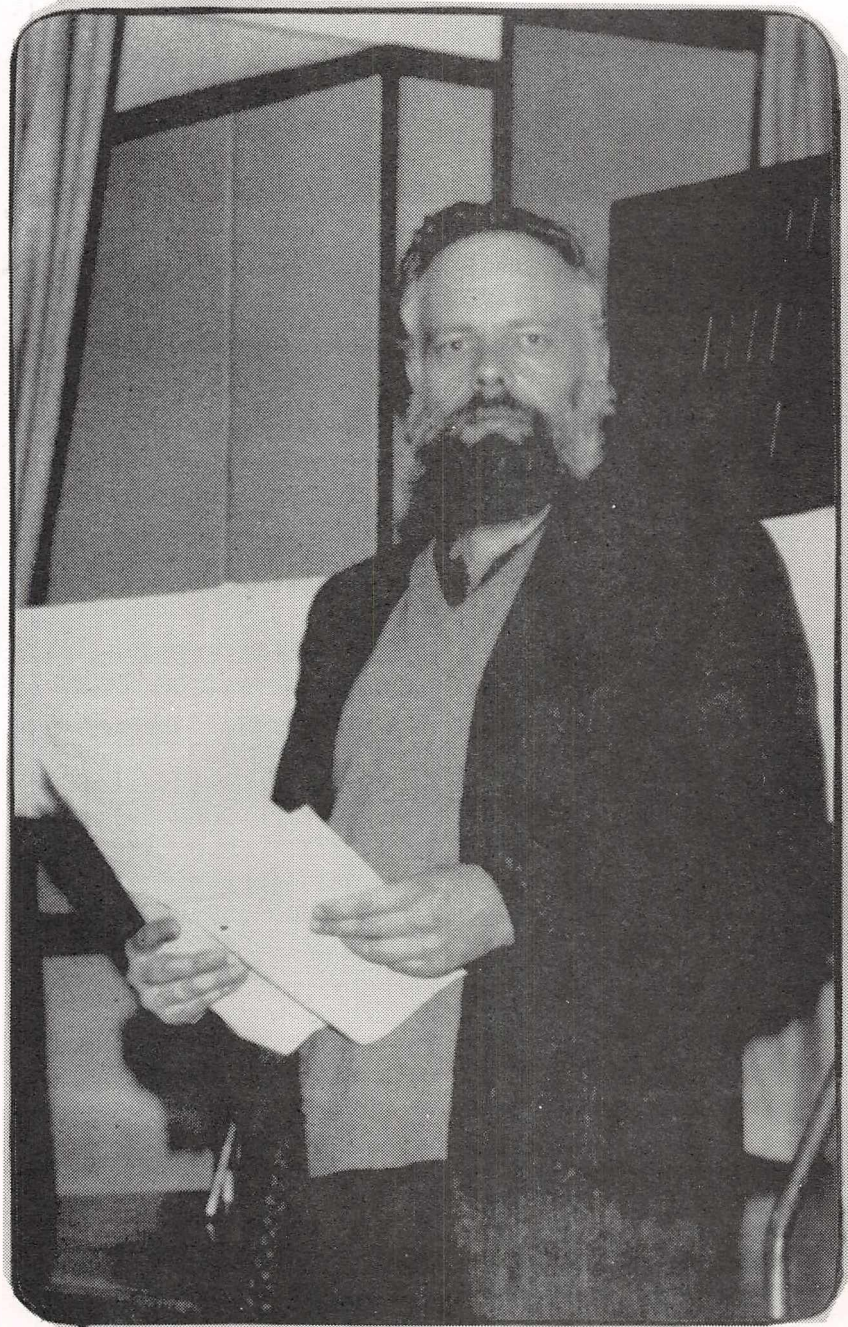


PHILIP DICK **in Vancouver**



IVAN ILLICH **in Melbourne**

S F COMMENTARY 31

STOP PRESS

The Committee that was bidding to hold the World Convention in San Francisco in 1975 has withdrawn its bid. So it looks like AUSTRALIA IN 75! unless the usual string of disasters happen. ::
EXTRA CREDITS FOR SFC 30: Drawing page 19 by Lindsay Cox; production help by Ken Ford (who joins the exclusive band); and the Space Age's address is 317 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

S F COMMENTARY 30 CHECKLIST

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S F COMMENTARY 31

DECEMBER 1972

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And you are travelling to Australia in 1975, I presume?

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PHILIP K DICK

The Android and the Human

EDITOR Of the small number of science fiction writers whom I consider of high quality, Philip K Dick is my favourite. I'm not prepared to say that he is "the best" - such a term becomes almost meaningless in the field. But no other writer in the field inspires in me the same kind of awe, admiration, and affection as does Philip Dick. If ever I make a list of my favourite 100 books, the following books by Dick would have to appear in it: THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH (my favourite), and in the order in which they were published, SOLAR LOTTERY, EYE IN THE SKY, TIME OUT OF JOINT, THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, MARTIAN TIME-SLIP, CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON, DR BLOODMONEY, THE ZAP GUN, NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR, DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?, UBIK, WE MADE YOU, and A MAZE OF DEATH. I'm told that OUR FRIENDS FROM FROUX-8 is worthy of the same company. Dick has published about twenty other books as well.

Dick has also had a long association with this magazine. In SFC 1 appeared the first of my three long articles about his work. It was called MAD, MAD WORLDS. SFC 4 contained CONTRADICTIONS, and in SFC 9 I published a long letter from Dick, another one from George Turner, and the third of my articles, THE REAL THING, in which I attempted to summarise my own most persistent impressions about Dick's work. SFC 17 carried a letter by Philip Dick about this article. Now Jerry Lapidus (54 Clearview Drive, Pittsford, New York 14534, USA) will reprint the entire Philip Dick section of SFC 9 in his own magazine, TOMORROW AND..

During the years during which Philip Dick and I have been trying to come to some agreement on what his books are about, Dick has continued a fairly bumpy life which carried him, in March of 1972, to the Vancouver S F Convention as its Guest of Honour. Thanks to the considerable help of Mike Bailey and Dan Say of the Vancouver S F Society, I was able to obtain for printing the complete text of this speech. Thanks also to Mike Bailey for the photo which appears on the front cover of this issue of SFC.

..And also Mike Bailey told Philip Dick that I would be printing the speech; Philip wrote to me; I wrote back; and here is his answer to serve as:

INTRODUCTION

PHILIP
DICK

Dear Bruce

I'm terribly pleased that you see value in my Vancouver speech; I think I worked four months on it, trying to sum up an entire lifetime of developing thought. At the time my personal difficulties were so great (in November 1971 my house was torn apart and looted, evidently by political extremists) that I felt I wouldn't live much longer; I sensed, incorrectly I'm glad to say, that the speech would be the last thing I wrote.

Therefore I poured into it all the remaining ideas in my head, in particular my germinal notions for future books. However, I did live on. I flew to Canada in February 1972, but bad luck still plagued me: the girl with whom I had been in love since my wife left me in 1970 did not as planned accompany me; at the last moment she tore up her plane ticket, and I have seen her only once since, and just sadly and briefly. Kathy is her name; she is the girl mentioned at the end of the speech who stole the cases of Coke and then turned in the empties for the deposits. I had expected her to be seated beside me in Vancouver when I delivered the speech, and at UBC when I gave it there. She hadn't known I'd be telling about her prank in the speech and I had planned to turn to her as I ended and kiss her. After the Convention I decided to stay in Canada, feeling I had nothing to go back to in California; I had lost Kathy, most of my friends had become drug addicts (I had gotten deep into the drug subculture, but seeing the fast deterioration of young addicts, especially the girls, I had changed my whole basic view towards drugs and become strongly anti-dope), my house was gone, and bitter memories of my wife and child leaving me would be revived if I returned. So I rented an apartment in Vancouver, and found the science fiction people there, such as Mike Bailey, good new friends. I even met a new chick. It looked good. FM radio station CKLG interviewer Bob Ness had me on his show and we became close friends... and then the new chick all at once decided to leave the Vancouver area. My life fell apart again all at once, just as I was recovering from Kathy's leaving. I made an abrupt, almost successful suicide attempt. Fortunately, Suicide Intervention (the BC Crisis Centre) intervened and suggested I go to a residence therapy organisation called X-Kalay where I'd be with people constantly until I forgot the new chick, Janis, plus Kathy, plus my wife, and so forth. I did so, and spent a month there.

X-Kalay turned out to be by-and-large a heroin rehabilitation organisation, like Sinanon in the US. Under their overwhelming attack therapy and heavy work-load and discipline I soon got my head together, pulled out of my depression; within a week I had an office and typewriter and was hard at work doing PR work for them. I found that rehabilitating former heroin addicts was the most rewarding, soul-reinforcing pursuit I'd ever encountered. No reduction of the human into a mere thing, short of removing actual sections of the brain, can be found outside of the dismal transformation brought on by heroin addiction. When a heroin addict confronts you, two insect eyes, two lightless slots of dim glass, without warmth or true life, calculate to the exact decimal point how many tangible commodities you can be cashed in for. He, being already dead, views you as if you were already dead, or never lived. Biological life goes on, but the soul has been extinguished. He is always our enemy, or rather I should say it is pitted against us - simply because we are still alive, we affront its insect intelligence. But I did see a certain humour, a slight felicity, return to the tombstone eyes of some such reflex-arc creatures; I lived among them, ate with them, spent all day with them. There was one girl, only sixteen; her brothers had addicted her at fourteen and she had had to become a prostitute at fifteen. What a poised, bright, lovely chick she was - her name is April - and in no explicit way damaged, except for a coolness unusual in a girl so young. But she can't ever leave X-Kalay; a week outside and the heroin pushers would have her back. April would have contributed so much to our general society, and she will contribute to X-Kalay. Untreated, her teeth would have fallen out by now, her arms become like broom-handles, her hair wispy and grey, and her eyes - chitin-like glazed-over

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black, mirroring nothing. My antagonism for narcotics - and my fury and really murderous hate toward drug dealers - comes from my having seen addicts who entered X-Kalay too late to be saved from that; entering at twenty-three rather than fifteen years of age. Donna came in one day and we thought she was fifty. She was twenty-four. She did not even know that her hair had turned grey and was falling out, or that she was missing teeth; long ago she had been numbed out of any vestigial awareness of her body. Somebody there had at a previous time seen her dancing and pretty, with her husband - I asked how long ago. "Three months," the person said. He hadn't recognised her until she gave her name. When I left X-Kalay, Donna rode with me to the airport; it was a chance to venture outside the facility for an hour. A staff member came along and stayed with her every moment, and took her back. I hope she is all right now, at least as all right as she could be. I wish her luck; she struck me as worth more of one's time and attention and hope than any novel. She was a universe, even what remained of her. But so thin.

Anyhow, I left X-Kalay and Canada on an invitation from the state college at Fullerton, California to fly down and supervise the archiving of my MSS at their library's special collections. So many of my possessions had been destroyed or stolen in Marin County that I wanted to turn over what remained to professional safekeeping. I'd never been to Fullerton, which is in Southern California near Disneyland. I found it to be a plastic, clean, dope-free, expensive, modern, dull city with no scenery but many bright, pretty college chicks, one of whom I fell in love with right away (she met me at LA International Airport and drove me to visit Norman Spinrad, an old friend of mine). Mostly because of the s f activity in this area, in particular my colleague friends like Norman and Harlan Ellison and Ted Sturgeon, and because I was nutty, crazy, freaked out in love with Linda, I rented an apartment and drilled down into the concrete to establish prefabricated roots. Linda and I went out, fought, got suicidal, thought up endless trippy, amusing, weird thoughts and sayings, got nowhere, did nothing useful, but gradually I regained a sense of identity; there is so much s f activity here, so much interest. Even though at the Nebula Awards in April I dislocated my right shoulder (Linda's fault), I began to write again - after two years - and lost, because of the relative stability and calm of this area, my former angst and depression. I have really had a good time during these last six months. I sort of identify with this wretched place, where a scenic wonder is a dried-up swamp and the national bird is a buzzard, which the city owns and operates the way other cities own and operate pigeons. Norman and I were on the air for three hours live a couple of weeks ago, and I've lectured at college classes and seen a lot of students. Most important (I almost forgot to mention it) three months ago after a terrible fight with Linda in which she told me to get out of her car and never come back (in LA you're always in your car, not your home) I met the sweetest little chick in the world, but I won't go into details about her because who cares except me? Tessa is now my executive secretary, anyhow, and we'll be married when my divorce is final, soon. She's eighteen, has lovely black hair and green eyes, looks English, is small and lithe, knows Kung Fu karate, has an acute interest in and knowledge of the hard sciences, and is the warmest, kindest, most gentle little person I've ever known. Also, under stress, she is incredibly cool; when she encountered my wife at my recent divorce hearing, she lent her ten dollars and some matches, and my wife hugged her goodbye. That's poise. And my wife said, wistfully,

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"Well, I guess I can't kiss you." Tessa is sitting on the couch in our living room right now reading a novel of mine and looking for errors in it, of all kinds: I wish she'd stop. She is wearing a green mini-skirt and white sweater I bought her, is barefoot, and on the coffee table in front of her is Pansy, the tribble we bought from David Gerrold at the LA Worldcon. The second day of the con, David tried to put his arm around Tessa's waist and she Kung F'd him out of existence, something he deserved. We have a happy, active life, writing and reading and shopping and planning the future for ourselves (not for the world, however; we're starting out modestly), and seeing a lot of people involved in s f. Tessa has systematically thrown all my ex-girlfriends such as Linda out of the apartment one by one, but I guess this is okay; Linda babbled on too much anyhow, and now we have more time for writing, such as this somewhat rambling letter to you.

But I thought, since you expressed such much-appreciated interest in my life and difficulties in your letter, and told me a little about your own, that I might take this opportunity to tell you what's become of me during these last two years. Really, my days of misery and anguish (and they really were, if not outright physical violence, guns and knives, police and drug dealers and paramilitary extremists) seem about over, with Tessa's help. I'm on a new novel at last and, yes, I am utilising the insights expressed in the speech which you so generously praised - that praise, by the way, meant more to me, Bruce, than any favourable criticism that has ever been directed at anything I've ever written, by anyone, even yourself. It gives me more impetus for pushing on in my work again than you can imagine. If you of all people feel that the speech contains insights that truly advance my work, then I am satisfied that I'm on the right track and that these last two years, although arduous, haven't been wasted. This speech is the sole product - and the summation - of these years, and, I hope, the seed for my novels to come. I really was about to give up and write no more. But I have started again, and you've encouraged me enormously, even crucially. Few people so far have read this speech, and yours is the first meaningful feedback. As I said to Tessa a little earlier this evening, your point of view is to me the most telling one on this planet; it reflects back more accurately than any other point... I feel a 6,000-mile bond with you, Bruce.

PS:

By the way, my Paris editor Patrice Duvic called my attention to Thomas Disch's Doubleday novel, CAMP CONCENTRATION. I have just now read it and consider it the finest s f novel that I've ever come across and in some respects the finest novel of any kind that I've read or expect to read. I wonder where he got the idea; maybe from Thomas Mann's THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN. Illness and genius, genius and insanity... I think this novel will rank someday with the finest of the Greek tragedies, such as THE BACCHAE. "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." I had in mind writing along a similar line: a brain-deterioration, however, rather than speedup of neural efficiency. Among drug addicts often I saw insidious falling-off phenomena in cognition and perception, often of a perplexing sort - it nowhere fitted brain-damage symptoms such as Goldstein described (e.g. cortical lesions). In some respects it resembled the manic-depressive cycle; in other respects, the dementia of schizophrenia in particular hebephrenia. I do not to this day know what drug induced it, or if one and one drug only did so; maybe general

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brain toxicity from a variety of sources was involved. In one girl, for example, I saw performance go from ultra brilliant to cretin-like vacuity within a month. It was not psychological; I took her to a psychiatrist. One week she was reading aloud from Milton and Joyce; a month later she could not read a menu in a restaurant nor feed herself, and at last had to be institutionalised. I would like to know what did it, and I saw similar degeneration in five or six other individuals, all involved in taking illegal drugs. Seeing this set up a terror in me similar to what I experienced on a lesser scale when I first read Ibsen's GHOSTS; the ending thereof, "Mother, give me the sun." Did these drug addicts have some sort of general paresis in addition to everything else? That theory was advanced by one individual I knew, who had observed them (he had some scientific background for that assessment). Was it contagious? Possibly it was - these poor creatures knew one another. The fast-acting, untreatable paresis put forth as the topic of Tom Disch's novel made me think of this for that reason, too, the possibility that these drug addicts were victims of some contagious disease possibly spread by injection - they got it when they shot up, got their fix. Possibly - and this is a horrible thought - it was deliberately given them, but by whom and what for? Patrice and I discussed this at length. There are rumours brought back from Viet Nam by US servicemen of a new incredibly-swift-acting syphilis of the brain, untreatable - penicillin won't help it, and a secret island in the Pacific has been set up to house and contain its victims. This certainly resembles CAMP CONCENTRATION, does it not? And perhaps the novel is somehow involved in setting off these rumours or maybe Tom Disch heard the rumours, etc. I hope it isn't true - in fact I pray to God it isn't, especially now that I've read Disch's novel. Nothing that I can imagine could be worse, and if this is indeed what my unfortunate friends whose brains shorted out so tragically had, then woe be it for us, woe has fallen on us beyond the power of the telling of it... or rather beyond our ordinary ability to tell: Tom Disch may have done it, uniquely and horrifyingly. Do you have any comment on this? The gravity of it - even the rumours if false are in themselves a grave matter - makes me inquire, now that I've read the book. If you haven't read it, I urge you to. I'm sure it is fiction. It must be. Reality could not descend to such a level this side of hell.

