

Science Fiction Review

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INFINITY #1

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New York

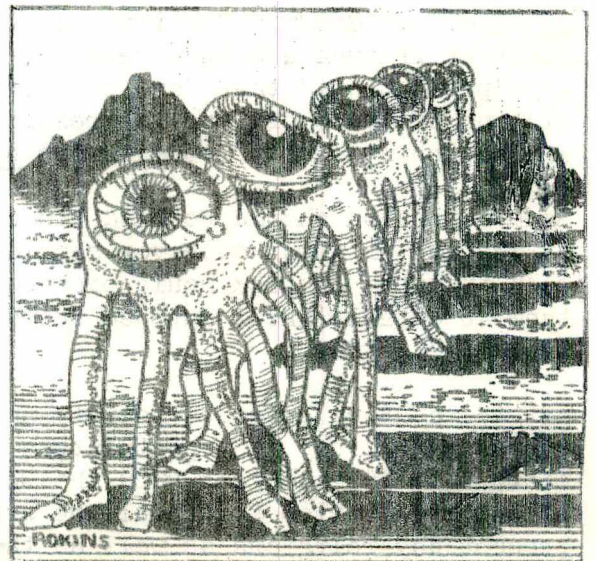
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A Monolog BY THE EDITOR

about INFINITY #1

INFINITY is a good name. Though I wonder what would have happened if Chuck Harris had had his fanzine, INFINITY, copyrighted. After the fact, it is odd somebody hasn't used the title for a prozine before this...especially during the boom when new magazines were popping out of the woodwork every month. In a future boom of science fiction I expect the publishers and editors will be up-against-it to find really new titles for their magazines. Certainly it is pathetic the way a few tried and true words were used over and over in different combinations during the last not-to-distant era of too-much. I wonder if the time will ever come when the possible titles will have all been used?

The cover of the first issue of INFINITY isn't a blaze of eye-catching color as might be expected. There is, instead, a certain air of conservatism and quality. The only bit of blatant "Look here!" is the red boxes which announce the first issue and the special Arthur C. Clarke story. Certainly the cover picture is not too contrasty or filled with near-naked female. It's hard to say whether the naked neural and blood vessel system portrayed holding hands with a young woman who is obviously a bride will arouse the curiosity of the browsing stf reader enough to make him pick up the magazine, scan the interior illos, read the blurbs, and buy the issue.

The interior art is adequate enough, but not much else. The Giunta drawing for the Clarke story is good, and the Griffith work for Blish's King of the Hill is better than most art seen in stf mags, though probably most fans will disagree on the ground that it didn't actually illustrate any of the action. However, I thought it set the mood well and indicated the mental conflict that is the heart of the story. The rest of the illos are rather mediocre to my view.

In A Matter of Steps Larry Shaw editorializes about the predictions of science fiction. And to me it seemed he is saying that the purpose of science fiction is the prediction of future scientific accomplishments. He also indicated that in his view science fiction should not bother with the beginnings of revolutionary discoveries and inventions, but should delineate the big things of the future.

I dunno.... Science fiction has, in its modern phase, been more concerned with what might be if such and such were so, not a conscious striving to crystal-ball the future. Any "predictions" that have come true in our world of today from the past of science fiction are more or less the result of chance; it follows that some of the inventions and happenings in stf stories are bound to come true.

Some attention should be paid his contention that the small beginnings of a major step in science or human endeavor should be by-passed by science fiction. Shaw maintains that treating of them would probably result in greater realism but that to describe them in detail (and I suppose build a story around them) would result in a "niggling and dull" affair.

Writing a story around a society-shaking discovery isn't hard to do...it is what most writers stick to; they postulate a change and then go on from there. Frequently stories start with "By the year 2309 the Church of Glug had crushed all opposition." But think of all the stories that could be written of the struggle between Glug and the many present day religions as well as the millions of non-religious people who would oppose a strong world-wide church. Think of the power struggles, the censorship fights, the rows about thought control, propaganda in schools, etc. There are hundreds of stories

inherent in such a struggle, yet they are largely ignored, as Shaw agrees they should be, in favor of the accomplished fact so that a Hero can eventually succeed in toppling the structure single-handed.

In The Sickness, William Tenn has written another story which ducks the problem which is set up for his characters to solve. In a spaceship he virtually duplicated in miniature the power set-up of the world today: three Americans, three Russians, and an Indian who is commander of the ship. Tenn is not sanguine about the ability of Man to live with himself, either on a planet or in a spaceship. There is mutual distrust, suspicion, and secret plans for taking control of the ship in "they" try anything suspicious.

The story ends as so many, many others have ended...Man changes into a superior being. Specifically, the men catch a disease and eventually recover with 1,000 times their former I.Q. and maturity. There is an interesting sub plot running through the story concerning Preston O'Brien, the most intelligent of the spacers, who turns out to be naturally immune to the disease and in the end finds himself a complete imbecile compared to his changed shipmates.

It seems as though Tenn, as with so many others who write science fiction, has come to the conclusion that Man cannot solve The Problem; that unless we are helped by superior aliens or mutate into wonderful psi-powers or are otherwise changed, that we will most certainly wipe ourselves off the face of the Earth. Every sf mag seems to have at least one story of this type in every issue. It is, to borrow a political phrase, a philosophy of "gloom and doom". Isn't it about time this theme is carted off to the graveyard where lies the Hero who always invented a weapon out of an old radio, a hairpin and an abandoned Civil War cannon in the nick of time to save the (a) world; (b) solar system; (c) galaxy; (d) universe?

But aside from the consideration that the Man-must-change theme is being written to death, there is the basic flaw in the plot structure of all these stories: the problem at hand, that of finding ways of living together peacefully, is not solved by mankind ...it is solved for mankind, either by benevolent creatures from outer space or by the author in the form of psi or esp powers, a strange gas from space, etc., or in the case of this Tenn story, a disease. Some writers, of course, faced with the conviction that Man is doomed, and unwilling to inject a basically dishonest plot element into their story, simply face the inevitable in their tales and actually kill off all the race. Such stories aren't very popular, though. Better an unrealistic and optimistic ending than an honest story that won't sell.

Kid Stuff, by Winston Marks, is an unoriginal re-write of the old alien-children-don't-mischief-to-Earthman. In this one the alien kids "improve" a man, are caught by their mother, and return the man to his former shape...almost. Two heads.

Have Tux--Will Travel is a mildly amusing tale by Robert Bloch. It features an incredibly egotistical professional comic, a perfectly predictable plot (even to the geek ending), and some very clever idiomatic phrases woven into the thread of the narrative and dialogue. Such things as: a well built girl, "racked, stacked and shel-lacked"; the final say so, "the third word", struck me as exceptionally good extrapolation of current slang. It could be that these phrases are already in use by the advance guard "cats" and are merely new to me. If so, take away the above egoboo from Bloch.

I wish Bob would "try doing Hamlet" once in a while instead of sticking to these dreadful only-slightly-amusing humorous science fiction stories. In the fan magazines he has shown a remarkable maturity and insight into human nature as well as the ability to express himself lucidly. I know damned well he has something to say; I cannot understand why he doesn't say it.

James Blish pulled the rug out from under the readers again in King of the Hill, another of his Civillian Intelligence Group stories. In this one the one-man crew of the artificial satellite of the United States is insane and intends to loose H-bombs on Washington D.C. The head man of CIG is sent up to the satellite to trouble shoot. There is a tense scene in which the automatic machinery is readying the bombs, carrying out punched-tape orders that are slowly feeding into it from the control room... while the CIG man is desperately talking, thinking, facing a gun in the hands of the deranged Captain. The suspense is terrific.

Of course the hero performs a fifteen minute psychoanalysis and barely stops the bombs in time. Later, in a scene back at CIG headquarters that resembles not a little the end-of-the-story-explanations in detective novels, it is learned that the bombs were actually duds.

In the two stories of this series I've read thus far, both have been fake-emergency; in the first the H-bomb in NY harbor is a hoax perpetrated by CIG itself, and in this second the bombs are harmless. This seems an unconscionable let-down after the reader has been led to believe the danger is real.

