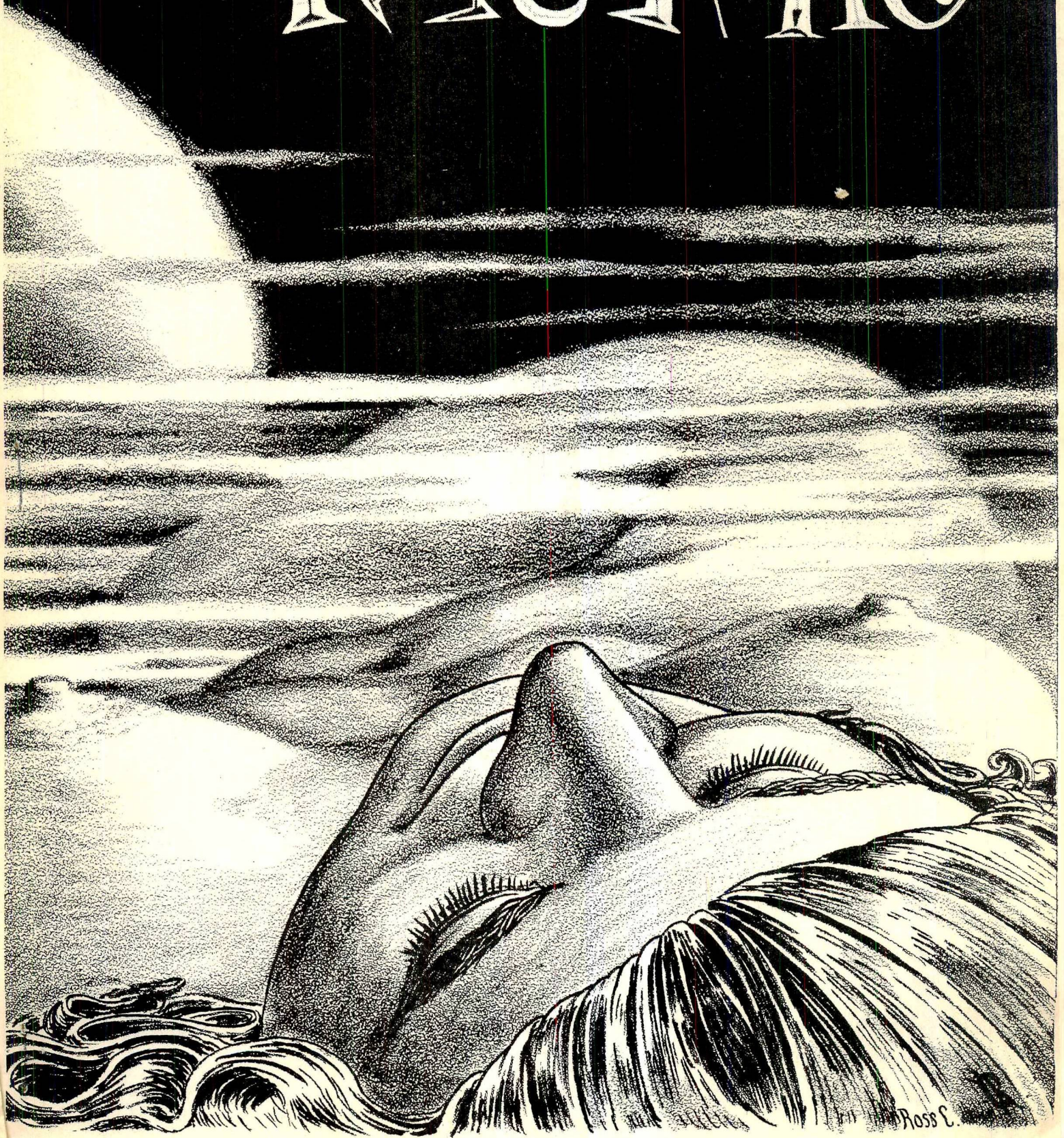


PSYCHOTIC



ROSS C.

PSYCHOTIC

THE LAUGHABLE SERCON ADULT PULP
FANZINE SEPTEMBER 1968

27

CONTENTS

THE COUCH—by the editor who reports on the Hugo winners at the BayCon. A few surprises, too!...4

A VOICE FROM THE STYX—comment on the art of speculative fiction by HARLAN ELLISON. He praises with loud damns and a Hugo winner has mixed emotions.....5

VOID BEFORE (AND AFTER) TED WHITE by GREG BENFORD, who is realistic and Sets The Record Straight.....12

DELUSIONS—Book Reviews by ED COX and the editor. Some authors will weep, others will smile, some will mail bombs.....14

THE PSYCHOTIC InMate #2 by JACK GAUGHAN...a fold-out!.....21

PSYCHOTIC InMate #3 by BILL ROTSLER...a photo.....23

FANS WE ALL KNOW...AND PERHAPS WISH WE DIDN'T—by ARTHUR JEAN COX. This issue: The Galactic Square. Which L.A. fans are thinking, "I'll sue!"??.....25

A SQUARE THINKING AROUND—by JOHN CHRISTOPHER. Something is sick in art and society. John has a few thoughts.....26

THE VIOLENT WARD—by the editor who satisfies no one this time, mostly himself.....27

SECTION EIGHT—by the readers, many of whom bash Ted White with bludgeons of their own. Oh, the pain.....28

STEVE STILES' PAGE.....49

A PRIMER FOR HEADS—by EARL EVERS
Part Four—We go on a real trip this time, fans!50

SECOND SESSION—by the editor.
A final chat with the psychiatrist
...this issue...about 2001 and a
few other things.....54

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BACOVER by DEAN KOONTZ

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ENSTEIN—28, 36, 44; VAUGHN BODE—7, 11, 46; JACK GAUGHAN—8, 26, 32; RAY NEL-
SON—51, 52, 53; ROSS CHAMBERLAIN—31, 43; STEVE STILES—49; JOHN D. BERRY—13;
RICHARD BERGERON—48; BOB KELLOG—13; MIKE SYMES—35; AL ANDREWS—37.

PSYCHOTIC is a product of the aching mind of the mad hermit of Santa Monica.

He is Richard E. Geis

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90403

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

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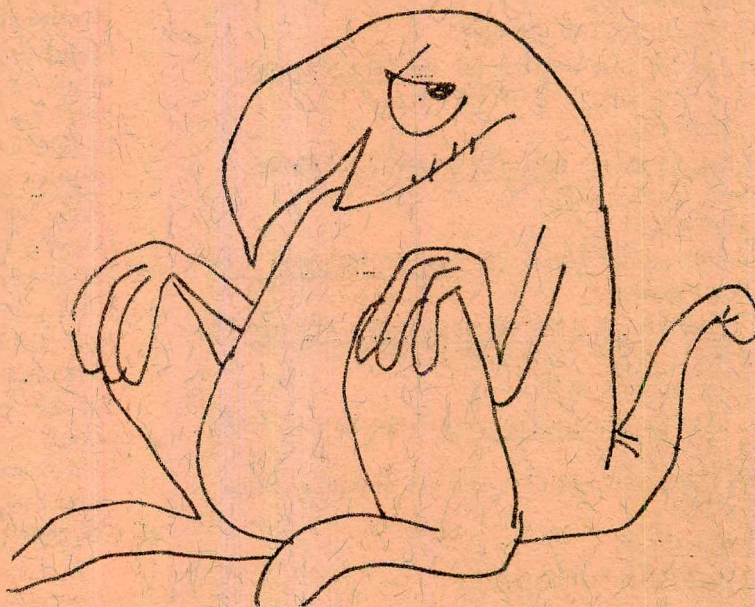
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The contents page is
getting more and more
crowded!

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writers and artists who con-
tributed material to this issue.



This is the Annish—a bonus
issue.

THE COUCH



WHERE THE EDITOR RAMBLES ON AND ON AND ON AND ON

"You look glum, Geis. What's the problem this time?"

"I've just been cranking off some stencils for this issue. 350 copies this time. *GROAN*

"Your circulation does seem to spiral, doesn't it?"

"Ummph. And this is the Annish, if you'll remember. Not quite the 500 pages I jested about a couple issues ago, but well over fifty, and with two (count 'em) TWO InMates!"

"I'm impressed. Especially by the big Gaughan fold-out. Lovely. But the young lady's head..."

"And NEXT issue I have a coup of sorts—Philip Jose Farmer's BayCon speech. A fine, provocative 9,000 words ...even terrifying words."

"Yes, fine, but you're avoiding a subject..."

"OKAY! The HUGO AWARDS."

"Tell me who won the—"

"LORD OF LIGHT by Roger Zelazny won in the best novel category."

"But who—"

"WEYR SEARCH by Anne McCaffrey and RIDERS OF THE PURPLE WAGE by Philip Jose Farmer tied for the Best Novel la Hugo."

"That isn't what I—"

"Best novelette was GONNA ROLL THE BONES by Fritz Leiber."

"Geis, tell me who won the best—"

"I'm getting there. Best short story was won by Harlan Ellison for I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM."

"I'll scream if you—"

"Calm, rational psychiatrists do not scream. The best dramatic presentation was won, by double winner Harlan Ellison, for his original Star Trek script, CITY ON THE EDGE OF FOREVER."

"I'LL GIVE YOU ONE MORE CHANCE!"

"I know, you've been waiting for the best pro magazine award. It was WORLDS OF IF this time."

"NO! WHICH FAN—"

"Which fan was chosen best fan writer? Ted White, our columnist, that's who!"

"I'M WARNING YOU!"

"I'm determined and fearless! Best professional artist was Jack Gaughan!"

"Geis, I swear by all the sacred writings of Freud—"

"The best fan artist was George Barr!"

"NOW, will you tell me?"

"Yeah...best amateur magazine was...was...*sob* AMRA."

"AMRA?"

"Why are you surprised? You knew it probably wouldn't be PSY."

"Yes, but...AMRA?"

"A sword and sorcery fanzine."

"Hmmm..."

"What are you thinking?"

"Well, Geis, I'm thinking it pays to publish a specialized, narrow focus zine."

"That's what PSY is! We focus on science fiction and fantasy."

"Not narrow enough! Beam in on...say, robot fandom!"

"Robot fandom? Ridiculous!"

"Oh, yeah? Think how many computers there are in the world now. If they ever get interested in sf...you're IN!"

"I'm leaving!"

"Come back here, Geis! You have an announcement to make."

"Oh, yes. It gives me great heartburn to tell the fans that—"

"A GREAT HONOR!"

"Isn't that what I said? A great honor to announce that ETHEL LINDSAY is now PSYCHOTIC's agent in England."

"She must be mad!"

"Naturally."

"Why are you looking that way at the Gestetner, Geis? I've seen that look before...on the face of a homicidal maniac!"

"Kill...kill...kill..."

"Control yourself. Only thirteen thousand five hundred more clunkety-whunks to go. Only four more days of crank turning...only three more days after that of gathering and stapling."

"AAARRRRGGGH..."

"Geis, put down that hammer! Gestetnecide is against fannish law!"

"But *whimper* the time...the work..."

"Resign yourself, Geis. It is your lot. Ghod has decreed—"

"Mummmble....dirty razerblaksdffe..."

"Calm....calm...take these pills."

"There is a way out, you know!"

"NO! You wouldn't stop...publishing?"

"OF COURSE NOT! But I did just sell another book..."

"Another one?"

"Yep. Working title is OBSESSED. But the thing is... I now have a little extra loot and I been thinking..."

"Ph-ph-photo-offset?"

"Well..."

"But photo-offset is so cold and unfannish!"

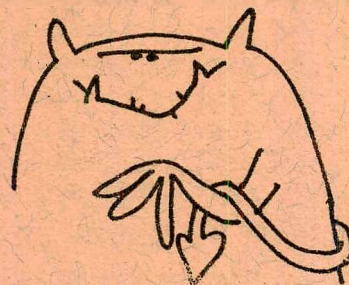
"Not nowadays. Besides, I'm only toying with the idea."

"It does have merit. You would have more time to do pro work."

"I'd read. We both know that. I'm leaving!"

"Come back here. You can't leave me with a couch covered with peanut shells!"

A VOICE FROM THE STYX



COMMENT
ON
THE
ART
OF
SPECULATIVE
FICTION

We come now to the inevitable fractioning of the form. What is "mainstream fiction"? It is Guthrie's "The Way West" and "The Big Sky". Which are westerns. It is "Miss Lonelyhearts" and "The Day Of The Locust" by Nathanael West. Which are religious allegories in contemporary settings. It is John D. MacDonald's novels of Travis McGee. Which are adventure/suspense novels. It is Myrer's "Once An Eagle". Which is a war novel. It is Baldwin's "Another Country". Which is a love story. The main stream, as nobler critics than myself have long noted, is composed of many smaller tributaries. The genre novel—in reality—no longer exists, save when it is so hopelessly inbred (as with the most inept cowboy novels or slanted "nurse" and "gothic" novels) that it aspires to no greater stature in the pantheon of Art.

Only in speculative fiction do we still seem to retain the semblance of doing-our-thing with no (or little) recognition of what goes on in the larger arena. I think the operable word in that previous sentence is semblance, for in point of fact the novel of speculative fiction has undergone so many changes and directions in the past ten years that today, as I write this, August 1st, 1968, Publishers' Weekly (v. 194, n.5) reviews John Brunner's forthcoming Doubleday sf novel "Stand On Zanaibar" not in the science fiction section, but as a mainstream fiction offering, side-by-column with "The Best American Short Stories 1968", John Barth's "Lost In The Fun-house" and Hermann Hesse's "Beneath The Wheel". The reviewer makes no bones that the book is sf, but says of it:

"Doubleday classifies the whole thing as science fiction, but it's far from the conventional science fiction-fantasy category of writing."