(October 31, 1972)

PHILIP K DICK(3028 Quartz Lane, Apt 3, Fullerton, California 92631, USA)

EDITOR I've written back to Philip Dick, answering most of the points he raises in his letter. All I can say is that it gives me a sense of vertigo to think that a man who is as extraordinary as Philip Dick could value the opinion of such an extremely minor person as myself. I suppose I could say that I can read and write a bit better than most other people; but I have never done any living which might validate or falsify the things that I learned from books; that a man who has lived as much as Philip Dick should still find my writing valuable makes me very glad. Anyway, it's good that Philip is getting along much better than before; perhaps I can follow suit some day. I had to tell him that I wouldn't really know if some dread drug-spread disease was wiping half the Australian population off the map, since I see very little evidence of use of or traffic in illegal drugs among the people with whom I mix. If you want it, you can get it; I think that's the way it goes. If you don't want to have anything to do with drugs, here you don't even need to know that they are around. Disch's novel is remarkable and very moving; he wrote it in 1965 and 1966, so if his predictions were founded on fact, the government has hidden traces much better than it hid the PENTAGON PAPERS. But the above letter

A speech delivered at the Vancouver SF Convention, and at the University of British Columbia, March, 1972.

It is the tendency of the so-called primitive mind to animate its environment. Modern depth psychology has requested us for years to withdraw these anthropomorphic projections from what is actually inanimate reality, to introject - that is, bring back into our own heads - the living quality which we, in ignorance, cast out onto the inert things surrounding us. Such introjection is said to be the mark of true maturity in the individual, and the authentic mark of civilisation in contrast to mere social culture, such as one finds in a tribe. A native of Africa is said to view his surroundings as pulsing with a purpose, a life, which is actually within himself; once these childish projections are withdrawn, he sees that the world is dead, and that life resides solely within himself. When he reaches this sophisticated point he is said to be either mature or sane. Or scientific. But one wonders: has he not also, in this process, reified - that is, made into a thing - other people? Stones and rocks and trees may now be inanimate for him, but what about his friends? Has he not now made them into stones, too?

This is, really, a psychological problem. And its solution, I think, is of less importance in any case than one might think, because, within the last decade, we have seen a trend not anticipated by our earnest psychologists - or by anyone else - which dwarfs that issue: our environment, and I mean our man-made world of machines, artificial constructs, computers, electronic systems, interlinking homeostatic components - all this is in fact beginning more and more to possess what the earnest psychologists fear the primitive sees in his environment: animation. In a very real sense our environment is becoming alive, or at least quasi-alive, and in ways specifically and fundamentally analogous to ourselves. Cybernetics, a valuable recent scientific discipline, articulated by the late Norbert Wiener, saw valid comparisons between the behaviour of machines and humans - with the view that a study of machines would yield valuable insights into the nature of our own behaviour. By studying what goes wrong with a machine - for example when two mutually exclusive tropisms function simultaneously in one of Grey Walter's synthetic turtles, producing fascinatingly intricate behaviour in the befuddled turtles - one learns, perhaps, a new, more fruitful insight into what in humans was previously called "neurotic" behaviour. But suppose the use of this analogy is turned the other way? Suppose - and I don't believe Wiener anticipated this - suppose a study of ourselves, our own nature, enables us to gain insight into the now extraordinary complex functioning and malfunctioning of mechanical and electronic constructs? In other words - and this is what I wish to stress in what I am saying here - it is now possible that we can learn about the artificial external environment around us, how it behaves, why, what it is up to, by analogising from what we know about ourselves.

Machines are becoming more human, so to speak - at least in the sense that, as Wiener indicated, some meaningful comparison exists between human and mechanical behaviour. But is it ourselves that we know first and foremost? Rather than learning about ourselves by studying our constructs, perhaps we should make the attempt to comprehend what our constructs are up to by looking into what we ourselves are up to.

PHILIP of human activity and function into the activity and function of what we hu-
K DICK mans have built and surround ourselves with. A hundred years ago such a
thought would have been absurd, rather than merely anthropomorphic. What
could a man living in 1750 have learned about himself by observing the behav-
iour of a donkey steam engine? Could he have watched it huffing and puffing
and then extrapolated from its labour an insight into why he himself continu-
ally fell in love with one certain type of pretty young girl? This would not
have been primitive thinking on his part; it would have been pathological.
But now we find ourselves immersed in a world of our own making so intricate,
so mysterious, that as Stanislaw Lem, the eminent Polish science fiction wri-
ter theorises, the time may come when, for example, a man may have to be re-
strained from attempting to rape a sewing machine. Let us hope, if that time
comes, that it is a female sewing machine he fastens his intentions on. And
one over the age of seventeen - hopefully, a very old treadle-operated Singer,
although possibly, regrettably, past menopause.

I have, in some of my stories and novels, written about androids or robots or
simulacra - the name doesn't matter; what is meant is artificial constructs
masquerading as humans. Usually with a sinister purpose in mind. I suppose I
took it for granted that if such a construct, a robot, for example, had a be-
nign or anyhow decent purpose in mind, it would not need to so disguise
itself. Now, to me, that then seems obsolete. The constructs do not mimic
humans; they are, in many deep ways, actually human already. They are not
trying to fool us, for a purpose of any sort; they merely follow lines we fol-
low, in order that they, too, may overcome such common problems as the break-
down of vital parts, loss of power source, attack by such foes as storms,
short-circuits - and I'm sure any one of us here can testify that a short-cir-
cuit, especially in our power supply, can ruin our entire day and make us
utterly unable to get to our daily job, or, once at the office, useless as far
as doing the work set forth on our desk.

What would occur to me now as a recasting of the robot-appearing-as-human
theme would be a gleaming robot with a telescan-lens and a helium-battery
powerpack, who, when jostled, bleeds. Underneath the metal hull is a heart,
such as we ourselves have. Perhaps I will write that. Or, as in stories al-
ready in print, a computer, when asked some ultimate question such as, "Why is
there water?" prints out FIRST CORINTHIANS. One story I wrote, which I'm
afraid I failed to take seriously enough, dealt with a computer which, when
able to answer a question put to it, ate the questioner. Presumably - I
failed to go into this - had the computer been unable to answer a question,
the human questioner would have eaten it. Anyhow, inadvertantly I blended the
human and the construct, and didn't notice that such a blend might, in time,
actually begin to become part of our reality. Like Lem, I think this will be
so, more and more. But to project past Lem's idea: a time may come when, if a
man tries to rape a sewing machine, the sewing machine will have him arrested
and testify perhaps even a little hysterically against him in court. This
leads to all sorts of spinoff ideas; false testimony by suborned sewing mach-
ines who accuse innocent men unfairly; paternity tests, and, of course, abor-
tions for sewing machines which have become pregnant against their will. And
would there be birth-control pills for sewing machines? Probably, like one of
my previous wives, certain sewing machines would complain that the pills made
them overweight - or rather, in their case, that it made them sew irregular
stitches. And there would be unreliable sewing machines that would forget to
take their birth-control pills. And, last but not least, there would have to
be Planned Parenthood Clinics at which sewing machines just off the assembly
10 SFC 31 lines would be counselled as to the dangers of promiscuity, with severe

warnings of venereal diseases visited on such immoral machines by an outraged PHILIP God - Himself, no doubt, able to sew buttonholes and fancy needlework at a K DICK rate that would dazzle the credulous merely metal and plastic sewing machines always ready, like ourselves, to kowtow before divine miracles.

I am being facetious about this, I suppose, but - the point is not merely a humorous one. Our electronic constructs are becoming so complex that to comprehend them we must now reverse the analogising of cybernetics and try to reason from our own mentation and behaviour to theirs - although I suppose to assign motive or purpose to them would be to enter the realm of paranoia; what machines do may resemble what we do, but certainly they do not have intent in the sense that we have; they have tropisms, they have purpose in the sense that we build them to accomplish certain ends and to react to certain stimuli. A pistol, for example, is built with the purpose of firing a metal slug that will damage, incapacitate, or kill someone, but this does not mean that the pistol wants to do this. And yet here we are entering the philosophical realm of Spinoza when he saw, and I think with great profundity, that if a falling stone could reason, it would think, "I want to fall at the rate of thirty-two feet per second per second." Freewill for us - that is, when we feel desire, when we are conscious of wanting to do what we do - may be even for us an illusion; and depth psychology seems to substantiate this: many of our drives in life originate from an unconscious that is beyond our control. We are as driven as are insects, although the term "instinct" is perhaps not applicable for us. Whatever the term, much of our behaviour that we feel is the result of our will, may control us to the extent that for all practical purposes we are falling stones, doomed to drop at a rate prescribed by nature, as rigid and predictable as the force that creates a crystal. Each of us may feel himself unique, with an intrinsic destiny never before seen in the universe... and yet to God we may be millions of crystals, identical in the eyes of the Cosmic Scientist.

And - here is a thought not too pleasing - as the external world becomes more animate, we may find that we - the so-called humans - are becoming, and may to a great extent always have been, inanimate in the sense that we are led, directed by built-in tropisms, rather than leading. So we and our elaborately evolving computers may meet each other half way. Someday a human being, named perhaps Fred White, may shoot a robot named Pete Something-or-other, which has come out of a General Electric factory, and to his surprise see it weep and bleed. And the dying robot may shoot back and, to its surprise, see a wisp of grey smoke arise from the electric pump that it supposed was Mr White's beating heart. It would be rather a great moment of truth for both of them.

I would like then to ask this: what is it, in our behaviour, that we can call specifically human? That is special to us as a living species? And what is it that, at least up to now, we can consign as merely machine behaviour, or, by extension, insect behaviour, or reflex behaviour? And I would include, in this, the kind of pseudo-human behaviour exhibited by what were once living men - creatures who have, in ways I wish to discuss next, become instruments, means, rather than ends, and hence to me analogues of machines in the bad sense, in the sense that although biological life continues, metabolism goes on, the soul - for lack of a better term - is no longer there or at least no longer active. And such does exist in our world - it always did, but the production of such inauthentic human activity has become a science of government and such-like agencies, now. The reduction of humans to mere use - men made into machines, serving a purpose which although "good" in the abstract sense has, for its accomplishment, employed what I regard as the greatest evil imaginable: the placing of what was a free man who laughed and cried and made SFC 31 11

PHILIP mistakes and wandered off into foolishness and play a restriction that limits
K DICK him, despite what he may imagine or think, to the fulfilling of an aim outside
of his own personal - however puny - destiny. As if, so to speak, history has
made him into its instrument. History, and men skilled in - and trained in -
the use of manipulative techniques, equipped with devices, ideologically
oriented themselves, in such a way that the use of these devices strikes them
as a necessary or at least desirable method of bringing about some ultimately
desired goal.

I think, at this point, of Tom Paine's comment about one or another party of
the Europe of his time, "They admired the feathers and forgot the dying bird."
And it is the "dying bird" that I am concerned with. The dying - and yet, I
think, beginning once again to revive in the hearts of the new generation of
kids coming into maturity - the dying bird of authentic humanness.

That is what I wish to say to you here, today. I wish to disclose my hope, my
faith, in the kids who are emerging now. Their world, their values. And,
simultaneously, their imperviousness to the false values, the false idols, the
false hates, of the previous generations. The fact that they, these fine,
good kids, cannot be reached or moved or even touched by the "gravity" - to
refer back to my previous metaphor - that has made us older persons fall,
against our knowledge or will, at thirty-two feet per second throughout our
lives... while believing that we desired it.

It is as if these kids, or at least many of them, some of them, are falling at
a different rate, or, really, not falling at all. Walt Whitman's "Marching to
the sound of other drummers" might be rephrased this way: falling, not in re-
sponse to unexamined, unchallenged, alleged "verities" but in response to a
new and inner - and genuinely authentic - human desire.

Youth, of course, has always tended toward this; in fact this is really a def-
inition of youth. But right now it is so urgent, if, as I think, we are merg-
ing by degrees into homogeneity with our mechanical constructs, step by step,
month by month, until a time will perhaps come when a writer, for example,
will not stop writing because someone unplugged his electric typewriter but
because someone unplugged him. But there are kids now who cannot be unplugged
because no electric cord links them to any external power sources. Their
hearts beat with an interior, private meaning. Their energy doesn't come from
a pacemaker; it comes from a stubborn, almost absurdly perverse, refusal to be
"shucked"; that is, to be taken in by the slogans, the ideology - in fact by
any and all ideology itself, of whatever sort - that would reduce them to in-
struments of abstract causes, however "good". Back in California, where I
come from, I have been living with such kids, participating, to the extent I
can, in their emerging world. I would like to tell you about their world be-
cause - if we are lucky - something of that world, those values, that way of
life, will shape the future of our total society, our utopia or anti-utopia of
the future. As a science fiction writer, I must of course look continually
ahead, always at the future. It is my hope - and I'd like to communicate it
to you in the tremendous spirit of optimism that I feel so urgently and
strongly - that our collective tomorrow exists in embryonic form in the heads,
or rather in the hearts, of these kids who right now, at their young ages, are
politically and sociologically powerless, unable even, by our California laws,
even to buy a bottle of beer or a cigarette, to vote, to in any way shape, be
consulted about, or bring into existence, the official laws that govern them
and our society. I think, really, I am saying this: if you are interested in
the world of tomorrow you may learn something about it, or at least read about
12 SFC 31 possibilities that may emerge to fashion it, in the pages of ANALOG and F&SF

and AMAZING, but actually, to find it in its authentic form, you will discover PHILIP it as you observe a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old kid as he goes about his K DICK natural peregrinations, his normal day. Or, as we say in the San Francisco Bay Area, as you observe him "cruising around town to check out the action". This is what I have found. These kids, that I have known, lived with, still know, in California, are my science fiction stories of tomorrow, my summation, at this point of my life as a person and a writer; they are what I look ahead to - and so keenly desire to see prevail. What, more than anything else I have ever encountered, I believe in. And would give my life for. My full measure of devotion, in this war we are fighting, to maintain, and augment, what is human about us, what is the core of ourselves, and the source of our destiny. Our flight must be not only to the stars but into the nature of our own beings. Because it is not merely where we go, to Alpha Centaurus or Betelgeuse, but what we are as we make our pilgrimages there. Our natures will be going there, too. Ad astra - but per hominum. And we must never lose sight of that.

It would, after all, be rather dismaying, if the first two-legged entity to emerge on the surface of Mars from a Terran spacecraft were to declare, "Thanks be to God for letting me, letting me, click, letting, click, click... this is a recording." And then catch fire and explode as a couple of wires got crossed somewhere within its plastic chest. And, probably even more dismaying to this construct, would be the discovery when it returned to Earth that its "children" had been recycled along with the aluminium beer cans and Coca Cola bottles as fragments of the urban pollution problem. And, finally, when this astronaut made of plastic and wiring and relays went down to the City Hall officials to complain, it would discover that its three-year guarantee had run out, and, since parts were no longer available to keep it functioning, its birth certificate had been cancelled.