There is a curious change of direction in the plot of Phantom Duel, by Ford McCormack. The story starts out with an interesting explanation of spaceship controls and introduces the the main character---the pilot. He is a local boy who is piloting a group of scientists on a survey. Another ship is discovered falling uncontrolled toward the nearby planet. The story then concentrates on the technical and interesting problem of overhauling the other ship, matching velocities, and sending over a boarding party ---all the while mindful of a time limit imposed by their collision course with the planet. Why the pilot, a very important man, is sent over with the boarding party is not explained.

The party discover that the crew of the other ship is dead. A scientist in the boarders discovers the dead men had been fighting over a rare jewel....and here the story breaks off and gellops in another direction. One of the men who had crossed to the derelict draws a gun and forces the others to take the still operable ship to the discovered place where the jewels had been found. There is a complicated and highly contrived business of radiation poisoning, test for poisoning, and antidote all involved in the business of ending the story as everyone knows it has to end; the hero-pilot finally gaining control of the situation, turning over the villains to the authorities, and contributing the incredibly valuable jewels to scientific research.

There is some extremely questionable psychology in this story with regard to the villain, Stokely. He is portrayed as a person who finds it very hard to see another person's point of view, and an avaricious person with no morals...a virtual psychopath. Yet the author ascribes this to the fact that Stokely was "sane, but too individualistic ---his social and co-operative indices had been low."

Well, I suppose that in the coming years of greater and greater conformity and emphasis on "getting along with the group", that the individualist and non-conformist will be regarded as highly suspicious and naturally relegated to the roll of villain in mass entertainment forms. But it is irking to find this in science fiction now, in the literature that a great many individualists and non-conformists favor.

Edward Ludwig apparently tried to out-Bradbury Bradbury in The First, and succeeded in writing an astonishingly inept and corny story. Right at the start it becomes ludicrous when he describes a parade that consists of "...a hundred bands, eight hundred flowered floats, and ten thousand marching men." Such a parade would easily run over twenty five miles in length. The story is that of an old man who had already

been to the moon and resents the publicity and fame of a later official flight which is all set to go. It is hard to believe that there would be no official records or memory of the earlier moon landings, but Ludwig gets around this by saying that "Everybody got the memory wash--from the President on down." Really? The President himself isn't trusted with the secret, eh? And who would have the authority to do such a thing to the President? And who memory washed the memory washers? And so on. Ludwig conveniently doesn't answer these inevitable questions.

Fanfare, a department featuring a story by Dave Jenrette from Lee Tremper's fanzine MERLIN, was a funny adaptation for science fiction of that joke about the workman who was stealing wheelbarrows. I got quite a bang out of it.

Dave Mason's Placebo postulates a probability world in which Man has reached utopia; there are no laws, no tight moral codes, no anxiety or conflict. The citizens of this utopia are kind and helpful to the poor, bewildered, neurotic travelers who think they are time-traveling but are actually traveling between the probability worlds by means of unconscious mental ability. Mason makes it clear that 1955 in our world is 1955 or its equivalent in the probable worlds; the race of Man in each of the might-be worlds is exactly the same age. So it is clear that the superior world he paints in this story in comparison to our own is necessarily the result of an entirely different cultural history and not that of mutation or other change. He is saying that a large body of human beings can live together simply, without laws, morals, or much work. But Mason grants these people the power of telepathy...which is cheating, in my book, because a valid comparison with the world of today is not possible. For the second time in the magazine we are fed a protest against reality.

A priest of the Jesuit order of the Catholic religion, in The Star by Arthur C. Clarke, is faced with a terrible blow to his faith. An expedition is returning to Earth after investigating the Pheonix Nebula...the remains of a star that had been a super-nova. On a Neptune-like planet, far out from the sun, they had found the Vault, a place where a great race had built a huge memorial to themselves before their sun exploded, a place which contained their history, artifacts, art. And the priest is greatly troubled because calculations show that the super-nova which ended the life of this great and superior race was the bright star which lighted the night sky above Bethlehem.

The priest cannot reconcile the mercy of his god with the death of such a race. He fears that when it is realized that such a race died in the flare of the Bethlehem star, that his religion will collapse, that this will be the final blow, that the atheists and agnostics will triumph. He is in a blue funk.

As well he might be, for such a situation reveals in a clear light the utter egotism inherent in saying that a just and merciful god could burn to a cinder a race in its full flower of civilization so that three men could find their way to the birthplace of that god's Earthly son. Such a god must necessarily be judged by human values by human beings, and a god with such a selfish disregard for life and intelligence is not one man y people could accept.

Clarke did not merely intent to set people to thinking calmly with this story...his purpose is clearly anti-religious. For this is not just an attack against the Catholic religion, it is an attack on all religion. It is a condemnation of Man for thinking he knows the unknowable, and for the vanity of believing he is something special in the cosmos. As the doctor in the story says while gazing out of the observation port at the immensity of space: "Well, Father, it goes on forever and forever, and perhaps Something made it. But how you can believe that Something has a special interest in us and our miserable little world---that just beats me."

---Richard E. Geis

A 35¢ TICKET AND THE OCTOBER



For those readers who have not delved into GALAXY of late the Forecast in the September issue may well have aroused their interest. Mr. Gold says "Robert Sheckley leads off with a long, adventuresome, plot-twisty novelet that begins with A Ticket To Tranai---the utopia of the Galaxy---and ends with a transfer to just about the last place you'd expect. Oh, it's a certified genuine utopia, all right, where all problems have been solved. But the way they're solved is ---well, devastatingly logical!"

Indeed, Mr. Gold, indeed.

As far as we're concerned the utopia has quite a bit of logic in it, but how about the story about this utopia?

The hero's name is Mr. Goodman. Hmmm, good man, perhaps? Well, we suppose he is, but he's also about the stupidest man to ever get into a science fiction story. He's even worse than John Carter when a rescued heroine turns breathlessly to him and asks "How can I ever repay you?" and the Warlord of Mars doesn't know.

We now know the hero's name, Marvin Goodman. Author Sheckley introduces us to him in the act of attempting to buy a ticket to Tranai (note how cleverly the title is inserted in the story, leaving no doubt or puzzle in the reader's mind).

It turns out that no particular space ship goes that far. In fact, the best available transportation takes him only halfway. Does he care? Not one bit!

Having gotten that out of the way author Sheckley tells us, in one fat paragraph, that Marvin Goodman is all of the following:

1. A natural-born crusader;
2. an author of expose articles that were never published;
3. a writer of letters-to-Congress-that-were-never-read;
4. organizer of the League For Civic Improvement;
5. organizer of the People Against Gangsterism;
6. organizer of the Citizens Union for an Honest Police Force;
7. organizer of the Association Against Gambling;
8. likewise for the Committee for Equal Job Opportunities for Women;
9. ditto one dozen (12-count them-12) others.

From this you can immediately deduce that Marvin Goodman is one hell of a psychotic (note how cleverly we insert this fanzine's title).

BY
EVERETT SLOAN

But look again and remember something: Sheckley must have had a reason for all that wordage (other than getting 3¢ for each and every deathless word). What do you suppose it is? Thus smitten with curiosity we proceed.

Marvie gets on his way, stopping at Oume, Machang, Inchang, Pankang, Lekung and Oyster which Sheckley calls "dreary little places."

This seeing things on a Galactic scope is probably going too far. How would Mr. Sheckley like it if some passing alien jotted in his note book "cruddy little solar system"? He wouldn't like it one bit! Inchang may be very nice in the Summer time, you never know, and Oyster may be a real bed-of-roses. Undoubtedly the various chambers of commerce will make their opinions felt very strongly.

Then he's off on his next leg of the trip. This includes hiring a local spaceliner to DvastaII "for an exorbitant fee". We're sure it was all of that.

Then comes a fast freight past Seves, Olgo, Mi, and Mvanti. There he is conveniently delayed for three months to give him time to learn the Tranaian language perfectly. A few more exotic stops along the way and Marv reaches Tranai where the story really begins.

After arrival he feels kind of washed out, as who wouldn't? And Sheckley tells us "he was suddenly terrified that Tranai might turn out to be a fraud."

That's a fine time to think of that, isn't it? Instead of thinking derogatory thoughts about Inchang, Machang, Pankang, Lekung and Oyster (dreary little places) he could have been considering that very problem. As we said before, this Marvin Goodman is one Grade A lunkhead.