The reviewer also said, after praising the book inordinately, and directly leading the reader to understand that this is a book of rather heroic proportions, "Anyone who doesn't want to work pretty hard for his cautionary tales might take (preceding comments on the book's intricacy) as a hint."

BY HARLAN ELLISON

This review, and more what it implies than what it openly says, should give us pause for consideration of the current state of the sf novel in relation to the mainstream. There is a definite attempt here to single out this book as something above and beyond the "conventional sf-fantasy category of writing", whatever the reviewer may think that is. Is this merely another attempt to label a good book as something apart from speculative fiction, as though Hersey's "The Child Buyer" or Levin's "Rosemary's Baby" are not sf-fantasy merely because they are good?

I think not. The tone of this review is much too informed, much too on-target. I think what the reviewer is subliminally saying is that much of the speculative writing being done today is genre: in intent and in execution. And that Brunner's new one far excels that mingy labor.

For it now becomes clear that the fractioning of the genre has for ten years been in progress. We now have war novels of sf ("Bill, The Galactic Hero"; "Starship Troopers"), we have westerns of sf ("War Of The Wing-Men"; "The Horse Barbarians"), we have religious allegories ("Thorns"; "Lord Of Light"), and we have love stories, historicals, novels of manners. These last three types bring me through a somewhat underground route to my topic of discussion, Anne McCaffrey's new Ballantine novel, "Dragonflight"—an historical love novel of manners.

This reviewer confesses in front that he comes to the subject of women writers with something approaching paranoid ambivalence, leaning slightly more toward antipathy than delight. Until fairly recently I was firmly convinced that writers who were women amounted to very little. I cast back historically to find precedent to make me reverse my decision, and the best I encountered were the Brontes, who, at best, wrote elegant soap operas. But within the past five or six years I fortuitously mortared up the gaps in my literary education with the likes of Isak Dinesen, Flannery O'Connor, Shirley Jackson, Dorothy M. Johnson, Zoe Oldenbourg, Mary McCarthy, Charity Blackstock, Barbara Tuchman and the incomparable Dorothy Parker (whom I'd always adored, yet somehow managed to exclude from my theory by a feat of unmatched speciousness). I had managed, also, to exclude Leigh Brackett, Andre Norton and Catherine Moore. Obviously they weren't "women writers". They wrote like men.

It may seem an oversimplification, not to mention a crochet, but men write like men (most of the time) and women write like women. There is a gentleness, a softness, a frustrating lack of tensile strength in the writing of most women. Best typified by the works of Fanny Hurst, Frances Parkinson Keyes and Agnes Sligh Turnbull. We won't even mention Edna Ferber. My theory—that now-hoar-en-crusted theory—was that women, having been reared with a Jessemyn West "friendly persuasion" way of thinking, were incapable of truly coming to grips with those flash-points of conflict that invariably result in emotional, gut-level reformations of character, not to mention naked violence. Try to think of a woman having written the scene in "Billy Budd" where Billy, chivvied by the detestable Claggart, in-

capable of vocally defending himself, kills the Mate with one blow.

Morris Renek, in "Reflections On Violence As A Literary Tool" (Story Magazine, May 1967) puts it thus: "In Herman Melville's 'Billy Budd', for example, the act of violence clearly takes the place of speech. Billy's blow articulates his anguish against tyranny where his tongue cannot. Violence has this illiterate coherence. Everyone understands a sock on the jaw; when language fails, there is the fist."

Written by a woman? Unthinkable.

Or try to conceive of a woman having written Faulkner's "Intruder In The Dust", or a woman's view of the scene in "Tropic Of Cancer" in which Henry Miller describes fucking the Jewess under the stairs, all the while surreptitiously ransacking her spilled purse for subway fare. Or a woman understanding the gauze-like theory of Those Who Are Doomed By The Universe that eternally separates Henchard from Farfrae in Hardy's "The Mayor Of Casterbridge". These are points of view, last extremes of the human condition that women seem apparently unable to manipulate.

As my secretary recently said (in jest, but with more insight than she had thought), "Are women writers like women drivers: licensed, but not really in control?"

Well, I think that may be a bit strong. As I've noted, there have been women—no, make that female—writers who could show most male writers which end of the pencil was the business end. Comparisons between Katherine Anne Porter and Leon Uris instantly become invidious. But still there remains the stigma attached to a work of fiction by a woman; and in sf the stigma is at its most apparent. One need count no further than one's fingers to total the female writers who have made it in this specialized category.

Whether the explanation for this be inherent in the state of social subjugation in to which women have historically been forced, only now breaking down and becoming sufficiently memory-dim to allow women a flexing of their literary muscles, or because there is an inescapable truth in the theory that women are too home&hearth-bred to provide them with the raw material of creativity that intense Art demands...I cannot say. Each school has its proponents. At this point, and in part due to Miss McCaffrey's recent writings, I find myself having deserted the latter theory, and inclining more toward the former.

Yet—and again because of McCaffrey—I do not swallow the "woman in bondage" philosophy whole. For here, and now, in this enlightened era, we have a novel by a woman that tackles some hard sf topics, and if it fails in parts, it is those parts to which the female orientation has been brought, and applied.

#

As aside, though quite in line with the above: how would this book have read (I cannot keep myself from wondering) had it been written by Theodore Sturgeon, with his incomparable understanding of all the manifestations of love? How would

it have read had it been done by Keith Laumer, for my money the very best straight action writer we have these days? How would it have read at the hands of the Kuttner-Moore team, with his sure sense of the ironies of social protocol and her deep pool of feminine wisdom expressed in terms a man could relate to? And what would it have looked like, on the other hand, had it been subjected to the penchant for ecological minutiae of a Hal Clement? How would Mack Reynolds or Harry Harrison have burlequed it? This is the kind of novel that suggests so many variable ways of having been told, that one inevitably wonders what its shape and structure would have been had it been done better or worse by any one of a dozen different craftsmen.

But obviously, and sensibly, since we have here a version written by Anne McCaffrey, that is the one with which we must deal. And for the purposes of explicating the fractionalizing of the genre...for the purposes of examining the expertise of female writers with the tools and modes of the sf form, there could hardly be a better example.

#

Basic situation: generations before the novel's opening, Earthmen settled Pern, third planet of a golden G-type star; an Earth-like world with a stranger-planet that swings around Pern in a wildly elliptical orbit bringing it close to Pern every two hundred years at perihelion. Centuries later, the colonists of Pern have totally forgotten their Terran origins. They have joined with an indigenous life-form, dragons capable of breathing fire when they chew "fire-stone" and transform it with their digestive acids into flame producing gasses that ignite on contact with oxygen, to battle Threads—airborne spores catapulted off the Red Star stranger-planet at perihelion—which destroy all vegetation when they burrow into Pernese soil. The dragons and humans are telepathic, one-to-one. A specific dragonrider communicates mentally with his dragon. But it has been four hundred years since the last incursion of the Threads, and the memory of the Pernese has grown dim.

All of this is given, quite explicitly, in the introduction to the book. No one should be confused for long.

As the novel begins, we find Pern a world with a semi-feudal culture, split into two distinct societies. The Holds, ruled over by Lords, which raid and conquer one another. And the Weyrs, where dwell the last of the dragonfolk, those who ride the great winged telepathic dragons, and who live by the tithes they extract from the Lords. But in four hundred years, with no sign of Threads, the Lords have almost forgotten the need of keeping the Weyrs stocked with food and supplies, and they rail under the useless tribute paid to a high caste of what seem useless and indolent ex-heroes.

Miss McCaffrey has sketched in all of this preceding background—save for some extremely important explanations which she reveals as she goes along—well in front; an enormous aid in following the line of the plot. (A caution—





any note from which should be taken by other writers whose elaborate cosmographies or societies may be clear to them when they begin writing, but which far too frequently only emerge out of murkiness and re-readings for an audience that comes to each new world with the eyes of babies.)

Yet for the first half of the novel, very little is done with either the world of Pern or the feudal condition of its natives. The first half of the book is—while not precisely slow—terribly measured. (I have heard enough praise for the first section, published in ANALOG as "Weyr Search"—and its nomination for a Hugo bears out the high esteem in which the section is held by the mass readership—to accept that the first portions of the novel may not be plodding for everyone. Even so, on strictly craft levels, the "Weyr Search" chapters demand some critical analysis.)

In the first section we meet the ostensible protagonist of the work, the girl, Lessa. I say ostensible, for Miss McCaffrey has the damnable habit of switching viewpoints between Lessa and F'lar, the bronze dragonrider, to the detriment, I feel, of the novel's unity.

Lessa was a child when Lord Fax invaded Ruatha and conquered the Hold, murdering all those of noble blood. By secreting herself in the weyr of the household watch-dragon Lessa was able to retain her life. When Fax left, returning to his home Hold, Lessa emerged and began an existence as a kitchen drudge, cloaking her identity through the use of an ability to "cloud men's minds so they cannot see her" as she really is. With the thought of revenge driving her, Lessa grows to young womanhood, waiting for an opportunity to bring about Fax's death.

The opportunity presents itself when F'lar—on a Search

for a new Weyrwoman to meld with a soon-to-hatch queen dragon—finds her. The balance with the first section deals with Lessa's maneuvering of F'lar so he kills Fax, and F'lar's convincing Lessa she should come back to the dragonmen's Weyr to become Weyrwoman. That's all. One would think that with such a brevity of plot—thrusts a richness of detail anent Pern, its special alien nature, the people living there, and the lore of the dragon folk would fill out ninety-one pages. But it doesn't. The feudal background could be compared with invidious results to any of a dozen other science fiction novels, not the least of which would be the hearty offerings of Poul Anderson—whose work this novel resembles in many ways. But where "The High Crusade" or "Three Hearts And Three Lions" manages to convey an extraordinarily rich, one might almost call it heady, savor of times gone by, Miss McCaffrey's scent of the past is thin and almost bland. This should not be. For, stop to consider, not only does she have going for her all the remembered lore and mystique of the Terran past against which her Pernese past is paralleled, but she has the benefit of dozens of other sf novels that have dealt with cultures similar in tone to the Pernese. It would seem a not too difficult task to use those intimations, reflections and snippets of minutiae employed with such ease by almost every writer in the genre to hint at a richer, fuller background. But Miss McCaffrey does little in this way. The story of Lessa and her revenge could as easily have been written by Sir Walter Scott (though probably not with as much leanness). The language is the stilted, affected "regal" syntax many writers employ when they think they are writing mannered prose.

On this point, then, I would seriously fault Miss McCaffrey's creation. She has not seized, until one-fourth through the novel, a leitmotif that most surely makes this an historical work, and a work of importance by way of its explication of the interplay of peoples with their societies and their natural environment.

It is an oversight difficult to understand.

In all fairness, I must note that this richness of detail occurs more regularly in the three-fourths of the novel not yet discussed. But we are never treated to a full merchandising of the wares Miss McCaffrey has built into her world. (I am reminded, as another aside, of the way in which Heinlein has always managed to indicate the greater strangeness of a culture with the most casually dropped-in reference: the first time in a novel, I believe it was in "Beyond This Horizon", that a character came through a door that...dilated. And no discussion. Just: "The door dilated." I read across it, and was two lines down before I realized that the image had been that the words had urged forth. A dilating door. It didn't open, it irised! Dear God, how I knew I was in a future world.)

McCaffrey, with all the past impressions of bad MGM movies and all the implanted lore of every swordplay thriller from Dumas to Sabatini, should have been able to show us her world more colorfully in that first section. Why should she? Because, very simply, for the first fourth of "Dragonflight", there is something akin to boredom.

It is necessary for a critic to express his opinions, his positions, even his most minor crotchets, early on. In that way, the reader is never in doubt as to the motivations for critical judgements. Herewith, a basic one you may try to remember when considering these criticisms: a writer may have a message, an emotion, a philosophy to impart in his fiction, and these are the most marvelous kind of serendipity. But his first job is to entertain. To inform comes second. To entertain comes first. So, in my view, the single greatest crime a writer can commit is to bore. If a book cannot hold me past the first few pages, I have to struggle to compell myself to go on. (I have been faulted for this narrowness of nature—with good cause, I might add—by writers to letter columns of several fanzines, who have accused me of limited vision, lack of tenacity and outright stupidity. They have also indicated their pity that I've missed some very worthwhile books, most notably "Dune". I cannot argue with them, I can only report the way the mechanism functions.)

This is not to say that "Dragonflight" as a whole is a bore. Nor even that the first section is in toto boring. Only that there is a tendency toward boredom in the first ninety-one pages. And in a book as good as this one, I find even the taint of boredom a ghastly presence, possibly all the more noticeable because the book is so good.

Well, then, to what can we attribute this boring tendency in the first section? Partially, as I've indicated, a lack of drawing upon the world in which Lessa lives, for a depth of back ground that would shore up such a thin plot-development. But this is only the lesser part of the responsibility. The greater share is due to the central topic of this analysis: the "woman's" view.

Unfortunately, most of the failure of this section, due to the "woman's view", cannot be explicated. It is in the nature of tone, of shadow more than reality; my friends on the Strip would say it was all in the "vibes"; I would say vibrations, but that's because I'm on the other side of the Gap,

sockittowardsme!

So I can't tell you at this point in space, time and analysis what it is content-wise. But let me go on with the book, and by the time we reach the bottom line, I'll have it for you. Even a critic sometimes has to grope for the proper words: but that's all to the good. It removes from your minds the sureness that we critics are infallible gods, with clear vision. I'm sure that's what you thought.