Of course, literally, we should not take this seriously. But as a metaphor - in some broad sense maybe we should scrutinise more closely the two-legged entities we plan to send up, for example, to man the orbiting space station. We do not want to learn three years from now that the alleged human crew had all married portions of the space station and had settled down to whirr happily forever after in connubial bliss. As in Ray Bradbury's superb story in which a fear-haunted citizen of Los Angeles discovers that the police car trailing him has no driver, that it is tailing him on its own, we should be sure that one of us sits in the driver's seat; in Mr Bradbury's story the real horror, at least to me, is not that the police car has its own tropism as it hounds the protagonist but that, within the car, there is a vacuum. A place unfilled. The absence of something vital - that is the horrific part, the apocalyptic vision of a nightmare future. But I, myself, foresee something more optimistic: had I written that story I would have had a teenager behind the wheel of the police car - he has stolen it while the police is in a coffee shop on his lunch break, and the kid is going to resell it by tearing it down into parts. This may sound a little cynical on my part, but wouldn't this be preferable? As we say in California, where I live, when the police come to investigate a burglary of your house, they find, when they are leaving, that someone has stripped the tires and motor and transmission from their car, and the officers must hitchhike back to headquarters. This thought may strike fear in the hearts of the establishment people, but frankly it makes me feel cheerful. Even the most base schemes of human beings are preferable to the most exalted tropisms of machines. I think this, right here, is one of the valid insights possessed by some of the new youth: cars, even police cars, are expendable; can be replaced. They are really all alike. It is the person inside who, when gone, cannot be duplicated at any price. Even if we do not SFC 31 13

PHILIP like him we cannot do without him. And once gone, he will never come back.
K DICK

And then, too, if he is made into an android, he will never come back, never be again human. Or anyhow most likely will not.

As the children of our world fight to develop their new individuality, their almost surly disrespect for the verities we worship, they become for us - and by "us" I mean the establishment - a source of trouble. I do not necessarily mean politically active youth, those who organise into distinct societies with banners and slogans - to me, that is a reduction into the past, however revolutionary those slogans may be. I refer to the intrinsic entities, the kids each of whom is on his own, doing what we call "his thing". He may, for example, not break the law by seating himself on the tracks before troop trains; his flouting of the law may consist of taking his car to a drive-in movie with four kids hidden in the trunk to avoid having to pay. Still, a law is being broken. The first transgression has political, theoretical overtones; the second, a mere lack of agreement that one must always do what one is ordered to do - especially when the order comes from a posted, printed sign. In both cases there is disobedience. We might applaud the first as meaningful. The second merely irresponsible. And yet it is in the second that I see a happier future. After all, there has always been in history movements of people organised in opposition to the governing powers. This is merely one group using force against another, the outs versus the ins. It has failed to produce a utopia so far. And I think always will.

Becoming what I call, for lack of a better term, an android, means, as I said, to allow oneself to become a means, or to be pounded down, manipulated, made into a means without one's knowledge or consent - the results are the same. But you cannot turn a human into an android if that human is going to break laws every chance he gets. Androidisation requires obedience. And, most of all, predictability. It is precisely when a given person's response to any given situation can be predicted with scientific accuracy that the gates are open for the wholesale production of the android life form. What good is a flashlight if the bulb lights up only now and then when you press the button? Any machine must always work, to be reliable. The android, like any other machine, must perform on cue. But our youth cannot be counted on to do this; it is unreliable. Either through laziness, short attention span, perversity, criminal tendencies - whatever label you wish to pin on the kid to explain his unreliability is fine. Each merely means: we can tell him and tell him what to do, but when the time comes for him to perform, all the subliminal instruction, all the ideological briefing, all the tranquilising drugs, all the psychotherapy, are a waste. He just plain will not jump when the whip is cracked. And so he is of no use to us, the calcified, entrenched powers. He will not see to it that he acts as an instrument by which we both keep and augment those powers and the rewards - for ourselves - that go with them.

What has happened is that there has been too much persuasion. The television set, the newspapers - all the so-called mass media, have overdone it. Words have ceased to mean much to these kids; they have had to listen to too many. They cannot be taught, because there has been too great an eagerness, too conspicuous a motive, to make them learn. The anti-utopia science fiction writers of fifteen years ago, and I was one of them, foresaw the mass communications propaganda machinery grinding everyone down into mediocrity and uniformity. But it is not coming out this way. While the car radio dins out the official view on the war in Viet Nam, the young boy is disconnecting the speaker so that he can replace it with a tweeter and a woofer; in the middle

14 SFC 31 of the government's harangue the speaker is unattached. And, as he expertly

hooks up better audio components in his car, the boy fails even to notice that PHILIP the voice on the radio is trying to tell him something. This skilled crafts- K DICK man of a kid listens only to see whether there is distortion, interference, or a frequency curve that isn't fully compensated. His head is turned toward immediate realities - the speaker itself - not the flatuus voci dinning from it.

The totalitarian society envisioned by George Orwell in NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR should have arrived by now. The electronic gadgets are here. The government is here, ready to do what Orwell anticipated. So the power exists, the motive, and the electronic hardware. But these mean nothing, because, progressively more and more so, no one is listening. The new youth that I see is too stupid to read, too restless and bored to watch, too preoccupied to remember. The collective voice of the authorities is wasted on him; he rebels. But rebels not out of theoretical, ideological considerations, but only out of what might be called pure selfishness. Plus a careless lack of regard for the dread consequences that the authorities promise him if he fails to obey. He cannot be bribed because what he wants he can build, steal, or in some curious, intricate way acquire for himself. He cannot be intimidated because on the streets and in his home he has seen and participated in so much violence that it fails to cow him. He merely gets out of its way when it threatens, or, if he can't escape, he fights back. When the locked police van comes to carry him off to the concentration camp the guards will discover that while loading the van they have failed to note that another equally hopeless juvenile has slashed the tires. The van is out of commission. And while the tires are being replaced, some other youth syphons out all the gas from the gas tank for his souped-up Chevrolet and has sped off long ago.

The absolutely horrible technological society - that was our dream, our vision of the future. We could foresee nothing equipped with enough power, guile, or whatever to impede the coming of that dreadful, nightmare society. It never occurred to us that the delinquent kids might abort it out of the sheer perverse malice of their little individual souls, God bless them. Here, as a case in point, are two excerpts from the media; the first, quoted in that epitome of the nauseating, TIME, is - so help me - what TIME calls "the ultimate dream in telephone service once described by Harold S Osborne, former chief engineer of AT&T: Whenever a baby is born anywhere in the world, he is given at birth a telephone number for life. As soon as he can talk, he is given a watch-like device with ten little buttons on one side and screen on the other. When he wishes to talk with anyone in the world, he will pull out the device and punch on the keys the number. Then, turning the device over, he will hear the voice of his friend and see his face on the screen, in colour and in three dimensions. If he does not see him and hear him, he will know that his friend is dead."

I don't know; I really don't find this funny. It is really sad. It is heart-breaking. Anyhow, it is not going to happen. The kids have already seen to that. "Phone freaks," they are called, these particular kids. This is what the LA TIMES says, in an article dated earlier this year:

They ((the phone freaks)) all arrived carrying customised MFers - multi-frequency tone signals - the phone-freak term for a blue box. The home-made MFers varied in size and design. One was a sophisticated pocket transistor built by a PhD in engineering, another the size of a cigar box with an acoustical coupler attaching to the phone receiver. So far, these phone freaks had devised twenty-two ways to make a free call without using credit cards. In case of a slipup, the phone freaks also know how to detect "supervision", phone-company jargon for a nearly inaudible

PHILIP
K DICK

tone which comes on the line before anyone answers to register calling charges. As soon as phone freaks detect the dreaded "supervision", they hang up fast.

Captain Crunch was still in the phone booth pulling the red switches on his fancy computerised box. He got his name from the whistle found in the Cap'n Crunch breakfast cereal box. Crunch discovered that the whistle has a frequency of 2,600 cycles per second, the exact frequency the telephone company uses to indicate that a line is idle, and of course, the first frequency phone freaks learn how to whistle to get "disconnect", which allows them to pass from one circuit to another. Crunch, intent, hunched over his box to read a list of country code numbers. He impersonated a phone man, gave precise technical information to the overseas operator, and called Italy. In less than a minute he reached a professor of classical Greek writings at the University of Florence.

This is how the future has actually come out. None of us science fiction writers foresaw phone freaks. Fortunately, neither did the phone company, which otherwise would have taken over by now. But this is the difference between dire myth and warm, merry reality. And it is the kids, unique, wonderful, unhampered by scruples in any traditional sense, that have made the difference.

Speaking in science fiction terms, I now foresee an anarchistic totalitarian state ahead. Ten years from now a tv street reporter will ask some kid who is president of the United States, and the kid will admit that he doesn't know. "But the President can have you executed," the reporter will protest. "Or beaten or thrown into prison or all your rights taken away, all your property - everything." And the boy will reply, "Yeah, so could my father, up to last month when he had his fatal coronary. He used to say the same thing." End of interview. And when the reporter goes to gather up his equipment he will find that one of his colour 3-D stereo microphone-vidlens systems is missing; the kid has swiped it from him while the reporter was blabbing on.

If, as it seems we are, in the process of becoming a totalitarian society in which the state apparatus is all-powerful, the ethics most important for the survival of the true, free, human individual would be: cheat, lie, evade, fake it, be elsewhere, forge documents, build improved electronic gadgets in your garage that'll outwit the gadgets used by the authorities. If the television screen is going to watch you, rewire it late at night when you're permitted to turn it off - rewire it in such a way that the police flunky monitoring the transmission from your living room mirrors back his living room at his house. When you sign a confession under duress, forge the name of one of the political spies who's infiltrated your model-airplane club. Pay your fines in counterfeit money or rubber cheques or stolen credit cards. Give a false address. Arrive at the courthouse in a stolen car. Tell the judge that if he sentences you, you will substitute aspirin tablets for his daughter's birth-control pills. Or put His Honour on a mailing list for pornographic magazines. Or, if all else fails, threaten him with your using his telephone-credit-card number to make unnecessary long-distance calls to cities on other planets. It will not be necessary to blow up the courthouse any more. Simply find some way to defame the judge - you saw him driving home one night on the wrong side of the road with his headlights off and a fifth of Sagram's VO propped up against his steering wheel. And his bumper sticker that night read: GRANT FULL RIGHTS TO US HOMOSEXUALS. He has of course torn off the sticker by now, but both you and ten of your friends witnessed it. And they are all at pay phones right now, ready to phone the news to the local papers. And, if he is

so foolish as to sentence you, at least ask him to give back the little tape PHILIP recorder you inadvertently left in his bedroom. Since the off-switch on it is K DICK broken, it has probably recorded its entire ten-day reel of tape by now. Results should be interesting. And if he tries to destroy the tape, you will have him arrested for vandalism, which, in the totalitarian state of tomorrow, will be the supreme crime. What is your life worth in his eyes compared with a three-dollar reel of milar tape? The tape is probably government property, like everything else, so to destroy it would be a crime against the state. The first step in a calculated, sinister, insurrection.

I wonder if you recall the so-called "brain mapping" developed by Penfield recently; he was able to locate the exact centres in the brain from which each sensation, emotion, and response came. By stimulating one minute area with an electrode, a laboratory rat was transfigured into a state of perpetual bliss. "They'll be doing that to all of us, too, soon," a pessimistic friend said to me, regarding that. "Once the electrodes have been implanted, They can get us to feel, think, do anything They want." Well, to do this, the government would have to let out a contract for the manufacture of a billion sets of electrodes, and in their customary way, they would award the contract to the lowest bidder, who would build substandard electrodes out of secondhand parts. The technicians implanting the electrodes in the brains of millions upon millions of people would become bored and careless, and, when the switch would be pressed for the total population to feel profound grief at the death of some government official - probably the minister of the interior, in charge of the slave-labour rehabilitation camps - it would all get fouled up, and the population, like that laboratory rat, would go into collective seizures of merri-ment. Or the substandard wiring connecting the brains of the population with the Washington DC Thought Control Centre would overload, and a surge of electricity would roll backward over the lines and set fire to the White House.

Or is this just wishful thinking on my part? A little fantasy about a future society we should really feel apprehensive about?

The continued elaboration of state tyranny such as we in science fiction circles anticipate in the world of tomorrow - our whole preoccupation with what we call the "anti-utopian" society - this growth of state invasion into the privacy of the individual, its knowing too much about him, and then, when it knows, or thinks it knows, something it frowns on, its power and capacity to squash the individual - as we thoroughly comprehend, this evil process utilises technology as its instrument. The inventions of applied science, such as the almost miraculously sophisticated sensor devices right now traveling back from war use in Viet Nam for adaptation to civilian use here - these passive infra-red scanners, sniperscopes, these chrome boxes with dials and gauges that can penetrate brick and stone, can tell the user what is being said and done a mile away within a tightly-sealed building, be it concrete bunker or apartment building, can, like the weapons before them, fall into what the authorities would call "the wrong hands" - that is, into the hands of the very people being monitored. Like all machines, these universal transmitters, recording devices, heat-pattern discriminators, don't in themselves care who they're used by or against. The predatory law-and-order vehicle speeding to the scene of a street fracas where, for example, some juvenile has dropped a water-filled balloon into the sportscar of a wealthy taxpayer - this vehicle, however fast, however well-armed and animated by the spirit of righteous vengeance, can be spotted by the same lens by which its superiors became aware of the disturbance in the first place... and notification of its impending arrival on the scene can be flashed by the same walkie-talkie Army surplus gadget by which crowd control is maintained when blacks gather to protest for their SFC 31 17

PHILIP just rights. Before the absolute power of the absolute state of tomorrow can
K DICK achieve its victory it may find such things as this: when the police show up
at your door to arrest you for thinking unapproved thoughts, a scanning sensor
which you've bought and built into your door discriminates the intruders from
customary friends, and alerts you to your peril.

Let me give you an example. At the enormous civic centre building in my
county, a fantastic Buck Rogers type of plastic and chrome backdrop to a bad
science fiction film, each visitor must pass through an electronic field that
sets off an alarm if he has on him too much metal, be it keys, a watch, pair
of scissors, bomb, or .308 Winchester rifle. When the hoop pings - and it al-
ways pings for me - a uniformed policeman immediately fully searches the visi-
tor. A sign warns that if any weapon is discovered on a visitor, it's all
over for him - and the sign also warns that if any illegal drugs are found on
a visitor, during this weapons search, he's done for, too. Now, I think even
you people up here in Canada are aware of the reason for this methodical wea-
pons search of each visitor to the Marin County Civic Centre - it has to do
with the tragic shootout a year or so ago. But, and they officially posted
notice of this, the visitor will be inspected for narcotics possession, too,
and this has nothing to do with either the shootout or with any danger to the
building itself or the persons within it. An electronic checkpoint, legiti-
mately set up to abort a situation in which explosives or weapons are brought
into the Civic Centre, has been assigned an added police function connected
with the authentic issue only by the common thread of penal-code violation.
To visit the county library, which is in that building, you are subject to
search - must in fact yield absolutely and unconditionally - for possession
without the juridical protection, built into the very basis of our American
civil rights system, that some clear and evident indication exist that you may
be carrying narcotics before a search can be carried out against you. During
the search I've even had the uniformed officer at the entrance examine the books
and papers I was carrying, to see if they were acceptable. The next step, in
the months to come, would be to have such mandatory checkpoints at busy inter-
sections and at all public buildings - including banks and so forth. Once it
has been established that the authorities can search you for illegal drugs be-
cause you're returning a book to the library, I think you can see just how far
the tyranny of the state can go. Once it has provided itself with an elec-
tronic hoop that registers the presence of something we all carry on us: keys,
a pair of fingernail clippers, coins. The blip, rather a quaint little sound,
which you set off, opens a door not leading to the county library but to pos-
sible imprisonment. It is that blip that ushers in all the rest. And how
many other blips are we setting off, or our children will be setting off, in
contexts that we know nothing about yet? But my optimistic point: the kids of
today, having been born into this all-pervasive society, are fully aware of
and take for granted the activity of such devices. One afternoon when I was
parking my car on the lot before a grocery store, I started, as usual, to lock
all the car doors to keep the parcels in the back seat from being stolen.
"Oh, you don't have to lock up the car," the girl with me said. "This parking
lot is under constant closed-circuit tv scan. Every car here and everyone is
being watched all the time; nothing can happen." So we went inside the store,
leaving the car unlocked. And of course she was right; born into this
society, she has learned to know such things. And - I now have a passive
infra-red scanning system in my own home in Santa Venetia, connected with what
is called a "digital transmitting box" which, when triggered off by the scan-
ner, transmits a coded signal by direct line to the nearest law-enforcement
agency, notifying them that intruders have entered my house. This totally
self-operated electronic detection system functions whether I am home or not.

animal. It has its own power supply. If the line leading from it is cut, PHILIP grounded, or even tampered with, the signal is immediately released, or if any K DICK other part of the system is worked on. And Westinghouse will re-install it wherever I live: I own the components for life. Eventually, Westinghouse Security hopes, all homes and businesses will be protected this way. The company has built and maintains a communications centre near each community in this country. If there is no police agency willing or able to accept the signal, then their own communications centre responds and guarantees to dispatch law-enforcement personnel within four minutes - that is, the good guys with the good guns will be at your door within that time. It does not matter if the intruder enters with a passkey or blows in the whole side of the house or, as they tell me it's being done now, bores down through the roof - however he gets in, for whatever reason, the mechanism responds and transmits its signal. Only I can turn the system off. And if I forget to, then - I suppose, anyhow - it's all over for me.