In rapid succession ol' Marv learns the following things:

1. The planet's Prime Minister has a high-powered rifle on the wall.
2. Men keep their wives in suspended animation nearly all the time, just bringing them out of storage for... uh...certain reasons.
3. The President wears an official medallion around his neck and asks Goodman if he'd like to be the next President.

Being very interested in crime, women's rights, and government (he organized the People Against Gangsterism, Committee for Equal Job Opportunities for Women, and the League for Civic Improvement) he couldn't help but be interested in what was going on. Could he? But does he ask? Not him!

You soon find out the reason for his ignorance, however. The story would immediately end and author Sheckley would be unable to continue writing the same story for 3¢ per word. Naturally everyone believes in a man's right to make a living and Sheckley has that right too, no matter how much the reader suffers at the hero's stupidity.



On the other hand, having a stupid hero makes it possible for the reader to feel smugly superior. Everyone likes to feel superior. An idiot would have no trouble feeling superior to Marvin Goodman. But let's turn the crank and learn a little more about Tranai.

1. There has been no war on Tranai for 600 years.
2. There is no crime and, as a result, no judges, sheriffs, marshals, executioners, truant officers or government investigators.
3. No poverty on Tranai.
4. Economy is stable without socialism, communism, fascism, or bureaucracy.
5. Tranai is "a free enterprise society where individual initiative flourishes and governmental functions are kept to an absolute minimum."
6. The government does minor regulatory matters, cares for the aged, and beautifies the landscape.
7. Wealth is distributed without government intervention or taxation.
8. Not one little bit of corruption anywhere.

Then little inanities come up as Marv settles down with his job in the robot factory. There is no crime, but people are robbed all the time. In fact, robbers with black masks are tax collectors working for the government. Robbery is the method of wealth distribution. There are no poverty-stricken people, but some are so close that the distinction is hard to make. Aged people are given government licenses so they can beg for a living.

Just as Goodman didn't have the sense to ask about the Prime Minister's rifle (surely, common everyday curiosity would be enough to---but not Marvin!), the wives in stasis, and the President's strange amulet and desire to give away his office, he didn't ask about the voting machine where there is listed all the office holders of Tranai with a button beside each name. Mr. Sheckley took an entire paragraph to tell us "No minors were allowed to press the buttons, of course," and still Goodman isn't interested.

He's interested, but he's not interested---a confusing paradox that is the only thing keeping the story going.

Naturally, belonging to as many groups as he does he can't help deciding that something should be done to change the situation. Yet he doesn't ask one question about any of the things he wants most to change.

Then comes some action in the story. Marvin's been married and can't stand to put his wife in stasis. He comes home one day and discovers her with someone else. THEN he finds out that women are kept in stasis so they're always young and the man has a young wife to be with and, when the husband dies, the wife is a rich widow. At this point it is necessary for action. The best kind is dramatic action in which Marvie's life may be endangered.

Everyone in the story seems to realize this and Janna, his wife, gives her permission to her lover to kill Marvin dead. "'Forgive me, Marvin,' Janna said." Naturally, this is all rather unsettling to Marvin, especially after he'd learned the Prime Minister's rifle was to shoot murderers with (10 killings and you're a murderer). The amulet around the President's neck explodes when a voting button is pushed by anyone, killing the President, as though things weren't bad enough already.

Somehow Marvin couldn't adjust to his new civilization and ran for home. Returned to Good Old Earth he settles down and organizes a League to Take the Vote from Women.

Summary: In all honesty and fairness this story must be given a very high rating. It is a wonderful satire on the type of stories appearing in GALAXY.

---Everett Sloan

COMMENT

Rich Lupoff As for Jim Broschart's defense of GALAXY against ASF, let me tell you what happened to me concerning those two magazines.... When GALAXY first appeared, I thought it was the greatest thing since sliced bread. Gold could do no wrong. On the other hand, I couldn't stomach ASTOUNDING with a vodka chaser. Today I read ASF almost every month, and haven't bought GSF for nigh onto a year. After trying to figure out why and how GALAXY had deteriorated and ASTOUNDING improved, I concluded that I, not the magazines, had undergone a radical change.

GALAXY is and has always been the nearest thing in sf to a mainstream, literary magazine. (That next-to-last word leaves out the space-opera-zines.) For this reason it appeals to the reader who is new to sf and yet not quite steady on his pseudopods.

ASTOUNDING, on the other hand, is pretty well "advanced", if that is the right word, toward specialization.

What does this mean? It means that as I developed as a real sf reader (rather than a slightly-off-trail-but-basically-mainstream reader) I developed more of a liking for Campbell's work and less for Gold's.

And Schaffer, too, has a number of interesting points to make. Distribution is unquestionably a factor in a mag's success or failure. SCIENCE FICTION PLUS for instance. Of course there were a host of factors in that debacle, but one of the big things that acted to destroy the magazine was poor circulation. It was all but impossible, for instance, to get SFP in New York City -- and without the big town's sales, a magazine has two strikes against it from the start.

Oh for the good old days of big magazines!

((Uh...? GALAXY comparable to a mainstream literary magazine? That is one analogy I balk at...and I think Gold would too. Litrachoor magazines are not known as great circulation builders, and everybody knows that GALAXY has the greatest circulation since sliced bread.

Greg Benford German fandom is shaping up now, and a club, SCIENCE FICTION CLUB DEUTSCHLAND (Germany), has been formed. However, we need more books and mags for the club library. The reading material is loaned out to fans who want it. If you guys are anything like some fans I know, you've got stacks of old pb's and mags waiting to be thrown out. Why don't you send them to a worthy cause, namely German fandom? The man who handles all of the club is Walter Ernsting, Ruppichteroth/siegbkreis, Velken, Germany. Send all the stuff to him and we'll all appreciate it.

((Deutschland means Germany?? Gad, I learn something new every day.))

Paul Harold Rehorst My candidacy for National Fantasy Fan Federation presidency has been filed. It is my high honor to be heading the National Party of N3F slate of candidates. Postcards listing my directorate team will be mailed out prior to the election. NP of N3F is pledged to right the mess left in the wake of the tragic Susan administration debacle, under which N3F membership fell over one half, and the official organ appeared rarely. Susan and his directorate have been feuding amongst themselves while N3F almost folded. They deserve electorate repudia-

tion. Susan has even attempted to dissolve N3F through a petition scheme. This is HIGH TREASON.

NP seeks to: 1. Crush Susanism, ergo crush inefficiency; 2. Raise membership to 600 by September 1, 1956; 3. Ensure bi-monthly output of the OO, with a monthly letter-zine; 4. Lower membership dues to \$1.50 per calendar year. Won't you join in this great anti-Susan administration crusade? We humbly request your vote to shine as a star on our anti-Susan crusade banner.

((I couldn't resist printing this. And, Paul, this is not the favor you think it is. I'll be surprised if you're not laughed out of fandom.... Tell me, are you a Conservative Progressive or a Progressive Conservative?))

G. M. Carr In...Noah McLeod's book review of Earthlight: "He (Clarke) eliminates all sex angles by the simple expedient of making Sadler a married man separated from but very much in love with his wife." Huh? What was that again?

That must have been written by a single man, because if ever there was a description of a "sex angle" -- that's it. Ask any married man....

Noah McLeod's last paragraph asks some very pertinent questions regarding the attitude toward sex to be expected in the future. He seems to feel that there should be some change from what it is today. Unfortunately, there hasn't been a great deal of change in the present-day attitude toward sex from what it was in the past. So there isn't much liklihood (unless some major psychological change takes place in humanity) that there will be much change in the future. However, McLeod's questions do deserve comment.

"How does the heroine keep from becoming pregnant?" he asks, "How will pregnancy affect her social status?; do the mores and folkways in regards to sex differ or agree in a given society?; how are girls brought up to regard their bodies and the feelings toward men? It seems to me that an honest science fiction writer must consider at least some of these questions before putting an unmarried woman in bed with a man."

