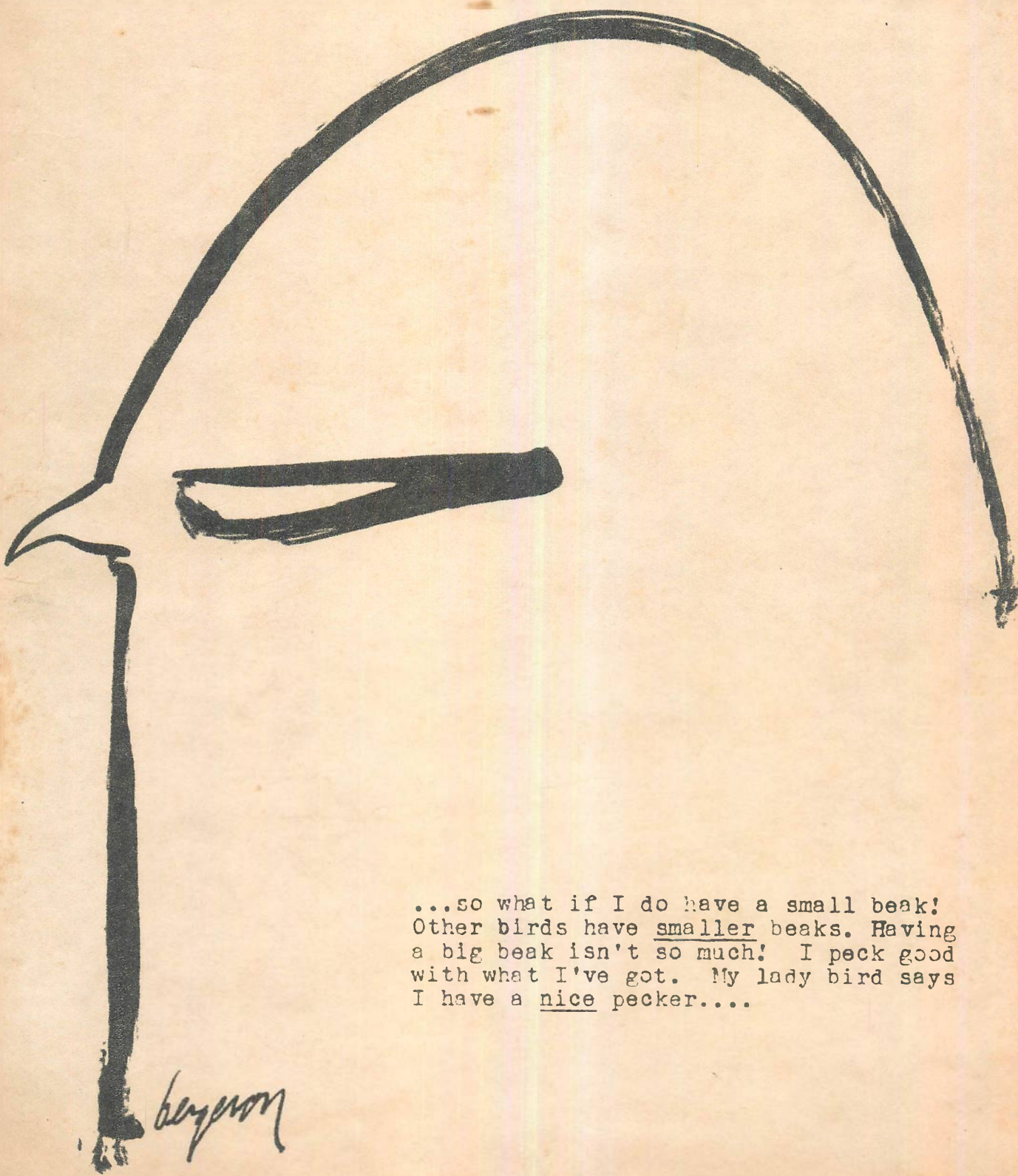


Psychotic



...so what if I do have a small beak!
Other birds have smaller beaks. Having
a big beak isn't so much! I peck good
with what I've got. My lady bird says
I have a nice pecker....

Psychotic



PSYCHOTIC

THE NON-VIOLENT ADULT PULP FANZINE

JULY 1968

26

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- Great Howling Horny Toads!
Your subscription has died!
- You are a contributor...a
Nice Person.
- We trade.
- You are mentioned in this
issue...now start looking.
- A complimentary issue

COVER by RICHARD BERGERON with words by me. BACOVER by VAUGHN BODE

INTERIOR ART by BILL ROTSLER—3, 21, 35, 37, 39, 41; JOHN GODWIN—5; DOUG LOVENSTEIN—11; VAUGHN BODE—6, 9, 17; JOHN D. BERRY—20, 30, 32; AL ANDREWS—23; STEVE STILES—44; RAY NELSON—45, 46.
FOLD-OUT InMATE #1—VAUGHN BODE

PSYCHOTIC is a product of the fevered mind of the Mad Hermit of Santa Monica. (New cave!)

NEW ADDRESS !!!!!!!!!

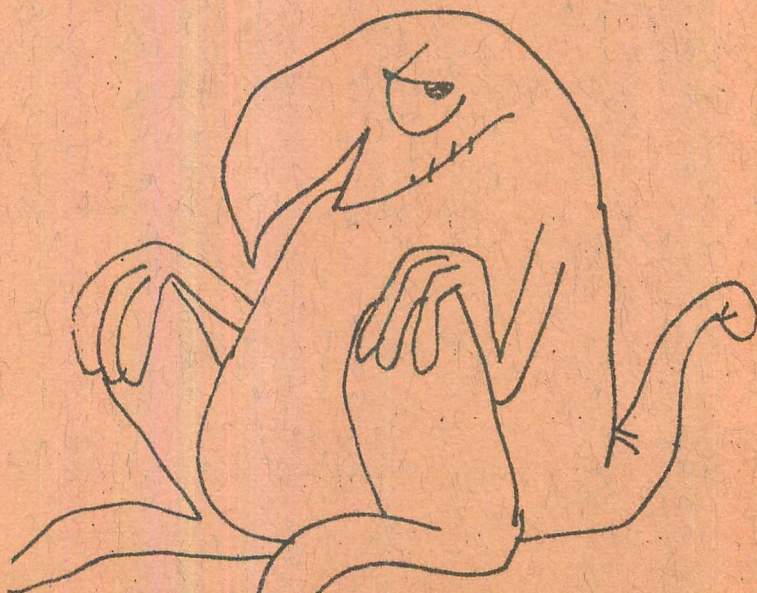
Richard E. Geis
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90403

Published on the left-handed Psychotic Press, PSY is issued for trades, contributions and 50¢ per copy.

REMEMBER: no mail addressed to "The Mad Hermit" will reach me. It all goes to LeRoy Tanner.

Contents

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THE COUCH



WHERE THE EDITOR RAMBLES ON AND ON AND ON AND ON

"All right, Geis...assume the position!"

"Yes...but I wish you'd buy a new couch. This one is so damned old and motheaten...the leather is worn out, the springs are probing for vital spots..."

"Stop complaining. It you'd pay me instead of pouring blood and sweat into PSYCHOTIC—"

"Hold it right there! PSY is sacred."

"That's obvious. You should be working on your latest book, THE OUTCASTS, and instead you sit here typing a PSY stencil."

"Listen, if I didn't, you'd be a dead psychiatrist."

"Dead, but wealthy."

"But I'd be unhappy. Man does not live by professional writing alone."

"Umm. But you seem to live by fanning, if a typical day in your life is any indication."

"I can explain..."

"No! No evasions. Just answer my questions. Now, when do you get up in the morning?"

"Around seven to seven fifteen. Depending on when I go to bed. I usually hit the sack around midnight."

"Alright, now give a rundown of your morning activities."

"I suppose most fans will consider me weird..."

"Well, sheeit, Geis, you are a self-proclaimed mad hermit."

"Yes, well...I get dressed, go out to get my morning L.A. TIMES, and make my breakfast."

"Normal. What do you eat for breakfast?"

"You'll laugh."

"I won't laugh."

"I fill a cereal bowl with raw wheat germ, add milk until it's mushy, then I add sliced peaches...now while they are in season...but usually bananas."

"Sounds awful. Abnormal."

"But healthy!"

"All right, so once in a while you mix up an ungodly mess and—"

"No—every day!"

"EVERY DAY?"

"Maybe once a week or so I have fried eggs."

"Fine, a couple eggs—"

"Usually six or seven at a time."

"I...see..."

"And I take vitamins, too. Vitamin E and A, and a lot of natural C with bioflavonoids."

"You're afraid of death, aren't you, Geis."

"How did you guess?"

SIGH "What do you drink with this concoction?"

"Black coffee or tea."

"Umm. And you read the paper while you eat that gunk, is that right?"

"Yes. That takes an hour. Then, around eight-thirty

or nine I go to my desk, read some of what I did of the current book the day before, and start writing for money."

"You write fast?"

"I write slow. If I get five pages done in the morning I am content. Twelve-thirteen hundred words...first draft."

"Do you do second drafts?"

"No. I edit with a pen, make small cuts, small insertions, and once in a while type out major alterations."

"The time is now...?"

"Around eleven to eleven-thirty. I go to see if there is any mail."

"You now have a box number. P.O. Box 3116, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403."

"Right! I ride down on my bike—"

"I thought you had a scooter."

"I sold it. I skidded on some oil last January and lost Control. I scraped my left ankle severely. It is healed, but—"

"Love of life impelled you to sell the death machine."

"Right. I now get some exercise—which I need—on a three speed Sears lightweight bike, black, with a special padded seat, a transistor radio rack on the front, and large wire saddle baskets on the rear wheel. Plus a headlight that can be—"

"That's really more than I want to know about your bike, Geis."

"Sorry. Well...after I get the mail I do food shopping, and stop by the book store, maybe buy a Ramparts, a Nation, a New Republic, a Realist, a Wall Street Journal, a Minority of One, a Playboy—no, I have a sub to that—an Evergreen Review..."

"I get a picture of your political leanings."

"Yes. So then I go home and make lunch. Cheese sandwiches, usually, sometimes bologna, sometimes with pickles. And I drink hot tea or a root beer and I chomp an apple or suck an orange while I read and listen to the news on KNX."

"I'm a little sorry I started this. When do you do pro work again?"

"I don't—unless I've got a looming deadline or have sold another partial and must get to it soon. Usually I write fan correspondence and do stencils and read sf in the afternoons."

"And at night?"

"At night I watch the CBS news, usually, watch tv or go to a show or read or do fan work until eleven, when I watch news or read or fan until eleven-thirty, when I go to bed."

"And drift off by midnight, eh? You forgot supper."

"Oh. Supper is usually a tv dinner. I make them myself, you know."

"WHY?"

"Saves money. I can make a good, nourishing tv dinner for twenty to twenty-five cents. Use used tv-trays, buy frozen

vegetables, cut-up pre-cooked chicken or ham or turkey or weenies, cover with alluminum foil, freeze..."

"You ARE mad."

"Individualistic!"

"You better watch out, Geis. You're revealing too much of yourself to fandom. They will take just so much non-conformity, then they will search you out and hand you the cup of hemlock."

"That reminds me, I'm thirsty. Think I'll have a root beer and read The New York Review of Books which I buy once in a while."

"Come back here! Back on the couch! Don't you dare—"

"You have no respect for authority, Geis. Walking in here whenever you want, expecting me to drop my copy of "How To Be A Sex Pervert" and attend to your stupid little neurosis. What is it now? What are you smirking about?"

"PSYCHOTIC is on the Baycon Hugo ballot."

"Ahh...and you have delusions of a Hugo gracing the top of the bookcase. Do you really think PSY has a chance?"

"Sometimes yes, sometimes no. There are so many factors to consider...how many of the voters have seen a copy of the new PSY, as opposed to those who have seen LIGHTHOUSE, ODD, YANDRO, ASFR..."

"And how many think PSY is best."

"Yeah. In a way, the fanzine and best fan artist and writer awards are in the hands of uninterested "walk-in" con fans who are eligible to vote because they paid their money but who don't get fanzines or care about fanzine artists, writers or editors."

"So what do you suggest—limiting the voting in those categories to those who draw for, edit, write for or subscribe to fanzines?"

"No. Too complicated. But it is an interesting problem...if it is a problem."

"Why, exactly, do you want to win?"

"Egoboo, pride, status...the usual egotistic motives. And, too, I think PSY is the best zine around now."

"WHY?"

"Well, LIGHTHOUSE might be better, but LIGHTHOUSE is published so infrequently...and while ODD is beautifully duplicated, it doesn't have the ZAP and PAMTERRY of PSY. YANDRO is fine but is like an old slipper to fandom, and ASFR is excellent but more formal and "stiff."

"But, Geis, you forget one thing. The Baycon awards are for fanzines published in 1967. You put out PSY 21 and 22 in 1967. Do those two issues equal a year of YANDRO? A year of ASFR? Even a single issue of LIGHTHOUSE?"

"You filthy— You HAD to mention that, didn't you?"

"You didn't. So I—"

"I'm changing psychiatrists! You are fired!"

"I see you came back. Couldn't get any self-respecting psychiatrist to take you on, hmm?"

"They all want to be paid. You have the virtue of being free. And captive."

"But carping, cynical, honest, intelligent."

"Yes...my conscience... How I'd like to strangle you sometimes!"

"All right, what's on your mind today?"

"Good thoughts. Really! I want to point out that PSY is now sporting an InMate this issue, a fold-out by Vaughn Bode. A lovely alien girl he did especially for PSY. I thank him again. Each issue of PSY will have an InMate from now on."

"Stole the idea from PLAYBOY, didn't you, Geis!"

"Well..."

"Figure this will bring in the subs, eh, Geis?"

"No. Subs are okay, they help pay some of the bills, but I did this...the InMate...because I like the idea, because it gives the artists a larger area to play with and...because I'm obsessed with sex!"

"Of course. Glad to see such honesty in you, Geis. Now, tell me...what you got lined up for the InMate #2?"

"Well, see, there's this photograph of this almost naked girl Rotsler sent me..."



"Geis, what is that drawing by John Godwin up there supposed to represent?"

"That is a vivid picturization of a fan who has just run off 300 copies of a thick fanzine. It is titled "Gestetner Arm."

"So?"

"If I ever get rich I'm going to get an electric."

"You tire of cranking, cranking, cranking?"

"Just figure out how many CLUNKETY-WHUNKS are required for fifty pages and 300 copies."

"Umm...uh...ah...carry the six...drop the two...transpose the square root of hip..."

"Fifteen thousand!"

"Oh. Take this pill, Geis."



WHO IS LEROY TANNER? In the February, 1968 issue of AMAZING, a new critical talent burst, quite unexpectedly, upon us. On page 141, one LeRoy Tanner opened his review of Roger Zelazny's Lord of Light thusly:

I must admit that this volume disturbed me in a rather physical manner, producing a scratchy sensation not unlike that of a bath sponge being drawn through my large intestines on a cord. I mentioned this to my colleague, C.C. Shackleton, who kindly consented to read it on the spot, which he did, although he dropped it into the coal hod before he had finished a chapter. "All decoration and no form, dear boy," he sighed. "All I could find were words." And, by heavens, Charles Chadeston was right, as I discovered when, after dusting the book briefly, I opened it once again.

Tanner goes on to rip a half dozen phrases from the context of the book in order to sneer at them ("But, I thought those were rather fine lines," Chip Delany objected, when he read the review), and then delivers himself of this judgment: "The author / Roger Zelazny, if you'd forgotten / undoubtedly has a tin ear for the meanings and nuances of language." Of the quoted lines, Tanner says, "This man has unenviable talent for inventing cliches." He goes on to state, "I hesitate to mention the one-sentence paragraphs which stud the book like carbuncles," in the process perpetuating a rather hoary cliché himself, and concludes, "If one should ask me

THE TRENCHANT

do I like this book, I would answer no. You are welcome to my copy. It is back in the coal hod."

My reaction to this fantastically fatuous review can be read in the July issue of AMAZING, and I won't quote it here. However, I also included a carbon of my letter to AMAZING with a letter to the SFWA FORUM (a letterzine published exclusively for the members of the Science Fiction Writers of America), since Poul Anderson had brought up the topic of sf critics. It was published in the March FORUM, and provoked a letter from the redoubtable Mr. Tanner, himself not a member of SFWA, forwarded to Editor Terry Carr by Harry Harrison (who is a member of SFWA). Terry showed me the letter and I only skimmed it briefly, since a fast look at it was enough to send my blood pressure up and I didn't want to ruin a fine afternoon (we'd just gone riding in Terry's new red Renault). My impression of the letter was that it seemed preoccupied with Mr. Tanner's outrage in being criticised by myself. Mr. Tanner spent a couple of half-sized sheets in a blanket condemnation of me, my opinions of Zelazny, my opinions of him, and, indeed, any other opinions I might now or in the future hold. But buried in this curious letter were a couple of unwarranted assumptions, and one of them was that, in January or February (whenever I sent both of my letters to Terry for the FORUM), I had access to the knowledge that my letter would be printed, completely sic to my last unknowledgable error of grammar and spelling, in the July issue of AMAZING. The July issue of AMAZING appeared on my stands in late April, and it was then, and only then, that I had any concrete knowledge that my letter would indeed be published. (It does not stand as I wrote it, however. Several errors, including a "to" for "too", have been added, no doubt accidentally.)

When I first glanced down the densely packed invective of Tanner's letter, I was struck with my first doubt. "Is this guy Tanner for real?" I wondered aloud. "How could he — or I? — possibly know the contents of a future AMAZING... unless he's very close to the editor?"

But the editor was (then) Harry Harrison, residing in California — while Tanner purported to be British.

But Tanner's letter had been forwarded to Terry by Harrison...how strange. And, if you stopped to think about it, the attitude revealed towards AMAZING in his letter was much more that of an editor who, having put an issue together and sent it to his publisher, is thinking of it already in past-

B L U D G E O N

tense, despite the fact that it will be several months before it is published.

"I wonder if Harry Harrison is LeRoy Tanner?" I wondered.

"It makes you wonder, doesn't it?" Terry sagaciously replied.

The July issue of AMAZING is remarkable for more than my letter anent Tanner. It also contains two additional reviews by Tanner himself. The first contains no less ego-content than had his previous review; he devotes the opening third to talking about himself. And if he praises A Torrent of Faces by James Blish and Norman L. Knight with frequent damns, at least he appears to hold a grudging respect for the book.

The second review, however, is another story. Ostensibly a review of The Amsirs and the Iron Thorn by Algis Budrys, it spends fully two-thirds of its space (the first two-thirds) in one of the most vicious, unprincipled, and specious attacks ever fired across the pages of one professional sf magazine at another: an attack designed to thoroughly discredit Budrys as GALAXY's book reviewer!

The vehicle for this attack is in itself a curious one: a review Budrys had written of Nebula Award Stories Two, edited by Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison (the plot thickens!).

Tanner begins by stating:

I approached this offering with a certain amount of trepidation due to the fact that its author appears to be a man of intense feelings and bitter moods, as well as a reviewer of books himself. However, I have always enjoyed a singular capacity for making enemies ever since my public school days, so I am well aware that I am exercising that talent to its utmost when I state that, as a reviewer, Mr. Budrys is a pompous liar.

I have at times myself been highly annoyed with Ajay about his tactics as a reviewer (and his uncanny knack of 'never receiving' books he doesn't want to review), but this frontal attack brought me up short. It seemed a surprising breach of taste and professional ethics to use the review of a man's novel to attack him

as a critic! (And quite the reverse of the more common phenomenon, as well.) Tanner continues by stating, "For some reason, unbeknownst to me, he /Budrys/ seems to hold a measure of hatred for the two gentlemen who edited Nebula Awards /sic/ Stories Two (Doubleday, \$4.95) and has exercised that emotion in a review printed in a recent issue of, that otherwise fine journal, GALAXY. /Commas his/ I am shocked that a member of our profession should behave so uncivilly."

Curiously enough, Tanner does not himself at any point in this review identify the "two gentlemen" (Aldiss & Harrison, a back-scratching act presently much in vogue on the Continent) for whom Budrys is professed to "hold a measure of hatred." One wonders why, inasmuch as he even credits the publisher and price of this paranthetically-discussed volume, he refrains from naming the editors.

Yet more curious is Tanner's insistence upon "our profession," an arrogation which makes no sense at all if indeed LeRoy Tanner is only LeRoy Tanner, since no one of that name has published any appreciable amount of science fiction, or, for that matter, critical material. (His "colleague," C.C. Shackleton, has written a dull book review or two for NEW WORLDS, and co-authored a short story or two with, of all people, Brian Aldiss...also for NEW WORLDS.)

I turned to the February, 1968 issue of GALAXY to re-read Budrys' review of the Nebula Awards volume. I found it unexceptional in every respect. If Budrys does indeed nurse a measure of hatred for Harrison or Aldiss, he does little to betray it. Tanner quotes the opening paragraph of Budrys' review, and I commend it to you: the worst Tanner can quote from Budrys is the judgement that the book is "Self-conscious, saddled with primerous blurbs and introductory matter, it is so sophisticated, so scrupulous in crediting even the supplier who manufactures the Science Fiction Writers of America's Nebula Award tokens, that it resembles some kind of grotesque attempt to literatize a corporate statement. Fortunately, it is filled with good stories..."

Got that? Fine. For Tanner, "All of the above nonsense comes apart rather easily and leaves a revolting mess on one's hands," an overreaction if ever I read one. Tanner objects that "Primerous" is not a word, and I find my dictionary agrees with him, at least in the negative fashion of not listing it. But when Tanner himself calls the blurbs "frankly, innocuous copy," he seems to have hit the same point Budrys did: if "primerous" means anything, I take it to mean "primer-like" — or, oversimplified, talking-down, "innocuous".

Tanner wonders, "so I wonder what the reviewing gentleman /Budrys/ was becoming so excited about?" Did you detect any great excitement in what Budrys was quoted as saying? I didn't. Tanner seems to have gotten his fingers on his own pulse by mistake.

But Tanner began by calling Budrys a "liar." How so? Well, remember that line, "so scrupulous in crediting even the supplier who manufactures the...tokens"? A lie, as far as Tanner is concerned:

I am even more confused by the fact that he was forced to lie to make his next point. There is no mention in this book of the supplier of the before-mentioned "tokens" — handsome objects that others call trophies — however I did find Mr. Budrys' /sic/ source of information on the fly of the dust-jacket. Oh dear...Now he surely knows, goodness, everyone knows, that incompetent creatures penned in the publishers' basements compose this jacket copy, and that authors have no knowledge of it whatsoever until it appears in print.

Now, there stands Tanner's entire justification for calling Budrys publically a "pompous liar." Let's do a little rudimentary semantic analysis.

Wherein is the "lie"?

It is quite true that the British edition of the Nebula Awards volume has absolutely no mention of the manufacturer of the awards; its dustjacket copy is dull and innocuous. (However, the British edition is also incomplete in its text. A photocopy of the Doubleday volume, it for some reason cut in half the afterward by the editors in which they survey the field — more about which later — cutting out their entire list of recommended books in the process, as well as introductory paragraphs to that section.)

The Doubleday volume, however, does have a long note on the back flap of the dustjacket in which the awards are described in lovingly, tedious detail. And I doubt very much that "incompetent creatures penned in the basement" wrote that copy; it reads like a SFWA publicity handout on the awards.