Someone suggested, by the way, that perhaps this passive infra-red scanner sweeping out the interior of my house constantly "might be watching me and reporting back to the authorities whatever I do right there in my living room." Well, what I am doing is sitting at my desk with pen and paper trying to figure out how to pay Westinghouse the \$840 I owe them for the system? As I've got it worked out now, I think that if I sell everything I own, including my house, I can - oh well. One other thing. If I enter the house - my house - and the system finds I'm carrying illegal narcotics on my person, it doesn't blip; it causes both me and the house and everything in it to self-destruct.

Street drugs, by the way, are a major problem in the area where I live - that is, the illegal drugs you buy on the street are often adulterated, cut, or just plain not what you're told they are. You wind up poisoned, dead, or just plain "burned", which means, "you don't get off", which means you paid ten dollars for a gram of milk sugar. So a number of free labs have been set up for the specific purpose of analysing street drugs; you mail them a portion of the drug you've bought and they tell you what's in it, the idea being, of course, that if it has strychnine or film developer or flash powder in it, you should know before you take it. Well, the police saw through into the "real" purpose of these labs at one glance. They act as quality-control stations for the drug manufacturers. Let's say you're making methadrine in your bathtub at home - a complicated process, but feasible - and so every time a new batch comes out, you mail a sample to one of these labs for analysis... and they write back, "No, you haven't got it quite right yet, but if you cook it just perhaps five minutes longer..." This is what the police fear. This is how the police mentality works. And, interestingly, so does the drug-pusher mentality; the pushers are already doing precisely that. I don't know - to me it seems a sort of nice idea, the drug pushers being interested in what they're selling. Back in the old days they cared only that you lived long enough to pay for what you purchased. After that, you were on your own.

Yes, as every responsible parent knows, street drugs are a problem, a menace to their kids. I completely, emphatically, agree. At one time - you may have read this in biographical material accompanying my stories and novels - I was interested in experimenting with psychedelic drugs. That is over, for me. I have seen too many ruined lives in our drug culture in California. Too many suicides, psychoses, organic - irreversible - damage to both heart and brain. But there are other drugs, not illegal, not street drugs, not cut with flash powder or milk sugar, and not mislabelled, that worry me even more. These are reputable, establishment drugs, prescribed by reputable doctors or given in reputable hospitals, especially psychiatric hospitals. These are pacification SFC 31 19

PHILIP drugs. I mention this in order to return to my main preoccupation, here: the human versus the android, and how the former can become - can in fact be made to become - the latter. The calculated, wide-spread, and thoroughly sanctioned use of specific tranquilising drugs such as the phenothiazines may not, like certain illegal street drugs, produce permanent brain damage, but they can - and God forbid, they do - produce what I am afraid I must call "soul" damage. Let me amplify.

It has been discovered recently that what we call mental illness or mental disturbance - such syndromes as the schizophrenias and the cyclothemic phenomena of manic-depression - may have to do with faulty brain metabolism, the failure of certain brain catalysts such as serotonin and noradrenalin to act properly. One theory holds that, under stress, too much amine oxidase production causes hallucinations, disorientation, and general mental breakdown. Sudden shock, especially at random, and grief-producing, such as loss of someone or something dear, or the loss of something vital and taken for granted - this starts an overproduction of noradrenalin flowing down generally unused neural pathways, overloading brain circuits, and producing behaviour which we call psychotic. Mental illness, then, is a biochemical phenomenon. If certain drugs, such as the phenothiazines, are introduced, brain metabolism regains normal balance; the catalyst serotonin is utilised properly, and the patient recovers. Or if the MAOI drug is introduced - a mono amine oxidase inhibitor - response to stress becomes viable and the person is able to function normally. Or - and this right now is the Prince Charming hope of the medical profession - lithium carbonate, if taken by the disturbed patient, will limit an otherwise overabundant production or release of the hormone noradrenalin, which, most of all, acts to cause irrational thoughts and behaviour of a socially unacceptable sort. The entire amplitude of feelings, wild grief, anger, fear, any and all intense feelings, will be reduced to proper measure by the presence of the lithium carbonate in the brain tissue. The person will become stable, predictable, not a menace to others. He will feel the same and think the same pretty much all day long, day after day. The authorities will not be greeted by any more sudden surprises emanating from him.

In the field of abnormal psychology, the schizoid personality structure is well-defined; in it there is a continual paucity of feeling. The person thinks rather than feels his way through life. And as the great Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung showed, this cannot be successfully maintained; one must meet most of crucial reality with a feeling response. Anyhow, there is a certain parallel between what I call the "android" personality and the schizoid. Both have a mechanical, reflex quality.

Once I heard a schizoid person express himself - in all seriousness - this way, "I receive signals from others. But I can't generate any of my own until I get recharged. By an injection." I am, I swear, quoting exactly. Imagine viewing oneself and others this way. Signals. As if from another star. The person has reified himself entirely, along with everyone around him. How awful. Here, clearly, the soul is dead or never lived.

Another quality of the android mind is an inability to make exceptions. Perhaps this is the essence of it: the failure to drop a response when it fails to accomplish results, but rather to repeat it over and over again. Lower life forms are skilful in offering the same response continually, as are flashlights. An attempt was made once to use a pigeon as a quality-control technician on an assembly line. Part after part, endless thousands of them, passed by the pigeon hour after hour, and the keen eye of the pigeon viewed them for deviations from the acceptable tolerance. The pigeon could discern a

deviation smaller than that which a human, doing the same quality control, PHILIP could. When the pigeon saw a part that was mismade, it pecked a button, which K DICK rejected the part, and at the same time dropped a grain of corn to the pigeon as a reward. The pigeon could go eighteen hours without fatigue, and loved its work. Even when the grain of corn failed - due to the supply running out, I guess - the pigeon continued eagerly to reject substandard parts. It had to be forcibly removed from its perch, finally.

Now, if I had been that pigeon, I would have cheated. When I felt hungry, I would have pecked the button and rejected a part, just to get my grain of corn. That would have occurred to me after a long period passed in which I discerned no faulty parts. Because what would happen to the pigeon if, God forbid, no parts ever were faulty? The pigeon would starve. Integrity, under such circumstances, would be suicidal. Really, the pigeon had a life-and-death interest in finding faulty parts. What would you do, were you the pigeon, and, after say four days, you'd discerned no faulty parts and were becoming only feathers and bone? Would ethics win out? Or the need to survive? To me, the life of the pigeon would be worth more than the accuracy of the quality control. If I were the pigeon - but the android mind, "I may be dying of hunger", the android would say, "but I'll be damned if I'll reject a perfectly good part." Anyhow, to me, the authentically human mind would get bored and reject a part now and then at random, just to break the monotony. And no amount of circuit-testing would re-establish its reliability.

Let me now express another element that strikes me as an essential key revealing the authentically human. It is not only an intrinsic property of the organism, but the situation in which it finds itself. That which happens to it, that which it is confronted by, pierced by, and must deal with - certain agonising situations create, on the spot, a human where a moment before there was only, as the Bible says, clay. Such a situation can be read off the face of many of the medieval pietas: the dead Christ held in the arms of his mother. Two faces, actually: that of a man, that of a woman. Oddly, in many of these pietas, the face of Christ seems much older than that of his mother. It is as if an ancient man is held by a young woman; she has survived him, and yet she came before him. He has aged through his entire life cycle; she looks now perhaps as she always did, not timeless, in the classical sense, but able to transcend what has happened. He has not survived it; this shows on his face. She has. In some way they have experienced it together, but they have come out of it differently. It was too much for him; it destroyed him. Perhaps the information to be gained here is to realise how much greater capacity a woman has for suffering; that is, not that she suffers more than a man but that she can endure where he can't. Survival of the species lies in her ability to do this, not his. Christ may die on the cross, and the human race continues, but if Mary dies, it's all over.*

I have seen young women - say eighteen or nineteen years old - suffer and survive things that would have been too much for me, and I think really for almost any man. Their humanness, as they passed through these ordeals, developed as an equation between them and their situation. I don't mean to offer the mushy doctrine that suffering somehow ennobles, that it's somehow a good thing - one hears this now and then about geniuses, "They wouldn't have been geniuses if they hadn't suffered", etc. I merely mean that possibly the difference between what I call the "android" mentality and the human is that the latter passed through something the former did not, or at least passed through it and responded differently - changed, altered, what it did and hence what it was; it became. I sense the android repeating over and over again some limited reflex gesture, like an insect raising its wings threateningly over SFC 31 21

PHILIP and over again, or emitting a bad smell. Its one defence or response works,
K DICK or it doesn't. But, caught in sudden trouble, the organism that is made more human, that becomes precisely at that moment human, wrestles deep within itself and out to itself to find one response after another as each fails. On the face of the dead Christ there is an exhaustion, almost a dehydration, as if he tried out every possibility in an effort not to die. He never gave up. And even though he did die, did fail, he died a human. This is what shows on his face.

"The endeavour to persist in its own being," Spinoza said, "is the essence of the individual thing." The chthonic deities, the Earth Mother, was the original source of religious consolation - before the solarcentric masculine deities that arrived later in history - as well as the origin of man; man came from her and returns to her. The entire ancient world believed that just as each man came forth into individual life from a woman he would eventually return - and find peace at last. At the end of life the old man in one of Chaucer's CANTERBURY TALES "goes about both morning and late and knocks against the ground with his stick saying, 'Mother, mother, let me in...'" just as at the end of Ibsen's GHOSTS, the middle-aged man, regressing into childhood at the end of his life as he dies of peresies, says to his mother, "Mother, give me the sun," As Spinoza pointed out so clearly, each finite thing, each individual man, eventually perishes... and his only true consolation, as he perishes, as each society in fact perishes is this return to the mother, the woman, the Earth.

But if woman is the consolation for man, what is the consolation for woman? For her?

Once I watched a young woman undergo agonies - she was eighteen years old - that, just witnessing her, were too much for me. She survived, I think, better than I did. I wanted to console her, help her, but there was nothing I could do. Except be with her. When the Earth Mother is suffering, there is damn little that individual finite man can do. This young girl's boyfriend wouldn't marry her because she was pregnant by another boy; he wouldn't live with her & find her a place to stay until she got an abortion - about which he would do nothing; he wouldn't even speak to her until it was over - and then, or so he promised, he would marry her. Well, she got the abortion, and we brought her to my home afterward to rest and recover, and of course the son-of-a-bitch never had anything to do with her again. I was with her during the days following her abortion, and really she had a dreadful time, alone in a poor, large ward in a hospital in another city, never visited except by me and a couple of my friends, never phoned by her boyfriend or her own family, and then at my home, afterward, when she realised her boyfriend was never going to get the apartment for them she had planned on, been promised, and her friends - his friends, too - had lost interest in her and looked down on her - I saw her day by day decline and wilt and despair, and become wild with fear; where would she go? What would become of her? She had no friends, no job, no family, not even any clothes to speak of - nothing. And she couldn't stay with me after she healed up. She used to lie in bed, suffering, holding the puppy she and I got at the pound; the puppy was all she had. And one day she left, and I never found out where she went. She never contacted me again; she wanted to forget me and the hospital and the days of healing and bleeding and learning the truth about her situation. And she left the puppy behind. I have it now. What I remember in particular was that in the two weeks she was with me after her abortion her breasts swelled with milk; her body, at least portions of it, didn't know that the child was dead, that there was no child. It was, she said, "in a bottle". I saw her, all at once, as a sudden, woman,

even though she had, herself, declined, destroyed, her motherhood; baby or not, PHILIP she was a woman, although her mind did not tell her that; she still wore the K DICK cotton nightgown she had worn, I guess, while living at home while she went to high school - perhaps the same easy-to-wash cotton nightgown she had worn since five or six years old. She still liked to go to the market and buy chocolate milk and comic books. Under California law it's illegal for her to buy or smoke cigarettes. There are certain movies, many in fact, that our law prevents her from seeing. Movies, supposedly, about life. On the trip to San Francisco to see the doctor about getting the abortion - she was five and a half months pregnant, nearing what California considers the limit of safety - she bought a purple stuffed toy animal for 89¢. I paid for it; she had only 25¢. She took it with her when she left my home. She was the bravest, brightest, funniest, sweetest person I ever knew. The tragedy of her life bent her and virtually broke her, despite all I could do. But - I think, I believe - the force that is her, so to speak the swelling into maturity of her breasts, the looking forward into the future of her physical body, even at the moment that mentally and spiritually she was virtually destroyed - I hope, anyhow, that that force will prevail. If it does not, then there is nothing left, as far as I am concerned. The future as I conceive it will not exist. Because I can only imagine it as populated by modest, unnoticed persons like her. I myself will not be a part of it or even shape it; all I can do is depict it as I see the ingredients now, the gentle, little, unhappy, brave, lonely, loving creatures who are going on somewhere else, unknown to me now, not recalling me but, I pray, living on, picking up life, forgetting - "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," we are told, but perhaps it is better - perhaps it is the only viable way - to be able to forget. I hope that she, in her head, has forgotten what happened to her, just as her body either forgot the lack of a baby, the dead baby, or never knew. It is a kind of blindness, maybe; a refusal, or inability, to face reality.

But I have never had too high a regard for what is generally called "reality". Reality, to me, is not so much something that you perceive, but something you make. You create it more rapidly than it creates you. Man is the reality God created out of dust; God is the reality man creates continually out of his own passions, his own determination. "Good", for example - that is not a quality or even a force in the world or above the word, but what you do with the bits and pieces of meaningless, puzzling, disappointing, even cruel and crushing fragments all around us that seem to be pieces left over, discarded, from another world entirely that did, maybe, make sense.

The world of the future, to me, is not a place, but an event. A construct, not by one author in the form of words written to make up a novel or story that other persons sit in front of, outside of, and read - but a construct in which there is no author and no readers but a great many characters in search of a plot. Well, there is no plot. There is only themselves and what they do and say to each other, what they build to sustain all of them individually and collectively, like a huge umbrella that lets in light and shuts out the darkness at the same instant. When the characters die, the novel ends. And the book falls back into dust. Out of which it came. Or back, like the dead Christ, into the arms of his warm, tender, grieving, comprehending, loving mother. And a new cycle begins; from her he is reborn, and the story, or another story, perhaps different, even better, starts up. A story told by the characters to one another. "A tale of sound and fury" - signifying very much. The best we have. Our yesterday, our tomorrow, the child who came before us and the woman who will live after us and outlast, by her very existing, what we have thought and done.

PHILIP K DICK In my novel, THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH, which is a study of absolute evil, the protagonist, after his encounter with Eldritch, returns to Earth and dictates a memo. This little section appears ahead of the text of the novel. It is the novel, actually, this paragraph; the rest is a sort of post mortem, or rather, a flashback in which all that came to produce the one-paragraph book is presented. Seventy-five thousand words, which I laboured over many months, merely explains, is merely there to provide background, to the one small statement in the book that matters. (It is, by the way, missing from the German edition.) This statement is for me my credo - not so much in God, either a good god or a bad god or both - but in ourselves. It goes as follows, and this is all I actually have to say or want ever to say:

I mean, after all; you have to consider we're only made out of dust. That's admittedly not much to go on and we shouldn't forget that. But even considering, I mean it's a sort of bad beginning, we're not doing too bad. So I personally have faith that even in this lousy situation we're faced with we can make it. You get me?