I am very glad to see that point brought up, because it might possibly require some stf author to sit down and extrapolate a rational approach to sex. Unfortunately, very few societies (ethnologically speaking) on this planet have managed to evolve rational approach to sex. Small groups like the Esquimaux have evolved a strictly pragmatic attitude; incorporating the physical satisfactions of sex into their hospitality along with the physical satisfactions of food and shelter. Among any group which exists close to the edge of survival, there is by necessity a community unselfishness which extends to every possession. (That is a factor which might be considered for "colonies" and marooned spacecrews.) On the other hand, many primitive tribes appear to be unaware of the relationship between the sex act and pregnancy. (Most stf authors nowadays appear to belong to this category.) In others, and in other cultures, the relationship has been recognized and appreciated along surprisingly "modern" eugenic lines. In a culture where children were valued as potential citizens, to have among the toddlers in the family a child sired by some warrior or outstanding statesman was an honor. A wife might be loaned for the night not for the purpose of hospitality, as among the Esquimaux, but in order that the family group might be improved. This attitude incorporated a surprisingly high regard for the triple aspects of sex; ie, the intellectual, emotional, and economic factors of companionship between husband and wife; the erotic gratification of the sex act; and the responsibility towards society for the quality of offspring produced.

So far as is commonly observed in fiction, most stf (and other) authors assume sex

to have only one aspect, ie, "romance". Unfortunately, "romance" is probably the least important -- and, as Noah McLeod pointed out -- merely a prelude to the real function of sex, reproduction of the species.

I note that Geis has a tendency toward being veddy veddy 'superior' in his attitude toward fiction. Agreed, the stuff he is reviewing is not very good. In fact, it may well be so appallingly bad as to cause him to suspect a deliberate satire because he can't quite believe the author capable of turning out such crud. Why not face it? Geis is probably one of those high I.Q. boys who hasn't yet learned that no matter how hard he tries, he can't build up the world around him to his standards. Unfortunately a high I.Q. is not contagious, and his intelligence won't rub off onto the other fellow no matter how hard Geis rubs it in.... He would do better to point out the stories which DO meet his exacting standards so that like-minded fans would know what to look for, instead of what to avoid. After all, many of Geis' readers might enjoy the stories he pans if they didn't know they were supposed not to....

((Thanks for the compliment. I always suspected I was a genius, and now I'm sure of it. As for my reviews: I like to pan stories that seem to me to be redolent of cliché, stereotype, etc. If, incidental to my personal enjoyment of the read and tear, some fans learn to be a bit more selective in their reading, a bit more demanding of better stories, then fine.))

Bob Bloch The Kellogg cover on the new issue is absolutely tops...and his idea of doing caricatures of your contributors for hotel guests is exceptionally fine. I recognized every one of them except the pteradactyl creature on a string.

I am puzzled by McLeod's review of Earthlight, however: he starts by calling Clarke "the most brilliant English science fiction writer since the death of Stapledon" and then tears into the book's plot and characters and says Clarke "fell flat on his face in social extrapolation, plotting and characterization". This, to me, is damning with faint praise. May SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW have a better fate!

((I thought the clue was obvious as to who was the pteradactyl creature. Who else in sf fandom is known far and wide as a living fossil? Don't be so modest, Bob.))

Redd Boggs As artwork, the cover was pretty good, but a depiction of weird and/or other-worldly characters arriving for a convention is pretty conventional after all these years of hard use in con advertising. Interior pix were all a bit above average, except for RRPPhillips', and I especially liked Stewart's (?) on page... my god, no page numbers! Oh well, I liked it anyway.

It were disappointing to find your editorial reduced to less than a page, and something -- the lack of space of the change in magazine title -- seems to have made you positively tongue-tied. Your comments strike me as a little bit forced, like conversation with a total stranger. ... After talking about Damon Knight's contribution, you say, "The only other defect in this issue..." Yeah? ... I don't see much wrong with the stenciling, though of course pica usually reproduces better in mimeo.

I liked Knight's article, anyway. And it's a good article to start out SFR's career with, I think, because dk's advice, "try to refine our tastes, to distinguish more clearly between good science fiction and bad; and whenever the occasion offers, stand up and holler 'It stinks!'," should be the policy of a fanzine like yours, subscribed to by contributors and contributed to by subscribers.

McLeod's protest against "unconvincing" sex in science fiction, wherein he asks all

those questions about the prevailing mores which the writer should consider, reminds me of an old Bob Hope radio show. Must be 16 or 18 years ago, and I don't know why the ghost of it still wisps through my mind, but I was reminded of it now. Cobina was singing, "The moon stood still on strawberry hill," and Hope interrupted: "Cobina! It's blueberry hill, isn't it?" To which she wittily replied, "What's the difference? We was neckin'!" And I can imagine a Cobina of the future remarking, in response to Noah's solemn query, "Do the mores and folkways in regards to sex differ or agree in this society?"---"What's the difference? We was neckin'!"

"Dialogue": as a fellow said who was marooned on a Crusoe island with Marilyn, Gina, Ava, all the Gabors, and Rita, "This is too much of a good thing." Six pages of straight dialog are pretty hard to read, even when -- as here-- the content of the dialog, not the characters, is the important thing. Or maybe that's part of the reason. Allen Tate remarked in a seminar last spring, "Dialog of itself is unimportant; it's only function is to reveal character." He referred to dialog in fiction, of course, but maybe something of the sort is operating here. We're supposed to be concentrating on the comments about science fiction, but we keep trying to extrapolate from the content to the characters, and we can't do it. The characters are faceless and nameless, and their conversation isn't very revelatory. I think you've got a fine gimmick here, but it should be developed. I'll be interested in seeing what you are able to do with it. ... "Dialogue" or even "Dialog" strikes me as a ploopy title. ... Picayune criticism: it's "deus ex machina." ... I haven't read the issue of STARTLING you reviewed, but it seems that many of the old STARTLING contributors are still around. Just noticed the other day that my files end with the Winter '54 issue of TWS; I suppose, for the sake of a complete collection, I'll have to obtain the later issues, though reviews like yours don't make me feel too enthusiastic about it.

Mixed emotions greet the "Letter From New York" and "Letter From Britain"; here's another basically good idea badly carried out. Now I don't expect anything of the calibre of Genet or Mollie Panter-Downes (that fascinating name! Who caught Mollie with her panter downes?), But I do rather expect something besides, in Harlan's case, a superficial and flippant spate of name-dropping, and, in Fred Smith's case, a pedestrian parallel of that pedestrian report by whoever-it-is in FANTASY TIMES. In the case of Harlan's letter, I gave not the faintest damn whether he tried to rent (I almost typed rend -- who rent Sheckley's boat?) "Sheck's" boat, but I would be interested in a thumb-nail description of the man and a little revealing detail about him and his work. In the case of Smith's letter, I'm afraid I gave not the slightest damn about anything he revealed, and I wonder if anybody except a few collectors care what American sf is being reprinted in England? Such matters might be made interesting, if the trend, rather than its manifestations, was expertly analyzed, or if these were personalized.

Like Janke, I once experimented with running a wirecorder in reverse, my interest having been whetted by the gibberish that resulted when I accidentally spliced a small section of wire into a spool the wrong way. But with my machine I was able to experiment long enough to last me a lifetime merely by gently nudging the rewind lever so that the wire whirled back onto the spool at something close to forward speed. ... Janke needed the International Phonetic alphabet to make his demonstration effective, I'm afraid.

((Re the editorial: in a way I WAS tongue-tied. I had the feeling to a certain extent, that I should be a bit formal, dontcha know. But my days of editorial formality are dead...now.

The dialogue reviews are what I thought was the answer to the deadliness of such things. I had the idea of "sexing" them up so that they'd be a good deal more readable and...and..."commercial." Your criticism that dialogue is unimportant; that its only function is to reveal character, and that my dialogue reviews were in a way very frustrating because there was no character to reveal....is altogether valid. But if I take the logical step and create characters who will speak the dia-

logue and in the speaking comment on the promags, I am almost forced to spend a helluva space on delineating, maintaining, and deepening the characterization, with the result that the comment content is given a minor role...which is self-defeating for me, since the whole object of the review is lost. In this light it is altogether too clear that the dialogue reviews as they have been written are unsatisfactory, and as they should be written, they defeat their purpose. Too, I have the sneaky feeling that the reason most promag reviews are so deadly is that they are just plain badly written, either because the writer was not competent to review, or just plain couldn't write. So....if I think I can write well, and am competent to review, then why should I worry about ~~making~~ my reviews being uninteresting?))