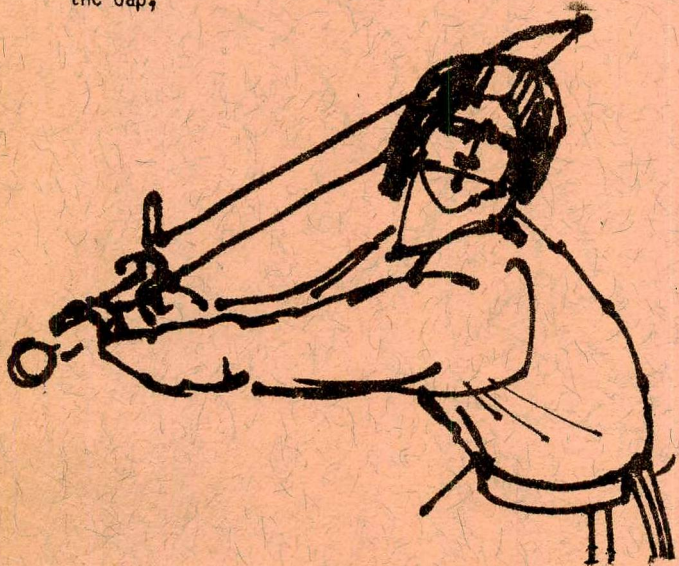
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Parts three and four of the novel appeared in Analog (December 1967, January 1968) as "Dragonrider". In the novel they are titled "Dust Fall" and "The Cold Between". Part two (called "Dragonflight" in the novel version) is first published in the Ballantine totality. It concerns itself with an attempt on the part of the Lords of the Holds to wipe the last of the dragonfolk off the face of Pern. They are turned back with what might most generously be termed underwhelming ease. It is not a terribly strong segment, considered in terms of plot, and I can well understand why editor Campbell chose to exclude it from the magazine version. It isn't necessary. Correction: it wasn't necessary for him.

In terms of the overall effect the book makes, it is immensely valuable. For in this section we begin to see Miss McCaffrey in her long suit: dealing with the futuristic novel of manners.

In the second section Miss McCaffrey deals with Lessa's gradual growing-into-state at the Weyr. Her training as a Weyrwoman, the relationship she has not only with F'lar—her airborne John Wayne—but more importantly with her great golden queen dragon, Ramoth. In this second section the author begins to dualistically mine her material: both in terms of characterization and in relation of people to the social structures.

It is here that the book finally catches fire. Life pours in as we see F'lar in terms other than as merely a killing machine for Lessa's revenge. We see Lessa for what she is as well. Unfortunately, we don't see her the way Miss McCaffrey would have us see her. We are intended to view the telepathic Weyrwoman as a strong-willed, cunning little minx, tipped brimfull of the survival stuff. In point of fact she emerges as a silly, vain, cranky adolescent intent on doing precisely the opposite of what everyone ask of her. (And here I find one of those author obfuscations that infuriates me: there is an intricate plan for the future being implemented by F'lar to restore the dragonmen to their former lofty station, in preparation for the arrival of the Threads. To carry the plan through, he needs Lessa's cooperation. But he never tells her what his plan is. So she regularly fucks it up, through spite and wrongheaded impetuosity. It makes for some nice plot-complications, and a little artificial conflict, but it could all be avoided if someone just once sat down with someone else and said, "Now here's what's going on..." But no one does. They avoid telling her the simplest, most logical facts, for no discernible reason in the construct of the plot, but merely because the author needed to



advance the story. This is dishonest. It is what Knight calls the "moron plot twist". And the frustrating part of it is that McCaffrey never needs to do it! The story works just as well with everyone being informed. Oh well...)

I suddenly realize that my objections to elements in the book I consider negative are definitely imparting a feeling that I disliked the book. Odds blood! Nothing could be further from the truth. I liked the book. Even admired it in places. The blemishes on its surface rather anger me because it is such a rewarding novel. So from this point on, I will praise, not knock. A valentine, from this point on.

The failure of the book (he said, proving himself an instant liar) is in the relationship between F'lar and Lessa. Against a background of the Civil War, Margaret Mitchell managed to tell a coherent and even touching love story between Rhett Butler and Scarlet O'Hara. The enormity of historical events only served to showcase the futility and intensity of their relationship. Anne McCaffrey has attempted the same trick, and failed. When F'lar (who keeps brushing that goddam forelock off his snow-white brow, like someone out of a True Confession soap) gets justifiably angry with Lessa, he doesn't do what any normal man would do... belt her or toss her up against a wall, or impress upon her by the force of his (alleged) indomitable personality that she is a jerk and had damned well better shape up before she sacrifices the entire planet to her immature tantrums ...he shakes her. Not very hard, for she always laughs at him with "teasing vexatiousness" or some other such silly modifier. (I won't go into it here, but Miss McCaffrey is one of the great practitioners of what Blish calls "said-bookism". People "grunt", "drawl", "breathe", "all but

shriek" and ring almost every change short of Mark Clifton-ism or Arthur Zirul-ism, rather than "say" something. It is a bad habit that, once having been pointed out to Miss McCaffrey, should disappear from her later work.)

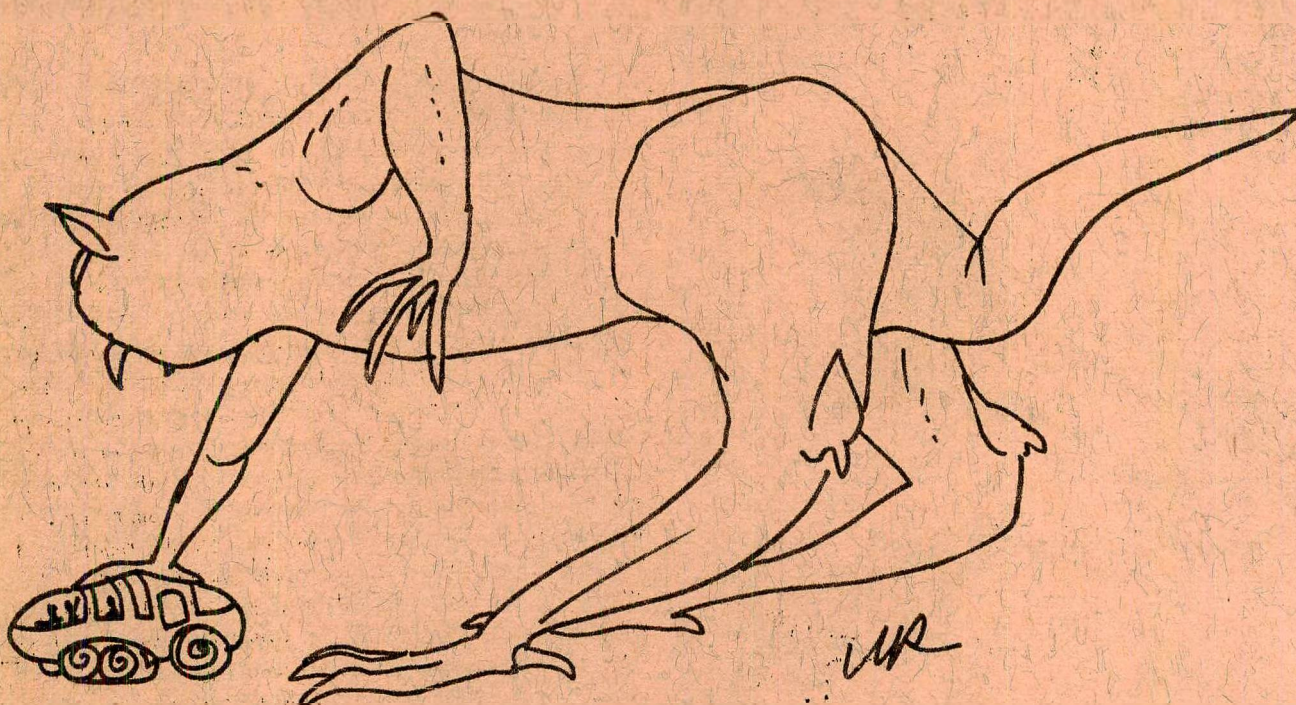
F'lar is supposed to be a very strong man indeed, but he acts like a simp where Lessa is concerned.

And that brings us directly, face-to-face with the "woman's" view, what is wrong with the book in the main, and the final explication of the topic at hand.

Anne McCaffrey has taken as her tools the form and content of the most masculine specie of speculative fiction: the hard science adventure novel. There is a complex use of the elements of planetary geography, ecology and inferred astronomy. Added to this is the swashbuckling story-line. And larded on top of all this is the basic love story. Now this is tatamount to juggling a dozen balls all at once. It takes an adept to keep them all in the air. For the most part McCaffrey keeps the spheres spinning. But too frequently the ball representing the person-to-person story falls and hits her on the foot.

Her people don't ring true in terms of the world on which they live. Lessa has undergone privation, torture and utter poverty. Yet at no time does she seem to have been affected by them. It is as if she went through fire and was not touched. F'lar is hellbent on a mission of intricacy and subterfuge to save his world, but he goes about it with the mannered ease of a ribbon clerk. One never gets the feeling that he is moving through the story as a marionette; more manipulated than manipulating.

These become, all too frequently, the stick-figures of the ladies' fiction. They posture and perform at the whim of



the author.

The relationship of the man to the woman is in no way recognizable as realistic, not only insofar as we relate today, in this time, now...but in any terms that we can relate to through the literature of the past. (To cop out and say they are relating as people in the future would relate is a dodge: their circumstances parallel our own, emotionally, and the reference points are in today, therefore a consistency must be maintained or it becomes a case of excusing boredom in a story by saying the author was cleverly trying to describe boredom.)

While I am not saying that McCaffrey should have dealt in terms of cynicism and masculine sweatiness to make her points, I am saying that one cannot hope to make a world of rigor and hardship come to life for what it is, and then populate it with anachronistic Victorian types who do a stately pavanne. The clang of dichotomy deafens, and the book is thereby made infirm.

On the positive side, however, Miss McCaffrey has saved herself in the latter half of the book with great skill and the putting-together of a jigsaw puzzle. Most of the questions asked in the early sections of the book are answered by action rather than description. McCaffrey has a skillful way of showing, not telling.

The book succeeds in great part because of the potency of the world and its dragons as attention-getters. What she lacks in hard-driving emotionalism, she makes up in suddenly revealed plot-twists. We suddenly learn that the dragons can teleport back through time. We learn that Lessa Today was the savior of the world by going back and becoming Lessa Yesterday. We rediscover the past. We find out where the mysteriously disappeared dragonfolk of all the other Weyrs went. It moves rapidly, beginning with part three, and it holds firmly.

This book is a notable property, not only for the sheer enjoyment the latter half provides, but as a talisman for the future. Miss McCaffrey's talent is a very substantial one. She is a writer. That she is—careful with this word—tainted by feminism is something she will either have to rid herself of, or learn to deal with. Other women writers have done it, most particularly Kate Wilhelm and Katherine MacLean. If she can, then what we will have is a humanist Hal Clement, a writer capable of creating the worlds of wonder we have come to expect as a staple of speculative fiction, combined with a nice feel for the male/female relationships those worlds will create.

There are flaws in "Dragonflight", as I've perhaps belabored, but make no mistake, this is a fascinating novel, filled with color, filled with ideas, filled with the indefinable aroma of a new talent discovering itself.

We await with hope Miss McCaffrey's next offering, and suggest she delve more deeply into the writings of Nathaniel West, John D. MacDonald, Jim Thompson and James M. Cain to get a grasp on less butterfly characterizations.

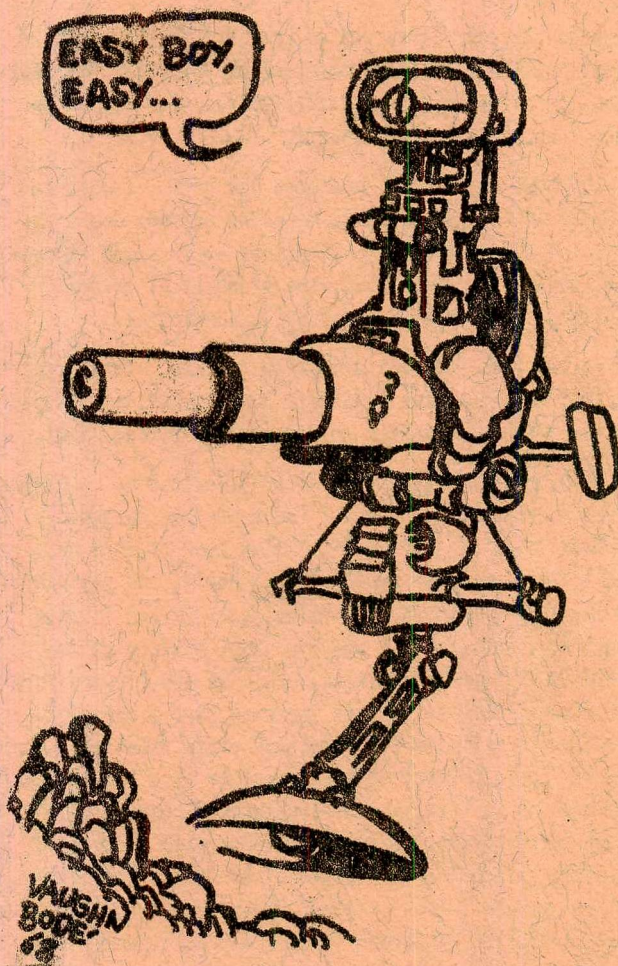
It may be that a woman can outdo the muscle-flexers in

speculative fiction. One can only observe that C.L. Moore and Leigh Brackett beat Robert E. Howard at his own game, and I watch with great interest as Anne McCaffrey—who is no Becky Thatcher let me tell you—goes after Heinlein and Asimov and Clement. It is a rough arena to choose to fight in, but I suspect the broad has got the moxie to make it.