Is this "in the book"? By any reasonable definition, yes: it is. And since Budrys does not credit it to "authors" of the book — not even to its editors — it seems a remarkably minor point on which to base so open and basic a charge. Indeed, I am again struck by the fact that only someone very close to the volume — one of its editors, for instance — would even choose to argue the point. Only an editor would so identify with the book that he would take criticism of its overall package to be "a measure of hatred" for him. Budrys didn't say that Harrison or Aldiss wrote that blurb — and Tanner in no way contradicts him, for all his self righteous air of having done so.

The fact stands: Budrys did not lie. Tanner did.

What remains?

The final death blow to reason /whose?/ is delivered when one realizes that the argument in the final paragraph of the review is not Mr. Budrys' at all, but has been lifted bodily from the Afterward of the book, written by these same sophistically degenerate anthologists, taken without credit being given — or the admission being made that there even is an afterward in the book.

A strong charge: plagiarism. But Tanner does not quote that "final paragraph," and for good reason. Here it is:

This is not a bad crop, and certainly worth having, if one has five bucks to spend on a book

of this unextraordinary length. But I can see little more logic and reasoned judgement reflected in this selection (and the designation of Babel-17 as equal to Flowers for Algernon) than there is in, for instance, the Hugo popularity poll. For years, we writers sat around vowing that when we had our award, by God, it would be impeccable. It ain't.

This is where my theory breaks down. For surely on of the authors of that Afterward would have a better memory for its content than has Tanner. I am not about to quote the last five or ten thousand words of Harrison & Aldiss' verbiage (it goes on and on, making its few points with all the flabby strength of a shot rubber band), but you can take my word for it: Budrys' argument is his own. Neither Harrison nor Aldiss would touch it with a ten foot pole (if they understood it). Both are boosters for the Nebulas (both have profited). Budrys is knocking them (the awards, that is), and rightfully so. The Nebulas are no better than the Hogos. No worse — but no better.

"Well, as the actress said to the bishop, enough of that," Tanner says. "Since Mr. Budrys is now a proven incompetent as a reviewer, let us see what kind of a novelist he is."

Let's stop there. Tanner has by now devoured two-thirds of his review of The Amsirs and the Iron Thorn. But what has he proven?

His own total incompetency. A jackass mentality which brays. An inability to face facts he himself quotes. A poisoned mentality which, in its sickness, has lashed out with half-truths and total lies to discredit a "fellow" reviewer.

I'd like to hope that LeRoy Tanner is just plain old LeRoy Tanner. Because then he could be ostracised and jettisoned and we'd never miss him.

But what if he's Harry Harrison? What then?

"...Tanner is a well known nuisance and evil influence who was stoned from his college and thrown into the river Cam for certain vile practices. We suffer his corrupting influence in the pages of AMAZING only because he has the despicable habit of being correct when he writes his, otherwise, repellent reviews."

—Harrison, FANTASTIC, August, 1968, p. 16

"...Your editor, who in most other ways tends to be rather reasonable, considers my reviews to be over-demanding, supercilious and — in fine — bitchy. He passed along a strong hint that if I were to continue benefitting by the new dollar-to-pound exchange rate I had better find something nice to say about something. This is rather hard to do because most of the SF that sweeps into my study is so much vari-colored trash." — Tanner, AMAZING, July, 1968, p. 136

I do not think it purely my imagination in detecting a similarity in the styles of these two quoted items, and Harrison's use of commas to set off "otherwise" in his last line is too exactly in parallel with Tanner's peculiar usage, to which I called your attention earlier.

I am not about to make a categorical statement in the matter of "Tanner's" identity: I have nothing but circum-

stantial evidence. I can note Tanner's stage-Briticisms with skepticism (what are we to make of "...but I had a wizard time willingly suspendingly me disbelief and chuntering along in it for a few hours"?), and I can point out that "as the actress said to the bishop" is a line fondly used by Leslie Charteris in his older Saint stories and that Vendetta for the Saint (the most recent Saint novel) was ghost-written by Harry Harrison (by his public admission), but I cannot say that I know who Tanner is. I don't. I have only the strongest suspicions, and I would like nothing better than to have them proved wrong. It would be a far better thing for us all if "LeRoy Tanner" turned out to be only exactly what he seems to be: a fop-pish, overbearing dimwit.

I WROTE ANOTHER LETTER TO THE EDITOR, Dept.: When the July AMAZING came out, I wrote a letter to Barry Malzberg, the new editor of AMAZING. (Barry becomes editor-in-fact with the December issue of AMAZING; Harrison apparently did not find working with Sol Cohen to his satisfaction.) I suggested that the Tanner review of Budrys was in the worst possible taste, and that for the sake of AMAZING's reputation he'd best be dropped as a reviewer.

Malzberg called me up to tell me that he'd written and mailed a letter to me, but had then decided to phone me as well. (If he actually wrote and mailed a reply, it never arrived here.) Malzberg told me that 1) Tanner reviews came via Harrison; 2) Tanner was enormously popular (but then admitted he'd received very little mail about Tanner); 3) he'd be obligated to publish more if Harrison sent more Tanner reviews in; 4) he disliked Budrys himself, and thought he had it coming to him (Budrys, that is); and 5) he couldn't get more than five or six pages into Lord of Light himself. Ergo: Tanner was a good reviewer.

Anent Budrys, Malzberg had more to say. Budrys was a bastard, he said, and only a bastard could say the unspeakably nasty things Budrys had said about Richard McKenna in his review of Orbit 2. "He said McKenna was dead," Malzberg said. "He said, 'Richard McKenna, who as you know is dead dead'! I wrote an extremely heated letter to Fred Pohl about that; it really had me burned up. I've never seen such bad taste in any review! Fortunately, I tore the letter up before I mailed it..."

I was in a researching mood. I dug up the offending issue of GALAXY (December, 1967) to see what vile excreta Budrys had perpetrated upon McKenna's name. "Richard McKenna," Budrys said in his review of Orbit, "who as you know is dead, was an excellent writer and a memorable person, a man capable of feeling and thinking on levels more of us should attain."

"He used McKenna to rip apart Damon's book," Malzberg had said. "He has no taste."

It makes you wonder, doesn't it, about the people who are editing our science fiction magazines these days?

JUST GOOD FRIENDS: When the unlikely duo of Harrison and

Aldiss launched their SF REVIEW several years ago (was it 1964? Bigolly, I think it was!), it was the first time I'd seen their names linked. It was not to be the last. Today one need only pick up a book by Harrison to find a forward by Aldiss telling us how lucky we are to see another gem of a book by Harry, and vice-versa. I suppose it was inevitable that such a song and dance team would promote themselves the enviable task of "editing" a Nebula volume. The Nebula Award Stories volumes, you see, all but edit themselves. You must include three of the four winners (the fourth is the winning novel), and the remaining space (eight stories, in the second volume) is easily filled with the runners up (and/or tying winners). What's left? A little introductory matter ("primerous," "innocuous," take your pick), and an Afterward in which you essay a brief survey of the year. In return for this, you get a modest share of the book's earnings (most of



the royalties are split between the SFMA itself and the contributing authors, who themselves get more from this anthology than any other, often twice the amount, in fact*), and your name in prominent display on library shelves. Much

* As Bob Shaw's agent I have been rather bemused to note the differing sums his "Light of Other Days" has earned from anthologization. Ave paid \$35.00 for World's Best. Campbell's

prestige, some money, and next to no work. How does one pull down this assignment? A murky question and one never answered to the membership-at-large of the SFWA. I suspect you must be one of the favored 'in' people with the officership.

In the first SFWA FORUM, as well as in his FAPazine, DIFFERENT, Sam Moskowitz accused Harrison and Aldiss of making additional hay from their assignment by plugging their own books in the Afterward of the volume they edited. Harrison and Aldiss both apologized without really apologizing. In effect they said, "We couldn't ignore such fine books as we wrote" Aldiss plugged Harrison, you understand, while Harrison plugged Aldiss. And since Moskowitz was not at all delicate in his criticisms, most people probably took Harrison and Aldiss at face value. "Golly," they must've said, "how could you overlook a fine book just because your co-editor wrote it? What a churl that Moskowitz is!" (And he is, actually.)

Well, just exactly what books did Harrison & Aldiss list? "We do not pretend impartiality or completeness, other than the complete statement that the following titles impressed and left their mark and memory behind them.** The following list is, can only be, partial and partisan," they say in preface to their list.

The list:

Who Can Replace a Man? by Brian Aldiss
Collected Editorials from Analog by John Campbell, edited by Harrison
The Ragged Edge by John Christopher
World in Eclipse and Children of the Void by William Dexter
Now Wait for Last Year by Philip K. Dick
No Room for Man by Gordon R. Dickson
Make Room! Make Room! by Harry Harrison
October the First is Too Late by Fred Hoyle
Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes
Tarnsman of Gor by John Norman
The Judgement of Eve by Edgar Pangborn
Of Godlike Power by Mack Reynolds
Needle in a Timestack by Robert Silverberg
The Lensmen Series by E.E. Smith
The John Wyndham Omnibus
Shoot at the Moon by William F. Temple

One is bound to ask: are those the best stories 1966 had to offer? No. A fast skim from my shelf of Ace Books alone reveals three books deserving of mention: Roger Zelazny's This Immortal and The Dream Master, and Thomas Burnett Swann's Day of the Minotaur. If I started digging, I could probably route out a dozen more, including whatever the Heinlein for 1966 was. Inclusion of the William Dexter books, the John Norman book, and several others re-

veal a curious bias on the part of the editors: these books are pulp hackwork, and if we're going to recommend them to the readership of Nebula Award Stories, why stop there? Why not Lin Carter, Emil Petaja, even Robert Moore Williams? And how about an up-and-coming writer like Ursula K. LeGuinn? Indeed, I'd stack my own 1966 Phoenix Prime against Tarnsman of Gor.

The list cheats, too. For some reason the editors wanted to include No Room for Man, by Dickson. As Necromancer, it was published by Doubleday in 1962. McFadden published the paperback in 1963. To include it in a list of books published in 1966 is ridiculous.

The good writers represented — Phil Dick, Dan Keyes, Pangborn — are cheapened by this list. And what can you say about the colossal gall of the Campbell Collected Editorials inclusion? This book was a piece of — let's use a phrase Harry himself likes — ass-licking for Harrison in the first place. Not only was it a fast buck for him, it probably helped guarantee the sale of his next three serials to Campbell. But putting it up here on a list of science fiction books is either an amazing piece of sarcastic labeling — or yet another installment of "You scratch my back and I'll see what I can do about yours".

This list included comments on each selection. For the Campbell Collected Editorials, Harrison-Aldiss stated, "One of the must-buys of the year." What's the matter — hasn't the ANALOG subscription-give-away campaign been moving them fast enough?

Of Aldiss' collection of stories, Harrison states, unequivocally, "These stories compare favorably with any written in the English language and are a landmark of some kind in SF..." Which they damned well would be if they compared all that bloody-well favorably with the best of the English language. But somehow, one doubts a little...

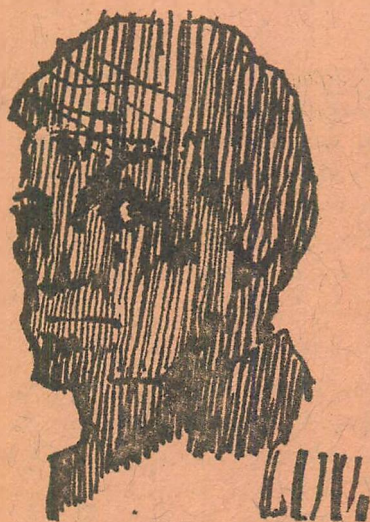
For Harrison's Make Room, Aldiss comments: "A marvelously saddening novel, the most effective warning ever against overpopulation, and consequently for birth-control." Just a shade more modest, that. Apparently Harrison is not yet ready to take on the very best the English language can offer, like, for instance, Brian Aldiss...

Commenting in passing on Moskowitz's Seekers of Tomorrow (one can see what set Moskowitz off!), the editors state, "While the effort is a laudable one, it might be wished that a bit less personal opinion and a shade more accuracy went into this author's work."

Well, from this corner, a tip o' The Ol' Bludgeon to Harrison and Aldiss for one of the most cynical jobs of self-exploitation recently on view. Keep up the good work, lads, and in a few years no one will believe anything you choose to write about each other. And congratulations on your taste in science fiction. You deserve it.

ANALOG anthology paid only \$19.00. Judy Merrill paid \$70.00 for her best of the year volume. Nebula Award Stories Two paid \$130.00. In each case the sum is an advance against a percentage of royalties.

**A typically clumsy line, I'm afraid.



JONAH

I first met him Saturday night in the bar at the Washington Convention. I suppose I had been regaling a table-full of new acquaintances with my editorial opinions, something I tend to do at the drop of a breath. Anyway, someone who had been passing on his way from the bar suddenly turned back and said, "Pardon me, but are you John Koning?"

I said I was.

"Well, I just wanted to tell you I like DAFOE very much. It's a good fanzine, and I enjoy reading it."

"Well, thank you very much." Egoboo is egoboo.

Then he asked me, in all confidence, if Eugene Hryb was real. I told him, in all confidence, that he was.

"Well, I just wanted to tell him, face to face, that I think his reviews are very good. In fact, his column 'In Search of Criticism' was a damn fine job." He took a gulp of his cocktail as punctuation.

"Well, I'll tell him. I like Gene's work, too. I think he does the best fanzine reviews I've ever read, and I..."

"Well, they're very good, yes, but he's not the best fanzine reviewer available."

He took another gulp, and suddenly I saw he had a little more in him than I had supposed. He had a day's growth of beard, and suddenly I had the feeling I might be talking to a drunk.

"Well, who does the best fanzine review column, in your opinion?"

"Oh, not just in my opinion." Some more cocktail disappeared. "I guess I write it."

His defferential arrogance floored me, but I wasn't going to let him see it. "Oh? And where is it published? Where can we read it?"

"That's just it, nobody publishes it."

That really stopped me, but suddenly the rest of the

table came back to life. Rich Brown cut in to ask, "If it's the best, why won't anybody publish it?"

"That's just what I can't figure out. Sometimes I think maybe it's a curse of some sort. Or maybe...maybe I'm the one that's the curse. But I am the best fanzine reviewer around." He finished his drink, and then suddenly became aware of the hostile stares from our silent table. "Well, I am! Damn it, don't take my word for it, you ask Ted White, if you don't believe me. You ask Jean Young, you ask Kent Moo... No, you just ask Ted White. He'll tell you." He tipped his glass but got nothing but ice. "Excuse me, I need another drink."

As he turned to stumble red-facedly away, I called, "But what's your name?"

He turned back, and gave a big, wide grin. "Ford," he said. "Charles Foster Ford."

Well, that finished it, so far as we were concerned. Poor old Charlie Ford has been practically a copyrighted D.C. pseudonym since the year one. We all had a good laugh over it, and figured we'd been had by one of the local WSFAns. But then, later that night, I was talking to Ted, and suddenly the incident came to mind. I thought I'd let him in on it.

"Say, Ted, would you happen to know a WSFAn by the name of Charles Foster Ford, who claims to be the best living fanzine reviewer?"

"Who? Charles Fos... You mean Larry Stark's here? When'd you see him?"

"You mean he's genuine?" I thought for a moment that Ted was playing along with the gag, but that wasn't it at all, and finally he had to tell me the whole tale.

It goes back into the Dark Ages, when Ted's old magazine, STELLAR was trying to be a GenZine. The fanzine review column was a sawtoothed, slam-and-blast affair, and it was written under a pseudonym. In fact, under several pseudonyms. There was a lot of confusion over the column, even editorial strife, and for a while it was written by someone new each issue. Each new reviewer changed the pseudonym, so as to distinguish himself from his predecessor. It started with Franklin Ford, and then Franklin Hudson Ford, and finally F. Orlin Ford. They were the

BY LARRY STARK

Famous Fords of Washington, but despite the rotating columnists, the column itself was never very distinguished.

About that time, Larry Stark, STELLAR's original co-editor (he only lasted one issue or so) decided to try a fanzine review column of his own. And it was a fine column, Ted said. His idea was to write a column about one aspect of the fan press, and to use several current fanzines to illustrate his points. (Much the way Gene does in HERBAGE, when he has the time.) He sent three finished columns, and Ted said they were the best he had ever read...but just at that time Ted had decided to fold STELLAR as a GenZine, and convert it to a four-page snap-zine. Rather than waste them, Ted sent the columns to Lars Bourne, who accepted them eagerly, but gafia killed his zine before he published them.

"And that was the story from then on," Ted said. "Sylvia wanted to publish his column in the third issue of FLA-FAN, but again, it was never published. Kent Moomaw sent him a glowing letter of acceptance, promised immediate publication, and a month later he committed suicide."

He kept writing new columns, but after a while he hesitated about sending them anywhere. It seemed that all he had to do to send a faned screaming into gafia...or worse...was submit the column for his magazine. After a while, Ted thought he had disappeared from fandom forever. But the convention coming to Washington had finally smoked Larry out, and Ted was determined to see him again.

We tracked him down the next morning, and except for a slight hangover, he turned out to be quite a pleasant individual. In fact, the three of us spent all of Monday night drinking and punning at each other, until the wee hour when we all left to catch trains. Ted drove us to the station, and we bid goodbye to each other and the convention in the same breath.

The beginning of school made the usual post-convention gafia almost total for me, but a month or two after the convention I received a thick, bulging envelope postmarked Cambridge, Mass. Inside were a number of review-columns, signed Charles Foster Ford, and a letter of explanation.

The columns were good, no question about that. But some of them were horribly dated. I remember reading one called "The Dallas Crudzines", and wondering when on earth there had ever been that many active neo-fans anywhere in Texas. Several famous old mags of bygone times popped up now and again, but most of the magazines reviewed were unknown to me. I will say this, however: I could almost tell from the thoroughness and detail of the reviews what the magazines must have been like.

Many of the columns were old, well-creased and battered, but there was one bright, spanking new one. It contained a detailed discussion of DAFOE. Actually, all my dissatisfactions with the magazine had been growing subconsciously for a long time, but suddenly "Charles Foster Ford's" judgements put them into words for me.

"Koning publishes this magazine for himself," he said, "and this is a good thing. The best fanzines are produced

because the editor wants to produce them. But fanzines continue to be published because the readers like them, and say so. DAFOE will continue to be published so long as Koning wants to publish it, but it will be published a lot longer if people keep telling him they like it. It is doubtful if such a personal product will get much reader reaction, and so we can only hope that the will to publish lasts long in the mind of the editor. It is a good magazine."

That "will to publish" was already disappearing, although I hadn't admitted it. Without eager readers clamoring at me to publish, I was being side-tracked into other preoccupations. I hadn't fully realized my dissatisfaction with readers' reactions to DAFOE till then. But the final straw, I think, was some of the paragraphs in the long, rambling, sad letter that accompanied the columns.

"It's taken a good deal of effort to make me send you these columns," Larry said. "The effort of writing them is, of course, nil. I write them because I want to. I suppose I will go on writing them, though probably less and less frequently. Because the real obstacle is organizing enough hope to make the task worthwhile. The one ingredient necessary to submit anything to a publisher is genuine hope of being read and appreciated and understood. When there is no reaction, or when the reaction is negative or incomplete, it is that much harder to awaken hope the next time."

Charles Foster Ford had been hoping and submitting, without result, for years...how many, six? Ten? More? I couldn't tell. And, in a similar fashion, my publishing of DAFOE had been that same sort of hope for recognition, for appreciation, and there was that same lack of response.

So, the next will probably be the last issue of DAFOE for me. For a while, I thought I'd just fold the whole thing then and there and forget it. But then, not long ago, I realized there must be one final issue of DAFOE. I suddenly realized I couldn't send these columns back to Larry, once again unpublished. The thought of trying to compose a letter with which to return them collapses me.

So there will be one more issue of DAFOE. Some of the material seems a bit dated, but that doesn't matter. Any day now, maybe next week-end, I'm going to begin cutting the stencils. I will publish Charles Foster Ford's column. I will. I swear I will.

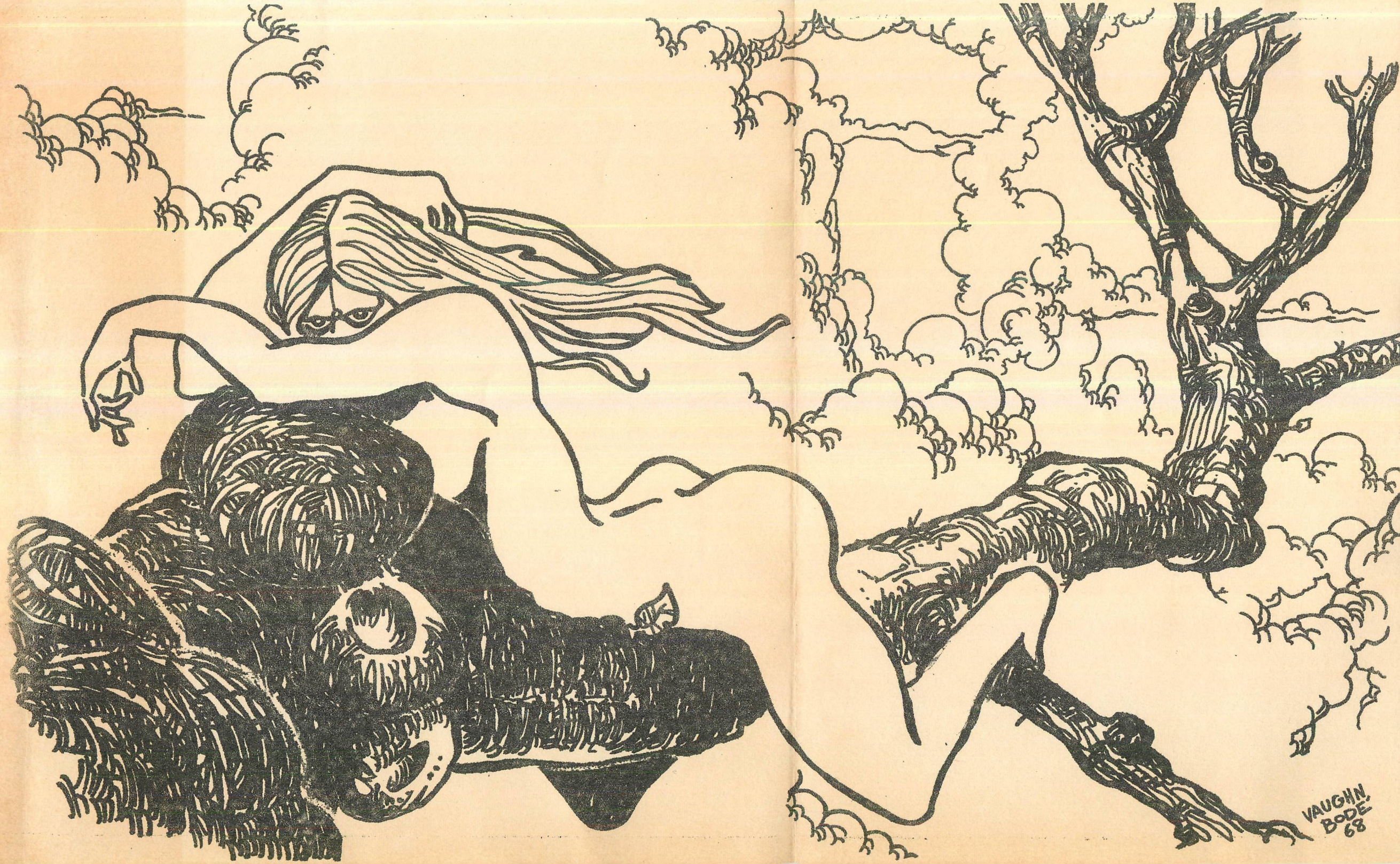
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NEXT ISSUE PSYCHOTIC WILL FEATURE

A FANZINE REVIEW COLUMN BY

CHARLES FOSTER FORD!!