Henry Moskowitz I sort of take unkindly to your remarks about AMAZING STORIES and FANTASTIC. Stories aren't that bad. Trouble is, of course, that few writers are doing the kind of stuff Browne wants right now.. The old blood-and-thunder boys left the field when the shift went away from adventure and action. Until he can get some new adventure-typists, he has to use the stable method. So far, stories have been improving; but it's a slow process. However, beyond any question, the field does need good action stories in a stiffish vein to bring in new readers. Ole PLANET STORIES used to be one of the stf primers, but after Bixby left it became a has-been. Now it's been folded. What happens to the field if there are no "juvenile" mags left? I give you 1937-1938-1939 as example.

I would muchly appreciate a bit of an ad stating that I am in the market for good copies of PSY #s 3 to 11; also MAD #5.

((I'd say that probably the best action story in years in the field is currently running in ASF as a serial. "Call Him Dead" is a terrific story. But if the sales of the Browne mags have improved 17% so quickly, as has been claimed, it would seem foolish of him to change the pattern and try for better stories. Why not just continue to print crud and grow fat and rich automatically?

WHY is it axiomatic that new readers can only be sought in the ranks of uncritical children? That philosophy, it seems to me, automatically ties the field down to a certain basic depth of damnably bad writing. How much of a gap is possible between the best and the worst?

I liked ASF when I was 12 and 13. But then, I'm a genius, aren't I? Er... tell me...what happened in 1937-1938-1939?))

Bill Courval You take STARTLING STORIES apart page (rip-wad-wipe-flush) by page verah thoroughly. This is the best in the issue. I feel guilty though, when I enjoy your cutting remarks, because I so seldom read crud anymore.

Whenever an ish of PSY gave me that "Echhh" feeling the lengthy letter column always corrected it. Well? You didn't need it for a redeemer this time. But why only two pages of letters??!!

((Well.....this is long this time, eh? Long enough to assuage your ire at the rest of this issue?))

James McCawley Jr. Enclosed please find 20¢ for a copy of your fanzine, PSYCHOTIC. I would have sent in my 20¢ long ago except that until Rog Phillips printed your address in his column in OW, I couldn't spell the name of the street on which you are situated.

I expect to have my own fanzine, THE SLIME SHEET, out in about a month, after which I hope to trade subs with you---meaning that this is the last time you'll get one red

cent out of me, let alone twenty of them.

I expect SS to be somewhat of an innovation in fandom: an anti-fan fanzine. In SS, I and my associate editor, George Willis, will denounce practically every idiosyncrasy peculiar to fans. I might also add that SS will be written entirely in English, not in the illiterate gibberish characteristic of fans.

((Couldn't spell Mississippi, hah? And you think fans are illiterate? Hooooooooooo.))

Dick Ellington Ken and Pamela Bulmer arrived a week ago last Saturday at Baltimore on board a boat with the fascinating name of INNISHOWEN HEAD. Was the best they could do about timing for the con. Strikes and all that you know. Larry Shaw, Phyllis Scott and myself buzzed down through waves of 95 degree heat in Larry's recently acquired '53 Willys and picked them up, running into Magnus, John Hitchcock and Bill Pavlat on the way. Have been shepherding these two delightful people around town and having more fun than a barrel of monkeys watching their reactions to the Hew Hess of Hay. Ken is sporting a rapidly growing shipboard beard and Pamela is sporting - well Pamela. Incidentally, she's taking over FEZ from JoCa.

"I think you're a very immoral nation." Pamela Bulmer

Had party at Jean Carroll's place Saturday and adjourned latish to Ellison's Hacienda till sevenish or thereabouts. We are trying to keep a schedule of dinner invitations arranged that precludes them buying any dinners and believe me it's a frantic thing. They're staying at Kyle's place so at least they have privacy.

Note by paper that Paul Gregory is producing Fahrenheit 451 this Fall with script by Bradbury and possibility of Lloyd Nolan to star. Broadway yet.

And then last minute preparations for a con bid. Well, is or is not Portland going to compete for '57?

So alright, you win. I like SFR. (unsolicited testimonial). It pains me deeply to admit this as I had made up my mind that no matter how good it was I was going to compare it unfavorably to PSY.

((Portland hasn't got an organized club to my knowledge, tho a few of the oldsters have gotten together once in awhile. Perhaps Seattle will make a bid?))

Lee Riddle McLeod seems to be harping quite a bit lately on the "sex" of the future. This makes the third or fourth review of a book that he has brought in the criticism of the "sex" angle of a book. I wonder if he is married or not. I have often thought that a reviewer (fan) who harps on sex quickly stops writing about it after he gets married or has his first woman. I wonder if it is because the wife exercises a censorship pencil, or the sex drive is satisfied? (Don't look at me--I have four kids!)

((I don't particularly care if Noah has had a woman or not...I'm more interested in what he says than in why he says it. But your point is valid enough, I suppose, but why make it? Are you inferring that because McLeod may be sexually frustrated his reviews and criticisms are therefore invalid and automatically unworthy of consideration when he talks of "sex"? Howcome you put sex in quotes? WHY?))

Robert Coulson Frankly, I think you or someone ought to take McLeod out behind the woodshed and explain the facts of life to him. Anyone with his pre-

occupation with sex---I'm referring to his recent material in several fanzines, not just SFR---and his apparent ignorance of the subject, deserves an explanation. First, just why should "the relations between the sexes", or at least the particular relation he is referring to, change radically in the next 300 or so years? Mistresses have been with us since the beginning of written history, and I can see no valid reason for them to become obsolete in the next 300, or 3,000 years. Then he asks, "how does the heroine keep from becoming pregnant?" Ye gods! Any college girl could tell him the answer to that one. Right now, we have contraceptives which are 98% effective---and that's the opinion of a gynecologist, not mine. I hardly think that a method which can improve present ones by only 2% is worthy of being described as stf. If Mr. McLeod wants to find the answers to his questions, he'd do better by reading a few medical journals, or SEXOLOGY, and keeping his juvenile opinions out of fanzines. And just what motives does he expect to influence the heroine? Lust, greed, and ambition seem to cover the situation pretty thoroughly, with the possible additions of love and duty. If he can think of another reason for a woman to sleep with a man, I'd like to hear it.

I suppose every McLeod has a silver lining, but I haven't found his yet.

((You, and Boggs, and by inference, Riddle, seem to maintain that stf shouldn't concern itself with sex patterns in stories of the future because sex is sex and doesn't change. But whatthehell---using that reasoning when thinking of stf stories is disastrous; why consider future civilizations and patterns of possible government, possible mutation, possible anything that man is liable to, if nothing is going to change....if we have dictatorships and democracy today, why write stories about future dictatorships and democracies? Why wonder about the conquering of the space frontier when we know all about the conquering of the Western frontier?

Why are future sex patterns, mores, laws etc. less valid as story material than future politics, economies, social structures, or what have you?

I can think of a couple of reasons not mentioned why a woman might sleep with a man: curiosity, revenge, amusement...why does anyone do anything?

In the opinion of a lot of people, Bob, if you want to get nasty, your opinions and not McLeod's would be considered "juvenile."))

Wm. Deeck The most interesting bit was Bob Kellogg's letter. Why can't stf authors make good characterizations? Is it that they haven't the talent? Or that the editors don't think the readers will appreciate well-written stories? A good illustration of this lack of characterization is Vance's Gift of Gab in the latest Asf. Vance didn't try -- or JWC didn't let him -- to make his characters even superficial; they, as far as I'm concerned, just weren't. The first guy that drowned was more believable than the rest. If the pure "idea" story and the action can only produce forgettable characters, I don't want to read them. Yet, there are some "real" people in stf novels: Pangborn's Martian, and most of the characters in Vonnegut's Player Piano. But I can't think of anyone in a short story.

Damn good review of Of All Possible Worlds. I could publish a review of Shakespeare's Hamlet saying it was full of shit...as long as I did not have to substantiate my claim.

((I found it curious that the only real character to emerge from that \$6,000 monstrosity, Preferred Risk, by "Edson McCann", was the inexplicable Zorchi. Or perhaps it was inevitable that the stock hero (who was no more or less than a name and a body who was put here, then there, said this, said that, did this, did that, all in strict accordance to the stereotyped plot line) and the heroine and villain should be mere wooden puppets.

Jesus Christ! I had hopes for a real bit of literature or at least a well told story from that Galaxy Novel Contest. For \$6,000 I expected something better

than that oh-so-familiar formularized exercise in hack writing. THIS is H. L. Gold's idea of good science fiction. Oh, my god....))