In any case, we welcome with pleasure her mainstream attack on the hallowed forms of the genre.

There are all too few guerrilla warriors in the jungle these days. If McCaffrey can keep from getting her skirts caught in the underbrush, she may be our next Che Guevera.

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VOID BEFORE (AND AFTER) TED WHITE — BY GREG BENFORD

Recently John Berry stated in PSY that the end of a "great fannish era" could be dated by VOID #28, the last issue. "Fantastic," I said to myself. "Ted White has done it again. Another convert."

The idea wasn't new, you see; I'd heard it before. It may even be true. But to me—the guy who was a co-editor of VOID through all 28 issues—it seemed incredible, and still does. VOID, the signpost of an era? VOID, the focal point of the fannish contingent?

Well...yes, VOID was a fannish fanzine. It started out that way, but like Ted's ZIP and STELLAR, it always had one eyebrow cocked in the general direction of sf.

VOID began in the spring of 1955, edited by my brother Jim and myself. The first issue was hectographed. (An indication of just how far we've come is that new fans today have never even heard of hecto, and you can't buy one easily anymore. Mercifully.) Jim and I wrote it all ourselves, and it was the usual mixture of fan fiction and juvenile articles. VOID #2 and #3 were more of the same, but the quality improved (Joe Gibson contributed two articles and Ron Ellik wrote a letter). We were living in Germany at the time, and like the 14-year-old neofans we were, we were influenced considerably by our surroundings. Gerfandom was heavily sercon and was passing from the 30's style of sf to the Campbell brand. Jim and I took interest and began to run articles on the evolution of German fandom, since it seemed to be a speeded-up version of the U.S. experience.

In VOID #6 we tired of it and broke away from sercon interests. I wrote two imitations of the well-known Derelicti Derogations that were appearing in Boyd Raeburn's A BAS, satirizing and attacking various conceits of the German fans, and some others as well. We acquired fannish columnists and letterhacks; the principal discovery was Kent Moomaw, who was just emerging as a promising fan of extremely fannish orientation.

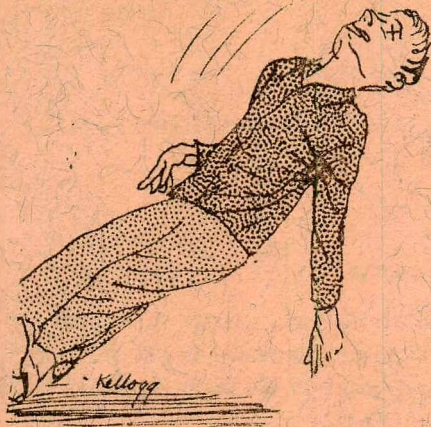
In VOID #10 Kent wrote an article remarkably like John Berry's in PSY #24. It called for a renaissance of

fannish writing, hoped someone would publish a regular, quality fanzine that would serve as a focal point, deplored the fragmentation of fandom into splinters of various interests, and all the rest. It was almost the archetype of the dead-serious approach to what should be a lighthearted matter.

Nobody starts writing first class humor because he read an article somewhere saying that's what fandom needs. So it is a little ironic that shortly after Moomaw's column appeared, a real era of good, fannish activity did begin. It started with Terry Carr and Ron Ellik: FANAC. Boyd Raeburn's A BAS, which had long been a focus of urbanity and wit, was dying. VOID stood halfway between A BAS and the Berkeley scene, including elements of both. While Jim and I edited it alone, it never wholly subscribed to the Burbee renaissance on the one hand, or the dry, rather subtle approach of Boyd Raeburn. There were other fans of that time who also fell somewhere in between—notably John Konig and Kent Moomaw. I think it's even more apparent now, ten years after Kent died by his own hand, that he would have been a primary figure in the fandom of the sixties; he probably would've become a professional writer, and I've come to think of him as a sort of serious Terry Carr.

Kent's suicide precipitated Ted White's "takeover" of VOID. Ted and Kent had planned a monthly ABERRATION, Kent's (quite good) fanzine. About two months after Kent's death, I got a letter from Ted proposing a monthly VOID. (This was the first contact we'd ever had.) I took him up on it, and from that moment the flavor of the zine changed. It became more earnest and high-powered. Ted put a hell of a lot of work into it and I, just entering university work, contented myself with writing editorials and editing the letter column.

From the first, Ted and I had the idea of producing a first rank, frequent fanzine. A Hugo contender. A focal point, if you will. (That unfortunate phrase hounded us for years—Sandy Sanderson, in APORHETTA, flogged it to death.) This is a legend, you see—the theory that such a fanzine is the highest embodiment of the Muse, that to edit one is a chance at some sort of immortality. Among fannish fans it's one of the few articles of faith.



"...history is written by the survivors."

Did VOID make it? I don't know. I was too close to it. The zine went through several ups and downs—Ted and I lost interest, were revived by Pete Graham, then we flagged again, only to be saved by Terry Carr. I think the issues got better from about VOID #22 to VOID #28, the last. The VOID Boys style evolved: light, semi-chitter-chatter, use of incidents and conversations, some catch phrases, and toward the end, rampant Burbeeism. What VOID became, of course, wasn't anything like our original conception. It wasn't frequent, and it wasn't that mythical focal point of all fandom. I think it probably was some sort of focus for fannish fandom; that is, for the people who're most concerned with fan matters, and don't spend very much time on sf.

But, as I've found over the last few years, VOID has become more than that. Now it's a sort of legend—a symbol for pure fannishness and humor, for an easy, flowing style, for Those Grand Old Days. I don't even recognize it any more.

In fact, I'm not quite sure how it got that way. Certainly Ted's personality has something to do with it. Unlike his other co-editors, Ted didn't curtail his fanac after VOID #28. He published MINAC with Les Gerber, was active in FAPA and fan politics, and continued to write quite a few articles on the side. He has a forceful personality. He commands loyalty, and he's awfully convincing when he wants to sell you an idea. There are a number of fans today—some of them among the very best we have—who came into fandom more or less on his knee. Naturally, they view VOID in a special light.

There's another reason, too: history is written by the survivors. Over the last few years Ted has written several pieces about VOID, to explain VOID as an example of his theory of layout and presentation, or as an example of fannish humor, etc. Every time he refers to it, the after-image of the zine gains a little more definition. He doesn't spread self-praise; but Ted White is a man of many opinions, and he illustrates them with what he knows. I'm sure if Richard Bergeron or Terry Carr or Dick Lupoff or Bill Donaho were writing similar articles, they'd have to refer

to their zines for examples. Similarly, WARHOON, INNUENDO, XERO or HABAKKUK would be better known if their editors wrote articles on the theory of fanediting...it's just a matter of exposure and visibility.

QUIP is a big help, too. This is the only instance I know of a deliberate, calculated attempt to evoke the spirit of a fanzine dead now for six years; and it may even succeed. More accurately, QUIP started as a VOID imitation. It's evolved now into a respectable, quality publication, still sporting the comic strip covers of the old VOID, but with a decided editorial personality of its own. Its editorial juggling (Katz to Bailes to Adkins to van Arnam) is very much in the VOID tradition, but it has also hurt the continuity of the zine over the past year. Still, every issue of QUIP is an advertisement for VOID, and it builds up that ol' image.

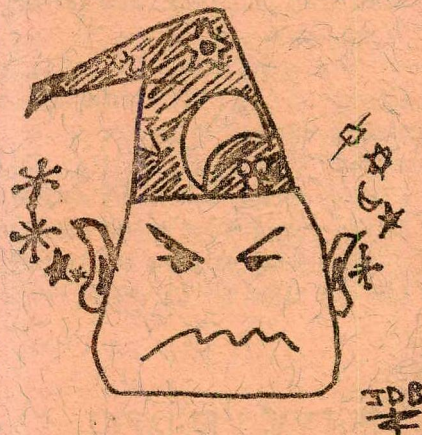
The upshot of all this is that the other fanzines of the early sixties gradually fade from memory, but VOID remains. There are a lot of new fans today who learn fan history by reading nostalgic articles, or looking back through someone's collection. But there aren't that many collections, and it would seem Ted White writes a good percentage of the articles.

A lot of neofans become acquainted with theories about fan history, rather than the history itself. They don't read WARHOON or INNUENDO. But they hear of VOID, and "four co-editors...that's not too many" and all the rest. It's part of the mythos now.

So what is the rank of VOID? How good was it? Did it catch the feel of the era, should it be held up as a model?

I'd like to know.

VOID #28 is already shrouded in the mists back there, doubly obscured by the cloud of opinion surrounding it. It would be good to have an honest, clear-eyed appraisal of the zine. I doubt now, though, that we'll ever be really sure.



DELUSIONS

BY ED COX and RICHARD E. GEIS

DELUSIONS

This issue Ed Cox joins me in my delusions. Welcome, Ed. Just remember, the crown is mine, do you hear, mine!

RITE OF PASSAGE By Alexei Panshin—
Ace A-16. 75¢ Order from Ace Books,
(Dept. MM), 1120 Avenue of the Americas,
New York, N.Y. 10036. Send price indicated plus 5¢ handling fee.

There has been a hooroar of sorts going on in YANDRO and in PSY over women writers and feminine-viewpoint stories. (See Harlan Ellison's column this issue for more on this.)

Anne McCaffrey mentioned in a letter that she thought Alexei Panshin had done an "extraordinarily fine job on his female characterization" in RITE OF PASSAGE.

I have to disagree and risk being labeled incapable of appreciating anything written by women or from their viewpoint. Before I get into why I disagree, something should be said first about the structure of RITE OF PASSAGE.

The story situation and background (in Panshin's own words) is briefly this: "In 2198, one hundred and fifty years after the desperate wars that destroyed an overpopulated Earth, Man lives precariously on a hundred hastily-established colony worlds and in the seven giant Ships that once ferried men to the stars.

"Mia Haverro's Ship is a small, closed society. It tests its children by casting them out to live or die in a month of Trial in the hostile wilds of a colony world. Mia Haverro's Trial is fast approaching and in the meantime she must learn not only the skills that will keep her alive but the deeper courage to

face herself and her world."

The last section of the book, wherein Mia spends her month of Trial on the planet, appeared in the July, 1963 issue of IF. The story, about 10,000 words long, was titled, "Down To The Worlds Of Men".

Now. The structure. The reader is presented with 178 pages of preface and introductory material before the real story begins...and that is the action that appeared as a novelette in IF. It is as if Panshin had a completely detailed autobiography of his character worked out for reference, and a lot of detail on the Ship and its culture, and instead of working this into an expanded Trial story, as short flashbacks and recall, decided to expand it yet again and patch it onto the front of the story and call it all a novel.

The reader is obliged to plod through tens of thousands of words of this material (in fictional form, granted) in order to get to the interesting, suspenseful, final portion.

Panshin demands more from the average reader than he is likely to get. The first two-thirds of the book are, as Damon Knight commented, boring.

Why? Because Mia Haverro is not that inherently interesting. She is "set" as a character very soon and comes across as a rather cold, too-rational, introverted, snobbish child. And her thoughts, with a few exceptions, could have been thought by anyone. There is a too-adult tone to Panshin's first-person-child writing which betrays his inability to create a true characterization for a girl, or a boy, that age. His children are overcontrolled, largely, and too mature.

I recently spent 20 hours sitting next to a brother and sister, ages 12 and 13, on a Greyhound bus. I was able to absorb their speech patterns and watch their behavior. I was friendly and got "inside stuff", as they opened up to me, and as they fought with each other and argued and gossiped and played. As it happened I had read about halfway through RITE OF PASSAGE before getting on the bus. The book was fresh in my mind. I couldn't help but make comparisons.

There are scenes and incidents in RITE OF PASSAGE which ring true and capture the spirit and energy of childhood, but overall Mia Haverro is not childlike enough. To say that she is a child of a different environment and culture, and more intelligent and so on, than today's child her age is to cop out. WHY is she different from, say, Venie, a girl in her age bracket on the Ship, who behaves as we normally expect? Why did Panshin choose to make his central character so adult in thought and behavior?

BOOK REVIEWS

Probably because a normal girl that age is so damned silly and giggly that she couldn't carry a book or manage to perform as Panshin's girl must perform during Trial.

There is something fishy about the basic premise—dropping children onto hostile planets to survive for a month or die, in order for them to become "adults" in the Ships. Panshin got this idea from a savage culture. But I question if the Ship people really would have adopted such a savage and irrational method of maturing their kids. Why should they? The Ships, after all, are presented as the most civilized of the human groupings that survived the death of Earth. They look down on the colonists as "Mudeaters". They pride themselves on being scientists and preservers of knowledge. Why in hell should they lose good minds, perhaps superior minds, even an occasional genius, in order to "test" their children in this way? It doesn't make sense.

Neither does the obliteration of the planet upon which Mia's group performed their Trial make sense. The entire population of the planet was wiped out for the "sin" of allowing unrestricted population growth, for stealing another Ship's scout vessel, and for killing and/or imprisoning an unusually large proportion of the children in the dropped Trial group! Rather a Draconian punishment considering that the Ship need only have "wiped out" a village or two to make its point. And howcum the other Ship didn't act when its scout was stolen?