VAUGHN
BODE
68

DELUSIONS

DELUSIONS

I don't believe it is enough to simply review current sf books as a service to readers and writers. There must be access to those books. I know that every time I read a review of a book that makes me want to read that book...I invariably find it not available for a variety of reasons at the local pocketbook racks and book store. So I curse and wander away, bitter and frustrated.

What is needed is a reliable, complete mail-order sf dealer. The next best thing is a list of publishers' addresses printed with the reviews so that readers can order by mail immediately. PSYCHOTIC so provides.

—REG

PAST MASTER By R.A. LAFFERTY—Ace H-54. 60¢. Order from Ace Books, Dept. MM, 1120 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036. Send list price plus 5¢ handling fee for each copy.

Lafferty writes like no other sf writer I know. His style is like that of an Irish teller of tall tales sitting in a livingroom in an easy chair with a drink in one hand and with his other hand free to gesture with evocative sweeps and jabs.

For HE tells the tale; the author is in the book as much, if not more so, than the characters. He explains things, describes, records events, speaks about his characters in a narrative style elegant and personal. He is in that chair, talking to you, the reader, from the printed page.

He tells tall, impossible tales that have moral and philosophical reality. His characters perform impossible feats, use psi powers or magic with casual lifelong skill, travel time, travel in a whole people's psyche, do this weird thing, that

outrageous act...all with unexplained aplomb and acceptance by others...because it is Lafferty's desire that they be able to do so, and to hell with "science".

PAST MASTER obviously isn't science fiction. It is, if anything, multi-faceted fantasy. With a point to it that skewers the reader's mind nicely, twinkly-eyed, and makes him think.

Briefly, the book is about the planet Astrobe, a colony of a now unimportant Earth. Astrobe has seemingly achieved a utopian perfection of easy living and wealth for all its citizens. Yet there is a cancer raging in its psychic and social body—millions of its citizens are fleeing this perfect, ideal life for squalid, disease-ridden, rat-infested slum cities where they willingly work at deadly jobs making essentially useless products.

Why? That is what bothers the leaders of Astrobe. They are looking for a man who can cure this cancer. They choose Thomas More, from Earth's past, and send an agent, himself a "criminal" non-conformist, to fetch More by means of a time-traveling spaceship.

Thomas More is brought to Astrobe and tours the planet with some weird companions: Rimrock, a talking, psi-powered fish-porpoise creature; Paul, the outlaw agent of the rulers; an ageless girl-woman witch named Evita; Scrivener, son of a programmed, robot-like father and a human mother; Maxwell, Copperhead, Slider...rebels all.

More is set up as President. But he is a figurehead, powerless, and is often manipulated by behind-the-scenes forces, each of which thinks it is the true power that runs Astrobe.

In the end Thomas More "saves" Astrobe...in his grisly fashion.

The book is full of incident, vivid scenes, intriguing who act and speak Lafferty's lines nicely. But it is all Lafferty the tall story teller you hold in your hands as you read, and he impells you to face some tough questions about life and man.

—REG

BEST SF: 1967, Edited by Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss —Berkley S1529, 75¢. Order from Berkley Publishing Corp., 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Send listed price plus 10¢ handling fee for each copy.

James Blish, in the Credo, suggests that a "Best SF" collection should contain stories that qualify as science fiction, as science fiction, the collection should be honest in its limitations, and should admit who makes the story selections.

According to that yardstick this volume comes out short in two respects: the best story in the book is "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" by Harlan Ellison—a fantasy so good it will be anthologized many times in the future. ...and "The Assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy Considered as a Downhill Motor Race" by J.G. Ballard, which to me was impenetrable and not recognizably anything, except perhaps symbolistic of something only Ballard understands. Mike Moorcock says this story shocked Ballard's agent so much that the man refused to send it to Ellison for possible inclusion in DANGEROUS VISIONS. I wonder if Harlan would have accepted it. It fails to show any trace of science, and its story (or fiction) content is marginal. I don't think it belongs in a collection of the best sf of 1967. Harrison admits as much in his introduction, admits he insisted that Blish write down the "rules" mentioned above, then fudges and oozes around them for no good reason except...what? that he liked the stories and wanted to include them regardless.

I suppose part of the reason and difficulty is that not much fantasy is written nowadays and "fantasy" isn't as commercial in title or theme as "science fiction", so a great story of fantasy like "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" has to be sneaked into a SF collection with a wink and a nod. But would it be so terrible to title a book BEST SF and FANTASY: 1967?

Robert Silverberg's "Hawksbill Station" is the longest story in the book. The ending only seems to be dishonest and a cop-out when the inhabitants of the station, political exiles who have been one-way time-warped into the pre-life past of Earth, are saved by the discovery in the future of a way to return and a revolution overthrows the tyranny that had imposed their exile.

Silverberg set it up to drive home a point: that happiness and a home and a meaningful life can be found in the least likely places, sometimes. And perhaps age and habit are far stronger elements in our lives than we care to admit.

I grouch, too, at Harrison for including "Ultimate Construction" by C.C. Shackleton. It is a short-short based on a dishonest ploy...the Earth is dead, dry, covered with sand, and the Last Man, faced with his broken protective dome and the encroaching sand, runs for a spade and a pail and makes a sandcastle—because the Last Man is a six year old boy. This is supposed to be very Arty and Meaningful, I suppose.

"1937 A.D!" by John T. Sladek is a lightweight tongue-in-cheek time travel story with Clever Twists told in a sardonic Tom Swift style. There must have been something better than this published in NEW WORLDS in 1967.

(I can hear Ted White exclaiming, "Aha! Sladek is one of Aldiss' pen names!" And Harrison and Aldiss might think I am taking Ted's side or am influenced by him in this largely unfavorable review. But I read the book and formed my opinions expressed here now weeks before Ted sent

his column, and I did not know the content of his column beforehand.)

Ben Bova wrote a pretty good hard science story about a rescue and subsequent race against airtanks and distance on the Moon in "Fifteen Miles." There is a morality complication and a characterization but they are stock elements and don't really come off.

In retrospect, as I review these stories, I can see that Harrison digs stories that are Significant in a light, humorous way. How else to explain the inclusion in this "Best" grouping, of Fred Hoyle's "Blackmail" in which animals watching tv sets have a large paw in the tv rating system and prefer their "...intellectual pabulum."—scenes of humans bashing humans. A cute idea, well done, but was sf short fiction so bad in 1967 that this is the best?

"The Vine" by Kit Reed is a beautifully done parable about man's greed, sense of duty, and his unthinking, automatic use of his fellow man for selfish ends. For the vine you could substitute the automobile, the military-industrial complex, government...

Harrison also picked as "Best" in 1967, "Interview With a Lemming" by James Thurber, which comes down to: "I don't understand," said the scientist, "why you lemmings all rush down to the sea and drown yourselves." "How curious," said the lemming. "The one thing I don't understand is why you humans don't." This was published in 1942.

"The Wreck of the Ship John B." by Frank M. Robinson is a fine story of the dangers of boredom and alienation and man's basic needs during long space flights. It is told extremely well. But Robinson wasn't content to trust the reader to absorb the message on his own; Robinson had to add an unneeded lecture at the end of the story to make sure the reader understood.

"The Left Hand Way" by A. Bertram Chandler is a long, deceptive rendition of an old, old joke. It's worth reading, but, again, is it really among the best sf short stories of 1967?

"The Forest of Zil" by Kris Neville apparently signifies that nature will triumph over man, in the sense that we cannot forever impose our changes on a natural landscape. Especially when that landscape fights back...or did it? I don't remember...

Ah, Fritz Leiber. His "Answering Service" is a fine story, perfect, structured, gem-like, with a tragic commentary built into it that will make you distrust old invalids to your dying day.

"The Last Command" by Keith Laumer involves the accidental reactivation of an old, buried, robot-like war machine capable of wrecking a city. With minimal, lingering power it surfaces and moves slowly toward a nearby metropolis. It is turned aside at the last possible moment by its equally ancient human war veteran driver who had recognized it on the tv news and who pleads with it to recognize him and his age-altered command voice. It does and together they creep out into the open

desert to die. Yes. "It is a far, far better thing I do..."

"Mirror of Ice" by Gary Wright is a fine tale of danger, death and the unsolved riddle of why men risk their lives in near-suicidal sports. He has written a highly visual and gripping story of future sleds and a man-killer ice course called the Stuka.

In his Afterward, Brian Aldiss feels that sf is bogged down in old ruts, and puts down space travel and "FTL"; the first because it is a sucking up to NASA, and the second because it is a device to escape our problems here on Earth. We must delve into the inner and outer forces that shape us and use them as subject material for sf.

Fine. But not exclusively, please. Too much New Wave is as bad as too much of the Blish-Pohl school of sf.

THE REEFS OF EARTH by R.A. LAFFERTY—Berkley X1528, 60¢ Order from Berkley Publishing Corp., 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Send listed price plus 10¢ handling fee for each copy.

In this book Lafferty uses his tall-tales style (perhaps his only style?) to examine mankind in situ by rubbing him up against a family of resident aliens, the Dulantys, most of whom look like gnomes and gargoyes. They have Powers, do these aliens, which are used by means of Bagarthach verse, like casting a spell or a curse.

The Dulantys are of the Puca race, and are marooned on Earth. The older Pucas are dying off, poisoned by Earth sickness. Only the children are immune.

But the people of Lost Haven do not wait for the sickness to take the older Dulantys. The adult Pucas are hounded, framed for murder and committed.

The Dulanty children vow revenge! Six of them (plus Bad John who is Something Else) vow to wipe out all the Earth people. The kids set out to do it, too, but somehow in spite of good intentions and some savage behavior, they manage to kill nary a one.

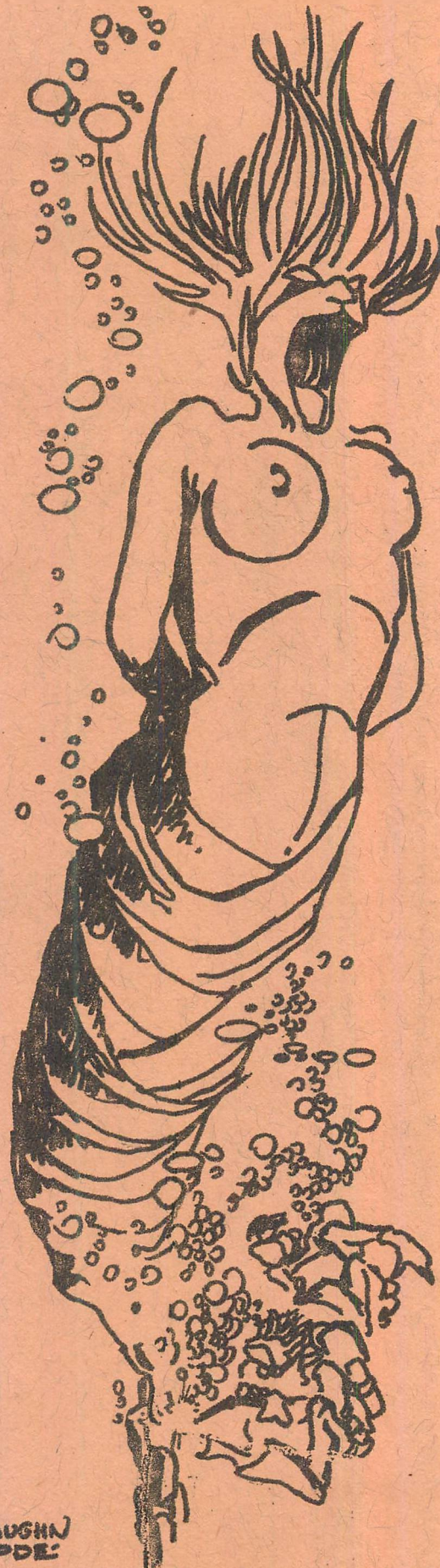
It is the Earth people who come off as cruel killers, vicious, depraved and heartless.

Not much of this book is real; the story, the characters, the action are somewhere south of fantasy and just east of science fiction. It is a Lafferty book, that's all. That's good.

The contents page lists chapter titles. The chapter titles make a rather beautiful poem.

If you demand a hard illusion of Reality in your reading, you probably won't like Lafferty. If you can accept a bit of magic and illogic and implausibility with a spicing of artistic narration and wild humor, you will.

DELUSIONS is a bit short this issue because of a lack of time to read and the dislocation of apt. hunting and moving. But next issue it will be, with some help, full and juicy.



VAUGHN
BODE



Paradox is a byproduct of rapid but incomplete change. And one of the paradoxes left by the New Wave as it sweeps over science fiction has been that Michael Moorcock, editorial Demon Prince of New Worlds, major critic, ideologue, intellectual pioneer of the New Wave has thus far made his primary impact as a writer in the arch-Old-Thing sub-genre of sword-and-sorcery.

In short pieces such as BEHOLD THE MAN and THE PLEASURE-GARDEN OF FELIPE SAGITAR-IUS, Moorcock-as-writer has been more in intellectual tune with Moorcock-as-theoretician, but not until the recent publication of THE FINAL PROGRAMME has Moorcock really spoken in his own true voice at novel-length.

THE FINAL PROGRAMME is light-years removed from sword-and-sorcery. Yet Moorcock's first major achievement as a novelist bears a curious psychic relationship to the sword-and-sorcery genre: in radically different ways, both satisfy our age's hunger for myth.

We live in an age curiously devoid of meaningful myth, that is, systems of personalized symbols that create a relative order out of the seeming chaos of our time, a mythical reality, with existential relevance to the events, forces and figures that shape our external world, that can bridge the gap between our private internal universes and The Great World Out There. Thus, alienation as the intellectual substitute for a genuine modern weltanschauung. Thus, the present sterility and irrelevance of so-called modern mainstream literature. Thus, the burgeoning popularity of sword-and-sorcery, which panders to this need without satisfying it by transferring the reader's consciousness to a schizoid pocket universe where the old myths still work.

But clearly the challenge to the modern writer, particularly the science fiction writer, most particularly the serious science fiction writer, is to create a new mythos for our time out of the material of our time. It is useless or worse to try to force modern reality into the molds of the old myths; meaningful myth must explain its historical context, not deny it. Its function is to enable the individual to alter his consciousness in such ways as to digest the seeming chaos of the external world, to heal the

NEW

WORLDS

psychic wounds of social change. The challenge to the writer is to create a wholly new mythical reality, a relevant mythical reality, out of the void.

This is the challenge that Moorcock has accepted in THE FINAL PROGRAMME.

Consciously or not, the reader is injected into this mythical reality immediately, in the opening section, where Jerry Cornelius, the prime protagonist, discusses the cyclical nature of history with a Hindu physicist-cum-mystic in the Angkor Hilton, rising like a saphrophite growth upon the ruins of Angkor, "the most impressive ruins in the world." Thus, from the opening paragraph, the dynamic of the book is established not as surprise but as inevitability. The Hilton, and the civilization it epitomizes—our civilization—is doomed to follow the civilization of the Khmers into the Long Night. One is somehow instantly reminded of a line from Vance's THE DYING EARTH: "Now, in the last fleeting moments, humanity festers rich as rotting fruit." But here the last fleeting moments are the sixties; the world that is dying is our own.

Cornelius himself, like the Angkor Hilton, is a saphrophite; a creature born of impending dissolution, dependent on the over-baroque richness of social rot for his psychic sustenance, yet destined to die when Western Civilization dies. Living off the rot, he must symbiotically feed it; yet dependent as he is upon the rotting civilization, he must fight to prolong those "last fleeting moments" to last his lifetime.

In his person, Cornelius "symbolizes" a constellation of forces and lifestyles—scientific mysticism, the mod-baroque, the psychic vampire who must replenish himself at grotesque parties, the Bondian ethic, rock, the hip mystique—that would seem to have no previous connection outside the pages of THE FINAL PROGRAMME. Thus, Moorcock has created a new mythic archetype, something new under the Jungian sun. Yet this is science fiction, not allegory, and Cornelius—the man is not lost in Cornelius—the archetype. His validity as a mythic archetype is reinforced by (perhaps even owes its existence to) his verisimilitude as a specific human being with specific human fears, weaknesses, hurts, problems. Having created this figure, Moorcock establishes, argues for his mythic relevance to our time by placing him in recognizable context, melding the speculative elements of the milieu through which he moves with touchstones of our time: the Gold Crisis (and the book was written well before the present crisis emerged), modern or slightly post-modern London, a party attended by "...Hans Smith...Last of the Left-Wing Intellectuals; the Microfilm Mind...the literary editor of the Oxford Mail

(Brian Aldiss)...the late great Charlie Parker...200 Hungarians who had Chosen Freedom and the chance to make a fast buck..." the real assassin of JFK, etc.

Cornelius is an archetype of dark forces at work in our society, the forces, as it were, of baroque evil. Yet the other main character, Miss Brunner, the super-computer-programmer, whose conflict with Cornelius forms the body of the book, is also an archetype of evil—but a different style of evil, call it a Lever House style, a technician style, the evil of Eichmann's death-by-numbers, of Rand Corporation megadeath scenarios, of subliminal television commercials, of means-as-ends. Like Cornelius, Miss Brunner is a psychic vampire. Together, they are the yin and yang of our society and their final fusion into a kind of hermaphrodite by mutual absorption is inevitable and brings the inevitable apocalypse.

The novel is redolent with minor symbolisms that build its power and its uncomfortable credibility. The real assassin of JFK is now retired because he achieved the ultimate—he killed "The Sun King." On one level, take this to mean "putting out the light of the world." Very neat and a point made many times before. But by using the "Sun King" as a symbol for JFK, Moorcock also reminds us that the original Sun King presided over the highest flowering of pre-Revolutionary France and that with his passing, that society began its decline into decay, though the apocalypse did not come till a later Louis. If JFK was our Sun King, we are already doomed. The Cornelius-Brunner fusion takes place in an underground installation built by the Nazis—who themselves were a fusion of baroque and technological evil, of Nuremberg rallies and cold Teutonic efficiency. And over the book hovers the spirit of rock—a fusion of the electronic McLuhanist means with the mystical, drug-oriented, Eastern ego-death end.

But it is important to emphasize that this is not a symbolic novel, is not allegory (i.e. GILES, GOAT BOY, or LORD OF LIGHT), but is science fiction. Science fiction is emerging as the relevant literature of our times because it and it alone has the power to meld "reality" and "myth", to raise the specific to the symbolic, to humanize the mythical and imbue it with verisimilitude, to bring about the fusion of internals and externals, chaos and order, technology and man, and create a healing synthesis on the mystical level to balm the open wounds of our schizoid times and make our civilization whole.

THE FINAL PROGRAMME, however, does not create healing myth. Perhaps this is too much to expect at this early stage in the evolution of the so-called New Wave. What the book does do is create a mythical reality germane to the agonies of our time. Whether those agonies will prove to be death-throes as described in THE FINAL PROGRAMME or the birth pangs of a new civilization-cum-consciousness is still an open question. Moorcock's myth is cautionary; let us hope it is not prophetic. Science fiction writers may not have the Answers....

But at least we have started to ask the Questions. =+=

COMING

A COLUMN BY
NORMAN SPINRAD

THE VIOLENT WARD

fanzine commentary

One of these days I've GOT to get organized... Some of the fanzines received recently are in boxes awaiting unpacking. A few are here at hand available for comment.

In a moment.

But right now...isn't the New, Improved PSYCHOTIC FUGG-HEAD AWARD beautiful? John D. Berry is to be complimented for creating it. If I were a fugghead I wouldn't mind being named a recipient of it...it's so beautiful. (Down, Mr. Terry!)

I have been hoarding this drawing for months, waiting the opportunity to award it to some unwary fan who has made a fugghead of himself.

But, alas, no one has come through for me—not of the calibre of past recipients. And so I display it now and throw the award open to fandom for nominations.

Yes, next issue THE PSYCHOTIC FUGG-HEAD AWARD will be given to that individual in the fan/pro world who has been nominated most often by the readers of PSY. Everyone is invited to nominate. Even dirty old pros.

The unlucky "winner" will receive a specially pintnered certificate of fuggheadism inscribed with his name and decorated with this new, improved award drawing.

ASFR 16 is highlighted by an exchange of articles and brickbats by Sam Moskowitz and James Blish. Sam accuses Blish of puffing his own work in

a series of reviews and commentaries under the penname of William Atheling, Jr. in SKYHOOK and in THE ISSUE AT HAND, a book of sf review and comment published by Advent.

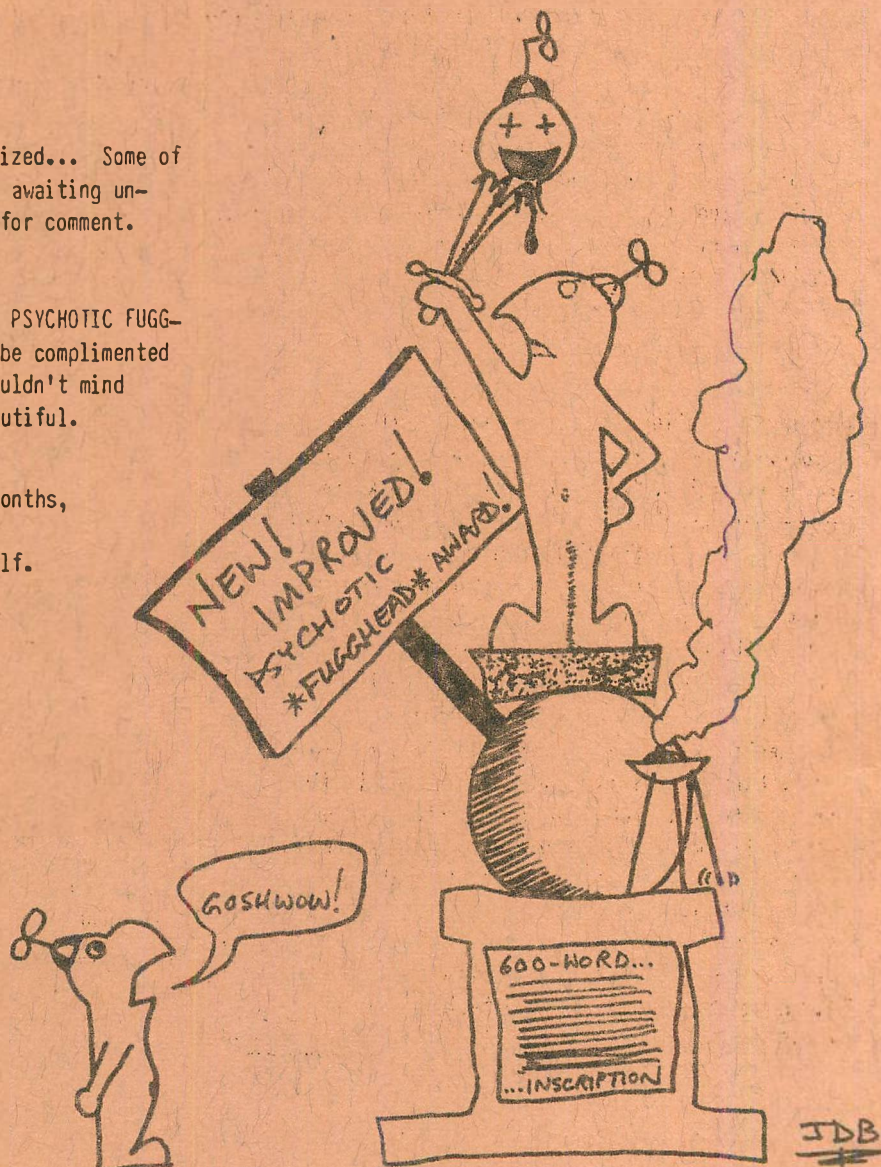
The reasons given by Blish for writing "in hiding" were freedom to say things about fellow pros, and a desire to talk about his own work.