32 18 072 This tosses a bizarre thought up into my mind: perhaps someday a giant automated machine will roar and clank out, "From rust we are come." And another machine, sick and dying, cradled in the arms of its woman, may sigh back, "And to rust we are returned." And peace will fall over the barren, anxiety-stricken landscape.

Our field, science fiction, deals with that portion of the life-cycle of our species which extends ahead of us. But if it is a true cycle, that future portion of it has in a sense already happened. Or, at least, we can on a basis almost mathematically precisely map out the next, missing integers in the sequence of which we are the past. The first integer: the Earth Mother culture. Next, the masculine solar deities, with their stern, authoritarian societies, from Sparta to Rome to Fascist Italy and Japan and Germany and USSR. And now, perhaps, what the medieval pietas looked forward to: in the arms of the Earth Mother, who still lives, the dead solar deity, her son, lies in a once-again silent return to the womb from which he came. I think we are entering this third and perhaps final sequence of our history, and this is a society that our field sees ahead of us which will be quite different from either of the two previous world-civilisations familiar in the past. It is not a two-part cycle; we have not reached the conclusion of the masculine solar deity period to return merely to the primordial Earth Mother cult, however full of milk her breasts may be; what lies ahead is new. And possibly, beyond that, lies something more, unique and obscured to our gaze as of this moment. I, myself, can't envision that far; the realisation, the fulfillment, of the medieval pieta, as a living reality, our total environment, a living external environment as animate as ourselves - that is what I see and no further. Not yet, anyhow, I would, myself, be content with that; I would be happy to lie slumbering and yet alive - "invisible but dim", as Vaughn put it - in her arms.

32 18 072 If a pieta of a thousand years ago, shaped by a medieval artisan, anticipated in his - shall we say - psionic? hands, our future world, what, today, might be the analogue of that inspired, precognitive artifact? What do we have with us now, as homely and familiar to us in our twentieth-century world, as were those everyday pietas to the citizens of thirteenth-century Christendom, that might be a microcosm of the far-distant future? Let us first start by imagining a pious peasant of thirteenth-century France gazing up at a rustic pieta and foreseeing in it the twenty-first-century society about which we science fiction writers speculate. Then, as in a Bergman film, we segue to - what

Cycle - and recycle. The pieta of our modern world: ugly, commonplace, and PHILIP ubiquitous. Not the dead Christ in the arms of his grieving, eternal mother, K DICK but a heap of aluminium Budweiser beer cans, eighty feet high, thousands of them, being scooped up noisily, rattling and spilling and crashing and raining down as a giant automated, computer-controlled, homeostatic Budweiser beer factory - an autofac, as I called it once in a story - hugs the discarded empties back into herself to recycle them over again into new life, with new, living contents. Exactly as before... or, if the chemists in the Budweiser lab are fulfilling God's divine plan for eternal progress, with better beer than before.

"We see as through a glass darkly," Paul says in FIRST CORINTHIANS - will this someday be rewritten as, "We see as into a passive infra-red scanner darkly?" A scanner which, as in Orwell's 1984, is watching us all the time? Our tv tube watching back at us as we watch it, as amused, or bored, or anyhow somewhat as entertained by what we do as we are by what we see on its implacable face?

This, for me, is too pessimistic, too paranoid. I believe FIRST CORINTHIANS will be rewritten this way, "The passive infra-red scanner sees into us darkly"; that is, not well enough to really figure us out. Not that we ourselves can really figure each other out, or even our own selves. Which, perhaps, too, is good; it means we are still in for sudden surprises, and, unlike the authorities, who don't like that sort of thing, we may find these chance happenings acting on our behalf, to our favour.

Sudden surprises, by the way - and this thought may be in itself a sudden surprise to you - are a sort of antidote to the paranoid... or, to be accurate about it, to live in such a way as to encounter sudden surprises quite often or even now and then is an indication that you are not paranoid, because to the paranoid, nothing is a surprise; everything happens exactly as he expected, and sometimes even more so. It all fits into his system. For us, though, there can be no system; maybe all systems - that is any theoretical, verbal, symbolic, semantic, etc formulation that attempts to act as an all-encompassing, all-explaining hypothesis of what the universe is about - are manifestations of paranoia. We should be content with the mysterious, the meaningless, the contradictory, the hostile, and most of all the unexplainably warm and giving - total so-called inanimate environment, in other words very much like a person, like the behaviour of one intricate, subtle, half-veiled, deep, perplexing, and much-to-be-loved human being to another. To be feared a little, too, sometimes. And perpetually misunderstood. About which we can neither know nor be sure; we must only trust and make guesses toward. Not being what you thought, not doing right by you, not being just, but then sustaining you as by momentary caprice, but then abandoning you, or at least seeming to. What it is actually up to we may never know. But at least this is better, is it not, than to possess the self-defeating, life-defeating spurious certitude of the paranoid - expressed, by a friend of mine, humorously, I guess, like this, "Doctor, someone is putting something in my food to make me paranoid." The doctor should have asked, was that person putting it in his food free, or charging him for it?

To refer back a final time to an early science fiction work with which we are all familiar, THE BIBLE: a number of stories in our field have been written in which computers print out portions of that august book. I now herewith suggest this idea for a future society; that a computer print out a man.

Or, if it can't get that together, then, as a second choice, a very poor one SFC 31 25

PHILIP in comparison, a condensed version of THE BIBLE, "In the beginning was the end." Or should it go the other way? "In the end was the beginning." Whichever. Randomness, in time, will sort out which it is to be. Fortunately, I myself am not required to make that choice.

Perhaps, when a computer is ready to churn forth one or the other of these two statements, an android, operating the computer, will make the decision - although, if I am correct about the android mentality, it will be unable to decide and will print out both at once, creating a self-cancelling nothing, which will not even serve as a primordial chaos. An android might, however, be able to handle this; capable of some sort of decision-making power it might conceivably pick one statement or the other as quote "correct". But no android - and you will recall and realise that by this term I am summing up that which is not human - no android would think to do what a bright-eyed little girl I know did, something a little bizarre, certainly ethically questionable in several ways, at least in any traditional sense, but to me truly human: in that it shows, to me, a spirit of merry defiance, of spirited, although not spiritual, bravery and uniqueness:

One day while driving along in her car she found herself following a truck carrying cases of Coca Cola bottles, case after case, stacks of them. And when the truck parked, she parked behind it and loaded the back of her own car with cases, as many cases, of bottles of Coca Cola as she could get in. So, for weeks afterward, she and her friends had all the Coca Cola they could drink, free - and then, when the bottles were empty, she carried them to the store and turned them in for the deposit refund.

To that, I say this: God bless her. May she live forever. And the Coca Cola Company and the phone company and all the rest of it, with their passive infra-red scanners and sniperscopes and suchlike - may they be gone long ago. Metal and stone and wire and thread did never live. But she and her friends - they, our human future, are our little song. "Who knows if the spirit of man travels up, and the breath of beasts travels down under the Earth?" THE BIBLE asks. Someday it, in a later revision, may wonder, "Who knows if the spirit of men travels up, and the breath of androids travels down?" Where do the souls of androids go after their death? But - if they do not live, then they cannot die. And if they cannot die, then they will always be with us. Do they have souls at all? Or, for that matter, do we?

I think, as the Bible says, we all go to a common place. But it is not the grave; it is into life beyond. The world of the future.

Thank you.

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* Several hundred people formed a queue outside Wilson Hall, Melbourne University. A cold night in May; they did not have tickets; I had a "press pass" and even then took a few minutes to get a seat. The hall seemed to be nearly full already. Where would they put the rest of the people who arrived with tickets, let alone those who still waited to get them?

A bloke stood at the rostrum on the platform of Wilson Hall. From time to time he yelled into the microphone and waved at one spot or another in the hall. Occasionally he pointed to the balcony.

"Joe!" he kept shouting. (It might have been "George" or "Fred" or "Mick"; I forget which. I'll call him "Joe" anyway.) "Joe! You can get in some more people over there!"

A wide sweep of hands. I looked around. No sign of Joe. I could see only hundreds of people filing into the hall, looking for the twenty or thirty seats that seemed to be still vacant.

"Joe!" shouted the bloke on the platform. He could have made himself heard without the public address system, but he used it anyway. Still no answer from Joe, but he kept shouting. "Put a few more people up there!" he said, pointing towards the balcony, which also seemed to be filled with people.

By this time, Joe must have combined the people-squeezing-in ability of a Tokyo railway-station attendant with the deafness of a B Gillespie who has just been asked to spend money. I never did get to see that mythical figure.

John Foyster sat beside me. "The rest of the conference has been like this, too," he said. "All the seminar sessions this morning started late. This conference is about as well-organised as an s f convention." The bloke on the platform whirled himself into a frenzy of instructions and dazzling arm movements. Later, I heard that everybody who had been waiting outside gained a seat. Joe must have existed, after all.

Half an hour later than expected, one of the members of the Australian Union of Students stood at the microphone and announced the guest speaker for the night - Dr Ivan Illich. The AUS posters had billed him as "the high priest of deschooling". A fairly short man rose to his feet. He wore glasses, and smiled most of the time. He beamed at the audience and began to speak.....

I
MUST BE
TALKING
TO MY
FRIENDS

IVAN ILLICH
IN MELBOURNE

EDITOR ***

A few interesting things happened to me during 1972. In SFC 30 I wrote a necessarily brief account of a high proportion of those interesting events. Also there was the first week of 1972 (my visit to Adelaide), the week of the teachers' strike in May, and the week in October when Shayne McCormack visited Melbourne...

...And there was the night when Ivan Illich spoke in Melbourne.

I had some idea of what to expect when I went to hear Illich, but my expectations had been building up for at least eight or nine months before the man arrived in Australia. At first Illich was just a wisp of a name. He was even less than that - the only "name" I had in my head was the label that his publisher tacked onto him, the label of "deschooling". The word "deschooling" kept appearing more and more frequently in THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT and THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT during the second half of 1971. I began to collect cuttings about the subject. I began to recognise names: Illich and Goodman stood out most clearly. At that time I knew nothing about them, except that they came under the label of "deschooling". Probably I had heard of Goodman's book, COMPULSORY MISEDUCATION.

At first, the idea of "deschooling" interested me more than the works of individual writers. I had hated school as much as the next child while I attended it, and I came to hate it much more while I was teaching in a technical school. When I was in Form 3 (9th grade in USA, I suppose) I missed 52 days of schooling because of illness, and "caught up" the backlog of work quite easily by myself. I had never got on particularly well with any of the other kids at school, so you can see that I never valued the institution much. Always I loved "education", but inevitably the education that meant most to me was that which I drank for myself, and not that which teachers poured down my throat.

But "deschooling" for everybody? I had always thought that school and I did not agree with each other because of my personal peculiarities, rather than anything that was inherently wrong in the institution. I have always said that I failed as a teacher because of my own personal weaknesses; now I would not teach in a school for any reason, even if, by some miracle, I became a good teacher. Illich and Goodman were saying that society should get rid of schools; that schools were bad for society; indeed, that schools should not be replaced. How? The articles that I read first did not provide any answers. Illich said that schooling had become the "universal church" of the twentieth century; entry into school was the equivalent of baptism into the institutional church; the level at which one dropped out of school decided one's level in a hell of hierarchically arranged circles. You could never get enough schooling to reach "heaven", because someone was sure to have consumed more schooling than you had. Carried to its most absurd conclusions, schooling contains the same value as the church's "preparation for the after-life": you could spend more and more of your life in school preparing for less and less of the rest of your life, until finally you spent all of your life being schooled for a responsible adult life that could only arrive after death.

Goodman's ideas were more practical and just as mystifying. He advocated "incidental education". Children should stay in a reasonably safe social environment until they are teenagers, and then begin to read. But they should not be forced to attend schools; most young people could learn what they need for life while "on the job". The essential thing is that they should choose the variety of learning that suits them best, and that all kinds of learning

Like most other people in the community, I was so effectively "schooled" that EDITOR I still could not see the main points that Illich and Goodman were making. In fact, I did not really see what Illich was saying until I heard him speak.

Having learned a little about "deschooling", I arranged to do an article on the subject for THE EDUCATIONAL MAGAZINE, which is the magazine for which I work professionally. I hopped on the horse of "deschooling", and in proverbial style, galloped off in all directions but the right one. I learned a great deal about "free schools" (which Illich compares scornfully with "rock masses" in cathedrals), "community schools" (which are the Victorian Education Department's attempts to provide more humane types of schools), and when I wrote the article about DESCHOOLING, I still did not know much about the subject about which I should have written. I went out to Huntingdale Technical School, which had, at least at the time when I went out there, exactly the sort of atmosphere in which I could have enjoyed school, both as a student and as a teacher. I examined the beautiful book, THE RASBERRY EXERCISES: HOW TO START YOUR OWN SCHOOL, without realising that Salli Rasberry and Robert Greenway, the authors, had also missed the point of "deschooling", if indeed they had ever heard of the term. If I may say so, the article that finally appeared in THE EDUCATIONAL MAGAZINE was probably the first comprehensive, journalistic account of the free-school movement that most Victorian teachers would have seen. (Not that I have any idea how many of them read it.) But the article did not talk perceptively about Illich's ideas.

Come April, The Australian Union of Students announced that in May they would hold in Melbourne a Conference on Quality in Australian Education. The two guest speakers would be Dr Brian Jackson from England and Dr Ivan Illich from Mexico. Jackson had worked a great deal among working-class areas in England; Illich was famous for his books DESCHOOLING SOCIETY and CELEBRATION OF AWARENESS, neither of which were distributed in Australia until nearly six months after Illich's visit. I and most of the other people who attended the conference still thought that Illich's main theme was education. Jackson was an unknown person for me, but while he was here he spoke very effectively.

I still don't know why the Conference proved so extraordinarily popular. I like to think that my article in THE ED MAG influenced a few people to hear Illich in particular. But I don't really think that more than three thousand people begged, borrowed, or (I wouldn't be surprised) stole tickets for the Conference because of an article that had appeared in a magazine published by the Education Department of Victoria. Obviously the AUS itself had publicised the Conference widely - but publicity through the magazines of a student body has never guaranteed the success of any event in the past, and AUS probably had its failures during 1972 as well as successes, like the Conference. No; for some reason ideas are travelling a lot faster these days. I would guess that almost none of the people who queued for Conference tickets had heard of Jackson, Illich, or "deschooling" six months before. But now they clamoured for seats.

In November 1971, I wrote in my article DESCHOOLING that "Deschooling is a utopian idea. We can't imagine that the professions, schools, and apprenticeship commissions will give up the power that knowledge gives to them. For Illich's ideas to work, society would have to change radically. It would have to give the keys to the world's knowledge to all the world's children, teenagers, and adults... Every adult would have to take responsibility for raising every child... Illich wants the world to go 'backwards', but only because it has gained so little from progress."

EDITOR During the early part of his preliminary talk on that night in May, Illich said, "Deschooling... I am sorry that I used that word in one of the sentences somewhere in my book. My editor said on the telephone that this is the title we will give to the book. I said, yes, leave me alone, I'm conducting a seminar on something else. And now I am responsible for an ugly neologism!"

So the people who came to hear Illich (most of them academics or teachers, I should think) faced a surprise as soon as Illich confronted them. He would not talk about "deschooling", which was only an "ugly neologism" that the TES and THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS made into a slogan. He did not even want to make the main topic of the night education, although certainly education was the paradigm for everything else he had to say.

Illich presented other surprises as well, especially for people who were all-too-used to lecturers who make lightning trips to Australia and then try to tell us how to set Australia right. Illich refused to talk about Australian examples, because he did not know about Australia yet. (The implication was that in about a week's time he would probably know as much about Australia as most of its citizens.) Later in the evening he refused to talk about China; he hadn't been there yet. Why not? He hadn't yet had time to learn the language. He was going to do that during the second half of 1972. It was refreshing for an "expert" to refuse to talk about something about which he knew nothing.

When Illich began to speak, he looked out over the audience and said, "I haven't had much experience addressing 2,000 people whom I don't know. There is something highly ambiguous in having as good acoustics as there are in a large room like this one - it is quite a technological achievement - but there is something very dangerous about it too. You don't fill up a hall like this one because people want to engage in a conversation, but because they ascribe to you the authority of performing an act... You have inevitably a regression of a sense of personal contact. For instance, it is the first time in a year and a half, I think, that I speak at a large meeting. Had I known that this was to be this large, I would have said no, because I do believe it is much more efficient if you think through what we have discussed alone together and discuss it with others, rather than have an expert in explaining his ideas, broadcast them."