Panshin may have been drawing parallels with our involvement in Vietnam and our own racist attitudes and policies, but if so he went to extremes and invalidated his argument.

A word about Panshin's skill as a writer: on the nuts-and-bolts level he's smooth and professional, if a bit cool, emotionally, in his scenes and characterization and dialog. On a novel-wide level he made a mistake in structuring the book, and in not justifying the Trial period well enough, if it could be at all, given the other elements of the Ships' culture and history.

And, finally, this: the book is patently a Juvenile, in the best sense, mind, but a Juvenile. I wish Ace and other publishers would have the courtesy to label Juveniles as such.

—Richard E. Geis

Ed C*o*x has also read RITE OF PASSAGE and has reviewed it. His judgement follows.

One of the trite phrases in the book world is that you can't tell much about a book from the jacket blurbs. Or maybe that's what readers often say. In the case of this first novel, RITE OF PASSAGE, by New York area writer, Alexei Panshin, we have less than restrained notices from established "names" in the field on the paperback.

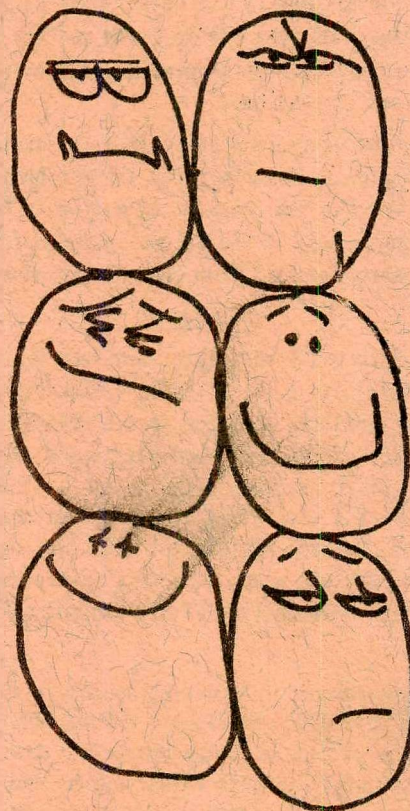
James Blish says, in part, "Not just another starship book, but a fully realized, lived-in world.—" John Brunner says, in part, "An impressive portrayal of the psychological and moral coming-of-age of a young girl...". Robert

Silverberg says, in part, "Panshin writes with vigor, charm, wit and the power of a born story-teller."

Unfortunately for the reader of the blurbs and the book, it is none of these. Briefly, it concerns a girl living on an asteroid-size "ship", one of a number roving the inhabited areas of space. They are the survivors of destroyed Earth who carry on the technical heritage, trading bits and pieces of it with the colonized planets for needed raw materials. Part of the "rite of passage" for the young to become adults is a survive-or-else sojourn on one of the worlds, crude, agrarian and resentful toward the starship society.

For what it intends it is poor science fiction, poorer as a novel of psychological insight. Its intent puts it into competition with any other such novel in any other field. It doesn't stand up.

Then, to read it as an offering of an unusual sort (in "our" field), as a portrayal of a young girl coming to maturity, not standing it against any other, nor even the cover blurbs, it is still less than believable. There is no real insight and the manner is cardboardly offhand and unconvincing. It is full of small errors of inconsistency, both in the category of "hard" science and in the milieu of the ship society. My notes, taken while reading the book, would take up more space than the editor would probably allow. But there are unsupportable deviations and character switches, illogical reasoning behind decisions and plot twists, inconsistent action on the part of the protagonist. So many as to amaze this reader by their profusion.



Naturally, one doesn't expect a lot of fast-moving action in a novel of this type. But the snail's-pace which one would expect to produce rich, if placid, philosophical insight into the inner thoughts of a young girl in a starship society achieving maturity within, and as dictated by, that society, there is boredom and superficiality. What continuity there is is several times broken by ingenuous and over-long "stories", or parables, whatever, told by one character or another. These no doubt are supposed to contribute to the sum of experience which our heroine soaks up to the final maturity. This is not the case. In one instance, she is for some reason embarrassed by the story, and the reader is embarrassed by them all. They are painfully awful and lacking the hard realism and sense that any old-world fable possesses. If they are based on old Russian folk tales, as I suspect they may be, they've lost lots in the translation.

While this book does not immediately leap onto that All-Time Horrible Shelf on which reside such as Clans of the Alphane Moon and The Wonder War, it should be bought only by a Panshin fan, the completist collector, or the unwary.

—Ed Cox

THOSE WHO WATCH by Robert Silverberg—Signet P3160, 60¢. Order from New American Library, P.O. Box 2310, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10017. Send indicated price plus 10¢ handling fee.

Coincidence plays too great a part in this book. In some novels, and from some writers, it can be accepted, but not from Bob Silverberg.

The book is about three aliens on Watcher patrol whose "flying saucer" is destroyed by its out-of-control engine reactor. The three must bail out to Earth and try to survive until rescued. They have assumed human form to avoid detection as aliens if possible.

The coincidences are sprung full blown immediately: each alien just happens to be discovered by the one human in his area of landing who has the ability and motive to keep the alien/human hidden. Each of the aliens in human form is damaged by the emergency fall from the sky and needs time to mend.

The plot is thin and basically flawed, and Silverberg tried to pad it out with a lot of endless character development, and by incorporating a menace from a different alien group who are also watching Earth on patrol and who wish to invade but are kept in check by a covenant.

But the book moves too slowly and the human characters are clichés—the drunken, cynical soldier...the sad young widow...the young boy who keeps a secret. Silverberg tried hard but the basic improbability of his beginning killed the book.

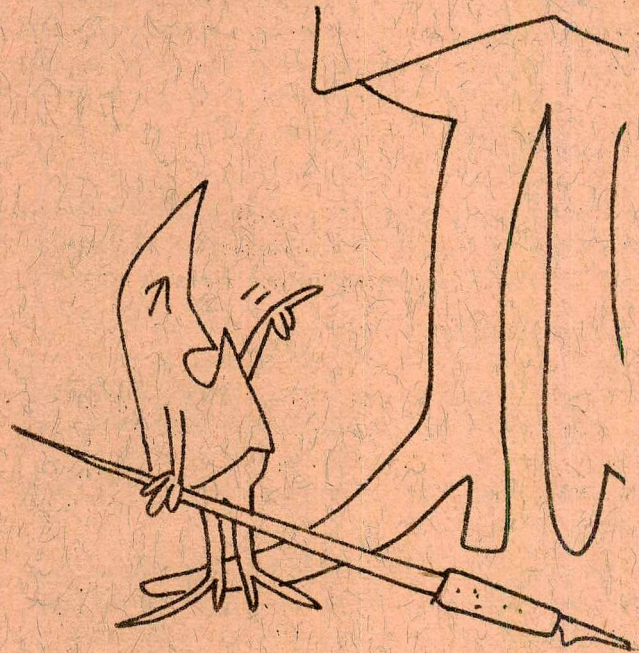
The aliens are rescued, of course, undiscovered by the authorities, the Watchers' patrols are maintained, Earth is saved and everyone is made a better person for the experience of alien-human contact. It gets rather syrupy and gooey at the end.

—Richard E. Geis

GREYLORN by Keith Laumer—Berkley Medallion Book X1514, 60¢. Available from Berkley Publishing Corp., 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. Send indicated price plus 10¢ handling.

In a few years time, Keith Laumer has easily taken a secure place in the ranks of popular science fiction writers. His is not often the most serious script in the genre but it is almost always entertaining. His brash, private-I style easily adapts the rough-and-fumble tactics of the proliferating spy and spoof-spy novels currently sagging the paperback rack. Four in this manner are thus presented in Greylorn.

The title original is a van Vogtian-type opus with little of the obfuscuity and much more action than the story—WAR OF NERVES—it resembles in outline. Captain Greylorn commands a ship, Earth's Last Hope, arrowing out to find a lost but potentially helpful colony, in an effort to Save Old Earth from the Red Tide (a biological growth covering all Earth, almost, not ideologically flooding Man's minds).



Making things tough is a mutiny stemming from those aboard who feel they're wasting time and ought to get back to the ranch. Things get screwed up in the process (like the food supplies) and Greylorn finds that they're actually and finally Meeting Up With The Aliens. They trade, each having something the other needs. The aliens are rather nasty in their humor and methods. Yet our hero wins thru and for a very good reason which is revealed in a neat little boff at the end of the story.

The other three in the volume are reprints. "The Night of the Trolls" tells of one way the deep freeze or similar type sleep might turn out, under very different circumstances from say, The Door Into Summer plot. Our hero is even more the brash type and bulls his way thru a post-war situation to

controlled and serviced society decided to deliberately destroy it. At the dome-city his computer-repressed memories are released and he learns of his past role in triggering the Chaos. The computer complex had kept him in storage until needed for another survey of humanity.

During his survey Tanner learns to become more human and falls in love with Rifka, impregnates her and becomes a proud father.

So, having learned of his past, having found a woman and become fully human, Tanner journeys back to the computer complex in the ruins of Manhattan, knocks on the door and tells the com-comp to go to hell, he will not give it any more data. The com-comp figuratively shrugs and wishes him good luck.

That's what I like—a society-wrecking computer with a heart of gold.

And, if the artificially constructed Tanner is too first-person human for easy credibility, and if his genetic ability to father a human child isn't established, and if his ability to move blur-fast is simply "given" like magic, and if his ability to project a tongue of flame from his mouth isn't explained either organically or mechanically...well, so what? This is one of those few novels that are honestly labeled "Science-Fantasy" on the cover, so there's no real genre complaint that can be made. This is a romantic adventure and it has a happy, if improbable, ending. (Most happy endings are improbable, I suppose, but I'm referring to the forgiving com-comp, not the love interest.)

—Richard E. Geis

Ted's character in this book is named Ianner. No first name. That's just as well, since Ted just might have chosen LeRoy if he had decided a given name was necessary...and so would have thrown all fandom into Confusion. (See the letter column this issue, and Ted's column in PSY #26, if the above confuses you now. This has been a pointless aside.)

PLANET RUN by Keith Laumer and Gordon R. Dickson—Berkley
Medalion X1588, 60¢ + 10¢.

Tanner encounters primitive stone-age cannibals, acquires a young female companion named Rifka, discovers more and more about himself; his super-endurance and super-healing ability as well as two secret weapons—he can go into a super-fast "overdrive", and in deadly danger is able to shoot a foot long tongue of flame from his mouth and throat.

Old Capt. Henry, several times rejuvenated and blaster of new frontiers is happy to settle down to retirement by the pool and reflect on how good the sun soaks into his bones. Rotten old Senator Bartholomew knows Hank is a Good Man and sort of blackmails Hank into being his man in The Last Great Land Grab.

Laumer takes over and the action gets off to a roaring start, plenty of bludgeoning but believably crisp action. Once again rejuvenated, Capt. Henry has gotten the Senator's

son to be a partner in the venture, hopefully to Make a Man of him (though not through the time-tested, though short, method of taking him to the nearest whorehouse). They land on the planet, immediately get into Big Trouble (through time-tested means) and get off on the Great Race as their Bolo blasts its way to a site where the plot takes an interesting twist.

I'm hoping you readers Out There will read the book, if you enjoy a good story for entertainment, so I won't belay the twist by going into further detail. But it does take off on a tangent. Our hero gets bloodily pulverized reminiscent of the old days when the squeamish had to beware the text dead ahead! Senator's son trudges against adversity. And the ending is typical of the old gangster-story denouement. Except that the epilogue, disguised as Chapter Nine, winds it up nicely and curves a neat little twist ending at you for good measure.

Strictly lightweight entertainment, but proficiently done. Better fare than you're likely to get from the faddists, even at 139 pages for 60¢. But there's a free S.F. Book Club ad bound in... Let's all bitch at Berkley about that!

Ed Cox

THE JEWELS OF APTOR By Samuel R. Delany—Ace G706, 50¢.

Luckily I didn't read the original version of this book when it came out in 1962 as part of an Ace Double. Delany has reworked it, put back material edited out previously, and almost certainly presented us with a superior book.

The book is, to quote the Introduction, "The book is a rich, mythic quest, a tale of a thief, a poet, and a triple goddess. The theme is mutability. It is handled in a symphony of color, with adventures on fog-bound seas, in treacherous jungles, decaying temples, abandoned cities."

It is that, all of that, and more. It is too easy and also misleading to say Delany is a poetic writer; a lot of poetry today is patently awful and too concerned with difficult word-effects when it isn't simply incomprehensible. Delany deals wonderfully in vivid, evocative imagery.

It would be interesting to see the result if he applied this style to a hard science fiction plot and background. His style has a great deal of perhaps unsuspected muscle, and I think he could take a Larry Niven type of story and come up with a damn near perfect, beautifully written novel of science fiction.

THE JEWELS OF APTOR is not quite science fiction and not quite fantasy. It is in that realm of vague unreality that requires suspended critical judgement and a willingness to float in a cloud of improbable adventure and behavior. With Delany the willingness comes easy.

—Richard E. Geis

THE HORN OF TIME by Poul Anderson—Signet F3349, 60¢ + 10¢.

Without the almost immediate impact of van Vogt or Hein-

lein in earlier eras of science fiction, Poul Anderson has, over the years, climbed to that pinnacle of success in his craft shared by few others in the field. Equally skilled in short story or novel, serious or light, he has become one of the most prolific, and dependably excellent, sf writers around. This collection of six stories attests to his proficiency.