When all the dust has settled we are still left with the core point: was it really necessary to be William Atheling, Jr. in order to comment on his own books?

No, of course not. He could have written separate articles for SKYHOOK under his own name. And "William Atheling, Jr.'s" failure to comment on James Blish's work would not have been "noted" by fans for years, given SKYHOOK's quarterly schedule. And "Atheling" was perhaps more kind to Blish than perhaps Blish would have been otherwise.

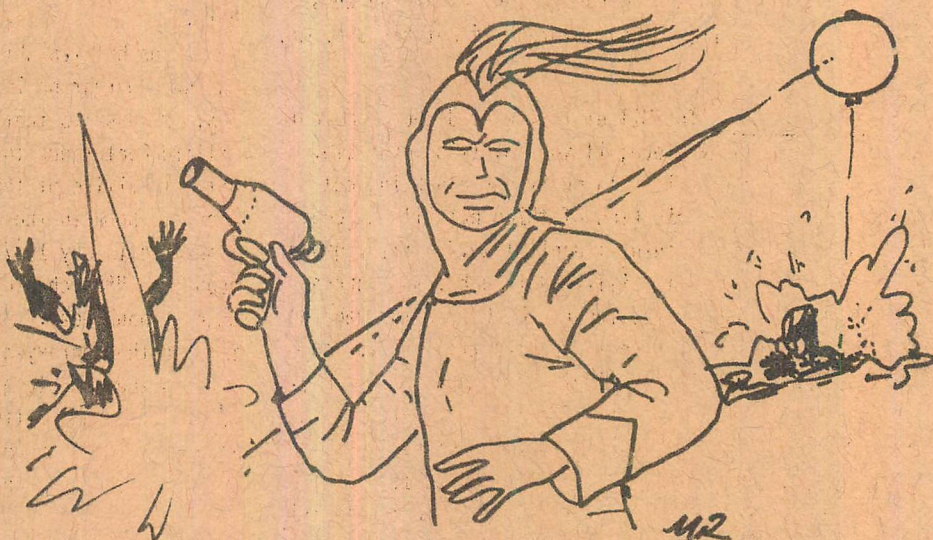
But I am not nominating Blish for the fugghead Award. A barely honorable mention, perhaps.

—REG



SECTION EIGHT

"RALLY! RALLY! THE
NEW WAVE IS COUNTER-
ATTACKING!"



Norman Spinrad
8346 Kirkwood Drive
Los Angeles, Calif.
90046

Après moi, la deluge. Of course this kind of diverse reaction ((to your articles in PSY #24)) is exactly what I expected and I think that all of it (with the exception of Ted White's exercise in envy), pro and con, is healthy for the field and proves conclusively that sf is alive and well in Argentina. So let's kick it around some more letter by letter:

Alva Rogers. I called DV the single best collection of sf ever compiled, not the best anthology. I should've made it more clear that that meant the single best collection of original stories. Also, I thoroughly agree with you that hard sf has a valid place in the field. This seems very hard for most people (notably excluding Greg Benford) to understand. I am for widening the sf field to include both "New Wave" and "Old Thing". I do not suffer from tunnel vision. The fact is that right now there are inertial forces operating in the publishing end of the field which operate to the disadvantage of "avante garde" and socially meaningful sf. Should the pendulum swing too far in the other direction, should good hard sf languish for lack of markets, you'll find me among those clamoring for a broadening of sf in that direction. To paraphrase JFK, "We must make sf safe for diversity."

Greg Benford. I agree with most of what you say, with minor exceptions. First, I am not interested in breaking taboos per se; I am simply interested in seeing to it that taboos do not get in the way of sf writers. This does not mean that I feel a writer must break taboos in order to be meaningful. Second, it appears to me that ANALOG does

publish "anti-liberal-social-consciousness stuff, which is one of the reasons I respect JWC above the other magazine editors, though I disagree with his opinions most of the time. He's true to the truth as he sees it. Which, paradoxically, means that Moorcock and Campbell, poles apart in everything else, are united in their editorial integrity.

L. Sprague de Camp. This letter saddens me because I have enjoyed much of de Camp's work and here I am confronted with arguments which are either dishonest or painfully imperceptive. Why is it that so many people like de Camp assume that because I am for meaningful sf that I am against entertainment? Does de Camp really believe that in order for sf to be entertaining it must be trivial and banal? How sad! Great fiction is both meaningful and entertaining. Writers cannot achieve greatness every time out, but damnit, they can try! I too am against stylistic experimentation for its own sake (self-conscious avante gardeism); true stylistic innovation comes about as a response to the challenge of the material.

De Camp says: "Since prejudices are emotional, it is useless to try to argue or bully the reader out of them." A truism—but cannot a writer attempt to eradicate a reader's prejudices by putting him in fictional situations, inside the minds of fictional characters, which will cause him to empathize emotionally with the objects of his prejudice?

De Camp seems to assume that I want to dictate the kind of sf he writes or reads. I simply want all writers and all readers to have the freedom to write and read what pleases them. The fact that he puts down Mailer as "ridiculous" and Dalton Trumbo as a "Communist-liner"

seems to indicate that he wants his own particular prejudices to prevail—which is what he accuses me of. In psychological terms, this is called projection.

Finally, how can he be so obtuse about the meaning of a writer's "dedication to the truth as he sees it"? Of course I'm not talking about Absolute Truth. I merely suggest that sf writers adopt the credo of the professional baseball umpire: "I calls 'em how I sees 'em." And whose opinions should a writer's work express if not his own, Mr. de Camp? Yours?

Poul Anderson. The Miller review of JUNGLE came out after I had written my piece; if you say it's favorable, I'll take your word for it. To me it was confusing but honest: "I don't like this kind of thing but it's a good example of this kind of thing I don't like." Miller gives the same kind of review to William Burroughs, so I guess from my viewpoint it was favorable. Maybe nothing can be done to improve the situation in the magazines as you suggest, Poul, but we won't know that for sure unless we try.

The ghettoizing of sf as juvenile in libraries is a self-fulfilling prophesy. The librarians believe it is juvenile stuff, so they so-classify it, and publishers who rely heavily on library sales therefore must cower to this notion, which tends to depress sf to a juvenile level, so the librarians can then say, "See, sf is written for juveniles." It is this closed circle of cause-effect-cause which must be broken.

I agree with you that meaningful sf has been written. But as you say, the average sf item is pretty dismal. And it is the average level of sf which is depressed by the editorial and publishing Meanderthalism in the field. Writers should be encouraged to do their best by editors and publishers, not do their best in spite of them.

Gee, I understood what you were trying to do in Eutopia, Poul. As for "boredom and callousness" setting in toward the horrors of war in JUNGLE—that's exactly the point. That's what happens to Bart Fraden, and since he is the viewpoint character, that is what is supposed to happen to the reader until the ending forces him to take another look as it does Fraden.

You say: "There is room for every kind of story, theme and style." And I say: "Exactly."

Andy Porter. I have an F&SF rejection which states "we don't do psychedelic stories." If this wasn't a statement of a taboo, I don't know what is. I made it clear that this taboo no longer exists at F&SF. 'Nuff said.

I didn't defend Larry Ashmead by saying, as you suggest, that he was a stupid fool but had a right to be a stupid fool. Several writers said to me that he had been stupid or crazy in rejecting BUG JACK BARRON and I said, no, he's not stupid or crazy, he's a good editor, and he just happened to make a mistake. My point was that one mistake doesn't make an editor stupid, crazy or incompetent. If I did feel he was a stupid fool, I would not have defended him. The distinction that I felt had to be made to the writers who commiserated with me by putting down Larry Ashmead was that what they and I considered one mistake on his part should not destroy their opinion of him as

a good editor. As it has not destroyed mine.

And finally, last because least, Ted White. I suppose my first reaction to Mr. White's uncouth letter was to attempt to show the man up for the asshole he is. Unfortunately, Ted has deprived me of this satisfaction—he's too good at it himself. I give the devil his due: Ted may be an asshole, but at least he's a self-made asshole.

Who but Ted White could prove himself to be a liar in the same paragraph in which he accuses someone else of lying? He asserts that I lied about the reaction of the 1967 Milford Conference to BUG JACK BARRON because "the book was not yet written at that point." The 1967 Milford Conference was held in the fall of 1967. BUG JACK BARRON was completed in May 1967. In the same paragraph, he talks about the "two chapters which led to (the book's) initial sale to Doubleday." I suppose this is going to send you into another paroxysm of rug-chewing envy, Ted, but the fact is that Doubleday contracted for the book before a single word was written. I didn't even have the title. I told Larry Ashmead the story over lunch and got a contract on that basis. On the basis of that, of MEN IN THE JUNGLE and some "pseudo-Elison self-promotion", I guess. Them that can, do; them that can't, bitch. Well, maybe I'm being unfair to Ted here—after all, he did admit to being "honestly jealous" and he's probably half right. But still, being called a liar by a prince of liars does call for rebuttal. Re Ted's unexplained and snide reference ("I have here in my hand, Mr. Chairman—") to my campaign to have fandom bug Doubleday into reconsidering the book: another lie. I knew damn well the book was dead at Doubleday. The only thing Ted could be referring to was a little piece on me in THIRD FOUNDATION which asked fans to write to Doubleday asking them to publish BJB. This appeared because I had given that fanzine an idea for a satirical set of Ace Double Novel covers and they wanted to show their appreciation. I didn't ask them to do it, didn't know they were going to do it until I saw the fanzine in question, and knew damn well it was pointless. But I suppose this is in line with Ted's generalized paranoia: fans, it Ted's view, would never do such a thing spontaneously, it must be part of a Dastardly Plot. Lessee, any other loose lies lying around? Oh yes, my "posturing in the pages of SF TIMES, etc." Gee, I didn't know there was a fanzine called ETC., Ted. But there must be, because aside from SF TIMES and PSYCHOTIC (which Ted is excluding in this paragraph), I've never written anything for a fanzine. So the editors of ETC. must have pirated something of mine. I'd appreciate it if you'd send me your copy of ETC., Ted, so I can set this straight. (To avoid further nastiness, I did just do a piece for ALGOL which is unpublished at this writing.) Finally, Ted says he knows of several writers who were at the 1967 Milford Conference and considered BJB dreadful. As you know, all the writers present at the workshops get to speak their minds. Two had negative reactions to BJB. I always thought "several" meant "three or more."

Of course, impaling Ted White on his own lies is

like hunting rabbits with an elephant gun: hardly sporting. Discussing the truth in Ted's letter would require an electron microscope which I don't happen to have around the house, but I suppose I can hold my breath long enough to deal with some of his opinions.

First, his opinion of *MEN IN THE JUNGLE*, to which he is entitled. Candidly, I admit to certain stylistic crudities in the book. Frankly, I was waiting for reviews to illuminate these failings for me. But what reviews I did get reacted entirely to the content. Miller in *ANALOG* in effect said it was a good book if you like that kind of book but he didn't. *Library Journal's* review was a rave which went into detail on the thematic material but did not touch on the prose. The *NEW WORLDS* review was so-so but talked mostly about content. Ted, if you weren't just getting yourself off, why didn't you detail some of the flaws in the prose so I could benefit from your bottomless pool of wisdom? Okay, so a bunch of fans sat around and had their jollies picking the book apart. That should keep me from getting too much of a swelled head over the book. But what the hell, it was nominated for a Nebula, it did get as many good reviews as bad ones, Poul liked it, Karen liked it, Phil Farmer liked it, academicians who have read it (types who look down their noses at sf) dug it, fans have said nice things to me about it. And Doubleday did publish it, Ted. Which is more than can be said for the six published books you claim you'd stack up against *JUNGLE* any day in the week. Could it be there is a reason you "have been cold-shouldered by Doubleday"? But then, you say yourself: "...admittedly I belong to a rather outdated group of writers in my thinking". (And how's that for syntax?)

Ted also opines that recent events have made BJB outdated. As a matter of fact, recent events have brought us closer to the America that I have postulated for 1988. I may conceivably have to advance the dating in the book—we may be getting there a little quicker than I had anticipated. Of course, this may merely be good fortune—but it may also have something to do with an understanding of the forces at work in our society.

Ted believes that I'm against "the system" of sf book publishing because I haven't "the wit to get around it." But I have gotten around it. Ted's notion of sneaking things into his books as "a kind of judo" is on a level with inserting the word "fuck" in Urdu as a character name in a story so as to "put one over" on JWC. Ted asks why I sold my first novel to a schlock house if I'm against schlock publishing. Would you believe that I'm now against schlock publishing because I've had experience with it? That's called "learning from experience," Ted. You might try it sometime. And the gall of the man insisting that *SOME OF YOUR BLOOD* belongs in the "sub-genre" (sub-sub-genre?) of "psychological deduction"! And *MOBY DICK* belongs in the sub-genre of "existential whaling stories." But then, Ted probably thinks that *Moby Dick* is a venereal disease.

Shit, I could go on all day—Ted White epitomizes everything clannish, paranoid, Philistine, illiterate, envious and just plain boorish which encrusts the science

fiction field like a scabbing of clammy barnacles. Also, he is a liar.

Would you buy a used car from this man?



Ted White
339 49th St.
Brooklyn, N.Y.
11220

I wonder why you think that "After Bug Jack Barron and *Dangerous Visions* there'll be no going back to the 'safe' subject matter and the 'fit for children' writing dictated now by the magazines and many pocketbook publishers"? You seem to be saying that up to now everything has been edited on this level, but that's not so — else, how could such 'taboo breakers' get into print? More importantly, what makes you think that the publication of such books by one publisher would influence another?

Publishing houses work on two levels: external standards and internal standards. The internal standards are those of the editor: "I don't care for this." External standards are those dictated by the desired audience: "I don't think librarians/readers/mothers/etc. would care for this." Each house has its own editors and its own audiences.

When I turned in *The Jewels of Elsewhen* to Belmont, the editor there told me, "You've got some pretty explicit sex here, and you mention marijuana."

"What's wrong with that?" I asked.

"Well, one of our major markets is the stores in the highschools — you know, the ones run by students where they sell notebook paper and pencils and like that. The books are screened. I'm afraid we'd lose the market if we left all this sex and stuff in."

"Well, if you'd told me it was a juvenile you wanted," I said, "I wouldn't have put it in."

"Oh, but we don't want juveniles," she said. "Besides, you've done it very well. It fits. I mean, I'd hate to take it out."

"So what're you going to do?" I asked.

"It's up to you."

"No," I said. "You're the editor. It's up to you."

"Well, it'll mean we'll lose those markets..."

The upshot was the book came out uncut and uncensored. Big deal. I doubt it sold any better or any worse than other Belmont sf. I'm told the distributor guarantees a display life of no more than two days. My friends say they never saw it on sale.

But do you honestly think that Belmont (as an example) cares if either Bug Jack Barron or Dangerous Visions are published? Belmont has Belmont to worry about. It's a big pond, and there are a lot of publishers. IF will still be bought primarily by teenagers, and I doubt Fred Pohl is going to start shoveling Bug Jack Barron or its successors out at them. I think you're making too much of all this.

((Well, I still think there's a strong movement in sf toward acceptance of male-female relationships on a more basic and realistic level than friendship and Platonic love. Science fiction is not an isolated little backwater in the river of literature (wow!) and it is influenced by trends and events in the larger body of writing in this country. For instance, the Ardrey books and others recently which picture man-as-instinctual-animal bring readers and the rest of the population by osmosis to a greater awareness of body as body.

The youth today are hip, cool and won't buy the sex-fear scene their parents are bagged in, and won't for long buy emasculated, "screened" books. Teenagers don't think of themselves as children in need of protection from life. Science fiction largely has gotten by in its editorial delusion that it can be adult while soft-pedaling adult concerns, but not for much longer.

I don't mean I want to see sex like "...turgid nipples...quivering thighs...she screamed in ecstasy as he plunged..." I do mean that it's stupid and hypocritical to shout "WE'RE AN ADULT FIELD OF WRITING!" to critics and reviewers while editing with one eye on librarians and tight-lipped mothers.

If I had written this five years ago it would be more true, because today sf writers and editors and publishers are being more honest and "daring". It's a continuing process, but I'm afraid that most of the magazines are caught in a double-standard squeeze.

Not everything up to now has been edited with juvenile standards in mind, of course not, but too much has...and still is. How did 'taboo breaking' Dangerous Visions get into print? Not the usual way. It took a superman like Ellison to ram it through. It has sold very well and will sell well in paperback, perhaps very well. Bug Jack Barron, if the rest of the book is as good as the first two chapters, will sell well, too, in my opinion. If it does you can bet Belmont will pay attention. All sf publishers will pay attention! As will the writers.

Maybe I am making too much of this. Time, as somebody said, will tell.))

Re: your quote from Bug Jack Barron: This is supposed to be good writing? I see that Norman even writes Harlan Ellison speech: "Don Sime would now never ball her." An ugly, Hollywood, teenybopper word, "ball." And why not "Don Sime would never ball her now"? Because it reads better? Aw, bug Spinrad.

((Picky, picky, picky.))

Re: NEW WORLDS: Would you care to comment on the cover with the Maharishi? I'm nominating it for the Bludgeon Good Taste of 1968 Award myself — although, as you'll see from the column, it's running against a tough crowd this year.

((I don't remember the covers of the two issues of NEW WORLDS I saw. (A bad sign, Mr. Moorcock.)))

Letters:

Rick Norwood: Are you now admitting that Star Trek is on a level with comicbook writing? If you will do this one simple thing, I will agree with everything you have to say about the show. My "refusal to play the game" was based on the (mistaken?) notion that you Star Trek nuts regarded the show as Fine Science Fiction. And since I can't help comparing it with Fine Science Fiction I have read recently, perhaps you can now understand my low opinion of it. But you're right: measured up against, say, Batman comics, Star Trek is quite laudable. Err, the Bob Kane Batman comics, that is...

Still, I can't help wondering about your description of the crew of the Enterprise as no-talent types and the Captain being the only man with the guts/talent/technical training to make landings on strange planets. I'm curious: howcum only Captain Kirk is endowed with these qualifications? How come the Enterprise doesn't carry a qualified Alien Contacts Team in its huge crew? What does the crew do, besides helping to keep each other from being bored? And what would happen if the Captain got killed? Who could possibly move up to his exalted position? ((Spock! Spock!)) Is this any way to run a space ship? I doubt it.

I can't figure Kay Anderson out. This seems to be a basic problem of mine, and I've about decided that she was placed on this planet for expressly this purpose. Take, for example, her letter here: I can't figure out whether she's praising me or putting me down. What's all this "James Fenimore Cooper Syndrome"? What did I say in the quote she quotes that "demands a jar of mustard to spread on /my/ foot"? And, is that Good or Bad? (I guess I'll try some mustard and see. Coleman's, salad mustard, Polish mustard, what? Help!:) You can see the problems this woman causes me.

Still, I'm flattered she thought to nominate me for fan writer last year, and perhaps I should thank her for being one of those who did, this year. Last year, of course, I would've had to disqualify myself, since Con Committee Members aren't eligible for Hugoes. However, nobody nominated me last year...

Alex Kirs is another voice from the past. A good, if convoluted letter there. But what's this about "is the

'involvement' /I/ talk about really preferable—it is certainly antithetical—to good writing?" I believe I was talking about reader involvement in the personality of a magazine. I don't see this as in any kind of opposition to "good writing", by which I presume Alex is referring to the writing of the stories in the magazine. I'm talking about the package in which the stories are contained. Beyond stating the fact that bad stories harm future sales of a magazine (and its reverse: good stories help), I was not specifically talking about the quality of stories or writing. I was talking about that which makes magazines different from, and superior (if indeed they are superior) to books. Books (paperback books) and magazines are presently in direct competition on the newsstands, and the books are winning, because they enjoy more favorable distribution. Magazines must try to offer that which books can or will not offer: personality, issue-to-issue involvement. Readers must care for a magazine and want it to survive. Obviously, the foundation must be the basic function of the magazine—good stories—but this alone won't do it anymore.

Think about this: what if, after a week or two, a month on the outside, all paperback sf books had to be taken permanently off sale. Well, I've looked at a lot of royalty statements from paperback publishers. The average sf book sells between 30,000 and 50,000 copies in its first six month period. There are exceptions, but I'm talking about the average books: the bulk of the books. It takes a year to three years before 70,000 or 80,000 copies are sold. Compare that with the sf magazines. They sell 50,000 and up all within a month or less. If the distribution was as favorable for magazines as it is for books, I suspect every sf magazine would sell between 70% and 90% of its print-order. And that's pretty respectable indeed. So let's not call the sf magazine dead just yet.

Hey, Jack Gaughan, Chip Delany is some kind of writer, yeah, but let's just stop a moment shy of acclaiming "the really dedicated craft that went into putting just ONE (count them ONE) word onto paper." Some of the words Chip has put on paper have been just as ill-chosen as those of even you and (I say, yes:) I. Let's not build up a super-venerated ghodhood around Chip, or, indeed, any of us writers. Chip has undeniable talent, some idea of what he's doing, and a fair amount of push to do it. So do most writers who exist above the X-cents-a-word hacking level. Let's just belay the Great Artist Above Mundane Criticism jazz, though. Huh?

The Bok F&SF cover was flopped (mirror-reversed), but I doubt it was to Hannes' consternation. Since he agreed to it and resigned the flopped version (although this shows up only on proof copies; his signature got cut off with the trim).

All this "selling season" stuff strikes me as Ad Agency Superstition. For instance, summers are supposed to be Big for comic books. Publishers bring out their extra comic book goodies in the summer months. But, for some strange reason, the summer of 1965 (I think it was) was disastrous for comic books. Why? Maybe they were all rather more lousy than usual. Maybe the kids who buy them were out looting. Maybe the distributors happened, that couple of months, to cheat more than usual. Who knows? So now sum-

mers are a "bad season."

This guy P.A.M. Terry has to be read to be believed. A recent British fanzine (BADinage) carried his anonymous attack on the NyCon for slighting a mythical twenty friends of his in Australia who, sez he, joined the con. The guy is, let's face it, a jerk. And I admire your restraint in replying to him.

I an Cut To The Quick to discover that all these years Avram has been waiting for me to Do A Proper Job on him. Avram, believe me, I thought of it. When Alma Hill started knitting socks for you and sending them off to you by mail, I was readying a massive attack in which I would link the two of you in the most compromising terms. But then you went and got married, and that scotched my whole schtick. Please forgive me, and tell me that my half-hearted 'tepid' insult will suffice.

((Hey, Avram, I'm sure Norman Spinrad has a couple Ted White Insults he'll let you have at half price.))

Greg Benford, it saddens me to say that you are off your ass. You have swallowed Spinrad's line, hook and sinker. There is but one single, simple requirement for getting published in sf: good writing coupled with a good story. Those are damned broad criteria, and they include all that's ever been best in sf. If you can write well, and tell it convincingly, you can sell any story, taboos or no. Spinrad's problem (and I return to him solely because he has made so much noise about himself that everyone is using him as an example) is that his preoccupation lies, apparently, in taboo-breaking. ("Norm's interests in stf—exploration of ideas that are taboo-breaking" ...G. Benford.) Just sitting down and thinking up taboos to break is infantile. It is stupid. Anyone can break a taboo. But not just anyone can do it in a valid way.