Cal T. Beck Speaking of Horrid Harlan...I note that having found the Cleveland area a mite too hot, he's now come into the NYC area this summer, along with the other unpleasant things that hot weather brings, i.e., dog days, rising temperatures, gnats, nits, and little biting things. Somewhere in that crowd, no doubt, hides little Harlan, fandom's perennial juvenile.

As is customary with this original Dennis the Menace, invariably he dashes off the deep end with one of his acidulous attempts at columnizing, mixing information with misinformation and semi-facts with fantasy. Of course, this is nothing new about Huggermugger Harlan, as all the fannish world knows...except that fandom, overtolerant, sometimes too doggedly passive, has to date failed in giving this kid the sound rapping across the knuckles and the necessary buttock slapping he's earned as a result of the barbs and stings tossed by him wholesale for the past three years or so.

And now I hasten to point out the latest, typical Harlanisms as muddled up in his column in SFR:

1) Fletcher Pratt IS NOT suing Harry Harrison for anything! According to Harry, whom I discussed personally this matter with last winter (sometime around March), Pratt is suing the owner of the defunct Fantasy, Space, etc., John Raymond. As I remember, the suit would cost Raymond \$65,000 if settled in full.

Now, a) I doubt that Harry would be the object of a suit, especially when he named Raymond, and Raymond only, as the main object of Pratt's grievance; and b) Harry was always but an editor at Raymond's farm--so elementary horse sense would show that a publisher, not an editor, would be the object of such a suit, and for the following reasons:

I was the first to apply for the position of editor of Fantasy Stories immediately following del Rey's dismissal. The mag was practically in my hands, except...Raymond wanted the biggest "name" he could find for the thing; and he kept looking for some 7 or 9 weeks, and no pro' with a "name" wanted to bother with the thing simply since the wages weren't comensurate with the tasks and fuss it would involve. It almost looked like I was going to get stuck with it, when suddenly Pratt said "Aye," and the whole matter got dumped in his lap. I don't know what Raymond promised Pratt, but from what I heard it was pretty far fetched. Finally, after Pratt went to some time and trouble getting everything set, and putting aside other work to delve into Fantasy, Raymond in one of his typical unpredictable, and I might add undependable moods, stopped Fantasy just about when it was going to the printers. (In re: Raymond's undependable and unreliable proclivities, Harrison and del Rey might be willing to vouch any old time.) Obviously Pratt found just grounds on which to base a \$65,000 suit considering the high position he's worked to attain as a professional, and what such queer transactions---over which he had no control---could do to hurt his name.

On the other hand, you have Harlan's stupid reporting and throwing Harrison's name around irresponsibly, regardless what a stinker others might think of a fair and square guy like Harry, all due to such an asinine and damaging rumor. {

2) The Science Fantasy Society (not American S.F.S.) undoubtedly exists better than some other clubs, which shall not be mentioned. It is even more of a solid entity than possibly Harlan, erstwhile fanzeener of S.F. Bull' and Dim' (otherwise quipped by a friend of mine as that "Dim, Dim The Lights fanmag..."). To cap it all off, the SFS so-shares its activities with the N.J. Writers Roundup, NJ's only pro & semi-pro's club. True, the SFS was dormant for awhile. But for a short hiatus late in '54, lasting about a month and a half (during a reorganizational period), this club's done itself up proud more than 12 months.

Dean Grennell Just for fun, I recently figured out the bare cost of each copy of Grue #23 and came up with the sobering fact that every copy I sold for 25¢ cost me somewhere between 26 and 28 cents in actual hard cash outlay. I've no idea how I came out on #24 and, in view of #23, I'm half afraid to check.

My idea of the ideal way to publish a fanzine is the thing somebody tried here a while back. You get about a 3 x 5 printing press and a font of small type and you set up the issue on postcards (or pocktasrcds, if you can get 'em!)(I meant pocktsarcds) and you make up your mailing list on addressograph tabs. No collating, no licking, no slip-sheeting, no stencilling, no stapling...not much of anything. A person could get quite a bit on a card with about 6-pt type and you could issue weekly without undue strain. You could probably break even at 2/5¢ and the beauty of it is that it would be economically practical to swap for all these minor items that turn up all the time. Then, if you still wanted to put out a fat plushy mag like SFR you'd be justified in charging for it: "Swap? Well, what the hell, bwah, I send you Pocktsarcd, don't I?"

Bill Danner, oddly enough, has a 3 x 5 Kelsey press which he will sell for \$20. I am tempted and only the vacuous lack of a double sawbuck restrains me.

((I dunno about that "ideal" business in the same paragraph with "printing press". I have heard some harrowing tales of trying to put out a fanzine on a press. The seeds of gafia soon bear bitter fruit in the rich soil of hard work and long hours slaving over the....need I go on?))

Denver Johnson You've got a subscription of mine hanging around there for four or five more copies of your magazine. Hold them for me, will you, until further notice? Reason: I've up and joined the Marine Corps. I've got a drill instructor who thinks if it's not about Marines, it's not worth reading. So the other day when my copy of SFR came, he called me in his office.

"Johnson," he growled, "what's this _____?"

"I d-d-don't know, S-Sir," I stammered.

"Did you read this crap when you were a crummy civilian?"

"Y-yessir..."

"But you didn't have the Marine Corps. Manual then, did you?"

"Nossir."

"Hnnnnnn.... Get back in there and read the Manual. I'll look at this, and if it's up to Marine standards, I'll let you read it. Git!!!"

"Yessir!"

Needless to say, it wasn't up to Marine Corps standards. I haven't been able to figure a way to smuggle them in, so just hold them up until about Oct. 15th, when I'll graduate off this island. Oh such a happy day.

This Marine Corps will get a fellow where he lives, though. Picture, if you can, 120 men marching around a room, singing the Marine Corps Hymn and bawling their eyes out. It happens. I was one of the men. I don't know what got into us. Maybe it was the tear-gas they turned in with us, to show us what would happen if we didn't use our gas masks. That might have had something to do with it.

((What a dastardly thing to do! Calkins, do you have anything to say about this? Does the Marine Corps have an official attitude towards Oops!? What a dastardly thing to do! I'm positively insulted. What a dastardly thing to do!...))

Joe Schaumburger Comments: damon knight is first class (as usual), although I think he's a little too optimistic about the future of stf book publishing. The field is tied to the short story, and there is no popular market for

the longer works. I see only a long chain of anthologies ahead. The economics of this is obvious - why write a nevel length piece of stf when you can write 10 - 15 short stories in the same time, sell them to the prozines, then collect further royalties when they're anthologized? In other words, why sell it once when you can sell it twice (or more)? In addition, the writer faces the risk of not selling his work - and 15 stories have a better chance of selling than one does.

((Do stf authors write the whole novel first, then try to peddle it, or do they write the first few chapters for an editor, plus an outline of the rest of the story, then go ahead with it if it is bought? Too, one cannot be sure that all 10-15 short stories will automatically be chosen for anthology...or even one, for that matter. Also, I rather think that a given novel has as much, if not more chance for reprinting as a short story.))

Harlan Ellison, 611 West 114th, Apt. 3D-308, New York 25, N.Y.

I've moved back again, next door

to my old apartment. Last time, honest!

((Tell you what, Harlan...you stop moving around in that building, and I'll stop changing the name of this magazine. Then everybody will be happy.))

Pete Vorzimer Some day we must swap long letters as to what's been doing in the last half year. In the meantime, however, I'd like to continue to receive your publications, remember, I did subscribe, for a year, to PSY, but only wound up trading as well, so I imagine I still have a few issues coming. The college address is still the same. As few have formally heard it, I might as well state for publication that I have resigned from fandom. I have a complete collection of Hyphen to get rid of, all Quandrys except the first three, all Psychotics except two issues, plus the first 50 issues of F&SF. If you would be so kind as to mention this, plus my address, I'd be very indebted. I'd prefer the fanzines go as one unit and the F&SF as another, no smaller.

((I can see quitting fandom, all right, but to get rid of Hyphen and Quandry! To say nothing of PSY. Well! Burning all the bridges, aren't you? It's consistent, though....you never did do things halfway.

Your college address (which was not valid during the Summer) is:

Peter J. Vorzimer, U. of Cal at Santa Barbara, 104 Toyon,
Goleta, California.