"The Horn of Time of the Hunter" ("Homo Aquaticus", AMAZING, Sept. 1963) is one of those sober ones, in that strain which Anderson explores so often, the time after Earth has, or very likely, destroyed itself or perished from some Outside agency. In this, a spaceship exploring far reaches of the galaxy wends homeward looking for signs of humans. On a once-colonized planet, ages deserted as reckoned by ship time, the earthmen discover a truth about mankind's destiny. That is, one apart from that often proclaimed by Man...

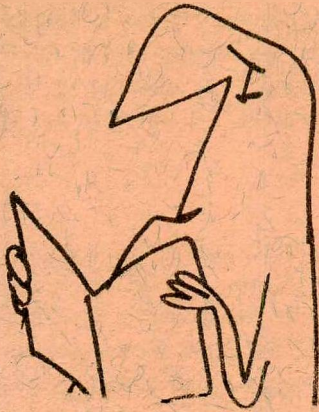
"A Man To My Wounding" is an abrupt change-of-pace, reprinted from EQMM (Dec. 1959) in a first person style mimicking that technique so popular in that field for a long time. In a future time in our society, war has taken nearly a 360° turn in methodology having first narrowed down the combatants from whole armies to merely picking off the top men on either side by a currently grim spectre known as assassination. Our hero in this story uncovers what, to him, is a shocking harbinger of the trend to come. A somewhat less than tongue-in-cheek commentary which is as apropos today as when written.

Back to a more austere and grimly bleak future we go in "The High Ones" (INFINITY, June 1958), another tale in the 1984-ish vein which Anderson does so frighteningly. A ship of exploration from a collectivized Earth encounters aliens in a far star system. Coupled with the threat from ostensibly invincible, but inexplicably behaving, aliens, is the desire of the majority of the crew not to return to the shackled society that awaits on Earth. The somewhat less than Heroic hero (a bespectacled American) solves the riddle of the aliens' massive city-world and gives a clue to us 1960s Americans as to what that old-new nasty, the Computer, can do to us if we don't watch out. Not a tale to be taken lightly.

But the Anderson we seem to know and love best blasts to the fore in "The Man Who Came Early" (not a ribald tale from PLAYBOY but from F&SF, June 1956). Here Scandinavian lore comes through as we witness an Iceland of early Christian times when life was simple and uncomplicated, by modern standards. Some simple glitch on the part of nature happens and a man of Today appears on the scene.

This scene is described in convincing detail and takes on a reality of frustration as the American (soldier) fumbles feebly with 20th century knowledge which flops completely as he tries to apply it via the existing technology of that age. He winds up a thoroughly useless individual in a society in which everybody pulls an oar. Even in war. His weapon brings more problems, rather than commanding invincibility, upon his head. It is in this story that the believability comes on stronger than the bleak futures of the others.

Which would include "Marius" (ASF, March 1957), another



in a long parade in which a post-WWIII-atomigeddon survivor group struggles to rebuild. This takes place in Europe where again is told the story of the would-be savior falling inevitably toward a neo-fascist militarism. It is short, simple and grim. Typical of the ASF story in that era of the magazine.

Leagues apart from another one in the post-war parables, "Progress" (F&SF, Jan. 1962, a sequel to "The Sky People", March 1959). Here the reshuffled nations, conglomerates of parts of countries and geographical areas of our own time, struggle to regain the industrial power of the pre-war era of long ago. They are frustrated by a lack of natural resources and the powerfully benign Maurai Federation of Sea People (roughly corresponding to what we call Oceania in the South Pacific).

This concerns a confrontation in the best cloak-and-dagger manner between the Sea People and one of the would-be Powers of this future Earth. Poul Anderson breathes life and convincing presence to this tomorrow as the Maurais again try to keep balance among the societies of that time and avoid a headlong rush back to the industrial proximity, and the dangers attendant, of the pre-war age. It, like "The Man Who Came Early", is well-told, with all the qualities a master story-teller can build into a tale complete with suspense, logic and believability.

A comparatively slim volume (144 pages) for 60¢, this is worth it and recommended.

—Ed Cox

THE COUNTERFEITS By Leo P. Kelley—Belmont 850-797, 50¢. Order from Belmont Books, Dept. 785, 1116 First Ave., New York, NY 10021. Price indicated plus 10¢.

Three alien ships come to Earth bearing the last few survivors of a dying world. They want to "share" our world. But when they try to make contact they are fired upon, attacked, and one ship is destroyed by a missile.

The aliens, in revenge, decide to use man's passions against himself. They kidnap eight people in the United States, assume their exact forms and set out to foment trouble...

Mr. Kelley has taken bits of many tried-and-tired sf

elements and themes and mixed them into a pastiche of a novel that is entirely predictable. It whispers in your mind, "You saw this in a grade C movie...you read this in a Heinlein book...this is from an End-Of-The-World epic..."

But this is a first novel and in spite of everything, including major inconsistencies and inexplicable alien illogic, the story manages to hold the reader fairly well; it moves, it has pace, and the writing is professional. The characterizations are at least ankle deep, some knee deep, and serviceable.

—Richard E. Geis

WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION 1967, Edited By Donald A. Wolheim and Terry Carr—Ace Book A-10, 75¢ + 5¢.

One way to gauge the impact of a story (if not its quality) is to wait a while after you've read it, look at the title and see if you can remember the contents.

It has been well over a month since I finished reading this collection, and the story with the most vivid, lasting impact is "Behold The Man", which won a Nebula for Mike Moorcock, and for good reason. Most science fiction is written in a relatively fast-paced commercial style using tried-and-true techniques. "Behold The Man" is slower paced and gives effective in-depth treatment to the personality and character of Karl Glogauer. Karl isn't attractive as a person; he's confused, masochistic, full of self-deceptions...schizoid. Yet these elements in him compel him to journey back in time to find Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. Find Jesus he does, and recoils in disbelief at the knowledge that Jesus—the real Jesus—was a crippled imbecile. And so, half-consciously, not quite realizing the significance and inevitability of what he is doing until near the end, Karl Glogauer, 20th century nebbish, assumes the role of Christ and acts out the historical record...up to and including the crucifixion. At the end he is 99% Christ and Karl is a dream.

"Behold The Man" is a reading event for a sophisticated person; for a young or intellectually sheltered (and religious) mind this story must be a shattering experience. This story has impact and quality.

"We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" by Philip K. Dick is a clever and absorbing future espionage story, but with the exceptions of "Light Of Other Days" by Bob Shaw and "The Keys To December" by Roger Zelazny, neither this nor any of the other stories declared by Wolheim and Carr to be "Best" are much in comparison to "Behold The Man".

"Nine Hundred Grandmothers" by R.A. Lafferty is an amusing story with an inevitable cop-out. "Bircher" by A.A. Walde... sorry, but without rereading parts of the story I couldn't tell you what it is about. "Bumberboom" by Avram Davidson I found to be Wizard of Ozish and fun to read. "Day Million" by Frederik Pohl, "The Wings Of A Bat" by Paul Ash, "Amen And Out" by Brian Aldiss, and "For A Breath I Tarry" by Roger Zelazny are others I can't place or recall from the title alone...a rude and heartless mention, but there it is.

Dannie Plachta, with "The Man From When", has used up one of the story idea gems of time travel. I doubt if it can be

—Richard Geis

—Richard E. Geis





FANS WE ALL KNOW... ...AND PERHAPS WISH WE DIDN'T

BY ARTHUR JEAN COX

1. THE GALACTIC SQUARE

His politics, morality and religion are strictly conventional but, aside from that, he has a free and untrammelled mind.

He can't think why the narrator of The Shadow Out Of Time should have been so oppressed with a sense of horror when he found himself cast back millions of years into a non-human body in an alien world; he would have been delighted with this opportunity to study an alien culture.

He understands very well that thrilling temptation felt by Professor Akely in The Whisperer In Darkness, to cast off the shackles of Time and Space and to be one with the star-flying Visitors from Yuggoth. Who could resist such an invitation and such a promise? Who, indeed?

And how he would like to go with Professor Jameson, better known to his metal companions as 21MM392, on his eternal odyssey among the stars! He is thrilled by the scope of the lensmen stories and delights, delights particularly, in the depiction of bizarre extra-terrestrial races and societies.

He doesn't write. Hasn't tried his hand at that. But he has an idea he could do as well as a lot of these writers, especially the new ones. He can, after all, design a planet: he knows stellar types, Kepler's laws, and how to compute surface gravity, mean temperature, atmospheric pressure, and so on. He knows something of anthropology, too — he has read Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict in the Signet editions — and is acquainted with the disciplines of (general) semantics and epistemology.

In short, such are the searching qualities of his mind, its scientific interests, its freedom from purely terrestrial limitations, that he would cheerfully confront and cope with the problems of any planet in the galaxy.

Except this one!

On this one, he hasn't made much of his life or of himself. We could hardly say that he has failed, as he never seems to have aspired to anything; and yet he has evidently suffered some disappointment, for, like some few others of his age, he is sinking into a gloomy resignation lit up now and then by little flashes of bitterness. But those flashes are rather pale and fitful and may be emitted, as far as I know — for I never see him elsewhere — only on the

premises of the club we both attend.

He misses the naive Sense of Wonder he used to feel as a twelve year old boy lying in the hammock on a warm summer afternoon in the back yard of his boyhood home in Lompoc, reading AMAZING and ASTOUNDING. Ah, those were wonderful stories! "Colossus!" Galactic Patrol! "Night!" The Mightiest Machine! The Galactic Circle! The Legion of Time!

But, as it happens, science fiction has evolved more than he has, and when he reads or browses through the magazines these days he is still searching, grown man that he is, for that same kind of excitement, resonant with...with it's hard to say what...with ideas trembling on the further edge of articulation, which so thrilled him at the age of twelve. And somehow seldom, almost never, finding it now.

The pity is that he has never learned to like anything else. He has no interest in literature, painting, music or drama, and consequently, since standards are formed by comparison, no idea that the stories in the magazines can be judged by standards higher than those applied by the writers to the letter columns.

He himself incessantly gripes and bitches about the current state of science fiction, as contrasted with the glories it boasted when under the benificent sway of the hammock, but is suspicious of any sustained effort of criticism: he thinks that shows "bitterness" (a projection). If only his ear could sometimes catch the sour notes of that one tune he sings!

Personally, I have never known him to be quite so surly as when I once innocently remarked to him that Mowgli — I knew it wasn't an original suggestion — that Mowgli was the progenitor of Tarzan. He thought that a very malicious attack on a favorite author, while it had never crossed my mind that the observation touched with the slightest shadow the summery glow of Edgar Rice Burroughs...for I too have lain in hammocks reading the classics.

Our friend is not much given to self-criticism, or to sustained reflection of any sort, and cannot bring himself into any but a conventional relation to life. He has a word-a-day job; dresses conservatively (though, being a relaxed sort of guy, he wears a "sport shirt" to the club); goes to church every Sunday, but likes to swap a ribald story or two with the boys on the Alternate Wednesday Poker Evenings; makes many jokes about the Beatniks and, more lately, the Hippies; and votes along strictly Republican — or is it Democratic?—lines.

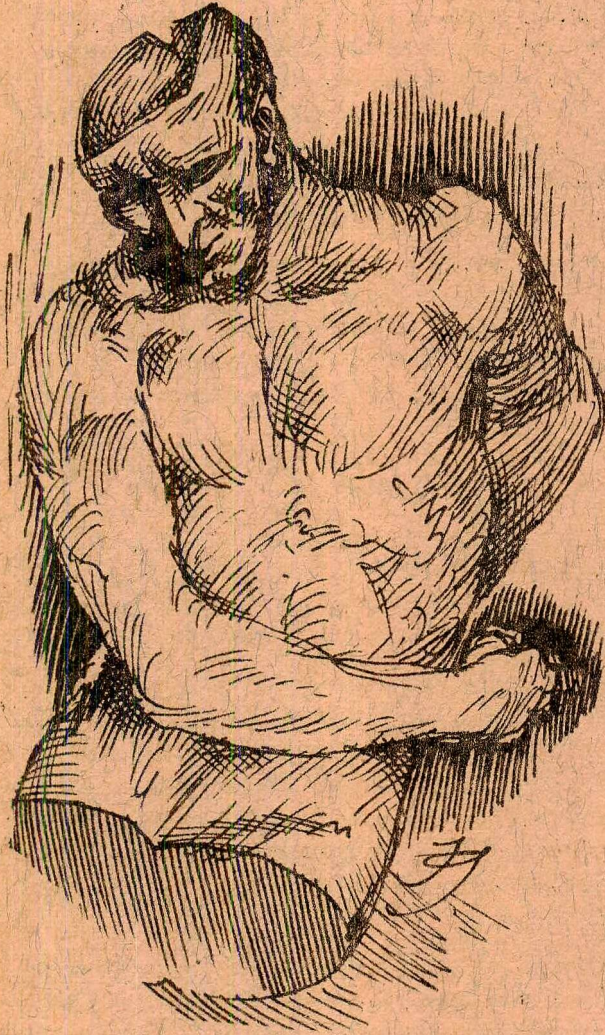
Science fiction and its attendant fandom represent his only connection with the imaginative life. Perhaps that is why he clings so tenaciously to them, even though, as he often complains, he no longer gets much satisfaction from either.

I have an idea that if we could peel back that rather faded skin and look into his heart, we would see a boy, younger than summertime and yet recognizable as him, quietly reading ASTOUNDING in a hammock on a warm sunny afternoon...absolutely unchanged after all these years.

He's a harmless sort of fellow. But that's the best we can say of him.



