//If the query had been,"Why not find something good in ERB or HRH to write about?" the answer would be the same as to Phil Farmer--that no overall evaluation was attempted, just a focus on one particular aspect of both authors; since it concerned failure to find something good about s-f in general, the answer must be: it's permissible to object to a critic's methods or conclusions but never his subject, since such an objection shows only that the critic's and the reader's interests differ.

Charles Smith (E1504, 1515 S. 4th St, Minneapolis, MN 55404), who offers as a definition of popular culture the following: Popular culture is an art or skill enjoyed by an essentially uneducated audience (irrespective of size) and produced with no obvious academic pretensions."

> In this sense, then, s-f is by no means popular culture. Beer can design, early rock and roll, and comic books are. The "popular" adjective is used in the sense of being enjoyable to those with no particular intellectual skills. One can, for example, enjoy a comic strip with nothing more than the basic skills acquired by John Everyman...while one must have certain mental predispositions to enjoy much of s-f.

David Ben Leavitt (101 S.44 St, #112, Philadelphia, PA 19104),who feels Lloyd Biggle was deliberately overstating his case "just to draw criticism (it does make for a more exciting speech). I just wish he had limited himself to the abuses of academe, rather than the institution itself."

> I taught a course in s-f while I was still at Pitt...It was one of the most disappointing intervals of my academic career. I wanted to explore s-f...to find out if the books we...consider as classics can really stand up to the test of scholarship...My students...were interested only in,"Gee, this sure is a neat book." Or, "I didn't like it." Their reactions reminded me of American Bandstand: "Duh, the song was OK. It had a good beat, and, uh, the words were OK. I'll give it a 72."

Jefferson Davis (45 Lake St, Dallas, PA 18612), with a seldom heard appreciation for the poetry section, "particularly Gazelle by Bruce Meyers and The Mad Man's Love Poem by Peter Alexsandrowicz."Concerning von Däniken's "collection of irresponsible utterances" Mr.Davis explains:

> As is the case with many ancient texts, the meaning of words vary greatly (through translation, in this case, from ancient Hebrew to Greek to English) and the presence of one word can easily throw off the reader...The word "giants" in /the Biblical statement,'There were giants in the earth in those days'/ does not mean "physical" giants, but rather "giants" above the common people; in other words, apostate rulers and tyrants.

I must end this section--with apologies to Mr. Davis for cutting so much of his letter--by another confession of ignorance, for I would think that apostasy could make a ruler a giant or a pygmy, depending on the circumstances.

Copyright Slugfest: Round One

(continued from page 179)

To put things straight I sent to various fan editors copies of the letters exchanged by Larry Propp and myself, but only one such publisher, Anthony Lewis, had the courage to print them both. A Canadian fan declined to print either on grounds that this was a private fight of no general interest, and Linda Bushyager, while printing the first letter, was reluctant to print my answer until she had obtained Roger Elwood's permission. (Thus vanished my illusions about freedom of the fan press.) Linda--as she admitted in a note to me--had been in telephone contact with Elwood, so it was easy to verify my original conjecture, but knowing the source of a rumour is not equivalent to stopping it. One fan, reading in Yandro that I was suing Sandra Miesel or Chilton Books, explained that "..if the issue is only..your not getting your share of the 'profits' or egoboo I can find no way to continue supporting the RQ." I pointed out that RQ already was mentioned in Elwood's book, so no "ego" was involved, and that I'd never asked money from any RQ contributor. (The limitations of the s-f imagination were becoming apparent: my reason must be loss of ego, "lack of a credit line," as the Alien Critic phrased it, or failure to win loot--these evidently representing the spectrum of human behavior.)

There were other protests and questions--

Karass objected that a law suit was "unfannish," i.e., a violation of the unwritten rule that disputes be kept within the family (a rule broken, e.g., by a fan who once threatened to complain to the post office about "obscene" covers in a FAPA mailing). Indeed, this was why I did not sue when Jack Chalker (the "exception" cited earlier) reprinted Mrs. Miesel's RQ articles (issues #10, 11) on Lord of the Rings without asking permission--for Jack is an amateur, like myself. But Roger Elwood is a professional, so the customary in-house rules of fan conduct don't apply to him. (Query: is it unfannish to run a false headline?)

Again, Buck Coulson asks: if my original motivation was neither money nor "ego," why a law suit at all? Now, I don't know the reason for Elwood's behavior; possibly he believed that his anthology's citation of RQ was an honour big enough to compensate for its editor's not being consulted. In any case, such action necessitates reprisal (see Larry Downes' comment, below), and a law suit is the only legal method available. Would Buck prefer my challenging Elwood to a fist fight?

But in one sense my original reasons are irrelevant: after the personal losses caused by Elwood's subsequent activities I'm obliged to seek whatever financial compensation is available. E.G., I've already lost several friends--one being Sandra Miesel. What monetary value does Roger Elwood assign to a lost friendship?

The first round, however, ends on a cheerful note, for there is at least one reader able to perceive what's at stake. To quote a letter from Larry Downes,

> I think it is extremely important that you not let Elwood get away with this--if he does, the entire fanzine world will be in sad shape. Editors will be afraid to publish anything because copyrights are so easily ignored. This must not happen.

Scheduled for round two (next issue) is the question: if I sue for a big amount, won't Roger Elwood be forced to increase his claim against Sandra Miesel? Another topic for discussion will be the Science Fiction Writers of America and its Grievance Committee, whose intelligence, as Carlyle might say, turns out to be slightly above that of a medium size rabbit. There'll also be the required explanation for another law suit against DAW Books--and still a third against the SFWA.