There are taboos and there are taboos. I don't think Norman has broken any, yet, myself. Even felatio isn't new in sf. Sturgeon included cunnilingus in his borderline Some of Your Blood, and I've had felation in more than one of my books. Not perhaps as crudely as Spinrad, but there's such a scene in my forthcoming Paperback Library Spawn of the Death Machine. Mostly you're talking about publishing taboos, rather'n ideational taboos. You're talking about overcoming a publishing convention, such as the old pulp conventions against obscenities. (But Dashiell Hammett snuck in words like "gunsel," which means a boy used for pleasure by homosexuals, even in the 1920s.) The Lovers didn't really break any taboos, either.

It seems to me that Spinrad's kind of "taboo-breaking" is simply a form of sensationalism, a way of playing Valley of the Dolls in our little pond. Today's taboo is tomorrow's ho-hum; you know, and a book written only to shock and break taboos doesn't last long.

In fact, as long as I'm on the subject, let's talk about Bug Jack Barron. It sold to Avon Books for \$3,000, accepted without major revisions. But Norm had previously agreed to a contract with Ace, for the Ace Specials series, for \$2500 and considerable revision. Terry Carr, the editor in question, was not interested in 'gutting' the book. He simply thought it needed more work. Spinrad agreed.

But he sold the book to Avon for more money and 'as is', thus in effect selling an inferior book. Ironically, Pyramid was willing to bid \$3500 for the book, but, like Ace, wanted revisions. I'm told Spinrad never even heard about that offer. Ace had sent out a prepared contract and heard about the sale to Avon only after the fact, without being asked to bid higher (which Ace might've done, I dunno).

Now Terry and I have our arguments, and our tastes in sf diverge, but I think he is probably one of the most honest, talented, and informed editors in the business. He liked Bug Jack Barron, with reservations. He was willing to work closely with Spinrad to help strengthen the book. It is very likely that had Spinrad chosen to work with him even I would have admired (if not liked) the final product. Spinrad might've had a Hugo winner.

But Spinrad is not concerned with quality. He's concerned with breaking taboos. Feh. He also promotes too much publicity for himself.

I like Poul's idea of a monthly magazine devoted purely to responsible sf reviews. I think it deserves more talking about, and some doing. A monthly magazine, offset perhaps, circulated to the libraries and schools, and which does not follow a narrow-lined policy of enthusiasms. A Virginia Kirkus of SF which is better written and better-thought-out than Virginia Kirkus, but which fulfills the same important function. We've seen attempts in the past, but they've been fanzines. Maybe the SFWA should sponsor it.

Baird Searles' letter points up something I've been wondering about for some time now: What qualifications does a man require in order to set himself up as an Authority on a field? In Mr. Searles' case it appears to be nothing more or less than access to a microphone at WBAI, a non-profit radio station. I listened to the review of my book which he accurately describes as a "comme-ci, comme-ca review", and later I read a transcript (courtesy Paul Busby, then of Lancer Books). Mr. Searles used something like two hundred words to say next to nothing at all, positive or negative, about the book in question. Following this, he turned the microphone over to a friend, who reviewed several other books in the same fashion. The reviews were fully as informative as jacket blurbs. I haven't bothered to listen to Mr. Searles since. But because the man is broadcast at large to a New York City FM audience, he assumes the role of authority. It is his because he is, willy-nilly, listened to. And apparently he believes in it himself. I've heard several friends who are sf writers talk about how wonderful he is, after he told them, (off the air) what wonderful writers they were. Perhaps if he'd done the same for me I too might worship at his feet. Or perhaps not.

I had only one contact with the man. Someone brought him to a Fanoclast meeting only a week or two after his fateful review of my book, sometime in late winter or early spring of 1967. He was a scruffy-looking fellow who made absolutely no effort to meet people or be friendly, but seemed willing to be lionized if anyone cared to make the effort. The meeting included people like Lee Hoffman, Alex

Panshin, Dave Van Arnam, Jack Gaughan, Grey Morrow, and ghod knows who-all-else — maybe twenty or more people — but Searles made little attempt to talk to any of them, and soon left. I had just had to tell the New York City Convention Bureau that we didn't want the flying saucer nuts advised about the NyCon3, and this topic came up in passing during a conversation which included, as I recall, either Andy Porter or Arnie Katz, with Searles a semi-onlooker. I reiterated that we wanted to hold the membership of the con down to a manageable size, and Searles seemed to understand this. I do not recall being impolite, but I can't say I warmed to Mr. Searles' limp handshake and fish-like manner. But I have been impolite to visitors in my house on only one occasion, and that was to send a gentleman packing with instructions never to return. (It was a painful incident and I didn't enjoy it at all.)

At no time after this did Searles make any attempt to get in touch with me, either by phone or mail, or even indirect message. His offer to broadcast speeches was a well-kept secret (although we have them all on tape and will be publishing them), and the cause of his annoyance is known solely to himself. I suspect it stems from pique, however: we didn't treat him like a celebrity. (A number of us have been on radio or on tv, and I guess it just didn't occur to us that he might expect it.)

Now this snide little letter of Searles' annoys me. He begins with this line about not usually indulging in "the standard mud-slinging of fandom," but he does a creditable job nonetheless. He refers to "Mr White's xenophobia about strangers intruding," refers to "the lack of politeness on the other side," says "science fiction fandom is not noted for its tact or finesse, but this hit a new low," and then he wonders if his review of my book had anything to do with it.

That's fine mud-slinging, Baird! You're very adept. You have the deft needle-touch of a talented hair-puller. You're capable of ignoring facts, of pretending to knowledge you don't have, of condescension for a field you're unaware of, of snobbery, and of snidely impugning my motives. Congratulations! I rather think you've gone us one better.

A couple of days after the NyCon3, several people asked me, "What'd you do to make WBAI so mad at you?"

When I asked what they meant (I rarely listen to WBAI myself, and had missed it, whatever it was), I was told that Searles had quite petulantly complained, on the air, that there was an sf convention going on in town, but that he wasn't allowed to say where it was.

I didn't hear this. I only had it reported to me by several different people. I don't know exactly what Searles said nor how he said it, but to judge from the reaction of those who heard it, I should say he more than repaid us for our supposed impoliteness.

"I don't feel the mass media should be courted, but I don't believe they should be stepped on, either, particularly if science fiction and fandom want the new non-insular image that it needs so badly." Count the errors and misassumptions. Note the grouping of sf and fandom together as needing a new non-insular image. Note a man's feelings being hurt.

That's all right, Baird. We wouldn't let Long John pub-

licize the con either.

Gary Deindorfer
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I would recommend that anybody
fooling around with psychedelic
sf first read the William Burroughs
novels straight through,
from Naked Lunch to Nova Express

to The Soft Machine to The Ticket That Exploded. I consider
Burroughs potentially the most important writer of recent
years less in my opinion for what he says than for how he
says it. No matter what you may think of his visions of
hell, or his tendency to tonal repetitiousness, the fact is
he is the first literary genius to try his hand at science
fiction, the first to combine the general approaches of
science fiction with visionary drug writing. He makes any-
body in Dangerous Visions come off as somewhat of a pussycat,
really. Hell, what are the experiments of farmer in
that book but a rather obvious neo-Joycianism — the over-
complex punstery, a consistent vitiation of any really strong
image by making it literary, of books, something that will
get to the scholars where they don't have any balls. On the
contrary, Burroughs peels all images down to their raw bas-
ics, and gives them to you as they occur, first time off,
before they can be changed, diluted. As he says, "I am a
recording instrument. Insofar as I succeed in DIRECT ex-
pression of certain areas of psychic process I may be said
to serve a limited function. I am not an entertainer."

This is one of the keys for anyone attempting what you
term psychedelic sf. To convey the effect of visionary ex-
perience, you have to deal with what is at hand, with what
happens right where you're sitting now, to get the essence
of a drug experience which tends to pertain to what is going
on, now. An overlapping mosaic of now, now, now. In a
field where writers tend to think and function in the past
tense someone like Burroughs who deals with immediacies,
pleasant or unpleasant, but AS THEY ARE, this is something
to, ah, pick up on. And it's a far cry from Chester Ander-
son.

Perhaps Phil Dick comes closest. He may not be a lit-
erary genius, but I think he has other science fiction writ-
ers beat all hollow in one particular. And that is his a-
bility to convey certain aspects of mood, certain resonances
and essences of a situation. All of his writing has kind
of a drug feel for me: some of his books have, well, an acid
feel. He actually manages to bring the same varieties of
mood across: the feeling of being unsure what it is, where
it's at, what's going to happen next, or simply what's going
on. Eye In The Sky and especially the last part of Man In
The High Castle have this feeling. Other books have an am-
phetamine tempo and feeling to them of everything about to
careen out of control, for instance The Three Stigmata of
Palmer Eldritch where somewhere about halfway through the
book Phil actually does lose control and surprises himself
by getting into some hairy new aspect of: well, if it's THIS
then how can it also be THAT; God, now it's neither but THAT,
everytime I think I'm catching onto the game they throw in
new rules for me. Like playing poker and before you know it

it's peanuckle and you're still playing like it's poker.
So by the time you get wise to it's being peanuckle already
it's Old Maid...and on and on.

Norman Spinrad's article kind of tells me where science
fiction in the magazines is at all right. Pohl considers
Ellison's "built in the privates like an ape" dangerous
stuff. Go read The Soft Machine, Fred Pohl. As for Ellison,
I get the impression that for Ellison a line like that is a
dangerous vision. Go read Tom Paine, Harlan.

((Come on, Gary, you're in no position, intellectually
or professionally, to patronize Pohl or Ellison.))

As for me, I had never considered sending my first book,
The Fourth Schedule, anyplace else than a house like New
Directions or Grove Press. Though some might call it science-
fantasy the thing that more than anything else makes it dan-
gerous is that it is more science fantasy-fact. I hope I can
get it published. I think it is good enough to see print and
nowhere in it have I watered down anything that needed laying
out AS IS. The thing I can't understand is why People like
Norman Spinrad don't submit their stuff to places like Grove,
New Directions, Dial Press, etc. Why not submit a science
fiction story that says something you really had to say to,
for instance, Evergreen Review?

Anything that really tells it the way you see it and fuck
consequences would probably no more appear in an Ellison an-
thology than anyplace else. Ellison above all else likes ob-
viousness: "Hey, God sucks!" or "Dig this, sodomy is an ac-
cepted practice between shipmates on long space voyages with
no women." Always the tone of, "Got caught with my hand in
the cookie jar." A real artist does not really think about
what taboos he is breaking and so on and how daring he is.
He simply says what he has to say, what he fucking will say.
The thing about science fiction writers, I doubt all but a
few of them have been there. They tend to assume they know
what it's all about. They tend to be very conscious of how
what they say will be taken and to avoid as a matter of
course going into anything that might blow out a few minds
somewhere. Well, my book, due to what I had to say about some
things I have seen, probably will blow some minds. I'll be
surprised if it doesn't.

What it is, I'm tired of Harlan Ellison thinking he and
his crowd know where it's AT. He's dealing with the one
tenth of the berg sticking up out of the water. Hope he does-
n't go to close to it in his little boat or he might find out
what the nine tenths part of what we might call the Set-up can
do when you deny its existence and assume what's showing above
waterline is taboo when the real thing floats below. Sink or
swim, every dangerous visionary for himself! Or one man's
vision of Hell he couldn't publish in GALAXY is another man's
vision of some cotton candy. I except "Faith of Our Fathers"
by Philip K. Dick. Some powerful imagery even if the idea that
God might be both good and evil fails to shake me up. You
see, I don't believe in Pandora's Box. Adam and Eve should
have stared the snake in his beady eyes and said, "You're ta-
boo, Restriction, what's hanging us up. 99 and 9/10ths per-
cent of all human thought has gone to put restrictions on

people, very little to take them off. The forbidden fruit is part of the big Original Sin con game."

Or you are on a trip and It winks at you and shows you its dirty underwear: "See, you didn't know that to maintain appearances I have to be that dirty somewhere else, did you?" So next day you want to tell somebody about it and the little voice whispers in your head, "Do so and you will be punished."

So for Harlan's next collection I will submit a story about the creator who made this universe by stroking his rod; we are his jissom.... Harlan introduces it with three pages and there I am with my hand in the candy jar. Yeah, ain't I daring?

Maybe the daring thing is to stand up for the possibility of our becoming more human to each other. Kindness and respect, part of the taboo against knowing who you are not to see that we have this humanity in our reach if we give it a go. By all our dumb Gods, how long we want to bat this tired old act around — that we're puppets and we can only follow what's been programmed for us. This is all that taboo propaganda which extends everywhere, well beyond the field of science fiction: government taboos, no, can't do THAT; religious taboos, no, can't ask THAT; all sorts of restrictive shit. We tend to want to think we're property. Actually, isn't it better that we can decide things for ourselves and be responsible for doing this?

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About twenty-five years ago, perhaps longer, I lost control of my senses and conceived the fruity idea of holding a worldcon in Bloomington (of all places), and later discussed some aspects of such an affair with a few Los Angeles fans (of all people). They encouraged me and in the next few months I almost fell over my own foolishness.

At that time, a city as small as Bloomington could easily accomodate a worldcon. Attendance was certain to be no more than a hundred, or possibly a hundred and fifty foot-loose fans and a few parasites; and too, it was no difficult feat to win a bid. The rotation plan wasn't even a beam in some dreamer's eye, and under-the-counter profits were nowhere near the million dollar mark. The fan who had ideas conducted a relatively mild fanzine campaign during the preceding months, and wrote a few dozen letters to the BNF's who were likely to give him a boost and a vote. Once on the convention floor, the fan buttonholed a few people to determine his chances, and then stood up to make his spiel — he merely invited the assembled fans to come his way next year, instead of dashing off to some uncivilized place such as Philadelphia or Newark. If the fans liked your face and your honeyed words (nary a drop of liquor flowed) you were in. Bloomington may well have won it.

So I made plans and consulted the Los Angeles fans. It was to be the first lake convention: Bloomington has a medium-sized lake about twelve miles north of town, with a meeting hall capable of containing a hundred persons and

then some; I would charter a couple of local busses and run the happy fans back and forth twice a day—or, if they wanted to rough it, they could camp and picnic at the lake. This much I told the Los Angeles people, and this much they approved of.

My secret plan was to charter the lake rubberneck boat on the last afternoon of the con, haul the entire assemblage to the middle of the lake, and sink the vessel. I would stand on the shore and watch it go down. That would be the end of fandom, and a good thing.

Now it is too late.

This has been an attack on tepid Avram Davidson.

((Spoken like a true Secret Master.))

Dave Locke
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It's wonderful to get back in fandom after a few years of sanity and find the neofans still saying how much greater it must have been in fandom ten years ago than it is today. There must be something magic in the phrase 'Good Old Days', because today's ordinary days seem to sooner or later get transformed into them.

I used to argue about the definition of BNF, but now I'm beginning to think I was wrong. It seems reasonable...that a BNF is a fan who has kept his name in the public (fan) eye for a period of about ten years, regardless of whether or not his contributions to fandom possess any inherent worth or not. I guess I'll just have to live with it... Of course I don't disagree with all of Berry's nominations, but I would like to see him make a list of all the people he considers BNFs who are still active today. All fanzines need an occasional touch of humor.

Rotsler draws some fabulous tits. Does he use models?

((I don't agree that it takes ten years to become a BNF. Some make it in one year. Others, with decades in fandom, are hardly known.))

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Let's see if I can still remember things that happened as long ago as the day I read the 23rd PSYCHOTIC. Instant encouragement, because I recall quite well the main objection that I found to Ted White's circulation theories. He overlooked completely the word-of-mouth element in the way a magazine sells. This must have something to do with it, because in colleges and at newsstands where patrons know each other and on commuter trains, there must be a lot of casual remarks that call attention to two particularly good stories in this month's If. I feel that Ted continues to put too much importance on artwork and general format as a sales factor. I can't think of any correlation between them and success for a stf magazine. I know that there is a necessity for keeping up with the Joneses, in the sense that a magazine that didn't have a colored cover or used 18 point type for the title of a story on its first page would be in trouble; but I'm not at all sure that total circulation

of the prozines would drop if their editors violated the anti-trust laws and decided to adopt these economy measures simultaneously in all the magazines. Of course, I can't rid myself completely of the suspicion that there are no regular readers of the prozines except for the few hundred people in fandom. This hypothesis assumes that circulation depends on the number of births two decades earlier, and that at some point in each young person's life he buys one copy of a prozine and is so disgusted with it that he never buys another. The birth statistics and circulation figures are facts that tend to confirm this suspicion.

I've been reading a great deal of old science fiction in recent months. My reactions are quite in line with what Harlan says about the sort of fiction Campbell has liked to publish in the past fifteen years or so. Still, I can't find sympathy for one minor portion of A Voice From The Styx. This is the defense of his refusal to be bored by the start of a novel which might improve in its later stages. I've never been much better than a coward in most of my encounters with the environment, but I'm proud of the fact that I've fallen asleep often over a bad book that didn't get better without regrets. All too often, a radically new style or a completely unfamiliar subject matter will be mistaken for boring writing until the reader rather than the writer gets better further on in the book.

I read with amazement and growing excitement all the letters about the last worldcon and the next worldcon (assuming that fandom survives this fuss long enough to create a next worldcon) and about the people who are and who are not staging the events. I still want to remain neutral. But I can't help but think about what Voltaire said of the Old Testament, when he indicated that he wasn't sure if it was divinely inspired, but if it was, then he wished that the divine inspiration had chosen a more edifying subject.

DANGEROUS VISIONS is a book that I haven't seen, so I'll keep out of that fuss, too, because of ignorance rather than fear of getting squashed. But the very existence of the controversy over the Ellison collection is proof that fanzines are more concerned with science fiction today than they were in the past. Nothing like this discussion ever busted out in a half-dozen fanzines and FAPA and various other places when other controversial collections came out in the long ago. I just did an article on Phil Stong's THE OTHER WORLDS for another fanzine, and while I was writing it, I was struck by the fact that fanzines of its era simply published little paragraphs about what stories it contained and some criticism on the grounds that Stong could have chosen better fiction. There wasn't this appearance of deep involvement by the people who wrote about it.

In the 24th PSYCHOTIC, I found Norman Spinrad's article exceptionally well done and another Far Cry, this time from the era when the pros who wrote for the fanzines were so careful to say nothing that might possibly distress another pro, whether author, editor or agent. I feel that the

timidity in the prozine field today is left over as a symptom of the disease that killed off most of the pulps. Of course, the publishers didn't want to offend mothers and fathers, because consciously or unwittingly, the publishers were putting out old pulp magazines for kids and there weren't enough adult readers to keep the field alive when the kids turned on the television sets around 1952. The adults found paperback racks containing fiction that appealed at least to both kids and adults, sometimes to adults alone, and enough adults still read to keep the paperback industry busy while magazine fiction is approaching extinction. At the same time, I have an uneasy notion that many of the themes which Spinrad would like to use in science fiction are anti-science fiction in one sense. If all science fiction stories suddenly began to stress drugs, race problems, birth control measures, and the other current problems, aren't readers apt to suspect suddenly that these are contemporary stories that have been converted into science fiction by the same minor changes that were once employed to turn westerns into space operas? Surely there must be some problems ahead that aren't problems today.

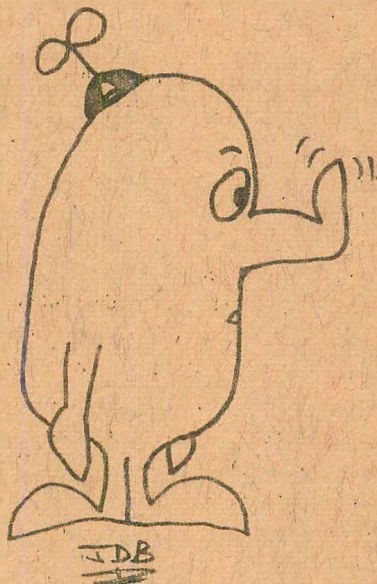
Usually I don't believe in the existence of tie-ins between fandom and major events in the outside world. But I suspect that there really is a connection between the lack of fun and enthusiasm among today's new fans and the disorder that reigns in American big cities and in Vietnam. The kids who have sense enough to think at all are more serious these years than they were during the late fifties cited by John as a lighter fannish era. We were between 1984-type wars then and we thought that the sputniks meant a quite early start on manned space travel and nobody had assassinated a president for a long, long time.

I suspect that I'd be on John Hayden Howard's side, if I wanted to choose up sides in this argument over style. It's possible to make almost any writing seem terrible, by this procedure of picking to pieces each phrase by the critic's own standards. Maybe you've seen the annotated Gettysburg Address, hardly a line of which is without some devastating and half-accurate criticism because of a clumsy construction or needless circumlocution or obvious redundancy. Theodore Dreiser is a good example of a fiction writer whose prose wouldn't find favor if it were used in a junior high school essay. But the real question is: Does it work? Would THE ESKIMO INVASION have received so many accolades, if the style of writing ran counter to whatever eternal verities serve as the English language's substitute for the French academy and the Kremlin's decisions about the Russian alphabet? Would anyone read the Tolkien novels, if their effect depended on the skill with which the writer met the dictates of today's grammarians and stylists? I admit that I read them two or three years later than I might have done if I hadn't run across some paragraph-length excerpts in which Tolkien's writing faults stuck out so blatantly. I decided that I didn't want anything to do with a novelist who handled the language like that, even if he was a philologist. Then I finally read the novels anyway and liked them and didn't even notice the crudities as I went along.

Earl Evers' A Primer For Heads is essentially meaningless to me, because I have no intention of checking up to see if drugs will harm me. It reads as if it's authoritative and the attitude of the writer seems fair enough. I have yet to see a sensible explanation of why those favoring the wider use of drugs are so careful to use euphemisms. Certainly grass and pot and high and all the other terms are well enough known in the mundane world to provide no camouflage, if the wrong person happens across an article on drugs. I get the impression that the drug advocates hope that using new words to describe old matters will have a magical effect, that of removing the public's prejudice, removing the bad physiological and psychological effects on some users, making a clean sweep of all the things that have caused drugs to become illegal.

It was high time that Rotsler got an appreciation issue, but it was a bittersweet tribute, in one sense. He's just been dropped from FAPA for lack of activity there, after having produced three and four times as much activity in recent years as some other members who doled out their minimal a little at a time instead of in sudden immense batches. I hope he draws as much and as well for you as he did for FAPA.

((Yes, Bill sent me a new batch of drawings a few weeks ago along with three startling photos, several of which will be published in PSY when I think fandom is ready for them.))



Doris P. Buck
510 Independence Ave., S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
cylinder and a slab?

Can you do something to stop Robert Bloch from reviewing until he learns the difference between a

((I can take a slab at it, but I suspect he's cylinder the influence of Jack Daniels.))

Mack Reynolds
Apartado 252
San Miguel de Allende
Gto., MEXICO

ions of my yarns, and, of course, I value them.

I realize my characters tend to be on the wooden side. I subscribe to Kingsley Amis' contention that in science fiction the idea is the hero.

But no, I didn't have in mind capitalism as the socioeconomic system prevailing in Alphaland, but rather industrial feudalism, with a fascist type political system. And I didn't particularly have in mind socialism in the Karlists, although I suppose they could have been some form of socialist. The term has become so elastic that it's meaningless unless you go further. At one swing of the pendulum, the Labor party in England calls itself socialist, while at the other swing, so do the pseudo-communists of the Soviet Union, and Nasser calls his dictatorship Arab Socialism. The Karlists might also have been advocating Syndicalism or Technocracy or various other social systems. It wasn't particularly necessary for the story for me to go into more detail.