A SQUARE THINKING



BY JOHN CHRISTOPHER

Some years ago (almost twenty, now I come to think) I went round an open-air exhibition of modern sculpture in London in the company of a young woman. I found myself baffled and resentful; she expressed herself as ecstatic. I tried to elicit from her what she was getting out of it all, with no success. All I succeeded in doing was to reinforce my earlier conviction that she was of fairly low intelligence, and to discover that what she did say was generally a poor parroting of her intellectual husband's views.

This was the first time I was able to be sure that an

expressed love for and understanding of abstract sculpture could be a fake. (Which is not to imply that the lady was not, in her own mind, genuine: self-deception and auto-suggestion go hand in hand). I have since had many other examples.

Now the above does not, of course, condemn modern art. No school should be judged by the poor quality of certain of its adherents. The young woman was no worse than the middle-class housewife with her professed love for her (unopened) classical works. But subsequently I added another experience to it. This time I went round an exhibition of Henry Moore in the company of a different young woman. This one was highly intelligent and knew a great deal about art—far more than I did. She was very fond of Moore, and I hoped to come to some appreciation through her. I was doing fairly well (the old auto-suggestion going strong) when we reached one massive bronze. It looked as though it could have been cast from several moulds and I was struck by one small but distinctive feature. Was this, I asked, intentional, or was it a technical flaw—a fault in the casting? She examined it very seriously and gave me her honest answer: she just did not know.

Now let us go back to the roots of art. It is surely (leaving the luminous well on one side) a combination of two things: a form of self expression and a form of communication. The man who, left alone on a dead world with a certainty that his solitariness will endure for the rest of his life, sets to work to write a masterpiece may still be an artist, but the act resembles masturbation compared with normal sex. The artist needs an audience.

This means that he works through a discipline, that of having to refine his private chaos into an order that can be understood by others. Art in the past has found it valuable to extend the discipline even further. The acknowledged masterpieces are generally rigidly contained. Not much poetry is better than Shakespeare's, inside the tight box of the sonnet, and Berlioz, scoring for a thousand-piece orchestra, did not improve on Mozart and Beethoven writing for string quartets: the reverse, in fact,

This discipline implies comprehensibility. You can debate the placing of commas in the sonnets, but the very debate assumes an acceptance of the fact that there is a proper place for punctuation, that there was a specific intention by the writer. Musically I am an ignoramus, but I take it, on the word of my betters, that the same applies. You can study the line of a finger in a Michelangelo figure, and with patience understand its significance.

It seems to me that this is not true of the works of art which today command the respect of our intellectual rulers. I once thought that the critics liked them precisely because they were chaotic: it was easier for the critic to show brilliance about something in which every speculation could be

AROUND

right than about something which maintained a regular form. I still like the notion, but I am sure it is inadequate as an explanation. We need a better solution to the problem posed by the mass exodus from reason.

That last phrase is not entirely metaphorical. "Ulysses" is now accepted by the artistic establishment as a masterpiece (though I sometimes wonder how many of its auditors have read it right through twice, or, for that matter, once). It has occasional superb insights into human nature, as one would expect from the man who in his younger days wrote "The Dead", a great work in a classic tradition. But what is most striking is the style: the convoluted twisting of language chiefly demonstrated in outrageous punning. Psychiatrists will tell you that compulsive punning is characteristic of certain forms of mental breakdown. I know myself that I once visited a seriously ill patient, normally a fairly inarticulate man, in a mental hospital, and listened to him punning in Joycean fashion easily and uninhibitedly for upwards of an hour.

If there is a basic sickness in modern art, what causes it? I would hazard the guess that it is inextricably tied up with the technological revolution which has more or less kept pace. It is a form of protest against conformity, and against reason. The human mind, after all, is only partly rational: moons not hers lie mirrored in that sea.

And here I am reminded of those fascinating experiments that were conducted a few years ago into the dream state. Volunteers were allowed to sleep but awakened when their brain rhythms showed that they were entering a dream. After a time certain clear manifestations of personality and mental breakdown appeared. The patients started to verge on the psychotic.

It seems to me that this has a relevance to recent developments in art. Man is, for whatever reason, a dreaming animal: he cannot survive without that release. Suppress his dreaming and the dreams become nightmares—in the end, he goes mad. We live in a world where logic, as exemplified in the production belt and the computer, the factory farm and the tax return, dominates our lives. Our artists do our dreaming for us, as a society, and where they are inhibited they will run wild. In fiction they may pun or they may, following certain French examples, dwell as compulsively and even more monotonously on minutiae. Certain mental patients do small repetitive pointless tasks over and over again, all day, all life long.

That is the hypothesis—I don't know the remedy. The most obvious forecast, since there is and can be no letup in technology, is that society will eventually enter the psychotic state and tear itself to pieces. The

students who today call for violence for the sake of violence (though last year it was love, love, love) are possibly harbingers of the end.

It would be nice to think someone qualified was doing something about it. Perhaps they are; perhaps in some obscure academic quarter the seminal work has already been done which will halt the Gadarene rush and set us back on the path to sanity. Meanwhile there is always a record of "The Marriage of Figaro", if one wants to remember what it was like.

+++=+

THE VIOLENT WARD

O THE SHAME — FANZINE COMMENTARY
REDUCED TO FILLER MATERIAL!!

BY THE EDITOR

Ray Fisher made a strong bid for the fanzine Hugo with ODD 19, which I received first class! I was stunned to see the postage at 54¢ (as I recall). Of course he is/was also staking out a strong claim for the Hugo in '69. And with hundreds of Missourians signed up as Con members he'll have an excellent chance. That is in the inevitable nature of voting and partisanship, I think. This^{is} not a grotch, just an observation...because ODD is so good.

"Proud and Kinda Hungry", a Thirdmancon report by James White in SCARR 121, is a perfect gem. I think it one of the best pieces of fan writing I've seen this year...or any year.

CRY is back! Number 175 is a "Hello, we're back!" issue, much as PSY 21 was. It sports a beautiful Atom cover. While I'm thinking of this—will SOMEBODY please send me Atom's address? I've got to get some of his artwork, too!

LOCUS is a happy, valuable frequent fanzine published by three Eastern fans, Charlie Brown, Ed Meskys and Dave Vanderwerf. LOCUS more or less is taking the place of SF WEEKLY, but I wonder for how long? Three editors-publishers doesn't sound too stable.

Creath Thorne is a fan to watch, if he hasn't been watched up till now. His first issue of ENNUI is fine...an 8 on my scale...a personalzine that is unpretentious, very well written, humorous and serious material... Yes, if he will only stick around fandom he'll be an extremely valuable fan.

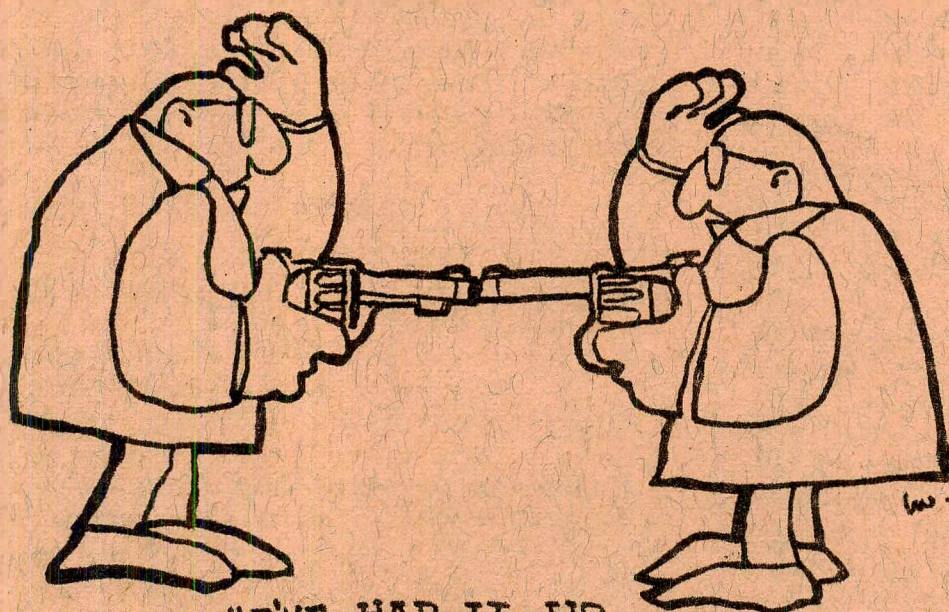
ALGOL 14 arrived recently. It continues to be a fanzine of high quality.

Vaughn Bode is splurging into fandom in a big way. He is a very good artist and his style is perfectly suited to sf fandom. He'll be up for a best fan artist next year, for sure.

WARHOON 24 arrived on schedule and will, if continued at it's current level of excellence of serious material, be another nominee for next year's Hugo.

As will SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES, which is suddenly among the better zines after having been revived but a scant few months ago. DIE, damn you walking dead! DIE! Stay dead! +++=+

SECTION EIGHT



"I'VE HAD IT UP
TO HERE..."

Harry Harrison
Box 1058
Imperial Beach,
Calif. 92032

I should have written you earlier,
since you have been sending me PSYCHO-
TIC gratis-free for some time. And I
have greatly enjoyed your knock-down,
drag-out literary fights. But there

is a difference between standing on the sidelines and wat-
ching the action—and being dragged into the action.

I'm of course talking about Ted White and the reams of
nonsense he sent you for #26. I don't know what has got
into him. His entire column boils down to a personal at-
tack on me and I wish I knew what motivates him. Other
than quick brush-bys at Cons I met him just once in my
life, in London. We both were up early for Loncon II, we
introduced ourselves, and he went with me when I drove out
that morning to see Ted Carnell. White should have fond
memories of that day because, when he mentioned that his
run of NEW WORLDS was complete except for the first issue,
Ted Carnell simply gave him one of his own two remaining
copies of that issue. Coming back in the car White gave
me his views of what science fiction should be. I found
them childish and absurd and told him so. We argued and
I think I called him a horse's ass at one point in the
discussion. We parted.

And now I have #26 before me and I shake my head in
wonder. I have no intention of tracking down, analyzing
and debating every lie and every absurdity in this thing.
I have neither the time, the energy nor the desire. But
I would like to make some general statements that might
help to clear the air.

While I was editing AMAZING I
tried to inject some life into the
magazine. I printed the Tanner re-
views since I considered them good reviews, though a bit
biased at times, in the hopes of getting some controversy
into the letter column. After the first reviews appeared
I received two letters about them; one pro, one con. I
printed them both in their entirety. White's was the con
and, as I recall, I added a single line of editorial comment.
This should have been the end of it.

It wasn't. White sent the letter to Terry Carr with
some kind of comment about "Harry surely won't print this,"
and Terry planned to run it in FORUM and told me about this.
I wrote back that there was no reason to since (a) it was
already in AMAZING (b) it had nothing at all to do with SFWA
affairs. But Terry already had it on stencil. He printed
the letter, then gave Tanner equal space to answer it, in
the same insulting language White had used in the first
place. By the time this exchange was complete everyone
(except White apparently) was sorry the thing had begun in
the first place.

As to the other FORUM argument with Moskowitz. More bad
taste on White's part, since FORUM is sent only to active
SFWA members and is supposed to be just that: a forum where
they discuss their mutual affairs without having them shout-
ed to the world at large. SaM wrote a letter accusing Brian
Aldiss and myself of secret vices and crimes and collusion.
Not one writer, in the FORUM, or personally, has ever agreed
with him. Except White, of course.

One more bit of setting straight. White says this about THE COLLECTED EDITORIALS OF JOHN W. CAMPBELL, which I edited: "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."

To PSYCHOTIC readers: Ass-licking is not a phrase I like. I have never used it in print or, to my memory, in conversation. (I'm not being prudish, just factual. If I had to convey this concept I would prefer "brown-nosing" or the even better one I read in John Masters, "bum-suck-ing.") This book was neither "ass-licking" nor "a fast buck." John Campbell suggested the book to Doubleday—and suggested at the same time that I be asked to edit it. I felt more than a little honored by the suggestion. The cynics may sneer, but as a True Fan of Campbell and ASF since the first issue this was an honor. It took me a year to dig out and read every editorial. My first short list was 200,000 words. I boiled down. As a simple courtesy I submitted my choices to John Campbell before closing the book. He accepted my choices without reservation. As for "cheap buck" I think I made about 50¢ an hour for the time I spent working on the book. As for guaranteeing the sale of my work to ANALOG—John Campbell rejected 3 out of 4 serials I submitted to him during and after the time I was working on the collection.

To Ted White: I was right, that time in London. You are a horse's ass. Worse than that you are a dirty-minded pipsqueak capable only of throwing mud at your betters. You are offensive. The quote above assumes that John Campbell is corrupt in that he can be bribed to buy otherwise worthless stories. And that I am corrupt in that I offer a bribe. This is a cease and desist order. I am tired of you, White, and slightly sickened by your dirty mouth and dirtier mind. Go play with the kids and stay away from the adults.

If you PSYCHOTIC readers are offended by the last paragraph, might I ask you to step back and take a look at this entire affair. It is entirely White's creation. He has pulled in all kinds of unrelated material, a review here, a letter there, a baker's dozen of assumptions, a few outright lies—and built what he calls a "case." It is nothing of the sort. Just White making noise on paper.

I prefer reality. For the past nine months I have been writing letters to White. A number of letters and one phone call from California to New York. He has never answered any of my letters, and he lied to me on the phone. The subject of all this is reality. At the Nycon I accepted a Hugo for Jack Vance, then mistakenly left the award in the hands of the Nycon committee for mailing, since I live some 600 miles from Jack. It was never mailed. Beginning last October I began writing to White asking him to mail it out. He never answered. I feel personally involved. A few months back I phoned White who informed me that the badly constructed Hugo had fallen to pieces and that he was gluing it back together. (Friends in New York

who have seen the Hugos lately inform me that this is not the case.) I suggested that since Jack Vance had built his own house and was now building a ship, he should be able to glue the trophy back together himself. White said he would mail it out at once. He has not. This is reality, not the nonsense White dreams up and types on paper.