In his book DESCHOOLING SOCIETY, Illich wrote as his credo: "I believe that a desirable future depends on our deliberately choosing a life of action over a life of consumption, on our engendering a life style which will enable us to be spontaneous, independent, yet related to each other, rather than maintaining a life style which only allows us to make and unmake, produce and consume."

So Illich converted the meeting from a lecture (the epitome of the production of ideas by an authority and the consumption of them by a gullible audience) into a series of spontaneous, independent dialogues.

Illich presented his thoughts in two sections. He gave a short preliminary speech. During the rest of the night he answered questions from members of the audience. Illich stood on one side of the stage at one rostrum. He invited his questioners to come up the stairs and stand beside a second rostrum that was on the other side of the platform. While he or she asked a question, the questioner looked directly across the stage at Illich. All the time that he was answering the question, Illich turned side-on to the audience and spoke directly to the questioner. Two to three thousand of us may have formed the

"audience", but for most of the night we were merely spectators to a series of often intensely personal dialogues that took place between equally concerned and serious people who were involved with each other for the purpose of discovering some aspects of truth. EDITOR

All the time that Illich answered these questions his face was emaciated, intense, and eager. He looked "prophetic", almost to the point of caricature. His smile was constant and infectious; he always looked so very pleased to speak with his questioners, as if they had done him a great favour by consenting to talk with him, instead of the other way around.

About half-way through the night, a young woman in her early twenties walked onto the platform. While she was asking her question of Illich, it became obvious that she was almost certainly a school teacher, and was probably already married or expecting to be married and seriously doubted whether she should bring a child into the world of the late twentieth century. Her voice contained a note of hysteria, or at least deep concern, which convinced us that she believed that she had something very important to say.

"I don't know how to ask this question," said the young woman, "because it is very hard for me to ask and I think very hard for you to answer, but without asking it, I think that what we are doing is so much academic talking."

The transcript of the night's proceedings does not record "Applause" at this point, but I seem to remember that a lot of people did applaud this notion. I'm not sure what I expected after this beginning - perhaps something like the rude "anybody-over-thirty-shouldn't-talk-nothing-about-nothing-to-me" retort which Paul Goodman sometimes received when he gave lectures about incidental education to student audiences in USA. Soon I realised that this woman was passionately interested in expressing exactly the kinds of doubts that I had had about Illich's writings ever since I began work on the DESCHOOLING article.

"Most people agreed that we have a hopelessness about the future," she went on. "Most of us are students or teachers or educationists, and we keep doing what we are doing because we have some sort of hope that what we are going to produce are children who are critical, creative, compassionate; and that might do something. But mostly we don't believe that. That is a rationale we keep going. We talk and think about a society in which people will learn to live by living, yet we all know that this cannot happen in this society we are in..."

"The question is: What do we do? Do we keep on doing the things we are doing in schools? What can we say, what can we do, what would you do if you were in Australia, if you were us - a teacher or a student? I know it is a hard question, because you don't know the Australian context, but - what can we do? And without that, all we are doing is just talking."

When she had finished asking the question, the young woman sounded as if she were about to burst into tears. Obviously Illich was very moved by the question, the complete sense of frustration which gave power to it, and the extent of the faith in himself which he could hear in the tone of her voice. For myself? I too could not see what a rational, professional teacher living in Australia could do to implement any of Illich's visions. At great personal self-sacrifice he or she could join a free school or quit teaching altogether, but I could sense that these alternatives were not what Illich had in mind. SFC 31 31

EDITOR But like the young woman at the rostrum, I still could not quite see what he did have in mind. A person who loved kids and the act of teaching and was dedicated to the most disinterested ideals of teaching (and I suspect that the questioner was all of these) could not calmly face the idea that everything in which she believed was quite valueless. What could she do?

By now Illich was obviously struggling to show clearly his deepest intuitions about life and the right way to live it. It was plain to see that he felt that there were many things he could not say. The struggle in his mind produced his most brilliant dissertation of the night, and, when written down, a passage of prose which surpasses in its clarity almost anything he has written in his books:

"Your question is not unfair," he began, "but it is personal... I made up my mind thirty years ago that by becoming a Catholic priest - for whatever reasons - I would not procreate children. Therefore I am a forty-five-year-old man who has no children, and therefore what I now say can be cruel... What I see is that children who are born today are children of a horrible period. One of the difficulties which you will probably have in sharing my vision about where the world is moving is that you want to have your child and place it into this world and therefore you say that it cannot be as bad as the Club of Rome outlines: there must be something wrong with the computer."

Illich listed the major growth factors in the present world that "are growing at a rate which is throwing the balance of the world off, not just in one, but in several directions." They are:

- (1) "The rate of growth of our transformation of nature into vulgar, durable junk."
- (2) The way that man's present use of tools makes most people become less effective with less ability to do things for themselves.
- (3) "The creation of a demand for increasing amounts of education", i.e. the creation of a world in which "fewer people can learn just by living in it, and more people need more education in order to feel at home in it."
- (4) The "polarisation of privileges" so that inevitably the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.
- (5) As society changes faster, the concept of law becomes impossible "because we believe that law, common law, is a reasonable judgment of peers about how a man acts under ordinary circumstances. How should somebody over thirty judge what is an ordinary circumstance for somebody under thirty?"
- (6) "Institutions become increasingly, not simply dysfunctional, but produce negative outputs."

That's not quite how Paul Ehrlich describes the current progress towards the end of the world as we know it, but it adds up to the same thing - or indeed reveals dangers in the cultural environment which do not even concern Ehrlich and the Club of Rome.

"In front of this almost inevitable trend to a catastrophic imbalance, what can you do?" continued Illich.

- (1) "I think that you should stop and not rush in and do something right away. And see clearer and clearer how anguishing this problem is."
- (2) "Then, I do believe, decide with a few friends what you personally can do without. There are many things which you can do without - not because you want to give them to somebody else - but simply because these things which you need increasingly make it impossible for you to do things in a way for yourself which is really human and which most people could share. I am speaking of voluntary poverty as the only way to own the earth, on a personal level."

(3) "Begin to talk with people about the issue you have raised, but with the EDITOR intention not of going and doing something about the issue you have raised, but of seeing more clearly. I do believe that this is the only political preparation for the political inversion which you can do, because I do expect a major crisis to result from the convergence of the various institutional crises in which we are caught."

Applause seemed in order - but everybody was too engrossed, waiting to hear Illich's next words, for them to applaud at this point. Consistent readers of my remarks in fanzines (ah! gallant band) will be able to see immediately why I found Illich's statements so worthy of applause. Illich knows what he is talking about: by working in Mexico and Puerto Rico, among Puerto Ricans in New York, and by keeping a close eye on all political events in the third world, Illich has examined closely the anatomy of the "institutional crises" which he sees happening right now. Surely Illich is the epitome of the man who can "do" - the man who has worked for many years among those people we call "poor", a man who can pick up a language in a week and seems to know almost everything, a man who conveys such a sense of integrity and emotional strength to the people he meets that probably he changes the lives of many of them, no matter how brief the personal contact. Yet this man who embodies personal "charisma" and power advised this young woman, who desperately sought something to "do", not to "do" anything. Instead, he advised her to think, to throw off those objects which would prevent her thinking, and to engage other people in the experience of "seeing more clearly".

At this point of the evening, Illich's three-part "program" provided a focus for all the paradoxes that are necessarily part of Illich's particular view of the world. Let me illustrate. A little later in the evening, a young man came up on the platform to ask Illich a question. The young man made it clear that he was dedicated to "the revolution", whatever that meant for him. He asked Illich, "How can your educational reform ideas be integrated as part of a weapon needed to shatter the structure of the society, to shatter the privileged structure sufficiently in order to, first of all, stop the exploitation of the under-developed countries, and, secondly, to stop the developing crisis which is going to come here very soon?"

The question placed Illich in an even more difficult position than that which he faced as a result of answering the young woman's question. I suspect that Illich was slightly annoyed because the questioner had missed the point of everything that he said previously. "If a crisis is useful," answered Illich, "then it will be a sudden crisis; a sudden shattering crisis of consciousness such as the French Revolution." Illich made it clear that "the crisis" is far more likely to come before anybody can take advantage of it, than it is to come as a result of long, united effort by conscious revolutionaries. "Demonstration and public testimony are at extreme personal costs," said Illich. "It is much more costly to abstain from compulsory transportation in Melbourne and therefore to have to take a street-cleaner's job next door, than to go to prison. And make people understand why."

Which, of course, is a restatement of the last two of Illich's "dos" - voluntary poverty, and the sharing of discussion about the problem. As if to answer questions of both the young teacher and the revolutionary, Illich said, "I do think that when the crisis comes upon us, a few hundred people who did the right thing very lucidly and clearly can give more orientation than the largest, most powerful means of communication."

EDITOR But is even this good enough? Illich again: He is describing the unique experience that he had when he sat in on four hour-length discussion sessions during the day. "I saw something which I have never seen before - a group of people, not so very old, but responsible people - responsible in the sense of 'with certain institutional responsibilities', who realised that we were in the midst of the crisis of industrial society, not a crisis within industrial society (which is about the ownership of tools of distribution of products), and who didn't have the way out to become activists, but had to face this crisis for which we were not prepared. Even though anguish becomes unbearable." (I've already mentioned the note of "unbearable anguish" in the voice of the young woman questioner.)

"I have never before been with a group of twenty people who had no way out into an immediate political issue. Who couldn't go: stop the war in VietNam, race integration, development, but who had to face: What does it mean that the world view with which we have lived for 200 years... is breaking down?"

It seems to me - and I'm willing to admit that I may only be choosing an idea that particularly suits my own view of the world - that Illich was vitally concerned that he should not give anybody any easy answers - not even to the young teacher in anguish; not even to the revolutionary who wanted a prescription for instant crisis. The industrialists, warmongers, educators, and media men can "give answers". We are worn down or destroyed by their answers every day. If Illich gave people prescriptions and courses of action, he would be acting like a classroom teacher; but to act like a classroom teacher would be to desert his own principles. Most of the people who asked questions forced Illich into a completely false situation. But, as he said, he could not be completely cruel. So he did not really tell us what we should do, but he did take some pains to tell us how we could decide for ourselves what to do.

Illich sums up his view of life in the title of his first book - CELEBRATION OF AWARENESS. He warns against all those elements of modern behaviour which reduce awareness - especially what Illich calls "manipulative" or "right-wing" institutions. They include schools, hospitals, mental asylums, armies, and the kind of industry that supports superhighways and fast jets. They are institutions which force people to use them, which are expensive, elitist, and addictive. For Illich, schooling is the worst of these; indeed, he would like the US Constitution amended so that nobody can make any laws in respect of schooling. In DESCHOOLING SOCIETY, Illich shows that the net effect of these institutions (equally prevalent in "capitalist" and "communist" countries, and sought for by "underdeveloped countries") is to promote a style of life "which is merely a way station on the road to depletion and pollution of the environment". "The state of mind of the modern city-dweller," says Illich in the magnificent last chapter of DESCHOOLING SOCIETY, "appears in the mythical tradition only under the image of Hell: Sisyphus, who for a while had chained Thanatos (death), must roll a heavy stone up the hill to the pinnacle of Hell, and the stone always slips from his grip just when he is about to reach the top... Man has developed the frustrating power to demand anything because he cannot visualise anything which an institution cannot do for him. Surrounded by all-powerful tools, man is reduced to a tool of his tools. Each of the institutions meant to exorcise one of the primeval evils has become a fail-safe, self-sealing coffin for man." (You'll notice here the similarity to all that Philip Dick says about the androidisation of man elsewhere in this magazine.)

The archetypal symbol of this process is the computer HAL in the film 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. Illich does not use this example, although he could have.

especially a film like 2001 which is the product of seven million dollars EDITOR worth of technology.) HAL, you will remember, cares completely for its human passengers. It takes a ship to Jupiter. However, it acquires a "life" of its own which is antithetical to human life. In the battle between HAL and the one man who survives, Bowman defeats the total-environment-controller, and gains the possibility of acting "under his own steam". He becomes alone in the universe. Only then does the film-maker show Bowman as anything other than a fleshed android entirely surrounded by equipment designed to keep him acting in as mechanical a way as possible. During the struggle, Bowman acquires "awareness" or "passion", and I take it that the much-discussed last sequence is Kubrick's attempt to provide a metaphorical analogue for the kinds of "awareness" that man might and can experience when free to do so. The fact that at the end of the film Bowman is quite alone may or may not mean that Kubrick missed the whole point of his film, anyway. The simpler point about the film is much clearer: that man has spent his entire history acquiring a vast, cos shell of technology which either (a) simply protects him against the realisation that man has barely changed during that time, or (b) has made man lose a considerable amount of the awareness that he had in the beginning. The thicker the shell, the more unaware and disordered is the human inside the shell. Illich's example from his book shows us that the whole earth has now become a kind of super-HAL, and is now on the point of snuffing out all of us.

Those who know me may be annoyed if they think that I am trying to "preach at them". I am perhaps one of the worst examples to put before you as a person whose thinking has been extensively deepened and freshened by studying the works of Ivan Illich and listening to him speak, for my actions exemplify nothing.

When Ivan Illich had finished speaking on that night in May, John Foyster and I were discussing some of the most trivial implications of what he had said. I said to John that, when faced with the challenge of somebody like Illich, I couldn't see much justification for continuing to publish a magazine about science fiction. S F COMMENTARY is so much me, so much a controlling agent of my life, that anything that affects my thinking in some way challenges my continued devotion of large amounts of energy and money to this magazine. I forget exactly what John said; I'm sure that he agreed with me that SFC wasn't really worth all that much effort. In other words, there were lots of other things I should be doing, and SFC was the only thing that prevented me from doing them. Since then John and I have talked more on this same general line and I'm still busily not making decisions.

One statement of Illich's in particular began that particular line of thought. During the talk, Illich said, "I think we are prophets because we describe what we see happening right now." When I reminded John of this epigram, he said, "That's what Franz Rottensteiner keeps saying, of course, but none of the science fiction fans see the point." "That's right," I said, "Franz just keeps talking common sense, and everybody ignores him."

You see, the overwhelming impression that Illich leaves upon me is of a man who can, above all, see the future. Compared with Illich, nearly all s f writers are blind, deaf, and dumb. Some American s f writers have been complaining because they cannot sell s f stories unless they "add a bit about pollution, or over-population, or something like that." They complain because they think that s f editors are trying to make them become prophets by "describing what we see happening right now". The careful reader can hear the whine in their voices - if they could get back to the inter-galactic, far-future viewing s f, then they'd show 'em, and predict the future into the bargain. SFC 31 35

EDITOR The implication is that, like good little wage-slaves, they have done what their editorial bosses have told them, carefully looked into the present, written their stories about pollution and overpopulation, and the results have been pretty dull. Therefore... - and the argument goes round and round.

Take a volume edited by a man who seems to think in the same way as that typical s f editor I have just mentioned. Take an example of the kind of volume of short stories which talks about present problems projected slightly into the future. Take AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS. It's pretty distressing, I agree. It will send people back to Doc Smith in droves. But is the main fault of AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS that the authors have "described what they see happening right now"? No, of course not. The book is mainly filled with stories by authors who have not the slightest idea what is happening in the world right now. They know what the popular magazines say about the current state of the world, but they show little evidence of finding out anything for themselves apart from a selection of liberal and/or reactionary cliches.

What is our text for this essay, anyway? Probably both Ivan Illich and Philip Dick would agree with me that the greatest chapter in THE BIBLE is I CORINTHIANS 13, and the last verse is the key to the rest of the chapter, the whole of THE BIBLE, and all that they have to say about the current crisis in the world. As I quoted in SFC 28, and may quote again as the occasion arises, the verse says, "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

On the last page of DESCHOOLING SOCIETY, Illich puts it another way. He quotes Yevtushenko:

We need a name for those who love people more than products, those who believe that

No people are uninteresting.
Their fate is like the chronicle of planets.

Nothing in them is not particular,
and planet is dissimilar from planet.