One of the things I am trying to put over in my stories is that there are various alternative socioeconomic systems. The world is presently in a condition of flux, including our own country, where it would seem to me that classical capitalism is rapidly evolving into a form of State Capitalism (government now spends over 22% of the Gross National Product, as contrasted with 8% under Hoover in 1929). I think that people should be aware of the fact that the changes upon us are not just a matter of choice between capitalism and communism, nor democracy and dictatorship. In my stories I've dealt with just about every social system advocated from Anarchism to Zapata's Mexican rural reforms. I am not beating any particular drum but am trying to stimulate interest in all facets of politico-economic extrapolation.

AND...

The Seattle Nameless Ones announce: II Seacon 71.

Co-chairmen: Von McIntyre
Anna Rutledge
V.W. Heminger

George H. Scithers
Box 0
Eatontown, N.J. 07724

It may be cheating or something to comment in one fanzine on what was said in another, but since Psy has detailed the bidding fight in such —er—detail, I will: Ted White says, in Yandro, that competition for Worldcon sites is Not A Good Thing, and cites the era of good feeling — from Pittcon through Seacon, Chicon III, DisCon, and Pacificon II, when there were no serious competing bids. Since then, things have been pretty grim — and pretty damn expensive for the participants. I agree! Let's go back to the smoke-filled room technique of picking a single site, and to Hades with these damned bid fights!!

Dean Koontz
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PSY #25 arrived today, and although we are in the midst of moving, I had to read it. To Hell with packing! Having read it, I must now write a LoC. I hereby leap into the crotch (the breach being much less interesting).

Ted White makes sense on such a variety of things that I sometimes feel he must be a committee; but then a committee could never agree on this many strong views. First of all, I agree with his viewpoint on Earl Evers and His Drug Things. Okay, pot is fine. It's nice to be high. I know that; most of us know that. But I also know that it is easily possible to lose perspective when high. And when one is continually high, one has no rational viewpoint from which to judge the high or its real meaning. Ridiculous things become "beautiful", not because you are looking into the depths of these things, but because a rational viewpoint has momentarily been suspended. For instance: there was a fellow I'll call Hank. Hank played the best damn harp since Dylan picked up his first dollar mouth organ. Hank has drifted into the grass-as-escape-but-I-won't-admit-it pattern, floating way up there for most of his time, convinced he is Lennon's Fool on the Hill. Not too long ago, Hank told me how wonderful his impromptu harp compositions become when he is high. I was skeptical. I listened. Crap! But Hank didn't think so. I decided I had a perfect chance for making a point, so I got him to agree to tape his grass-influenced compositions. When he came down again, we listened to them. He had to agree that they were atrocious. His rationalization? "But if you're high, you see inside the music. You really see what it is. You have a better position for judgement." You can't fight that. That's emotional nonsense.

Hank isn't "with it." Hank thinks so, but he's so far out he's almost coming back in. Sure, we all have escapes. Some alcohol. Some drugs. Mine? Reading. Oh, writing some too. I think writing is a sort of LSD to all writers. I know that when I am working on a story or book I can reach a peak of mental-emotional frenzy which is as good as anything I can get on grass and has the added benefit of being financially lucrative. But reading is the thing—the real thing—for me. I have this weird sort of ability to dive into a good SF novel and make myself live it. I mean, I hear that dragon snort, actually taste the blood of the hero, smell the heroine's hair. I used to worry about this. I think it is abnormal. Most people read a book. But McLuhan once described the book of the future wherein all five senses are really affected, and I suddenly realized that most people only read words and that experiencing the book was unusual. But I have accepted it as my peculiarity. It compensates for the fact that I never dream. The whole point here is the fact that the real world, the world down here is so fascinating that you don't need drugs. I've been in both worlds, and this one beats that one. The only difference is that you have to go looking for the fabulous things down here, whereas the quest is eliminated upstairs in the high world where things come to you. For some people, it is easier to sit and wait.

Again, I agree with White on Spinrad's "Neutral Ground." This is a story about drugs and is a little stale for this reason. In the July '68 F&SF, I have a story built around the chromosome damage done by LSD. The Psychedelic Children uses drugs, indirectly making a comment on the human mind—but not a direct statement of opinion. LSD becomes a handy way to explain the heroine's abnormality. Within the story, I have made no pro or con statement for the stuff. But by the end, there is a double-barrel-let's-loo-at-both-sides-of-the-coin idea presented. LSD has done a marvelous thing in that it has created a person who can actually change the fabric of this world, this reality. But, then, it has also made it necessary for this person to run away from the world, the reality, that created her.

"Neutral Ground" turns into the Oldest Wave sort of story one would wish to find. It is sometimes reminiscent of Heinlein's preachings. The thing Spinrad does best here is give us an atmosphere of horror and fear. But then he pulls another what I call—"Outer Limits" ending on us, making the villain into a good guy. He presents all sorts of interesting theories—through characters discussing the events it might be noted, not through actual action and plot—about the identity of the strange intruder into the experimentors' trips. In the end he dumps these theories and throws in an alien. LSD (or whatever he calls it in this story) is supposed to be the link that will unite alien and mankind, the bridge between races. Before Spinrad is going to get me to swallow this piece of philosophy, he is going to have to make me believe in a drug that either teleports the mind (as he hints) or one that expands the mind to new levels of investigation. LSD doesn't. Neither does grass. They both turn you in upon yourself. Off-hand, I can't think of a drug that is truly "conscious-expanding" and not "conscious-contracting". But Spinrad does not build a convincing case. He seems, mainly, to be trying to be dangerous. This time, anyway, it didn't work. Not for me, anyway.

I have run into censorship a few times. Having sold my quarter of a million words, I would have been damnably lucky not to. For instance, Joe Ross asked for a rewrite for AMAZING on a story that was "too sex-slanted for our publications." I re-wrote it. Then Joe asked me to put some of the sex back in, which I did. The major scene in trouble was a dog-rapes-woman scene. ((*Gasp* I haven't written one of those yet!)) The scene had to be shocking, because it has to jolt the hero from deep, slave-like hypnosis. I sweated my brains out to find another scene that would do the same thing to him. In the end, I found it. ((*Hmmm.)) The point is, the shocking sex scene is sometimes the easy way out. I know it was in that story. It required a real stretching of my mind to come up with something less sex-drenched and still as effective. In this case—as is almost always the case—the editor was correct. Some things were overdone. He didn't want me to take out the legitimate, natural flowing sex, but wished me to remove that which forced itself upon the story. Enough.

P*a*b*1*o

President, Secret Master Guild

I feel that a recent decision
of the Secret Master Guild

should be brought to the attention of your readers. At our last meeting, members discussed Ted White's column in your latest PSYCHOTIC, and the general feeling was that Fan X has been negligent in allowing his Secret Mastering to become obvious to fandom in general, instead of working completely unsuspected like all other Secret Masters. Fan X has therefore been expelled from the Secret Master Guild, and is no longer a Secret Master of Fandom.

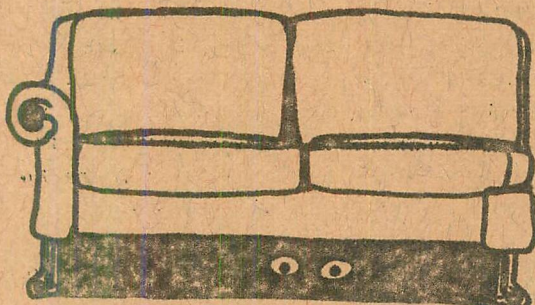
L. Sprague de Camp
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Many thanks for PSYCHOTIC No. 25, with my comments on Mr. Spinrad's article. You say that in this reply, I speak of anti-war mainstream

novels, whereas Mr. Spinrad is talking about anti-war science-fiction novels. Okay, let's consider anti-war science fiction novels. In 1907, H.G. Wells was warning us, in THE WAR IN THE AIR, that war would reduce the earth to universal barbarism. He warned of the atomic bomb in THE WORLD SET FREE (1914) and continued his warnings against war in several later novels. Olaf Stapledon's LAST AND FIRST MEN (1930) follows a similar line, while in 1932 J. Leslie Mitchell excoriated munitions makers in THREE GO BACK. And since 1945, stories of atomic doom have become utterly uncountable...

Perhaps I can make a small contribution to your current argument over drugs. I can't speak from personal experience, since I find the world so full of fascinating things that I haven't time to do half the things I want to anyway, so why should I coggle my few remaining wits in the search for some delusive chemical euphoria? I do, however, have a friend who is a professor of English at a local college. He teaches creative writing and is also a moderately successful novelist. My friend says that, among his creative-writing students, he knows of many who are on drugs who are on drugs of one kind or another. He says that, in his experience, use of narcotics, psychedelics, &c. is certain to kill whatever creative talent the user may have dead, dead, dead. The reason is not that the drugs necessarily destroy creativity - although this would probably depend upon the particular drug used. The real reason for this effect is that the drugs kill the user's critical faculties, so that no matter what bilge he writes, it seems wonderful to him. And since it is so much easier to write bilge than to write good copy...

((I have an idea we'll hear from Earl Evers on this point.))



JDB

Peter Singleton
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Crowthorne
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Greetings! It's a long time since I set my eyes on an issue of PSYCHOTIC and I was delighted to read Ethel Lindsay's interesting review in HAVERINGS #32 of PSYCHOTIC #23. I would very much like to be placed on your mailing list and I'm certainly willing to subscribe if you have a U.K. agent. If not, I'll promise to send you a LoC on each issue.

In case you are wondering where I've been, I can offer an explanation. I've been completely fasia for the last couple of years for a variety of reasons. For one thing, I've been experiencing considerable trouble with my hands. The tendons of both my hands have been slowly contracting, causing my fingers to curl inwards and rendering me completely unable to write. However, I have recently recovered from a series of operations in the plastic surgery department and my hands are almost back to normal again.

I hope you have no objections to sending PSYCHOTIC to an inmate of a mental institution because that's what I happen to be and I've been incarcerated for just over six years so far. The title of your fanzine is very apt for a place like this!

I get all the American prozines on subscription with the exception of the new INTERNATIONAL SF because according to the Galaxy Publishing Corporation this isn't as yet available on a subscription basis, so it must still be in the experimental stages.

I've recently joined the BayCon but of course I don't entertain any hopes of attending! My main reason for joining is in order for me to get in with my Hugo Awards votes for the final ballot. I was frankly amazed when WORLDS OF IF was awarded the prozine Hugo two years running. As far as I'm concerned, the 'big three' are still ANALOG, F&SF and GALAXY in that order.

I'm fairly keen on most of the New Wave but I draw the line at Ballard's disjointed monstrosities, though he can write good sf when he's in the mood. On the American front I favour Samuel R. Delaney and I particularly enjoyed his LINES OF POWER which is very much in the New Wave camp, so this phenomenon definitely isn't confined to the British prozine NEW WORLDS.

((I hope other faneds send you their zines, too, Peter.))

Anne McCaffrey
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PSYCHOTIC arrived today and managed to distract me from the day's ((June 5)) tragic overtones! Ah, brave new world that has such people in it?

Don't ask why it took so long for #25 to arrive: the residents of this town have long learned to take such irregularities with a shot of bourbon...it appears the post-office crew is inter-related and mail goes the long way round, by pigeon or cross-eyed gull. However, #25 was welcome today.

Let me comment favorably on the new type-face: handsome and legible as well as interesting.

My word, I sure have a champion down under! With friends like Pat Terry, who needs to mind how critics rave. And a proper court courtsey to you, Mr. Geis, for the handsome comments following the letter.

I've waited to answer the remarks of Mr. Paul Walker and Mr. Cox until I had seen #25. As you tersely remarked, Mr. Walker's comments anent RESTOREE are lacking in substance...socially acceptable substance, that is. I fear he falls afoul a fault usually ascribed the weaker sex - glittering generalities. As Mr. Walker does not comment on the novel itself, but on the sex of the author - which is not relevant - I comment no further.

To Mr. Cox's statement I can reply: he found that the narrative style ((of RESTOREE)) got too sticky towards the end. If he means sticky in plot construction, I might go along with him. If he means sticky-sentimental, I object, for Sara was sentimental, as most women are, so it was consistent to the character portrayed. The 'unexplained ambiguities of the technology' are explicable because the Lotharians (And I do regret that unimaginative planetary designation) knew the answers before they knew there were questions, having been presented, more or less, by the Mil with examples of advanced techniques. I thank Mr. Cox for his compliments about the Dragon-rider series.

((For those readers who are furiously paging through PSY 25 looking for comments from Walker and Cox to explain the above reaction from Anne—forget it. She is responding to portions of letters not printed forwarded to her in the Egoboo Bonus. I am printing her reaction because it is largely self-explanatory and because it leads into her remarks below.))

I wonder how the readers are going to respond to Alexei Panshin's novel, RITE OF PASSAGE (Ace) which came to my hand last night, and which I read avidly. Also a first-person female protagonist. I've already complimented Alexei but it bears public repetition: he did an extraordinarily fine job with his female characterization (one could almost say he learned from Heinlein's mistakes) and I thoroughly enjoyed the yarn.

One further word: the sex of the author is irrelevant to the talent involved. Sex ought not to rear its wobbling head, especially in s-f which prides itself on being open, tolerant, and imaginative. The story, be it novel or short story, ought to be judged purely on its own merits. I am a writer, who happens to be a woman. As a writer, I present my story from the best vantage point for that story. (I may yet do one from Mnement's point of view.)

Please - what is the etymology of 'egoboo bonus'?

((At times like this I rue my lousy memory. As I recall I started cutting up unprinted LoCs and partial LoCs in the Old Days...around PSY 14-15-16. I had read that the editor of a leading fanzine of that time had been doing it, and it seemed like a good idea, a proper additional "payment" to contributors. Now I even extend the bonus to writers of LoCs whenever possible.))

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On the old problem of whether tis nobler in the mind in print to *uck or not to *uck: i'm told a recent ANALOG story actually intimated that a guy and a girl slept together—to use XX century euphemistics—on a spaceship. But the act was nicely disguised, so that i'd get it but the kid next door wouldn't (or the editor). Later in that same story, though, such goodies as gradual human dismemberment and the like were described in detail most graphic. THAT, friends, is the 'double standard.' We deem it fine to show and write all about how people are destroyed—but it is EVIL to deal with how they are created! (Added: 6-7-68: we seem to be having more assassinations than rape.)

I'd rather an offuttspring looked at/read assorted scenes of ordinary (or even extraordinary) fucking than see/read, say, one of those recent Italian 'westerns' or a sexnovel whose author doesn't understand the limitations of male orgasmic experience—never, apparently, having had one—or that most females are climaxed in a manner different ffrom males. (Believe me, there's a vas deferens between males and females.) I'd rather they read CHATTERLEY or watched a Bardot movie than MOTHERS-IN-LAW, to which i object because it depicts (physical) adults with totally childlike behavior patterns and responses. I'd rather the younguns were led to believe adults do things differently. Some do.

That imitable writing team, Margroff and i, perpetrated a tale called STAR PRINCE. It involves an unheroic hero (my favorite kind; heroism is generally thrust upon one. Those who set out to be heroes frequently remain Over There, under upright sticks decorated with helmets—a reminder, presumably, of the futility of modern armor. Those who fall into heroism or have it thrust upon them frequently make it back—dazed. Then they do things like make lots of bad western movies or, just as execrable, enter politics). This reluctant hero of ours got ahead by moving through—careful; terminology for Adults Only—a series of four women. Wound up as planetary king.

It is now a novel with a hyperintercircuitous plot; in the days of which we speak it was a novelet. Gues who returned it, saying he liked blud-and-thunder as much as the next man, but please bear in mind when writing for him that there are younger readers—and parents?

But, gosh—one has to be at least 20 to be a graduate engineer, doesn't one?

Many screamed praises for years for a p.j. farmer novelet or two because sex was dargingly involved (well, sort of). And there was VENUS PLUS X, touted with awe for the same reason, and one hell of a disappointment. The 'sexiest' sf i can recall is de camp's ROGUE QUEEN—which was 'sexy' without being sexy. (Sorry, that's the best I can do in brief.) Even as a 'young reader' i got mighty tired reading about sf protagonists who ninnishly seemed to assume that a kiss on the mouth (1) was sufficient male-female relationship, and (2) led unalterably to the alter—as if christianity were going to survive! Van vogt, as i recall, did this to me more than once. Oh, and hamilton. I've always been a sucker for vv's work anyhow—until recently. I'm not that much a sucker. One can't make a

silky out of a sow's ear!

Greg benford suggests an adults-only sf line. ("You Enjoyed It As A Juvenile in ANALOG—Now READ The Adulterous Adult Version! You'll Go Into Orgasmic Transports at the Climax(es)!"') In a way, that's been done. But beacon books like beloved old PLANET and SS and TWS, was a 'cheat'—all the sex was on the cover. I still have a superb aldiss book; there was no sex in it really, although the cover certainly led one to believe more than just the plot was laid in africa! And i remember THE DEVIATES, whose cover depicted a young lady whose blouse was in a state of forcible removal. Can't find it—must have traded it.

It isn't fourletter words that are adult; certainly they don't make either james jones or his books adult. It's a normal—or even 'abnormal', by our lights, in another time/place—male/female response that seems grownup. (I am not referring to the ted mark supersexies or the myriads of copies.)

And if you think careful, good writing can't get the job done, read MANDROID in the 6/66 IF. There's a heterosexual laying, a homosexual, and a direct statement that the Adam/Cain story is hogwash. (Excuse me. Better keep it kosher—eyewash.) Which reminds me—it seems strange that l.s. de camp isn't familiar with vardis fisher's JESUS CAME AGAIN or, apparently, the success of grove and olympia presses.

The 'sleeper' sexy-sf novels of the past two years are john norman's GOR books. Apparently the writer is familiar with sir j.g. frazer's GOLDEN BOUGH, as well as with freud. He also understands, as burroughs did not, some female psychology and the role a woman plays in a barbaric society. I think they're sexy books, and i appreciate it. But—those younger readers everyone hides behind could probably read norman and miss the sex. Hence—they STILL aren't 'adult' sf.

I keep trying. But i find that i can sell graphically sexy novels easily, under a penname, while there is some trouble getting a little normalcy in sf. Now THAT's a double standard! I make money writing novels under a penname; i am proud of the sexless sf i publish under my own name—which makes less money, even when anthologized. Now...why?

((Dunno. I'd be interested in knowing what your sex penname is, though, even DNO.))

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Rick Norwood suggests that most detractors of STAR TREK either haven't seen many episodes, or approach it with a negative attitude and don't give it a chance. I, for one, have seen every episode to date and have only become alienated with them when flagrant inconsistencies and reversals of plot logic and characterization and mind-boggling coincidences manifest themselves. I thoroughly enjoyed the first season's first episode. I never knew that they cut corners to save money—their production seems excellent to me as it is. I'm willing to accept the Captain's presence on every landing party and the United-States-culture-in-1960 background as necessary concessions to viewer-identi-

fication. Within these self-imposed limits STAR TREK still fails most of the time.

Hollywood scriptwriters have risen to the occasion and tried to turn up with Great New Science-Fictionary Ideas. However, knowing little of science and even less of science fiction, they don't manage very well at it. Even more important, they don't know how to adapt the skills learned in years of writing for westerns, adventure shows, or situation comedies to this new milieu. As a result, the scripts for even such westerns as CIMARRON STRIP and THE BIG VALLEY are much better-written than those used on STAR TREK. The only times that non-sf writers have managed to produce good scripts are when they try writing something they are familiar with: humor. I refer to "I, Mudd" and "The Trouble With Tribbles."

Considering how STAR TREK's characterizations have deteriorated in the most recent episodes, I feel that Something Must Be Done. STAR TREK fanzines might well devote their time to compiling lists of good sf stories that would lend themselves easily for adaptation to the STAR TREK format, though after seeing how they ruined Fred Brown's "Arena" I'm doubtful that Roddenberry could do it right. Maybe the man has problems that I know nothing of, but that doesn't change the facts.

Richard Labonte
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CANADA

Ever since you sent me the first copy of the revived PSY, I've wondered what a hermit was doing living in an apartment building. But it's just occurred to me that your madness may have something to

do with it.

And maybe its your madness which makes you such an Evil Editor, always out for blood, chortling as you plan a particular issue's feud or fuss. Else why would you put the two letters from the Canadian Secret Masters Guild and from Ed Cox one after the other. The Mistress to the Guild is boosting a Torcon II in '72, and Ed Cox is behind Fred Patten and L.A. in '72. Someone, obviously, is thinking unrightly.

Maybe a Wise Old Fan —Ted White, perhaps, who seems to get worked up over conventions— could explain the Rotation System and its many oddities to either the Mistress of the Guild or Ed Cox, and make everything well.

As I understand it, if the Worldcon is held in Germany in 1970 (and I hope it is), then the chance for Toronto to host it would be put back a year, to 1973. Am I right? But I think I've heard that the Rotation System might be changed. If so, how, and what would that do to the people of Toronto who are thinking seriously about a Worldcon when it next comes to this region? With all the convention controversy swirling around Section 8, I wonder if anyone really knows why things are done as they are.

You. Geis, are not only Evil, you are also at least subconsciously perverted. Nothing in the world will ever convince methat the sentence "...it's a lot less likely to do you any permanent harm if you have a bed trip" is presented the way Earl Evers wrote it. I'll bet he said "bad trip". It's this kind of lascivious, perverted, and morally degenerate



writing which makes the people I board with suspect that fandom is a Bad Thing, a Dangerous Pastime, and an Immoral Hobby.

Earl Evers' article itself I am enjoying. He seems to know what he is talking about, and the taking of drugs seems to have made life more of an enjoyable reality for him. I've shown parts one and two of the article to people who, whether or not they take drugs at least talk about it a lot, and they've been impressed that such an article would be published with the author's name on it.

I view drugs and drinking in essentially the same light—I dislike them both, but I feel it's a person's own business as to whether or not he uses them. I object, of course, to the drunk or high driver who runs other people off the road...but at a party or in one's own home, I feel the use of any sort of stimulant ((or depressant?)) is up to the individual and his conscience.

Ted White deserves to be named best fanwriter this year. He bathes his own opinions to a great extent, and he often tromps on people in public with unrestrained savagery; he also is a bit intolerant of other people's differing opinions.

But he writes such provocative columns so well.

And when he's not after someone for their folly, I can really admire his writings. In *The Trenchant Bludgeon*, and in the *loetter* column, he defends or remembers friends, with a sensitivity that I admire and really respect.

And when he's not gunning someone down, or reminding readers of the good people and fine friends fandom has to offer; when he sticks to reviews or nostalgia, writing like a raconteur; then, he's another person, an entertaining one.

As I write this, I'm haunted by the thought that Ted White doesn't care what people he doesn't care about think of him. He gives that impression in his writing.

I've just read the story "Beyond Words" mentioned by Hayden Howard (in the July *F&SF*—and, by the way, I've just noticed that Ted White's name isn't on the masthead as associate editor anymore.) It wasn't at all a bad story...I read it all the way through, was interested in how it developed and how it would end, and was only mildly disappointed by the ending. As he says, it's a jab at the social protesters; the ultimate in protest, it seems, is to crawl into the mind and keep quiet; this bothers people of the Establishment, who drag them back out.

Robert A. W. Lowndes
HEALTH KNOWLEDGE, INC.
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New York, N.Y. 10003

Many thanks for sending me the revived *PSYCHOTIC*. I've been meaning for some time to run some sort of fanzine reviews, or at least listings of fanzines sent me, in *FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION*; so far the space problem has frustrated me. Perhaps the only sensible thing to do is to run them in the earliest issue of my publications possible — whether *FSF*, *MAGAZINE OF HORROR*, or *STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES*.