Are you going to do the decent thing, old boy, and withdraw from fapa before your official membership ends? I hope so, cause there a lot of waiting-listers who are just faunching to make better use of the slot than you have.))

Greg Benford I have a complaint. I have been treated unfairly by WAW. I write him and Chuck two letters and a postcard, send him all three issues of VOID, and I don't get a reply. A friend of mine who doesn't even publish and is a neofan writes to both and gets a reply within a few weeks. Why? I always seem to get blocked off by a wall of prejudice when I write to any BNF. You are the only one who's answered any letter of mine. I write a 1 1/2 page letter, short enough for them to answer without any trouble, tell them that I want to trade as I publish a mag and tell them my age. Then I say I'd like to hear from them if possible. And that's the last I ever hear of them. They never reply, tho they do send me their mag (WAW did, at least). I never get a bit of correspondence from them. I, of course, realize that they are busy, and don't have much time, but a neofan who's nearby who's 28 gets

a reply. I'm about fed up with you BNFs and I may drop sending those guys letters from now on. But I'll keep sending letters to you, of course, as I realize you like to help neofans a little bit. Not so with Vorzimer, Chuck Harris, Walt Willis and various others. Please note: I'm not trying to be defiant and that stuff, but I have just got to tell somebody. Vorzimer didn't even send me Abby after I sent him sub money. And afterwards I wrote him several times, but never heard of him again. He replied to an original letter of mine asking for money so I could meet the 25¢ he was charging, and after I sent him the moola, narry a word burst forth from the dark marsh. From now on it's blank. Chuck Harris says in HYPHEN 14 that the letters are the only thing that make "-" worth the trouble. Well, I wrote him a letter and I never heard from him. So what impression am I to get from those guys? I sure ain't gonna comment on their mags anymore, I'll tell you that. And this guy Jan Jansen, a good friend of mine who is a good friend of Walt, says I should be patient, that Walt always comments on first issues if he can, but he's busy playing tennis at the moment. Ha! I've put out three issues so far and already Walt is back to the old grind and still I haven't heard of him. Well, all I've got to say is that it'll be a mighty cold day before they hear of me again.

Walt's a pretty good guy, but I guess he's just prejudice. Darned BNFs. Well, I've gotten that thing off my chest, and all I have to do is sit back and wait to be thrown out of fandom. Dirty pool, if you ask me.

((You must face the fact, Greg, that you are 14 and most of the BNFs are much older than you. There is a gulf between you that cannot be bridged by the mutual liking of stf or belonging to fandom. Until you have learned a great deal more, and have matured, it's not likely that you'll find yourself in correspondence with older fans except when you catch them at a lucky moment or ask some questions which seem to require an answer.

You are assuming an equality with Walt which doesn't exist...in fandom. Merely writing a letter to a BNF is not enough to insure his writing to you; as if there were a law that requires all letters to be answered word for word. You must earn a reply by writing interestingly enough so that the BNF will want your friendship and your comments. Consider: would you like to mess with a 4 year old?))

Ron Smith The first issue of SFR I didn't particularly like. Your particular article was rather irritating and foolish because you were trying to be funny with criticism. It's fine to make fun of things, but you were neither funny nor subtle.

But my main objection was your lack of editorial judgement. If you want to have a decent critical review of s.f., please stop pandering to these fannish egotists:

"I wrote the introduction.... I know Budrys, Silverberg, Garrett, and Melvin Gernsback."

Who in bloody hell cares? Normal people have friends because they like them. They derive pleasure from the friendship--not from the fact that they can say "John! Oh, yes, sure, John. We're old buddies. Have I ever told you about the time he was working over the manuscript of this story, Slan, and I dropped by, and I..."

And while we're about it, there's also the guy who says: "I think up the cover idea." That's great. I think up 80% of the ideas that finally appear in INSIDE. But what's the important thing: the value of the ideas, or the fact that I thought them up? If you're going to edit a fanzine dealing with s.f. print stuff that talks about s.f. and not about me. Prove you've got talent. Don't bother telling me you do, because I won't believe you.

((You hate me.))

Wm. Deeck

I got gripes. I got so many gripes that I don't have room for all my "milk of human kindness." Care to listen? Too bad if you don't.

I just received the latest (October) ASTOUNDING. Since I get it free, I get every ish. I pick it up and decide to read a short story. Security is the one I find. I finish it; I cringe; and I go back to make sure I didn't misread it. Such undiluted crap! We Scientists will find a way to beat petty bureaucracy and security! We Scientists will let nothing impede us! Sure they will and they won't; but must they tell us in a short story? I get more enjoyment from reading the label on a Budweiser bottle. At least the author of that didn't try to conceal his message in a puerile piece of fiction.

I decided that if this was the way it was going to be, I'd read the article. I perused the article attentively; and while I don't have much of a knowledge of Turnpike conditions and hypnosis, I could see JWCjr. had a fairly good case. Then comes the last sentence. I mentally regurgitated. Does Campbell think his magazine is read by sweet, gullible old ladies, who, when confronted by this emotional shocker, will write a nasty letter to their congressman, form a society, or take up a petition? I always thought Campbell took pride in the intelligence of his audience, but it doesn't seem that way. If I want something of that type, I'll read a love magazine or the like. He's becoming senile.

Next comes the ultimate in crudzines, the one and only GALAXY -- Or should it be called Gold? While Campbell's editorials are way up in the clouds, dealing with logic and We Scientists aren't making enough money, Gold's are so low and pitched to such a moronic level that I, something of an optimist, keep telling myself they have to get better. They don't, but hope is a tenacious clinger.

Preferred Risk, which they paid \$6,500 dollars for -- and if there were six of the same type, I might grudgingly part with \$6.50 for all of them -- was a dismal flop. The idea was good, but you have to do something with the idea. We find in Preferred Risk the same dismal, stereotyped characters: the villain who wouldn't love his mother if he had one; a fanatic who will destroy the world to rid it of some despotic organization; another fanatic; the ubiquitous lovely girl who is also part of this plan (of course it's unknown to her) to destroy the world; and finally the poor befuddled protagonist who throws his allegiances about with mad abandon, and finally, after demonstrating quite competently that he has an I.Q. of about 100, he is judged to be the only man who can form an efficacious and just world government. Thomas Wills seemed to be the solid type, happy with his place in the world, and one who, having found his little niche, would not swerve easily from his beliefs. Yet he does free the girl's father; but as I saw him, his discovery that the girl was right would have led to a non-too-involved rationalization or an ignoring of the facts. He was a self-assured young man, and my belief is that self-assured people do not act like that. A person who is certain is not so easily swayed. A Zorchi might have done it, but not a Thomas Wills.

Well, I can always go back to Westerns.

((The trouble with Security was not that it concealed the message in a puerile piece of fiction, but that it didn't conceal it well enough; the story was little more than a dramatized sermon....as are so many of the stories in ASF.))

Who wrote

"There is nothing so afraid as a million dollars."?

while ago, but cannot remember where.

I read it a

HARLAN ELLISON'S LETTER FROM NEW YORK

August 11, 1955

Dear Rich,

Remember last time I mentioned a fan from Jackson, Mississippi name of Jan Sadler who I had said paid me a visit? Well, it turns out that the Gullible Traveling Mr. Ellison was taken in once more. The intelligent young personage who paid me a visit was a friend of Jan Sadler. A boy named Thom Perry, from Nebraska. The whole thing was revealed by roundabout means, and the entire matter was begun merely to get me to contribute to Jan's new SLANDer. So I contributed, and I must say I am pleased with the way things worked out, because Jan Sadler, as I first thought, is not a boy. She is a girl, and stand back fandom, a princess of the royal order.