Why are science fiction writers incapable of talking about the future (which seems to me probably the only final justification for reading them)? If I can judge from that example which I just happened to have read recently - AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS - it is because s f writers have no "hope, faith, or love"; they have no respect for nor understanding of individual human beings but still the same love of processes and products that the s f writers of the forties had. To get back to Illich's terms, s f writers produce stories which seem like the product of the man inside the technological cushion - the man who is so smothered that he cannot feel, see, hear, or think about anything authentic. In particular, he has no interesting views about other human beings. But since the aspirations of other human beings provides the force that makes the future, most current s f writers have no way to write about the future. I said in a letter to someone that AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS comprises six stories and forty sermons. Now I would not even call them sermons. Their writers must be little androids, who pour little bits of machinery called "ideas" into a little mould called the "plot". Like the elements on a printed circuit, all the bits of "idea" settle into their appropriate slots in the "plot" - "and they all look like ticky-tacky, and they all turn out the same." Fortunately, Harlan Ellison's technicoloured verbal box is a bit more interesting than the dull little machines which he fits inside the box.

But I don't want to talk about AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS, which is no worse EDITOR than most of the other original fiction anthologies. --(At \$13 it costs a lot more, though.) I don't even want to talk about science fiction. I started to talk about the kind of challenges that Ivan Illich presented to me. I believe that there are a few science fiction writers who talk about the future and who talk about human beings in the future. Philip Dick has done so for many years; and his essay in this issue of SFC is, I believe, the greatest statement ever made by any s f writer. (It is certainly, says he smugly, the greatest article ever to appear in a fanzine.) I've talked about Brian Aldiss in this magazine; Dick talks about Disch in this issue of SFC, and, for example, Disch's THINGS LOST is one of the few real stories in AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS; there's Cordwainer Smith, and Ursula Le Guin, and Stanislaw Lem, and Farmer, and Vonnegut, and a few more. Not many; not well-liked among fans.

"I think we are prophets because we describe what we see happening right now." A few people inside science fiction do this; and so do a lot of people outside science fiction. If you want to find out about the future, don't look to s f. Read Illich; read Fromm; read Marcuse; read Reich (Wilhelm and Charles); read Steiner; read Bettelheim. There are hundreds more - professional people who survived some of the rigours of the twentieth century, and who can see only worse rigours for the rest of the century. Among writers of fiction, the field is much larger: for me, Robert Musil says the same as Illich, but much, much more. Kafka talks about our future, although he wrote during the first twenty years of this century. Conrad's NOSTROMO is still a far more penetrating study of what is happening in South America now (although Conrad's book was published in 1904) than any s f story I have ever read.

By the age of eleven, I had read three times a book called THE CHESSMEN OF MARS, by Edgar Rice Burroughs. I haven't read it since then, so please excuse any slight errors of detail. This book depicts a creature which has remained in my memory ever since then. This creature, whose name I've forgotten, had reached the evolutionary stage in which most of its body weight was in its head. Its head/body had a couple of tiny legs. When it wanted to move long distances, it attached the nerves at the back of its head to the nerves at the top of the neck of a sentient torso-and-legs. The torso-and-legs was quite a separate creature, I think, but it had no conscious life unless controlled by the little head creature. The "head" commanded the "body" to get up and carry the "head" to wherever it wanted to go. When it reached its destination, the "head" made the torso lie down again. The head detached itself and wandered away on its own tiny little legs. Most of the time it sat thinking. When I was eleven years old I was really impressed when the creature told the hero of the story (who had one of those unlikely Barsoomian names, if I remember correctly) that his race hoped that during the next step of the race's evolution, the creatures would lose their legs altogether. They would wall themselves up in caves, and spend the rest of their (eternal) lives thinking.

I have always been attracted by this concept. For most of my life, indeed as long as I can remember, I have looked forward to a time in my adult life when I would be free from all the pressures that gave me so much pain during childhood; and I would be free to devote all my time to reading, writing, and thinking. And to publishing fanzines, of course. The curious thing is that several times during the last few years I have come very close to achieving that aim. I have to keep working at a nine-to-five job, which is annoying; but is a very congenial nine-to-five job. Indeed, for me, it is about the best possible job that I could get in Australia, even if I had the choice of SFC 31 37

EDITOR all the jobs that are available. But during the last year or so I have been free to pursue the kind of life that approaches the ideal that I have held for so long.

Yet, one day in April, I remember sitting down at the kitchen table and saying to my mother (who puts up with my babblings from time to time), "If somebody had told me while I was living in Ararat that in only two years time I would be living here in this house, with this job, with this amount of freedom, I would not have believed him. Or if I had believed him, I would have expected to be permanently and deliriously happy in such a position. Then why am I not?"

During August, as I related in SFC 30, I found out why I had not been happy, what I needed to make me happy, and at this moment I am forced to live disconsolately without that happiness. The problem was that before August I had received what I wanted; but I had wanted the wrong things. What had I wanted? A sort of perfectionism, a completely antiseptic, sterile, safe life in which my soul was somehow supposed to flourish. The world, and all other people were strangers to me, and I did my best to keep them at their distance. I think I diagnosed this situation accurately in my piece in SFC 28 - but as I wrote in metaphor, few people except Barry Gillam got the message.*

In DESCHOOLING SOCIETY, Illich makes the distinction between "hope" and "expectation". "Hope, in its strong sense," he says, "means trusting faith in the goodness of nature, while expectation, as I will use it here, means reliance on results which are planned and controlled by man. Hope centres desire on a person from whom we await a gift. Expectation looks forward to satisfaction from a predictable process which will produce what we have the right to claim... The contemporary ideal is a pan-hygenic world: a world in which all contacts between men, and between men and their world, are the result of foresight and manipulation... Inexorably we cultivate, treat, produce, and school the world out of existence."

Illich speaks for the whole world; I speak for myself. I'm not saying that most of the individuals in the present world suffer from the same neurotic symptoms from which I have suffered for so long. I sincerely hope that most people do not live in the way that I do or are as unhappy as I am. But if you take my ideals, which surely exemplify the triumph of "expectation" over "hope" (which, according to Illich's definition, I have never had), and extend them to the whole world, then you may see the similarity. But what changed my viewpoint from "expectation" to "hope", from a life without love to a consciousness that knows of its existence at least? The impression I tried to give in SFC 30 was of an overwhelming sense of surprise. "This can't be happening to me," I thought many times. "This sort of thing doesn't happen to me." But all I needed to do was to accept a generous gift.

It seems that Illich expects that something like this must happen to the world as a whole before the blatant, destructive neuroticism of unlimited growth can disappear. We must, he says, be prepared to be surprised, and to receive the gifts of the unexpected new age. We must celebrate the gift of awareness, of conviviality. We must "retool" so that we can live on the earth, and not murder it. Illich expects that soon we will all face a situation in which we say, "This can't be happening to us."

"Are you basically optimistic about the future?" was the last question of the young woman teacher. "I have made a distinction between expectation and hope. I am very pessimistic and hopeful," said Illich. For myself, I have neither

The following three articles were each sent to SFC as responses to Issue No 28. Any one of them would have justified by itself the publication of that particular issue.

JOHN GIBSON

The John Gibson Instant Cathartic Kit

This has been an eventful year for me. But first, I had better fill you in on some personal details.

I was grossly miseducated at Cleveland Street High School - a state institution which is situated at the edge of the vast Redfern slums, Sydney. The mediocrity of the teaching staff can best be summed up by referring to the habits of a few of them.

The English/History teacher thought it was his job to instill into the class his own peculiar brand of religious fanaticism. He would begin a period with the words, "May the Lord have mercy on any one of you who opens his mouth." About ten people would be caned by the end of his period and the whole class would be turned off religion - particularly his. No one bothered to learn any history.

The maths teacher would begin his lesson with the bracingly encouraging remark, "I'm damned if I know why I bother to teach you tripehounds." Well, we wondered too.

Then there was the maths teacher(a different fellow)/soccer coach who used to delight in ogling young boys' arses in the shower room. He was the target of a dozen dirty jokes a day. Rather a sad thing really - but young boys are hellishly intolerant. The Parents and Citizens got him dismissed, I think. It happened after I left.

I learnt to read and write from my grandmother (a Scottish headmaster's daughter) long before I attended school. This is the only kind of learning I could recommend - the personal kind. Schools tend to deaden a child's natural curiosity and willingness to learn. I have long been of the opinion that they should all be closed down.

I'm a natural dropout. I did a course in advertising (two years - unfinished because of boredom and inability to swallow the bullshit about advertising being a "community service"), a course in commercial art (two years - unfinished for the same reasons), and three language courses - French, Esperanto, and Russian (I can read and write the first two with some facility; Russian grammar has so far defeated me. There is no commercial application for being able to read and write a foreign tongue. You have to be orally perfect as well.) The last thing I tried was a course in management sponsored by the place in which I worked (unfinished because I was fired).

I have worked in a great variety of jobs - all soul-destroying - a newspaper SFC 31 39

JOHN office, a factory, the post office, a toy-aeroplane store, a messenger serv-
GIBSON ice, an advertising agency (checking department), a hardware store, a pub,
etc. I've loathed the lot.

To cap it all, my girl left me about three months ago and I feel rotten (my fault - about the girl, I mean.) There you have the concise John Gibson.

I have just returned from Queensland. ((Letter dated September 1.)) Sorry to have missed you at Syncon. I sent a letter to Shayne McCormack the other day apologising.

The trip came about like this: for the past two-and-a-half years - or thereabouts - I've been working as a plumbing salesman. This is not what you would call a mind-boggling activity; it requires only a general knowledge of the plumbing trade, which can be picked up in a little less than a year. Like most jobs available to ninety-five per cent of the community, once a working knowledge of the business is gained the whole thing becomes incredibly tedious. You get this nagging feeling that you are merely wasting good years of your life doing something that gives you fuck-all satisfaction. You start wishing that someone would create a revolution so that you could see the entire repetitively ennuous society go up in flames - Burn, Baby, Burn! you would cheer from the sidelines as Sydney was looted and incinerated from Circular Quay to Parramatta, from North Sydney to Hornsby. You start dreaming that you see lynched bosses and politicians dangling from every telegraph pole. Oh bliss!

Little wonder, then, that you throw a schooner of beer over your own bastard of a manager and invite him out for a punch-up - which he declines. This happened to me at an office party, and voila! I'm fired. God, though, it was worth it: the throwing of that beer was the first piece of real pleasure I've had in seventeen years of employment at mind-dulling, dehumanising jobs. It was a catharsis, a purification. I hereby recommend the John Gibson Cathartic Kit to fellow slaves of boredom and drudgery. It contains one glass of (preferably) stale beer and years of pent-up detestation, frustration, and utter alienation. Arise, ye clerks, ye computer programmers, ye factory-line assemblers - take aim, throw! It is the very least you can do to win back your self-respect.

Well, says I, what are you going to do now, John? Go find another equally boring job? Naah! I'll do something really crazy. So I set off on a push-bike ride from Brisbane to Cairns (1,200 miles), feeling the shit of years of penal servitude wash from my mind and body with every passing mile. What's more, I made it - three weeks of peddling and sleeping out in a bag and I was there. I spent a lot of time speaking to the people, drinking in pubs, going to parties, getting stoned on grass, and god! I've only got eight dollars left.

So I hitchhiked back to Sydney - five days. The people who gave me lifts on the return journey were wonderfully generous, some letting me sleep in their houses, feeding me, giving me beer. Thanks to all you generous people!

And now I've got to return to prison to serve more time. I hope this commercial penitentiary is a little more interesting than the others in which I've done time. If not - well, I guess I'll just blow my temper and throw another glass of grog. Now that I understand the process by which one can partly keep one's pride of self I shan't be awkward (as I was before) in using this unique method of self-liberation. Solidarity, brothers - and pass me that schooner

Next year - with any luck - I'll be in Canada and the USA. To hell with JOHN Australia! There's got to be somewhere else in this world where mediocrity GIBSON and timidity are not given all the rewards.

PS:

This has been an eventful year for me. You know, that suicidal bit of parachuting, trying out pot, riding through Queensland. It all adds up to the sense of absolute dissatisfaction with the way my life has been going. I'm thirty-five - almost thirty-six - and I'm beginning to feel a certain desolation. All those wasted years! To be quite honest, I don't believe I could take life if I thought it would be a repetition of what has already passed. Not that I'd commit suicide - too much of the coward for that. But my mind keeps on running back to the line of Thoreau, "Most men live lives of quiet desperation." I feel that; oh, I feel that. Perhaps America will be different; better. I don't know anything anymore... for sure. A religious person would say that I needed Christ. Well, I can't believe in fairy tales - not in Buddha, not in Mohammed, not in Confucius, or any of that crap. The thought is very much with me that the sole purpose of this or any other technological society is to make men's lives meaningless by giving them work that would bore an intelligent monkey inside a quarter-hour; yet men are supposed to suffer this tedium throughout their most active and (what should be) their most joyful years. Me, I've got to get out from under this dead-weight system that murders mind and hope and ego - or I'll go nuts. I'll be damned if I'll content myself as a productive unit living in quiet despair.

Yours completely alienatedly

JOHN GIBSON (2 Baringa Street, Blaxland, NSW 2774)

(September 1, 1972)

STUART LESLIE On The Way Back

Before I tell you what has been happening during the last few months, a few prefatory quotes:

...The prepsychotic personality of the schizophrenic. This personality has been characterised as asocial, serious, overtly cool, and eccentric ...a feeling of failure of communication, an increasing sense of inadequacy and of apartness.

- Andrew Cockcroft THE PSYCHOTIC

Bright young schizophrenics, like bright young people generally, are interested in reading about their condition. From the vast and varied selection of literature available to them, they appear to show a marked

STUART
LESLIE

preference for a book called THE POLITICS OF EXPERIENCE, by R D Laing.
- ed. Boyers and Orrill LAING AND ANTI-PSYCHIATRY

The subjects that occupy a schizophrenic's thoughts are often very abstract - philosophy, spiritualism, religion, or power, for instance... frequent close interest in religious, philosophical, and mystical subjects...

- Andrew Cockcroft THE PSYCHOTIC

Last year, because of the dreaded drugs among other things, I went deeply into mysticism of various sorts, started practising yoga, explored the drug scene and the dimensions of psychedelic experience, acquired quite a library on these subjects, and devoted a lot of mental time and energy to them.

At the same time I was isolating myself more and more, drawing the web of my defences tighter and tighter, becoming more and more obsessional, abstracted, and aloof. Nevertheless the total reality of the subjective experiences I have had was totally convincing and self-validating.

Then something happened after my last LSD trip. I never quite came back. I was left unfeeling, emotionless, empty. The reality of that higher spiritual plane of experience disappeared; my emotions were blunted and deadened. I began to pull out of this. Then, towards the end of last year, I had an unsuccessful affair with a girl; a failure both sexually and personally. After this my concentration began to go, and I became unable to sleep without drugs. My thinking became increasingly disordered and shallow and I began to have what I thought were flashbacks to the LSD state. These were exultant, ecstatic, - and unreal. They left me nowhere.

I struggled on, but was going down. I failed several auditions, I could not sleep or face being awake, and all the time I became more deeply concerned with eastern religions, in a vain attempt to recapture, to assure myself of the reality of that now-lost, transcendent reality. But it was me, I was becoming more and more unreal. I kept blaming the whole mess on the after-effects of acid.

I got a job working at the local golf club as a groundsman. On the third day there I managed to run over my left foot with a power mower, chopping off a large chunk of big toe and busting up the second. Laid off for five weeks and my hassles continuing, at last I went to see a psychiatrist whom I had met several times on a personal basis.

Nothing to do with acid, he explained to me, after I had related to him my state and my grandiose theories about its causation. You have some heavy subconscious conflicts going. What, me? With all my introspection, my intricate theories, my knowledge of psychology, my mystical insights into my own mind. Bullshit! But still, maybe.. after all he knows better than me; said he sees the same symptoms every day.

I turned this over in my mind for a week. Then it all started to collapse. Too many real insights hit me at once. I was reading a passage in an article on Tolstoy. It was about man living not by reason or rationality or economics but by needs. By emotional needs. The passage was only about thirty or forty words long but I could not read it. My mind would not grasp it. The words did not mean anything. I read it again and again but it was as if a solid and tangible wall stood between that passage and any meaning in my mind.

42 SFC 31 There were too many things in my head. Things to do with me, my behaviour, my

family, feelings, concepts, things, forces tumbling, beating at my brain, knotting my muscles, twisting my stomach, tearing me apart. STUART
LESLIE

Next day, I returned to that passage. I wrote it out, laboriously, several times until I almost grasped it. Things, pieces, thoughts began to come together and fall into place and I began to fall. Out of place, out of self, out of mind, down and back and back into childhood, to infancy, to birth...