((You will now be deluged with fanzines...))

If anything justifies your increase in price, it is your new type face, which not only allows for more copy per page, but which I actually find more legible than the type face you used before.

The running argument around censorship and taboos continues to be stimulating and interesting. I'm entirely on the de Camp — Anderson — White side. In something like 27 years of dealing with writers, reading about them, etc., I cannot recall of an instance of an author's whining or spitting about "taboos, etc." where it did not turn out that the real reason for the difficulty was that the complainer was inept in one way or another: if not a poor writer, then the party complaining was sabotaging himself by confusing propaganda with art and/or entertainment, antagonising people needlessly, and otherwise behaving in such a fashion as at least to arouse suspicion that he/she was acting out a subconscious drive to fail.

It's true, of course, that at times writers who had something to say were not permitted to say it. But a clear-eyed view of literature just might show that, even in the worst of times (from the writer's point of view) those who really "had it" somehow managed to get their points across in spite of censorship, taboos, etc. — in fact, right under the noses of the censors. They took the situation as an amusing (rather than utterly grim) challenge, relaxed, and had one hell of a good time turning out what remains enduring literature that also goosed the authority figures of the time. In lots of instances, we may need footnotes to see some of their triumphs — but their contemporaries didn't. ... In our own times, it's something like the instances where relaxed authors managed to get a bit of sexiness or erotic humor past Catherine Tarrant and on to the printed pages of Astounding Science Fiction.

((Young writers often have trouble being that relaxed. They don't like to play games. In a way this controversy is a fight between youth and age...Ted White being over 30 now...))

Alan Dodd
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ENGLAND

The review of "2001—A SPACE ODYSSEY" by Robert Bloch impels me to recount my own odyssey yesterday for I actually met him in London where he had been flown over at 48 hours notice to do a script for the "Journey into the Unknown" television series due on your screen from Sept. 16th I think. Did you know when it's ten o'clock at night in California it's half past six in the morning here? You can get some very peculiar

sleeping hours to work out after an arrangement like this, via Greenland it is only 10½ hours by plane direct from Los Angeles. Isn't modern travel wonderful?

You wouldn't believe how useful an American toothpick could be to a professional writer until you've seen Bloch repairing not only his typewriter but his electric shaver as well! Mind you, the latter repair did not last too long and left him with an electric razor that couldn't be repaired because all the shops were shut this Whitsun weekend holiday season. Unlike Los Angeles most of the shops here do shut early and if you want something at some out of the way hour, then you've had it.

The typewriter was hired, incidentally, and the bar that holds the paper down came away from the cradle holding it, but half a toothpick held it in, though for how long only the remaining pages of that script will tell.

On Tuesday the workmen start construction work on the building opposite his hotel room where owing to the shortage of office space he is at present being forced to work, so you can imagine the difficulties there. At the London Hilton a few doors away he found a new anthology of short stories, which then answered the question I was asking as to what do you feel when you see a book of yours on a newsstand (OH, & GOD!), it had two stories of his in the collection which was quite a coincidence, though the introduction described him as a quiet spoken American with a love of baseball (which he doesn't).

Jim Harmon
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I don't know why I "got" to believe Harlan Ellison isn't happy, but is lonely, tormented. Most of us are lonely and tormented. I have never been able to derive satisfaction from such ideas as

"Einstein may have been a big brain, but he couldn't get out as good a fanzine as I can". Big deal! Some people are just better off than others. Harlan is better off in his tormented loneliness than I am in mine. It is just that I would not go about getting better off in his way if I could do it.

Right now I've got more money in the bank than I have ever had in my life — almost as much as I have previously made in my life put together. I don't really know what to do with it. (Except give it away.) I did buy a color TV. It seemed as if I should buy something. But I have this one pair of pants. Well, I have a brown suit but I hardly ever wear that. I wear these black Mr. Levi slacks most of the time. I'm fairly fat (tho not as fat as I used to be) and I wear out pants badly in the stride. I would wear out a pair of \$30 Italian silk slacks in a matter of weeks. So I wear these heavy Levi slacks. I have some others that are kind of worn out and patched that I put on while I wash these. It occurs to me that maybe I should buy a second pair of pants but I have yet to do so.

((I have a grey suit that I wear about once a year. I have two pairs of Sears Casual Jeans, assorted shirts, two sweaters, one pair of shoes. No desire for more. We think alike.))

The only things fanzines seem to discuss these days are Harlan Ellison and Star Trek (or Harlan-Ellison-and-Star-Trek).

I watch Star Trek fairly often, because there is little else on of any interest to me whatsoever. It is probably better than most TV series of the same type — that type is action/adventure, I would say. Gunsmoke is a bit better. I can work up absolutely no enthusiasm for the program — I wouldn't rearrange my schedule to stay at home Fridays to see it. I wouldn't write a postcard to keep it on the air. Maybe this is just generation gap. Younger fans must have some of the same enthusiasm for the show, that I once had for the magazines. I would say that the show is as good or better than many SF magazine stories and novels that appear these days. (Gunsmoke is also better than most etc., etc.) It is a far cry from the really good SF that has appeared in print in the past, and still occasionally appears in print. It probably does win new recruits to the ranks of SF readers. It seems to be as good or better than we dare hope SF TV can be. All of which is not to say that I can take the thing very seriously.

It dignifies it more than it deserves to discuss it seriously, but let me do my thing and compare it to an Old Radio Show. In I LOVE A MYSTERY, the three heroes could be described (among other ways) as Jack representing Logic, Doc representing Feeling, and Reggie representing Courtesy — the formalities by which a civilization functions. Jack was the leader.

On Star Trek, the three heroes might be described as Kirk representing Courtesy, Spock representing Logic, Dr. McCoy representing Feeling. Kirk is the leader — Logic and Feeling are subservient to Courtesy (or Tradition, or Formality). The tone of the thing is then pro-Establishment — Logic (the sciences) and Feeling (the Arts, perhaps) are kept in their place, and they are, of course, All Right in Their Place. Kirk is a rule book Militarist and probably votes the straight Republican (or Resurrected Whig) ticket. True, Kirk takes a lot of chances. Of course, there are real-life precedents of crackpot militarists with messiah-martyr complexes like Patton and MacArthur taking similar chances and at even higher rank. Moreover, I don't think comparing the Enterprise to a contemporary battleship is a justifiable comparison. Despite its cost and size, in that far distant day, it probably compares to a PT boat which are notoriously expendable. The whole ship is a gnat in the mind of the general staff — what the captain risks of himself is inconsequential. ((No...all the information given out so far is that a starship of the Enterprise class is the largest spacecraft the Federation possesses... which makes Kirk's behavior all the more strange.))

Moreover, in the logic of TV series, I don't think there is seriously supposed to be a serial continuity between episodes. You have to take what you are now seeing at its face value. You are not supposed to recall every case Perry Mason has won from Ham Burger as you see him win this one. Would a spaceship commander ever in even one case take the risks Capt. Kirk does? See discussion of crackpot-messiah-martyr militarists above.

The whole thing is a harmless time-waster. I suppose I

need not elaborate this unpopular minority viewpoint further.

Dick Ellington PSV continues to stir the fannish urge
1415 Allston Way in me. And it is PSV. I still get a
Berkeley, Calif. meager few fanzines from kindly types
94702 who either remember me or have extracted
my name from some odd mailing list
somewhere and I read them when they come in but, while I
have to admit that some of them are quite good, none of
them stirs in me anykind of urge to rush to a typewriter
and froth back at them.

Bloch's review intrigues me enough to make me interested in seeing 2001 — A SPACE ODESSEY, a film which I might otherwise miss. I am mingy about movies and demand that it be a double bill which at least sounds interesting to me and of course, anything like 2001 will undoubtedly be paired with some kind of teenage insanity. That happened with PLANET OF THE APES, which I would sort of like to see, but they keep playing it with stuff that even with my high tolerance for movies in general I couldn't sit through. And I like movies in general, finding things in them others don't seem to—'Italian westerns for instance, I find absolutely delightful and Pat and me actually have got to the point where we keep score sometimes on the bodies...though we still haven't decided whether the battle scenes in THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY count or not since they weren't cold-blooded murders actually. I notice Hollywood is trying to make imitation Italian westerns now—we saw one called BLUE last week—but they just don't have the knack I'm afraid.

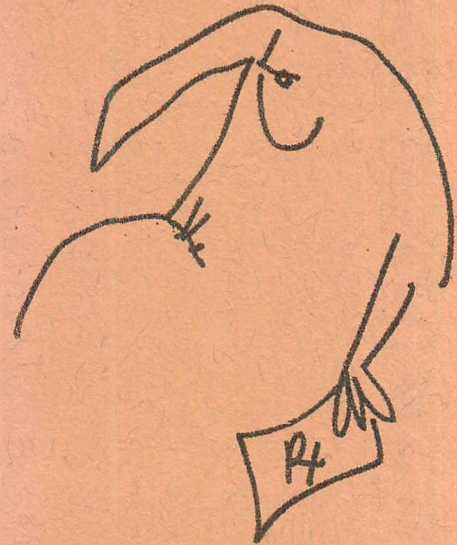
((I was lucky. APES was on with FLIM FLAM MAN here... and MAN was the better of the two.))

Dipping into your fanzine reviews, I was surprised to see somebody using the title ALPHA again. I wonder if Smith knows that Jansen used this some years ago?

Berry is most entertaining. I guess he is a good example of what I said above about fanzines. Ever since I met him briefly at the Rogers' during an assemblage to say hi to Boyd Raeburn, he's been sending me occasional fanzines and while they really are delightful zines and I do enjoy them, none of them move me to comment. Like him, I was delighted to see WARHOON pop up (in my case it was in my FAPA bundle), and particularly delighted to see Willis-stuff in it. Willis had got back on the FAPA waiting list and then unaccountedly dropped off it and such is the state of FAPA that nobody seemed to notice.

Ted's comments on convention bidding are interesting, particularly on the new breed arising. If what he says is true, it certainly is a Cause for Concern, though even putting it in capitals doesn't stir me to rush off into any smoke-filled rooms. The point about the older crowd of finaglers and politicers at least being responsible enough to put on a con is well-taken. Now that I think back on it, he is quite right. I used to be a bit turned-off by some

of the smoke-filled-back-room arrangements I saw (and even took part in on occasion) but thinking back any of the groups so engaged was quite competent to put on a good con if they got the bid. And of course, to some people this kind of infighting is a delightful sport in itself, entered into with little regard for the actual outcome and a very high regard for the techniques and skills employed. On the other hand, winning a bid meant putting on a con and this was a price they paid willingly and honorably for the chance to engage in the Game.



Dave Locke
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I can't help wondering what the hell it's costing you in time, money and equipment (new typers with Woody Allen typeface). Especially time; to think of the amount of it necessary to produce zines like this just overwhelms me. Another reason why my wife and son and I are moving to California — you must have longer days out there.

((See the editorial on page four for a rundown on the time element, Dave. As for money...an issue of PSV runs around \$65 to \$70. An expensive hobby, especially when you consider that if I spent the hobby time at writing for money I could make an extra three or four thousand dollars a year. But whatthehell. You only live once.))

PSV hangs together pretty well, and regardless of my likes or dislikes of any individual piece of material I can find only one unsat item in #25. Your fanzine reviews. They're too cursorily done, and their superficiality doesn't blend well with the 'depth' of the other items you publish. They don't even fit your own image. You cover entire fanzines with "good," "bad," "a zine to watch," "groan," "dreary," "meaty," "readable," "must get," and other adjectives and other phrases shot from the hip. However, you don't review books that way. Why not? Wouldn't it be a lot easier than going to all the trouble of describing the story, pointing

out its strengths and analyzing its weaknesses? Then you could review fifty books instead of just a half dozen.

((Those one word or one sentence evaluations of fanzines were not shot from the hip—not casual—but the result of hours of thought and consideration. Why don't I review books that way? Because at base I value the books more...and I'm a professional writer. I think sf novels and anthologies are more important—one for one—than fanzines. If there were only a dozen or so fanzines being produced every two months, fine, I'd review them more fully. But they come in in droves. And half of them do not merit review, in all honesty.

And...I've changed, too. In the Old Days I was a fan with hopes of being a pro writer. Now I am a pro and I'm older and my values have changed. I think PSY is a lot better this time around. I know it is.))

Evers' article on drugs is interesting; I just can't help reading a man's own story of how he's throwing his life away. Blowing his life, so to speak. It's pitiful, but so fascinating I can't put it down. He writes as though he doesn't realize what he has been doing to himself; has never stopped for a 'breather' to take stock of himself and his course in life, and in so doing realize what he has wasted and what he would continue to waste just for the sake of the sleepwalking unreality of drugs.

John Brunner Disinfect this before reading - I have a
17-D, Froggal, terrible cold. If I were in normal health,
London NW3, though, I'd be struggling on with the cur-
ENGLAND rent novel; as it is, I get to comment on
 the latest Psychotic (for which many thanks)
directly after its arrival.

I'm pleased at your giving such extensive space to my gripes about The Eskimo Invasion, and particularly so because I know now there really is a John Hayden Howard; in common with many other SF readers I'd wondered whether the name was pseudonymous. And since Mr. (Dr.?) Howard lives in California no doubt I'll have the pleasure of making his acquaintance at the Baycon, where perhaps we could carry a discussion of our differing opinions to a more satisfactory conclusion than we can through the medium of a fanzine.

In the note which you append to my letter, though, you raise what strikes me as a very important point, and at the risk of being accused of shifting the ground of the argument I'd like to follow it up a bit further. I'm not referring to your citation of some of Heinlein's work as "clumsily written", because he's a prime example of an author whose narrational excitement can transcend his technical limitations. (It doesn't always do so, and I suspect that his enormous popularity has encouraged him to scamp on self-improvement - things like Glory Road come to mind, that book being very badly constructed indeed.)

But I don't want to get bogged down in that sort of digression. What I want to follow up is your remark about college professors who can write perfectly "correct" sentences and yet not be writers in any sense of the word.

True, and very damned true. The mark of genuine talent and creativity in writing as in any other field of the arts does not consist in knowing the rules and slavishly adhering to them, but in sensing the rules and breaking them where necessary. The only creative writing course I ever heard of which was worth a damn was the one allegedly given by John Steinbeck. Enter the maestro to conduct the first class. "How many of you want to be writers?" Every hand dutifully goes up. "Then why the hell aren't you writing?" End of course.

Related to this, of course, is the long-standing dispute between rival schools of grammarians: the descriptive on the one side, the prescriptive on the other. While shedding the occasional tear over such howlers as the misuse of valuable and unique words like "flaunt" (for "flout") I stick staunchly to the former attitude myself - the job of grammarians, lexicographers and linguistic pundits generally is not to straight-jacket the language but to record its function as a vehicle of human communication. The more lively and vigorous the language, the more rapidly it will leak through any hard-and-fast boundary anyone attempts to build around it.

However, this brings me to an aspect of the subject which is constantly being discussed over here at the moment (largely because of Mike Moorcock's single-handed restructuring job on New Worlds). It does so happen that over the past several centuries a number of rule-of-thumb canons have been evolved for the use of the English language as a fictional medium, in the novel and the short story. These have served writers of universally acknowledged stature, and served them well, giving them an audience which far transcends their immediate environment both in space and in time. In order to diverge from these (I grant, fundamentally arbitrary and conventional) principles, I think it is necessary for a writer to possess a truly exceptional and singular talent. One might adduce, by way of comparison, the truism that Picasso could never have become the seminal figure he now is in "modern" art had he not been one of the handful of great portraitists of his generation.

So when I run across, in a book like The Eskimo Invasion, passages which offend against these canons of narrative style, I must ask: is there something in the substance of the theme, or in the quality of the imaginative faculty displayed by the author, which justifies this divergence from generally accepted standards of verbal presentation? In this specific case, my answer to myself was negative - hence the extremely strong terms in which I couched my analysis of the section I took to bits in my last letter. (It's a sad but true fact that if you want to get people to pay attention in our jaded society you have to shout at them!)

I'm delighted to learn from Mr. (Dr?) Howard's reply that he had a specific purpose in mind in adopting the mode of presentation to which I took such violent exception. I have therefore much pleasure in absolving him from the charge of "style-deafness" which I levelled against him in the first letter... but there does remain one fault, not a particularly surprising one, yet a serious one, which I think he ought to try and rectify. In order to make it absolutely clear, I shall have to take a somewhat roundabout route.

Unless a writer is gifted with quite extraordinary powers

of detachment, his emotional involvement in the words he is at this moment setting down on paper is such that from time to time he will expect more from his readers than the information he is conveying justifies. Moreover, minor flaws, stylistic infelicities and visually or auditorily jarring turns of phrase will slip through his mental guard and will not be caught unless he has the chance to come back to what he had written with a clear eye. (I complained about awkward repetitions in my former letter - Howard counters with the suggestion that this is common in real life, in conversation. True, but literal transcription of conversation is not suited to fiction, or indeed to any kind of printed text. Consider, for instance, the word-for-word transcriptions of President Eisenhower's press conferences which stick in my own memory as a superlative illustration of the weakness of unedited material.)

And these faults do constitute a barrier between reader and writer, precisely because the reader does not bring the same degree of emotional involvement to the text as the writer did. The text itself has to create - to conjure up - that involvement.

That not even the most naturally gifted of our current writers can claim to be immune to this is shown by... (Ought I to say this? Yes, I don't see why not.) Well, I suppose I had a kind of one-per-cent share in this year's short story Nebula award, because while staying with Chip Delany in New York I saw the MS of his fabulously good short story Aye, And Gomorrah, and had the pleasure and privilege of helping him take it apart and put it together again. (I even invented the name "frelk"; he had been going to use "froik", but it had drawbacks, such as that it didn't transcribe into Spanish.)

Now I'm nowhere near in the same class as Delany - that man has more natural talent in his left hand than I have in my whole body. But as a very self-conscious long-time SF reader I was able to point out the places where the effects he was reaching for could be more easily and economically achieved by doing it a different way - perhaps by accepting something less personal in the imagery, perhaps by re-casting the word-order or some other similar trifling amendment. Delany's prose is invariably beautiful: sinuous, flowing, muscular, all the right things. I find Howard's stiff, awkward, mannered and often stilted. And, impenitently, I shall continue to do so until he produces something which retains the strength of his present writing (the unusual quality of his subject-matter) and loses the superfluous obstacles he places in the reader's way, such as the excessive stress laid on the protagonist's identity as Doctor all-the-time West.

Do you know the original sense of the word "masterpiece"? It was the apprentice's graduate thesis, so to speak: the work he submitted to demonstrate that he had learned the fundamental principles of his craft. Not his art, although the distinction back in the days when the term evolved was much more blurred than it is nowadays. Approval of this work entitled him to be regarded as a-master (as we still say, "master craftsman") and with his fundamental talent publicly accepted he could then go on to build something

fresh and personal. In this sense I have just done my "masterpiece", after serving a very long apprenticeship without making any claims to originality, and it's called STAND ON ZANZIBAR - due from Doubleday in September. I think, and hope, that in that book I've managed to combine the principles I've learned with something specifically my own, and I shall be extremely disappointed if nobody feels it worth taking to little bits for examination and evaluation...which is what I tried to do with that short segment of Howard's book.

((Perhaps Mr. Howard can be prevailed upon to do a review of STAND ON ZANZIBAR for us...))



Kay Anderson
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93030

I am about a quarter of the way through your lettercol, having just enjoyed savoring my own sweet words in print. Must admit I haven't collected any real juicy insults from Ted White myself, though I am hoping that your printing of my latest attack on his character may provoke one. ((Sorry. You puzzle him. When he figures you out he'll slash you to ribbons!)) I believe he sneered a bit at my intelligence in YANDRO lately, and again in a letter to Bob Vardeman that Bob showed me as we had a mad glorious session of collating on the floor a few weeks ago. In it Ted sneered at my mentality again. Trust him to attack the obvious.

((Hmm. 'She collated with him on the floor, madly, gloriously...' What a line for my next sex novel! Thanks, Kay. A new perversion.))

About 2001. I see it is opening in L.A. soon. We won't see it then, firstly because it is a reserve-seat deal and I can imagine what the prices for this much-touted thing will be, since they don't have the nerve to publish them in the

ad. Secondly, just last week we missed Ventura on the freeway and wound up in Santa Barbara... I hesitate to even try to find one movie theatre in L.A., with that kind of luck. Clarke spoke at Northern Arizona University on May 14th and we drove over (then still living in Albuquerque) to see him. He spoke at the main ballroom of the Student Activities Center. The ballroom is on the second floor (a track meet was being held in the basement, indidentally) and is a long, rather low room taking up most of that floor, and ending in a pleated concrete wall. It reminded me strongly of the shuttlecraft hanger in STAR TREK, and I kept expecting the doors to open in that pleated wall, and we would all go wheetling off among the stars. Clarke is a bigger man than I had imagined he would be...he looked like such a mild clerky little fellow in his photo on the back of some of his books. In those photos he was blonde and thin on top...at NAU he was completely bald on top and had brown hair. He had an interesting accent, a mixture of British and American and some soft accent I imagine is Ceylonese. He spoke for about 45 minutes to a hundred or so people, but only mentioned 2001 to say he had made the dialog deliberately banal, and that HAL 9000 was his favorite character. Most of his talk was on the need for aerospace research and how the money spent on such activities more than repays itself in new processes and products. It was a very interesting talk, especially to one like me who is so damn tired of that old refrain of "Why don't they take all this money they're spending trying to go to the moon—if God had wanted us to be on the moon etc—and give it to the poor people?"

Before going to the talk we had visited Lowell Observatory. Did you know that Lowell is entombed there? He has a little mausoleum shaped like a miniature observatory, and roofed with a dome made of rectangles of cobalt glass. It's a nice sentiment, that he is still under the light of the stars, but it looks for all the world like all the school children in the U.S. sent in milk of magnesia bottles to form the dome.

Old pro pornographer, do you know any women who really and truly have scarlet, crimson, or blood-red nipples? I ran across this curious anatomical phenomenon first in some MAN FROM ORGY books, then in THORNS. Is this just an old porno tradition, or am I ignorant. I recall from many years of girls' PE classes and slumber parties and summer camp showers that all the pubescent and adolescent nipples I ever glimpsed were in varying shades of brown. As my own are pinkish-tan, I guess that being the inspiration for a porno heroine is another thing I'll never be, along with the lead dancer in Swan Lake, and the star of "Laura."

((Nope, I knew of no women or girls who have scarlet, crimson or blood-red nipples. Not even "coral-tipped". Mostly pink into brown to reddish brown. Of course girls have been known to lipstick their nipples... Of course, Bill Rotsler, with his VAST experience could give us an expert's opinion. How about it, Bill...ever seen any garish natural colored nipples? And all the readers are invited to send in comments...))

On the subject of women who are inspirations for var-

ious things, do you know of one Ree or Rene Dragonette? A friend who is a notorious liar tells me she knew this person in New York and that she had told my friend she was the mistress of a gang of Well Known SF Writers (simultaneously, I suppose) in the Golden Days, and a lot of other details I won't go into here. Just wondering if she was for real.

((Nope. I know nothing about her. Anyone have any info on this?))

((Now, for flogging and historical purposes, a letter from Jay Kay Klein. These pages of PSY are getting to be chock full of bits of fan and sf history. A set of PSYs will be absolutely essential to any future fan historian, said he, smugly...))