Evelyn E. Smith, she of the humorous science fiction, is now in the process of moving. Our occasion to call her was one of those infrequent chillers that happen to writers. Let me explain: About four months ago, I wrote a yarn called Rain, Rain, Go Away and submitted it first to Leo Margulies over at FANTASTIC UNIVERSE (about which more later) and thence to Horace Gold at BEYOND. Both bounced it. I filed it away for future peddling when there might be more fantasy markets. The other day the October issue of FANTASTIC UNIVERSE came out and I read it. The Evelyn E. Smith opus titled Weather Prediction stopped me cold. With the basic difference of variation of handling, the story was precisely and exactly the same as mine. What was this bit? I mused. It has been known that editors will go for ideas occasionally from stories submitted and then rejected, both with and without intention. Was this one of those times? Did H. L. run through several thousand mss. after mine, then suddenly come up with a "blinding flash of inspiration for a new concept story", put Evelyn on it, then reject it because it wasn't good enough for BEYOND, forcing her to submit it to Margulies? Or did Margulies just assign the idea cold to E.E. and then run it? What was the pitch? Whatever it was I didn't like it one little bit. So I got on the phone. It turned out, so Evelyn said, that the story had been written after she got out of high school some years ago and lain fallow till now. We both agreed it was pretty poor, but still there was that niggling doubt in a corner of my mind....

New York is currently crawling with footloose fans feverishly fawning at the far frontier fringing currently crawling Cleveland. Alliteration aside, the fans are all frantically trying to garner rides to the Clevention. There are autocades by the score being planned, many of which will not coalesce. But it is a safe bet that New York fandom will be ripely represented. If I may be excused a Nostradamusaying, next year all of your readers will be frantically trying to get up autocades to New York. And I think that will be a good thing. For my money, having lived here now for almost six months, New York is an ideal situation in which to hold a convention. This is not political propaganda, merely one man's opinion. For my money, the further away from the machinery of a convention, the more I enjoy the final product. But logically, can you think of a better site, economic-wise and logic-wise?

The DIMENSIONS Citation plaque was sent off to Redd Boggs last week, with the name of its 1955 recipient neatly engraved. I might have delivered it in person to the fellow who won it next time he came into town for a beer, but since Mr. William Atheling, Jr. doesn't want his real name to get out--for painfully obvious reasons--we shipped it out to his publisher, Redd, who will, I trust send it to Mr. Atheling.

PLANET STORIES has definitely folded, and with it an era died. I think the days of twenty-page novels, girls in brass bras, dandruffy magazines shedding in your lap, and the Visigraph were something quite wonderful, and I for one am saddened at the passing. In the last issue, in fact, one of those charming mistakes were made that makes me so enjoy PLANET. On the cover a story was listed by Poul Anderson (obviously his original title) as The Part-Time God. Inside, before presstime, but after the cover was finished, the story was changed in typical retiring, unassuming PLANET. The Part-Time God became

Out of the Iron Womb! complete with exclamation point!

Bob Silverberg and Randall Garrett, whom I mentioned both last time, have joined forces in a series of a) True Confessions yarns and b) an interesting series of novellettes for Campbell. The reason they didn't do a novel length serial for JWCjr. is that he is up to his ears in serials. In fact, and hold onto your crepe suzettes, there is a powerful Heinlein serial coming up soon. After the current brilliance of Eric Frank Russell's Call Him Dead (which was, incidentally, originally titled His Brother's Keeper) there is another serial by an author whom we have never heard of, a name totally new to the game--but not "new" the way "Edson McCann" is new. And after that, the Heinlein job, which we await almost as feverishly as ASTOUNDING's first "girlie" cover, done by Kelly Freas, and fitting neatly into the Bem-Bim-Bum class of Bergey days. More humor in it, though. By the way, that is an interesting story, the one behind "Edson McCann". Unfortunately I can't tell it. But a letter to Scott Meredith, who is McCann's agent, might elicit some interesting information.

In a few days of this writing Ken and Pamela Bulmer--Ken won the TransAtlantic Fan Fund's nomination for a free trip to the Clevention--will be feted at a large party. We have all been assiduously buying up copies of The Stars Are Ours and Galactic Intrigue from the little-known book stores, in expectations of mass autograph orgies. Your commentator is particularly interested in meeting H. Ken Bulmer, for the cryptic Mr. Willis, on his sojourn to the States several years ago told us that he reminded him of Bulmer. Looked almost like him. Fantastic. Outrageous. We shall see. More word on this vital subject in our next communique.

Another story by "Cordwainer Smith", author of the highly heralded--and rightly so--classic yarn Scanners Live In Vain, is coming up shortly in GALAXY. This is more than passively interesting for several reasons. Smith is obviously a nom-de-plume, but such a well-hidden one that your guess is probably better than mine. The story showed a fire, verve and brilliance that few gems of the genre can boast. It was a single effort, and no more was heard from him. The story appeared in possibly the worst magazine of the Boom Period, FANTASY BOOK, completely unballyhooed but wringing forth acclaim from all corners. Now, suddenly, a re-appearance for Smith. I am currently more interested in finding out the real name of "Cordwainer Smith" than practically anyone in the game. Even Atheling, Van Dali, McCann or Freeman.

Jose Ferrer was in town last week to plug his The Shrike. This would not be of interest to science fiction readers, were it not for the following: we work in one of the bookstores along the Strip--Broadway between 42nd and 54th--where we have been picking up local color while earning a living. We happen to be next door to the Victoria Theatre where The Shrike is currently making its stand, and Mr. Ferrer stopped in to purchase a few books. We waited on him and pumped out of him further information on his purchase of Alfie Bester's The Demolished Man. Production starts sometime next year, and tentatively scheduled for the part of Ben Reich is--guess who? If that doesn't set your white cells to jumping, nothing will. Jose Ferrer as Ben Reich, against a society of Espers. This has earmarks of being the most potentially valuable s-f film ever produced. Ferrer has a capacity to play down the most dramatic moments so that stark force, raw and vital, emerges. If The Demolished Man is treated with the reverence of Moulin Rouge, The Shrike, Cyrano, and Stalag 17 (which he directed) we may well quiver in expectation.

Tell me, did everyone out your way think the Bonestell cover on the September F&SF was a reprint the same as every one out here did? Many of us passed the issue up thinking it was a leftover edition. And after reading the stories



we wish we had. McIntosh is fast getting to be the most brilliantly disappointing writer in the game. He has yet to finish a story satisfactorily or logically. Maybe someday.

Martin Jukovsky's CATHARSIS, a somewhat promising fanzine, has been re-scheduled for publication. Soon after the convention it seems. He will be soliciting subscriptions at Cleveland and if pre-publication appearances mean anything, the toll charges will be worth paying. Marty has a good deal of talent, and a scintillating sense of humor.

Ted and Judy Dikty, and Mel Korshak were in town also, last week, and though we could get nothing from them about the \$25,000 alleged law suits, and the trouble with Campbell, Farmer, Lin Carter and others, still they are some of the most charming people we know--particularly Judy--and we hope things straighten out satisfactorily. Next s-f book they issue, after the Westmore Beauty Book, will be van Vogt's God series. Scheduled for publication from Shasta is Lin Carter's first novel, Space Family Robinson, a juvenile. Ted and Judy went over to see Lin, so I imagine arrangements are all set up. Congratulations are in order.

David Ish, late publisher of SOL, and fanzine reviewer for DIMENSIONS, has sold a story to NEW WORLD WRITING for 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ a word. It is called The Fantasy People and marks Dave's entrance into serious writing. The editors of NEW WORLD WRITING are very much hepped up over Ish, and consider him, in the words of senior editor Arrabelle Porter, "A truly promising talent, possibly one of the biggest of his generation." This from what was once the fan Marion Bradley panned for immaturity publishing a fanzine at 14. The story is in actuality a convention report of the 1955 Metrocon, but told with a depth of feeling I wish a few other fan, or ex-fan, writers would learn. Good luck to Dave on this auspicious start to a brilliant career.

That appears to be it for now. Yours most sincerely,



August 29th, 1955

The rumor passed on by me in the first Letter From New York that Standard pubs were coming out with some new magazines has lately been found to be untrue. A new policy on the part of Standard has left a fellow named Castle editing their one lone offering, and they say that they will not go digest-size, which is the single factor that has killed the top mags in the Standard line since 1953. How long Startling will last is anyone's guess.

The Howard Browne rumor of a new main-stream (science fiction impregnated) magazine has also been deflated. By Mr. Browne.

---h.e.

Dan Adkins, whose work appears in this issue, and will appear in future issues, is a good fan artist. He wants to trade artwork for fanzines. I recommend his work and urge you art-poor (and even art-rich) faneds contact him.

His address: A/3c Danny L. Adkins
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Luke Air Force Base
Glendale, Arizona.

I'm in the nude for love, simply because you're near me.... Darling, when you're

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