I won't go into a psychodynamic analysis of myself. But John Lennon sings about it, about what "I, I found out":

Mother, you had me but I never had you
I wanted you, you didn't me...
Mama don't go
Daddy come home...

And it ends in a scream. Minutes long and ages deep. Like a knife tearing from your guts, your body, your being, tearing pain and frustration and rage and terror from the deepest infantile layers of existence; pain, writhing, convulsive, a pool of need dammed for twenty-five years, a pool so deep and old as man that swallows you totally. Pain one cannot bear to face. Need that is all you, me. The primal scream.

But it was a catharsis. It left me higher than an acid trip. Until two days later, having returned to work at the golf club, suddenly I realised that I had chopped up my foot on purpose. I had done it deliberately, if subconsciously. I had done it because I hated myself, because I hated those within me, because I had never been allowed to hate, or even show the mildest aggression, and after twenty-five years of storing my hate and rage there was nowhere else for it to go but in on myself. What I had become: nobody; nowhere. I relived it. What's more I suddenly realised that I was doing exactly the same thing I had been doing when I ran over my foot: steep slope, long wet grass, same mower... I went psychotic. Paranoic, swamped by terror, all the age of hell.

I had enough control to get myself home and drop a large dose of Largactil, a major tranquiliser and brain-function normaliser. This brought me down, but I was disintegrated. My whole self, my being, my self-conception, my picture and self-image had been destroyed. I went into a state of psychotic depression of utter and absolute despair and hopelessness, the blankness and sense of futility and lack of any light of which cannot be conceived by those who have not been through it. I am lucky. To a large extent I pulled out of it, spontaneously, but I have seen those who cannot and it is a dark weight on the soul just to know what they are living in.

Anyway, I have spent five weeks in a psychiatric clinic - polite term for a mental hospital - which is, luckily, the best in Australia by all accounts. I was discharged about two and a half weeks ago, not cured or sane or anything like that, but at least able to live with myself, something I was unable to handle before I went in. Life is still a hassle. I am up and down, but improving now can only come from living.

I have given up the idea of acting as a living. It has been a lie from the start. My whole life has been an act. I have seldom felt total, whole, real, especially in the presence of other people, which is why I have been more and more avoiding the Other during the last few years. Keep people at a distance and I am safe. From my own real feelings which I do not want to face.

STUART The clinic was a little world in itself. I went through a hell of a lot and a
LESLIE lot of hell there exploring my real feelings. Also I discovered a hell of a
lot of beautiful things, like other people and, through them, more of me. The
normal barriers that serve to distance people, the unspoken rituals and
assumed rules that govern social intercourse outside are, to a large extent,
broken down and closeness is as near as a touch; communication as instant and
complete as two pairs of eyes meeting, understanding in a word. And all
people are basically like this. But in this world there is so much we will
not admit, especially what reminds us of our own pain. That we cannot bear to
face. And there is so much unrecognised pain in the world, in people. And
people are what is important; the most important. Ah! I have learned that.

So I have a long way to go before I can say, "I am me." Like a whole life-
time. Probably I will take acid again but not for a long time. I still smoke
grass - nice stuff, and is said, we all need our crutches. So, I want to get
a job for the rest of the year and next year, do my matriculation full-time at
a technical college, thence to university, course as yet undecided. First, I
have to get myself back together again, and that is a tough one.

Peace and Good Things

STUART LESLIE (Longueville, NSW 2066)

(September 6, 1972)

BARRY GILLAM

The Last Man Drafted

"We are standing outside the Armed Forces Induction Station at 201 Varick
Street. It is a crisp, clear October morning. The clock reads seven. And...
here he comes. Mr Gillam... uhh, Mr Gillam, yes. Could you tell us how it
feels to be the last man drafted?"

Well, it's rather lonely. Some people think the draft has already ended. On
2 September (notice how easily I slip into officialese) I received my order to
report for induction (on October 3rd). I'm pretty sure I can get it postponed
till the end of this term and with a great deal of luck the whole school year
(by which time I should have my Masters). At the same time I'm investigating
the possibility of going into a reserve unit. But things are uncertain at
this point. Further bulletins as they come into the newsroom.

Just yesterday I finished my paper (THE EMPIRE OF REASON: MACAULAY'S LITERARY
CRITICISM) for my first graduate course. It was only a week late, the course
having ended a week before - but no matter. The course itself (Victorian
Studies) was excellent, if crammed with reading. Three hundred pages a day is
more than I can handle comfortably. Nevertheless, the professor was so good
that the lectures (2½ hours a night, 4 nights a week) were interesting and
entertaining (!) even without having completed the reading. We worked mainly
on five prose writers and three poets: Macaulay, Carlyle, Newman, Mill, Arnold
and Tennyson, Arnold and Browning.

That summer session course (eight credits in six weeks) was on a tuition re- mission, a sort of mini-scholarship. Now I have the privilege of paying my fall courses (at \$83 a credit - luckily I'm only taking eight) myself. If my hoped-for scholarship doesn't come through by next semester, my further schooling joins the uncertain list. Ah well. Yes, tune in tomorrow for As Gillam Turns: the spinning soap opera. Watch Gillam sit like a catatonic for half an hour contemplating his chaotic future. Will he continue school? Will the draft get him? Will he ever meet Julie Andrews? Or will he be cancelled and sentenced to the purgatory of re-runs - forced to live the same dreary old problems over and over?

SFC 27: Well-produced and a solid, sensible piece of criticism, but it is the kind of pat thing (textual changes and connections are inarguable) that doesn't spur comment. While I think it's a good thing for SFC to be flexible enough to produce the varied 26, 27, and 28, I'd have preferred seeing Foyster's essay as one section in a larger issue of SFC or as a supplement. In design, it does have to be a separate entity, but I'm afraid I just expect more from SFC.

SFC 28, on the other hand, is a wonderfully successful experiment. Of the four, Leigh Edmonds' and Harry Warner's are definitely the best. None of you four are really stylists although you all write competently. It's a question of subject. The changes in the lives of Leigh and Harry are more important, more interesting, and better related than Bill Wright's little history of COMORG and your intellectual history.

I was disappointed in the 1969 preface to Leigh's 1971 until I took in fully the contrast between the two. The turgid prose and third-person narration of the first reflect his emotional paralysis; things take the place of feelings; he describes the surface of a static, ramshackle environment, but he cannot participate in it; he has detached himself. ((*brg* How's that for a short critique of REPORT ON PROBABILITY A, Brian?*))

The 1971 is interesting as a record of how Leigh's mind has changed. The first lines are a direct link to the 69 attitude. The last lines contain a very hopeful, satisfactory feeling of admitting, and coming to terms with, one's emotions. There is a sense of progression as Leigh opens himself tentatively to other people. First he buries himself in piano practice, then he goes out with a girl whose attributes are totally physical (to judge from Leigh's account) and finally, with Valma, and ultimately with his parents, he is willing to give up a part of himself in a relationship.

There is still something tentative about Leigh's attitude to Valma and his reconciliation with his parents. Valma is only a cipher, a name. Even with the cover photo (and that too posed, telling us nothing about Valma herself) I don't get any feeling of what she is like. Michael and Bernie are, in their furtive, sad way, more understandable and real. Oh, I do feel at one moment close to her charm: when she kisses Leigh's father. I'm not complaining; Leigh's article is so good and, I think, more revealing than he means it to be.

Reading Harry Warner's 1971 made me think of that wonderful panel in Edward Gorey's THE REMEMBERED VISIT. Young Drusilla is in Europe with her parents. One day she is taken along to visit Mr Crague, "a wonderful old man who has been or done something lofty and cultured in the dim past." He is now, like the topiary, genteely shabby, with a long, flowing white beard. They are having tea on the lawn. In this frame, we see Drusilla sitting politely with her SFC 31 45

BARRY cup and saucer in her lap. Mr Crague is just raising his arm in dismay as his
GILLAM cup and saucer fall to the ground. Neither Drusilla nor the text mention the
gaffe. Gorey acknowledges but also accepts the small weaknesses that are at-
tendant on age.

Harry's outlook is basically and rather bravely optimistic. One has a feeling of an active intelligence continually reaching out into new fields and a sensibility thoroughly enjoying itself in all its endeavours. Harry's 1971 is pitched on a balance between an undertow of loss and an attempt to hold one's ground and to recover parts of the receding shoreline. Harry talks of his impending second operation and his lack of full recovery from the first, his little lapses of memory, but also his salvaging of his early memories of movies, his foreshortened disability benefits, his backlog of letters and fanzines, his discontinuing playing the piano, but also of his new interests in country-and-western and his buying of 78s, saving them from destruction, the corrupt and ruinous zoning practices in Hagerstown, his own weather-worn house, but also of his repairs and now-safe fanzine collection, etc. The last paragraph of Harry's 1971 is the best thing in SFC 28.

Bill Wright's piece is well written but rather inconsequential compared with the other entries.

And then there is your piece. I found it interesting and it's certainly packed with Gillespieana. I even rather like the framing device, although it does wear a little thin after so many pages. The lists: I have respect for your s f choices. I might not put some so high, etc, but they show a sense of taste that so very few fans have. I'm not going to comment on any of these lists in particular. I will say that your fiction lists contain a number of works I'll have to try to get around to and that I consider your film lists a hodge-podge, but that's neither here nor there.

There's something more important about your article. I get the feeling while reading it that the elaborate structure of criticism and evaluation is somehow an attempt to create order out of chaos. A laudable goal. But it is also an attempt to escape from the vagaries of human relationships into the lucid hierarchy of art. The most affecting passages are about the emptiness of rooms in your mind, the broken images in "People", the lack of connection between body and mind. I'm suggesting that this state of things is like that of Leigh Edmonds in 1969. Except - and this is an enormous exception - you're aware of the problem and you have, in any case, a different kind of mind. The schema of rooms of the mind is indicative, and it is also a very apt description. I mean no value judgment in what I say. The fact is that I am in largely the same situation and have no real right to blithely analyse someone else. I do it nevertheless: with the security of a distancing critical evaluation.

By the way, I don't know if I ever mentioned a letter you wrote to an early OUTWORLDS suggesting that fandom is a sexual sublimation. It was probably the best letter in those issues - if I remember rightly, I voted it best prose in the Year One poll. There is something very true to that. Writing of any kind, and especially that which leads to publication, is definitely a sexual substitute. It is a reinforcement of self and it provides a sensual feedback. I suppose I could be more specific about the particularly onanistic qualities of writing (read a Macaulay essay sometime and notice his use of repetition, parallel structure, and balanced statements - the slight but pleasant friction of the sentences sliding back and forth, notice the way his arguments build by progressive stages until they burst into a clinching, vivid epigram and an

accompanying bright visual image. Macaulay never married - claimed he was BARRY just too busy. It had to go somewhere.) but I don't want to get you into GILLAM trouble with Australian censors.

(September 9, 1972)

(Barry chose to join the reserves - six years of part-time training **brg* instead of two years full-time in the army. Here's his latest news...)

On one level, I feel that my life has stalled before a stop light. I had been telling a friend some anecdotes about the Reserves and what I'd heard about basic training. "Makes good material for a novel," he commented. "I don't know," I said, "It's one thing to read a novel but I don't like the idea of being trapped in a novel." I feel as if I am in one of those eddies of a life that are later set down as a passing phrase in biographies: "Six months later, he was called up to active duty."

On the other hand, I am engaged in rewriting what is a major piece of work for me. And in this sense, my life is a seamless progression of reading, film-going, thought, and writing. From this point of view, the traffic light up ahead will turn red rather than green when I'm called up.

The Reserve meetings are at once laughable and maddening, a great nuisance but, considering the alternative, a relatively minor nuisance. The "drills" average four hours a week, but work out as either four hours Monday night (6.30 - 10.30) or eight hours Sunday (7.30 - 4.00) and even occasionally Saturday. After a double (eight hours), we get two free weeks, which is a blessing. They bunch up the meetings so that the holidays are free. One weekend in early December, we had two eight-hour meetings to give us several weeks around now without them.

What does the drill consist of? Well, first of all, they take attendance, which seems to be the major (perhaps, only) function of the Reserves. They take attendance when you fall in for formation at the beginning, they take attendance wherever you're assigned and they take attendance at the formation before they dismiss you. Why? Because if they didn't, nobody would show up. If they left off the last roll call, no one would be there that late. And on Sundays, they have four or five roll calls to make sure that people don't go off somewhere and sleep between formations.

Inspection is generally conducted at the Sunday-morning formation. Everyone has to show up in the appropriate uniform. But the real item on inspection is hair. All the reservists wear their hair as long as they think they'll be able to get away with. The officers walk around trying to decide whose is too long. (Everyone's is longer than the guidelines which are posted facetiously all about the building.) Some of the reservists wear wigs for meetings. Everyone who doesn't have a specific task goes to the classroom. We sit there for the four or eight hours watching Army training films. These include such fascinating subjects as: THE EFFECTS OF THE IONOSPHERE ON RADIO WAVE PROPOGATION, MALARIA, AMPHETAMINES, THE EXCRETORY SYSTEM, DRILLS AND CEREMONIES, and PLAGUE CONTROL. No one cares about the training films. They turn the sound down so as not to annoy anyone. And although they turn off the lights there is enough light coming in through the windows to give eyestrain to anyone actually watching the film. Most of the time they sit around sleeping, reading the Sunday papers, going homework, playing cards, and talking.

It isn't always so bad. The sergeant only comes in once in a while to make us SFC 31 47

BARRY put away our reading and pretend to watch the movie. One recent Sunday I GILLAM whiled away the hours with two games of joto, one 2½-hour-long game of scrabble, and a game of chess in addition to reading and a good deal of conversation. There's always a bridge game going on and often two or more chess games, the latter always with kibitzers. When things get very dull, they pitch pennies in the back of the room.

All the reservists grumble and groan the whole time and count the months until they get out. In fact, the Reserves are so appalling that, while the regular Armed Forces are apparently getting enough volunteers to phase out the draft, they're contemplating drafting people into the Reserves - no one would enlist unless forced... Well, that is, I am sure, more than you ever wanted to know about the US Army Reserve. It is also, of course, more than I ever wanted to know, but one's perspective changes with one's situation.

BARRY GILLAM (4283 Katonah Avenue, Bronx, New York 10470, USA) (Dec 25, 1972)

*brg** When I received Barry's first letter (about SFC 28) I said to myself, "That's it! That's exactly what's in that issue of SFC." Very few other readers seem to have seen the same thing. SFC 28 took about eight months to put together, much of them waiting for Leigh Edmonds and Bill Wright to send me their articles. "Fannish" issues are much too difficult to publish. You're right in saying that I am about in the same position as Leigh was in 1969; except that I don't see much hope of getting out of that position. I am very grateful to have received the magnificent letters from Stuart Leslie and John Gibson: certainly they sum up much of what I feel about life at the present. Thanks again, John and Stuart and Barry. *

EDITOR I MUST BE TALKING TO MY FRIENDS - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

expectations nor hope. I have three talents: for reading, writing, and unhappiness. I can do nothing else but await the gift of happiness, for that is not something which I can grab for myself. I am in despair, but I am no longer going in the wrong direction. But where's the right way? For any of us?

Damn. Damn. Damn.

Books that might interest you: QUALITY IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION CONFERENCE, MAY 1972, published by Andrew Bain for the Australian Union of Students, 344 Victoria Street, North Melbourne, Victoria 3051. \$1 from AUS. It contains an almost-complete transcript of the proceedings of the Conference.

DESCHOOLING SOCIETY, by Ivan D Illich. Calder & Boyars, 18 Brewer Street, London, W1, England. 1971. 116 pages. \$3.35. Available at the Space Age Book Shop, GPO Box 1267L, Melbourne, Victoria 3001.

CELEBRATION OF AWARENESS: A CALL FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION, by Ivan Illich. Calder & Boyars. 1971. 189 pages. \$3.35. Also available at Space Age.

Editorial stuff: SFC is facing the usual difficulties, all of them involved with the personal problems of the editor. Sorry for the continued lack of a letter column (although there are four letters in this issue anyway). Many letters soon. Keep sending them. :: I've left out many things about Illich which I haven't had room to say. I suggest that you buy his books and read them for yourselves. Next issue, back to s f? Maybe. Au'voir.