Jay Kay Klein
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I feel kindred sympathy for Avram Davidson's wistfulness over drawing only a tepid insult from Ted White. In Ted's PSY 25 column, he refers to my beloved DISCON Convention Annual as a booklet. This denigration must be corrected!

The Con Annual #3 is a BOOK. I admit its pages are held together precariously by three home-made staples—but look how big it is. A full 104 pages, each 8½ x 11 inches. That's over 93 square inches per page. The average sf paperback is 4½ x 7 inches, totalling less than 30 square inches, and seems to run just 200 pages long.

Thus the Con Annual #3 is over 50% larger than the average paperback. ((So? What is it compared to the average Sunday N.Y. TIMES?)) To top it off, the average paperback is only 75¢ against the whopping \$3.00 charge of the Discon Con Annual. (A sum raised in numerous cases by fans selling their aged grandmothers to the gypsies.)

Also, Ted's referring to this death defying collection of photographs as "ostensibly a photo-volume" has shocked me even more senseless than usual. This book has a stupefying 285 photographs. This used to be the world record holder for science fiction convention picture books until the just-published Convention Annual #4, covering the Tricon. This has a fearsome 433 photographs! And sells for \$4.50. (Well, there go the last of the aged grandmothers in science fiction.)

((Including yours! Wait'll you get the bill for this adv.!!))

Now that I've cleverly secured valuable publicity for the Con Annual, let me add a couple footnotes to Ted's article on convention bidding. It's true, as Ted pointed out, that it was mostly the older fans who felt that worldcons were losing the excitement of competing bids. This was only natural, since the last competing bids were so long back that teenagers weren't old enough to remember them. Still there were many younger fans who thought things were too tame, too.

For myself, I gathered the impression that just passing cons around without any effort on anyone's part was leading to apathy towards putting them on. This was becoming a sort of chore or civic obligation. That there were single'bidders'

wasn't due to formal planning, but simply that whenever anyone stepped up and said he was going to try for the convention, everyone else sighed with relief and happily let him take the effort upon himself.

Now, there's nothing financially rewarding in putting on a convention. And it's a lot of work. I felt—still feel—that the best way to insure a supply of competent, eager persons to run worldcons is to make it a privilege and an honor to run a worldcon. It's an historical fact that people will contend for honors and privileges. And the harder they have to work for them, the more they appreciate the prize.

I certainly didn't "commission" Bob Madle's article on convention bidding. I had asked Bob Madle, Dave Kyle and Don Ford for DISCON conreports. Dave and Don turned them out for me. Bob asked me if instead I would take an article on convention bidding. I said it was okay with me. Bob's a good writer, and anything he does is interesting.

When the manuscript reached me, Bob's blazing rhetoric fired me with a crusading enthusiasm to go-out-and-fight-for-the-things-I-believe-in. That's the first (and probably last) time I've ever done a stupid thing like that. Boy, was it a lot of work! I'm sure Ted's right that the hardest part of putting on a con is getting it, and after that it's mostly coasting. Ben Jason has told me the same thing.

I know the Syracuse bid made Ben work awfully hard. He's told me that, too. At the same time, it got the other midwest fans off their fat easychairs and on their feet to help Ben. In doing this, they generated an enthusiasm for the Tricon in their own ranks, and in others, that was worth every ounce of effort I put into con bidding. I can't speak for Ben and his helpers on this, but as Ted noted, at the Tricon they weren't mad at the Syraconcom. If anything, they were magnanimous to a gallant, defeated challenger.

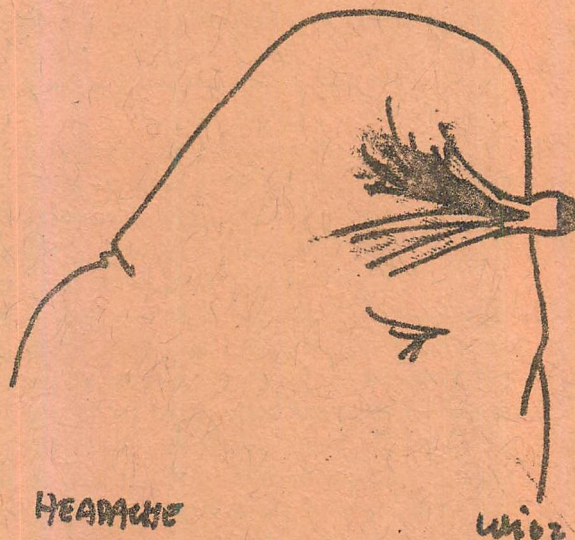
Bidding and voting for a convention now seems safely re-established in fandom. Ted raises the argument that this is a waste of time and money, and is divisive. This argument has often been directed against democratic political systems in general. Certainly the selection of a group to run the United States government is awfully expensive and divisive. Probably I shouldn't make this comparison, since the analogy is not perfect — but I think the point is understood. However, if the majority of fans think otherwise, the consite selection rules should be changed.

Competing for a prize is hard work. You can easily get overwrought in the process. The various bits of flack that came my way I put down to "campaign oratory". I wish other fans could do the same, and once a fight is lost, put it aside and go on to something else.

I found the bidding was a lot of fun, despite the work. It cost me quite a bit of money, too, though the Syraconcom didn't spend near as much as the thousand dollars Ted cites for the Nycon bidders. A lot of the Syracuse money went for fan parties. I don't regret my share. After all, I've been the beneficiary of many parties, and I feel it was time I sponsored some, too. Maybe there are better ways to put on

large parties than have bidders hold them. If so, I urge future concons to make the proper arrangements instead of neglecting them.

At future worldcons, I expect to confine myself to picture taking. I sure hope we don't run into any more dry spells where there are single "bidders." I suppose Bob Madle should write another flaming article and set me off again!



Mike Zaharakis
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I am sitting here in the Hobbit Hole picking the petals off off daisies. The chant to accompany this action goes something like this: "I am an alcoholic dimwit. No, I am a back room planner."

In either case, according to Ted White, if I believe in competitive bidding I am wrong.

Let us just take a wild theory of two cities who may want to bid for the Worldcon NEXT time it falls to the Midwest. Let's say Minot, or better yet, Minneapolis wishes to have the con. Now let's say St. Louis also wants it. Do you really think we could come to agreement with the cities in the South over who should get the bid. Uh..uh. Even if we could, I wouldn't want it that way.

I believe that competition produces quality. (Naive, aren't I?) Ideally the fact that two or more cities are bidding for the con should produce a con that the majority of people are going to want. I realize that it doesn't always work this way, and that there are petty kingmakers. It might sully the right of the fans to make a choice.

On the other hand, what does a few people on the top making a Gentleman's agreement do?

I might point out that four or five years hence one or two very strong fan organizations in the upper Midwest are going to be casting lustful eyes on the con. Columbus may drop out now, but what happens if Minot, Fargo, Minneapolis get together first and agree on a location of a joint type bid? I'm not saying this would happen, but it's a possibility. I notice

If some of the stories in DANGEROUS VISIONS have a fault, it is because (like Lester del Rey's) they are 'attacking' issues that have been attacked in literature more or less since Plato and have been attacked with impunity for at least 200 years. I know of at least one case where an

The career of H.G. Wells should be example enough — his marvelous imagination became increasingly the slave of his rather ordinary intelligence. Give me A.E. van Vogt with all his naivete and loathsome syntax to Frederik Pohl any old day of the week. What's happened to ANALOG and GALAXY, sadly, is that they began to rate information (I suppose that's what it's called) and intellect over imagination, and what happened to F&SF in its worst phases was that it rated technique over everything else. I'm not sure what the public will say has happened to NEW WORLDS. What we're trying to do is let the imagination of our authors range wild and free, demanding only that the work has discipline and structure (aesthetic qualities, if you like) even if that structure is not necessarily familiar to the reader of more traditional fiction. In short — form that is completely dictated by the demands of the subject matter. The current spate, in the U.S. magazines, of fancy, emotive writing used to give a semblance of life to stale ideas carried on obsolete story structures, is to my mind a dead-end — the last spasm of the corpse. Why are at least half of the NW 'regulars' Americans when the U.S. magazines can pay them infinitely better money? Morality (of a certain, limited kind at least) is the enemy of imagination and sensibility. Yeah — you got it — art for art's sake... Or, if you prefer, entertainment for entertainment's sake. Rationalisation is the ruin of fic-

tion. We should, maybe, be arguing how well it is done within its own terms — not what it's for. What makes an average deductive mystery so dull? The 'facts' that the authors are always shoveling in — 'facts' and opinions are no substitute for imagination. Most of these days seems to be written by people without imagination for people without imagination. Who was it said 'by robots, about robots, for robots'? Good fiction, no matter how fantastic, always has the essence of 'real life' anyway. A good writer is a 'truthful' writer, by definition. A bad writer always tells lies — and he's the kind who's usually pretending to tell you the 'truth'. And, for the record (this letter is becoming associative and non-linear, I fear) by good fantasy I don't mean children's stories like Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. I don't mean 'rationalised' children's stories a la UNKNOWN. I mean grown-up's stories like Peake, Vian, Ballard (at his best?), Langdon Jones, Jim Sallis, and, by god, me (at my best — and I ought to know since I've written a great many fantasies for a teenage readership — that's how you write them, by the way, by assuming that your reader is fifteen). And Aldiss, Leiber, I should have added, and Disch and, obviously, dozens more.

The subject matter of all the above mentioned writers is very different (Firbank, Peake and Vian, for instance) and their techniques (compare Firbank with Peake) are often at opposite ends of the spectrum. What they have in common is their approach to their subject matter, their refusal to fetter their imaginations by torturing their inspiration until it fits an acceptable form. The funny thing is, to wind up, that while this stuff is more commonly produced in Britain (and to a slight degree the rest of Europe and S. America) it sells best in the U.S. Maybe Campbell and Pohl should think about that. On second thoughts, maybe they should stop thinking for a while — it doesn't seem to agree with them too well. They aim at a predominantly teenage readership and the teenage readership seems to be going more and more for good teenage fantasies like Tolkien, Burroughs, Howard and the rest. If they want to attract an adult readership, they should stop compromising, if they wish to continue putting imaginative fiction into their magazines. But maybe they know best — after all they don't lose half their circulation by getting banned all the time...

 Ed Cox Book reviews are always welcomed.
 14524 Filmore St. There's so damned many new titles
 Arleta, Calif. 91331 coming out these days that it's a
 service to have the current offer-
 ings reviewed. After a while, it's easy to get some sort
 of gauge of what you'd like or not from reading said re-
 views by a given reviewer.

So you review NEW WORLDS. It's not something I expect I'll be reading. Not if it features the slop it has been. From what I've read about it. And what I will read in it. I may change my mind when I've read more. Who knows? But I will say that I disagree with you, Dick, when you mildly prophesy (is that a verb?) that this trend will split sf

down the middle, adult and juvenile and shape the whole future of the field. You base this, tentatively, on NEW WORLDS and Dangerous Visions. As I've admitted, I've read little in NEW WORLDS, as yet, and will now admit that I haven't read much of DV yet. But what I've read, so far, beefs up a lot of review opinions to the effect that nothing much new or dangerous transpired in DV! Now. I shall read Bug Jack Barron. Or try. And no doubt Spinrad did write for "...literate, college educated adults...etc.", but I frankly doubt if this is going to wreak havoc in science fiction. I doubt if a lot of this type of stuff is going to go anywhere. The key is just as you've called it: it is mainstream level writing. And as such, isn't going to create any great success as science fiction or as main-stream. Maybe Bug Jack Barron will...frankly, I hope so.

I'd like to see Norman Spinrad make 78,000 bucks on a best seller type. And Terry Carr and Fritz Leiber, Jim Schmitz, Lester del Rey, all of them. But I seriously doubt if this type of stuff is going to compete with Couples or Harold Robbins, Meyer Levin, et al. These guys are already writing what the publishers know the public has been trained to buy. You want to write main-stream type stuff, write it and Sell it! But I don't think a marriage of sf and main-stream best-seller-dom fare is going to work. If it can be done, by somebody, great! They will make a pack of cash and good on them.

But let's not change all the field to this sort of stuff! I want science-fiction still. I can buy best-seller stuff in immense mounds. Anytime.

((What we have here is a failure...to read minds. I mean by mainstream writing, prose which is NOT in the pulp mold; it does not use pulp style, pulp techniques and pulp formulas. A great deal of current sf writing is on the way to that goal.

In essence it is a shift in thinking and aim from the juvenile to the adult by writers and editors.

By mainstream writing you seem to mean writing aimed at the "best seller" audience...in content and technique...a sort of watered-down sf to appeal to the Carpetbaggers' crowd; The literary equivalent of STAR TREK. I assure you that isn't what I meant.))

As for the other "New Wave", there have been journals and quarterlies and reviews full of this type of stuff forever. Now it's hit science fiction. And does it sell? Aside from Finnegan's Wake? You tell me... (This is direct reference to "Auto Ancestral Fracture".)

((I suppose NEW WORLDS has turned into a narrow-based experimental sf-zine. So what? There's a place for it, and I'm happy it exists. I wish it had distribution in this country beyond subscriptions. Is it your position that if writing is "not commercial" it shouldn't be published?))

 LoC it to me, sir!

I ALSO GOT LETTERS FROM—Jerry Lapidus who discusses 2001 and who asks how he can get hold of a copy of NEW WORLDS without shelling out ten bucks for a sub. He also closes with a "Chicago in '72" blurb....Steve Lewis who has comments on COMPUTER WAR and DEATH IS A DREAM....John Bangsund who laments writing mistakes...and from Neal A. Goldfarb and J. Jurgensen!



Before I go on, I'll have to say something about acid dosages. Heads and dealers are always talking about the number of micrograms of acid in the pills they're buying or selling, but these figures mean next to nothing. Most black market acid is put up by fairly low-level dealers who buy a gram of LSD at a time and drip it onto tablets with a pipette or mix it with a filler-substance and pack it into capsules. As to how much this bulk acid is cut, your guess is as good as anyone's. My own guess is plenty. Even the machine-stamped tabs attributed to "Owsley" or the other "name" dealers are highly variable in strength; in fact, these tabs are often inferior to more amateurish looking products, often containing an absolute minimum dosages of LSD with amphetamine or cocaine added to produce a short-lived "simulated" trip. The only thing that's certain about black market acid is that it normally contains the smallest amount of LSD the manufacturer thinks he can get by with. ("Pharmaceutical acid" is still occasionally available, but most of it is counterfeit — Sandoz did sell acid capsules at one time, but they were clear gelatin caps with a white filler, not color-coded or stamped with the company name, and very easy to imitate.

Despite rumors to the contrary, it's almost impossible to make acid without full-scale organic synthesis facilities. Small amounts of LSD are produced in college labs from time to time, but never enough so far for commercial distribution.

The only really practical synthesis for acid in commercial quantities requires lysergic acid, which is now

A PRIMER FOR HEADS

PART THREE

illegal also. Up till the last six months or so, most black market acid had been purchased from pharmaceutical companies before the anti-psychedelics laws were passed and stockpiled by big distributors to be sold by the gram or thousand cap lot.

Now, those stockpiles seem to be depleted, and dealers are getting pretty desperate. I keep hearing rumors that the Mafia or other big drug suppliers are going to start wholesale acid production, but so far they haven't. Small quantities of good acid are still trickling in from Europe and other places where drug laws are liberal or unenforced, but so far I don't think any large shipments of bulk acid have gotten into the country.

Some suppliers are extracting the drugs from morning glory seeds and selling the product as acid, and others are making various obscure drugs in the mescaline family and passing that off as acid, but neither of these are really very close to LSD. All you can do is shop around and hope. With the demand for LSD as high as it is, sooner or later the supply is going to re-stabilize.

Even if you've managed to find some fairly good acid, you might not have experienced an actual trip because your "threshold dosage" is higher than average. The effects of acid, mescaline, and the rest of the stronger psychedelics are not smoothly cumulative the way the effects of pot and hash are—below a certain dosage, you aren't experiencing a trip at all, though you might get as high as you do on hash. For this reason you can't prepare for an acid trip by taking half a cap. This threshold is fairly clear cut, and if you've ever really tripped, you'll know it. If there's doubt in your mind, you probably haven't exceeded your threshold dose. This threshold varies from person to



Some of my best friends
are transparent.

BY EARL EVERS

person, depending on metabolic rate, state of nutrition, and various psychological factors.

The dosage threshold of an experienced acid head is normally a lot lower than that of someone who has never tripped, which is much to the disadvantage of the beginner, since most of the smaller distributors determine their dosage for a batch by trial and error, using friends and dealers who are generally experienced acid heads for guinea pigs. There's very little acid on the market that will get a first-tripper off on one cap or tab.

The obvious solution is to take two caps instead of one but a lot of heads are unnecessarily paranoid about doing this. The truth is, acid is not that much of a cumulative drug. I can get off on one cap of most reasonably good acid, but the effects I get from five such caps are no different. LSD is a very strong drug and one that can be quite dangerous. I won't underestimate this danger, and if you're really apprehensive I suggest that you stay away from acid entirely. But the danger lies in the psychedelic experience itself, and that increases in steps rather than smoothly with increasing dosage.

If you're not experiencing clear-cut acid reactions an hour after dropping a cap, drop another one. I don't recommend more than two caps for beginners; if you can't get off on that, try another source of acid. And anyone who drops more than 1000 mikes is running a hell of a risk. (Most black market acid runs around 175-200 mikes.) I've taken up to 7500 mikes and had a perfectly good trip, but I still consider it much too dangerous to recommend to anyone else.

The dosage steps I mentioned vary widely with individuals, and if you take a lot of trips and experiment with large doses of acid, you'll locate where they lie for you. As I've said, I can trip on about 175 mikes, and up to 800 or so get no stronger effects. Over 1000 mikes, I have true hallucinations, and somewhere around 5000 mikes I lose contact with reality entirely. Unless I specify otherwise, I'm talking about the first level of acid trip when I discuss reactions to acid in this article.

Mescaline, psilocybin, and morning glory seeds have dosage thresholds, but you don't usually have to worry about it because the former two are much weaker than acid, with a dosage measured in hundreds of milligrams instead of tenths of milligrams so dealers can measure the dose directly



Now don't worry, I'm going to be your guide for the whole trip.

instead of guessing. I've never bought understrength pills of either mescaline or psilocybin, and at eight to ten dollars a cap, I hope I never do. As for seeds, I have no idea how much actual drug is in the five or six packs commonly used, but it seems to be enough to give you a trip. None of these three seems to have stronger effects as you increase the dosage, and I wouldn't recommend trying.

Before I describe the psychedelic effects of acid, I'd like to cover some preliminaries. The most important of these is: if you're really worried about taking a bad trip, don't try acid at all. If you've never tripped but are sure you want to, I recommend that you try some of the intermediate drugs mentioned in this article first. I would also recommend that you read some of the books currently available which describe the drug experience, even though I don't consider any of them very good. (I wouldn't be writing this article if I thought the material had been adequately covered elsewhere.) If you get a chance, be around while other people take an acid trip. The more you know, the better off you'll be, even though you can't really understand the psychedelic experience except by trying it.

Use common sense in picking the time for your trip. You should allow about 24 hours to recover afterwards and you should plan things so nothing will come up during your trip that has to be attended to right then—an important phone call or visitor, etc. Even experienced acid heads shouldn't trip when depressed, or facing an important de-

cision, or under any sort of mental strain that forces them to hold their emotions in check. If you're the sort of person who always feels you're holding yourself in check, I don't recommend that you take acid.

Environment is also important, and again, it's best to just use common sense. It's by far the best to stay home, or to trip at the home of a friend, especially for beginning trippers. Basically, you want a place where you feel comfortable and secure. Just being familiar with every inch of a room can make you feel much more secure when your vision, co-ordination and time sense are very distorted. Experienced acid heads often trip in public, especially at rock dances, raga concerts and the like, but I don't recommend this for the inexperienced; the noise and confusion and crowds of milling people can really dis-orient you.

There are some other environment factors to consider—if you're not particularly fond of the place where you live, it would probably be better to trip at a friend's place. I live in a seven room commune with from two to four other people and all their belongings plus wall to wall garbage. Now the clutter doesn't turn me off, but some people do mind it, and I find they don't enjoy tripping at my place. I know several young people who are paranoid that their parents might visit them while tripping, so they don't trip in their own apartments. If you tend to be paranoid about having drugs on the premises, make sure the place is clean before you trip. Acid increases your tendency to become fearful, and the best way to avoid this is to remove causes for fear.

Choosing the people who are going to be around you on a trip is very important. Obviously, anyone you fear or dislike is going to turn you off just that much more on a trip, and most people have the instinctive fear of strangers which is going to be just that much stronger on a trip. So it's best to trip among friends, people you like and trust. Tripping alone is fairly dangerous unless you have enough acid experience to be sure loneliness won't lead to uncontrollable fear. It's much better to trip with others around and to have a bedroom or other place you can go to be alone if you want.

If you and several friends all drop acid together, that's one of the easiest ways to trip. But I don't think it's a good idea to trip with a stranger just because he has a reputation as a "trip guide". I used to consider myself a good "guide" for trippers till I realized that the acid experience is far too personal for an outsider to influence it for good. It's pretty easy to flip someone out, but almost impossible to help them get more out of their trip. I've been around several of the "acid religion" centers and I was never impressed with their efforts to influence people's trips. I'll discuss ways you can help yourself get the most out of your trip later, but I don't believe you can guide anyone else.

Tripping with your lover can be a groove if the relationship is good, but acid is likely to do more harm

than good to an ailing marriage of love affair. And casual sex and acid don't mix at all well for most people, as a lot of flower children have found out the hard way. The average person has more hangups about love and sex than about anything else, and making it with someone you're not in love with while you're on acid can bring all these hangups into sharp focus. This might mean you'll come down from your trip with a more realistic attitude toward sex and the related emotions, but it's just as likely you'll have a bad trip and come down with worse hangups than before. One of the most pathetic bad-trippers I've seen was a chick who went around whining, "Everybody wants to fuck me but nobody loves me." My own rule is that I won't trip with a girl unless I'm sleeping with her regularly or have no desire to sleep with her at all. Unless you're married or living with someone and feel you have to trip together, it's best to take your first few trips with persons of your own sex. Acid makes a lot of people exceedingly horny.

A lot of people have asked me, "Just how strong is an acid trip, anyway?" The only answer is that the intensity of your reaction to the psychedelic experience depends on your personality, and that there's a wide variation between individuals. Some people can have a very intense trip, filled with all sorts of groovy sensory and emotional reactions, and come down feeling no more changed than if they'd been on a good drunk. Others remember their acid trips with absolute clarity for years and claim that the psychedelic experience has had a major effect on their lives. I fall into the latter category and so do about three-quarters of the acid heads I know.

I've had close to 200 acid trips and on each one I've experienced something new. And others describe a far wider range of psychedelic effects from their acid trips than I've had from mine. So all I intend to do here is describe some of the commonest effects and some of those that have left a lasting impression on me.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT
ISSUE

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF PSYCHOTIC YOU WILL SEE.....

A COVER by Dean R. Kóontz

A SQUARE THINKING AROUND—an article by
John Christopher

VOID BEFORE (AND AFTER) TED WHITE by Greg Benford

FANS WE ALL KNOW...AND PERHAPS WISH WE DIDN'T
By Arthur Jean Cox

A PRIMER FOR HEADS—PART 4 by Earl Evers

THE PSYCHOTIC InMate #2 by Bill Rotsler

AND ANTICIPATED FOR THE NEXT ISSUE—Ted White's column, John Berry's column, Norman Spinrad's column, AND Harlan Ellison's column! Looks like it might be a bit crowded!

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MA-CALL-IT IN 69...**