I have not mentioned this before because I dislike feuds, carrying tales, and discussing a man's deficiencies in public. As you can see, White's way of life is directly opposed to mine. As you can gather I am more than a little irritated at his nonsense. But at least it gives me an opportunity to settle a matter in the real world.

White—send Jack Vance his Hugo trophy. Will you readers say the same thing to him? Tell him that you won't play his little mud-slinging games until he mails the thing out. You too, Mr. Editor, if you please. Tell him he must mail it out before you print any more of his wild musings. Please. If he sees his dream world being penetrated, perhaps he may rise up to the surface long enough to wrap and mail the thing before sinking back below the garbage-laden surface.

Am I being too rough on White? Big cannon against his little pop gun? Perhaps. But he chose to start this and to use the filthy language and insult and innuendo and all the rest. I know I should ignore him, but this matter of the Hugo is very annoying. My hope is that this public notice may shame him, at last, into a little action.

Sort of a PS. I've been reading the rest of PSYCHOTIC before mailing this. I notice that everyone else who comments on White calls him a liar. So I guess he must be. So we come to the why? Hey guys—maybe that's his shtick! Like the jokers in the Paris cathouses that like to be tied up and whipped. White is the first letterhack flagellant in history! He writes all this nonsense so we can whip him. When the letters and zines flood in he locks his door, lies back writhing and sweating and has his orgasm. Which raises the moral point: are we helping him or hurting him when we tell him what a hapless fart he really is?

((Namecalling and misinformation aside, Mr. Harrison, you avoided ~~the~~ main point of White's column: Are you LeRoy Tanner?))

Alex B. Eisenstein I can't believe in a pornographer who
3030 W. Fargo Ave. is unable to identify with a female
Chicago, Ill. 60645 protagonist—haven't you ever written
a lesbian novel? They're all slanted
toward heterosexual males. You say Anne McCaffrey's heroine
ain't a dyke so you can't identify with her? Bosh!

((Here we go again. Yes, I have written lesbian novels, about 28 of them (some with only some lez activity, but all with female protagonists, many told first-person female) and one of my very best books, THE LOVE TRIBE, is told first-person by a 19 year old girl. Editors and readers have told me that I am one of the best writers in the sex novel field, and I believe them, but while I can write "female" with some skill and verisimilitude, I don't like to read the stuff. At least not the Confession style "female" writing. Could be

the feminine side of me only comes out in my writing, and my masculine component rejects it on the "incoming" level. Verry interesting. I'll have to think about it.

Incidentally, while I'm bragging, for the information of any curious fans out there, I've sold 58 books so far. It might be 59 tomorrow.

I'm sorry I can't print your seven pages of comment on THE ESKIMO INVASION, Alex, but it is going to John Hayden Howard and he may have some reaction.))

Gabe Eisenstein
1753 Rosemary Road
Highland Park, Ill.
60035

PSY 25 & 26 were the first issues I had seen of your zine: I'm rather new to sf fandom, being an emigrant from the comic book variety. As a result, everything I've seen so far looks like a masterpiece. Of course, sf fandom has always seemed like something of an Asgard to the terrestrial doings of comic people. Whenever Ted White condescends to an activity of the latter it has an aura of reverence. That's the impression I always got anyway. Ted's name was always some kind of hallowed thing, he was an elder statesman, but I could never find out just what he did, comic-wise. But now comes the revelation. It turns out that he does, albeit in a more intellectual and provocative manner, exactly what the jerks in comic fanzines do: that is, pick each other apart, call each other names, and in letters and fanzines present reasons why one fan or the other should be ostracized permanently, giving the opinion of one pundit or another to that effect. It appears that this is truly what fandom is based on, the difference being that you people have somehow managed to survive it for all this time, while the offspring group is virtually dead as far as organizational productivity. And I thought I wouldn't feel right at home.

((Gabe, meet Alex. Why don't you look each other up?))

Alexei Panshin
139 Joralemon St.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

Here I am, stuck one line into a new novel. It seems that I still have three immediate little questions to settle before I go on to the second line. Do you have these problems in writing your novels of social redemption, or do you just plunge ahead, so to speak?

((Sure, the first chapter of a book is the most critical, and the first pages more critical, and the first lines of the first page most critical of all.))

I want you to know that I was taken aback by the little sex scene in the last PSYCHOTIC. I read it as dialog until I was more than halfway through it. It came out like this:

"Turgid nipples...quivering thighs," she screamed in ecstasy...

Meaty stuff, Geis, for a family magazine.

Except for one minor slip in my youth, I've written nothing but critical fanzine articles. No whimsy, memories of 1940, con reports, geo-political analyses, or odes addressed in honor of my favorite dramatic tv show, Peyton Place. Not even an 8-page letter of comment. I'm amazed,

by the way, at people like Harry Warner and Ted White who have letters of comment in every fanzine that comes my way, and have been doing it for fifteen years, or twenty-five. Both of them deserve a Best Fan Writer Award more than I did, and I trust one of them will have won at Baycon by the time this sees print.

Since writing criticism is work and I only work for money these days, I expect whatever fan writing I do now will be in more traditional fannish veins. I'm preparing my memories of 1940 right now. Inspired by your own good example, I'm even thinking of thinking of thinking of putting out a fanzine. I'm going to be editing the SFWA Bulletin this next year. If I still have my enthusiasm a year from now, we'll see what I can do with a hecto, needle and thread.

The Psychotic Fugghead Award is a lovely opportunity. Terry Carr and I own a football and throw it for an hour or so a couple times a week on a sidestreet around the corner. The last time we got together, along with the football, we passed the names of possible award winners back and forth. Actually, we tended to feel that there should be a Fugghead of the Year award, and a Fugghead Hall of Fame for all-time favorite year-in year-out fuggheads. I think we came up with about ten names, all of whom deserve to be honored. However, my nomination is partly determined by the design of the award—only one man could get this particular drawing—Sam Moskowitz. He tries harder.

You say that what is needed is a reliable, completist mail-order sf dealer. I dealt with a wide variety for a number of years—for more than the last ten, however, I've dealt with Dick Witter—F&SF Book Co., Box 415, Staten Island, 10302—and he has been exactly what you is wanted.

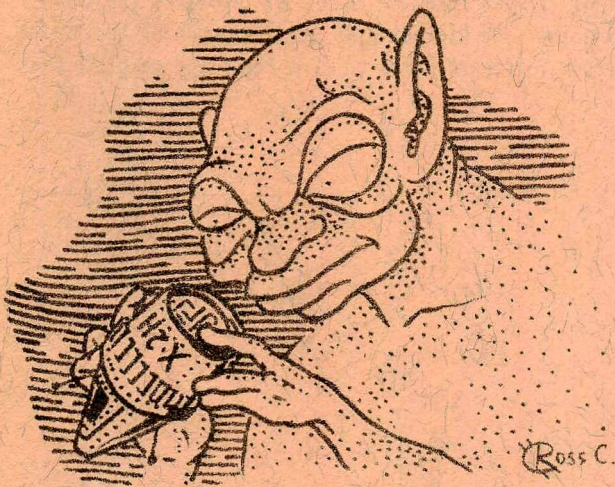
I was particularly interested in Andy Offutt's letter in the last issue because I've been invited to serve on panels on the subjects of sex and violence in sf at the Philcon in November. (These, I suppose, being my recognized areas of competence.)

I tend to feel that sex has little point in science fiction unless a story is centrally concerned with character, which most sf is not. Magazine taboos are irrelevant to the problem because the magazines are presently irrelevant. If you want to write a science fiction book with a sex scene in it, there's no particular problem in getting it published. If Andy Offutt is publishing sexless sf and is unhappy about it, there is more than one paperback editor ready to buy a sexy sf novel. Lancer has done it. Paperback Library has done it. Ace has done it. The fault, dear Andrew, is not in our stars, but in ourselves. There is an explicit sex scene in my novel RITE OF PASSAGE. ((And a fine slice of writing it was, too.)) A high school pb club bounced it for that reason, but I didn't have any problems with publishers or editors. The book was bounced by one publisher for my funny-sounding name, but never explicitly for the sex scene. And Ace saw no problems in publishing it. And for a really hot little book, take a look at Joanna Russ's PICNIC ON PARADISE. Also from Ace.

George H. Smith
P.O. Box 3337
Inglewood, Cal.
90304

Your zine continues to hold my interest, much to the detriment of whatever book I'm working on when one arrives. I promise myself I won't but every time there's a PSYCHOTIC in my box, I sit down and read it right straight through while my typewriter and my wife glare at me (the latter mostly because she's waiting to get her hands on it). I found your rundown of your working day very interesting but I don't see how you turn out the volume of work you do still find so much time for fan activities and reading.

Even Ted White, who manages to irritate me with almost everything he says, never bores. I'm sorry to say that after reading a couple of his books I find he is almost as good a writer as he thinks he is. I can't, however, see any point in his putting down Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss because they both do a workmanlike job in both their own books and in their anthologies. I especially enjoyed Harrison's MAKE ROOM, MAKE ROOM, or rather I was especially depressed by it which was the desired effect. White's dismissal of TARNSMAN OF GOR is also away off base. His



PHOENIX PRIME doesn't compare to the careful working out of an imaginary society that Norman did. I'm pretty well up on these sword and sorcery books because I recently read all I could hold in order to do some partials and outlines of my own in that field. To my way of thinking, Andre Norton, Moorcock, Leiber and John Norman are doing the best work in these today, with Robert Moore Williams being completely unreadable and White and Lin Carter somewhere in between.

I do have to agree with White that Tanner is a jerk, but when you consider what AMAZING probably pays for book reviews, they're lucky to get anyone to do them. Probably part of my irritation with White is due to the fact that NEBULA AWARDS #2 has been kicked back and forth by he and the Harrison-Aldiss duo and every time it gets kicked I wince because my IN THE IMAGICON was one of the runner-up

stories in it.

I really think I have to take Norman Spinrad's side against L. Sprague de Camp and the others regarding censorship. I've run up against it quite often, especially in the magazines. A story of mine, THE LAST DAYS OF LOS ANGELES, published in IF several years ago didn't make it the first time because of a fairly mild sex scene and some cracks about religion and the military. Another one, THE PLAGUE, which satirized the Catholic church stand on birth control, sailed back and forth across the desks of all the prozine editors until it finally was published in Bob Lowndes' FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION.

As for what Spinrad says about reviews...who ever gets any? I've had close to a hundred books published in the past fifteen years, dealing with every subject you can think of...science fiction, sex occult, flying saucers and politics. Aside from my non-fiction, WHO IS RONALD REAGAN, which stirs up a hornet's nest of John Birch and neo-Nazi types to write reviews to their local papers and hate letters to me, I've very seldom had a response. Admittedly, all except four or five of my books were paperbacks, but it just seems to me that reviews are about as scarce as hen's teeth unless your books are being pushed by one of the really big publishers. If you read several magazines or papers that carry reviews, you'll see that the same books are reviewed over and over. They are also the books that are the most publicized to start with. The rest of us poor bastards seem to exist in a parallel world of the unmentionable.

Rick Brooks
RR/H1
46737

Most of the New Wave is unreadable. For example, I managed to wade through Farmer's "Rider's Of The Purple Wage" strictly because I like puns. I left out most of the second half of the Ballard blotch, THE CRYSTAL WORLD (?) and just glanced at the ending. I managed to get most of the way through Burroughs' THE TICKET THAT EXPLODED because I kept mistakenly thinking that WB would fulfill some of the promise that he showed occasionally. But mostly when I hear the term "meaningful s-f", I flinch. I agree with Norm that great literature must be both meaningful and entertaining. But I'd like to see the authors that try to be meaningful put at least half as much effort into being entertaining.

And, Richard, I doubt that anything but a sensational sale of DANGEROUS VISIONS and BUG JACK BARRON would have the other paperback publishers pay attention. S-f is just a sideline with most of them. And, for the record, I think that Ted White can handle sex better than any sf writer with the exception of Alexei Panshin (RITE OF PASSAGE).

((Sideline or not, any publisher pays close attention to what sells, trends, and new ideas that work. Thousands of dollars are at stake.))

The nice thing about being an ultra arty writer like William Burroughs is that it is hard to evaluate your true worth. Gary Deindorfer calls him a literary genius. I call him a literary failure who, like Ballard, is busy betraying and burying his potential. I find it hard to follow what he is

gripping about; lack of honesty or lack of shock value. Maybe to him they are the same. ((Yes, honesty is shocking to a lot of people.)) I still think that a writer can say what he has to say without four-letter words or trying to shock people. After all, I heard more filth with very little context while in the service. In fact, swearing loses most of its impact when you overuse it. I find after all the using four-letter words as everyday adjectives and adverbs, that I have no words to use when I really need to say something strong. In short, shock value has to be continually escalated.

((Why do you deny a writer what you wish for yourself? You want four-letter words, strong, undiluted by overuse, for shock impact...but writers may not use the same words for the same reason—for effect, for impact, to blow a mind, to drive home a point or make a scene credible.

Rationalize your way out of that.

And anyone who seriously uses the word "filth" when discussing language and/or sex tells me where he's at in areas of basic attitude...as you just did.))

Anne McCaffrey's remarks on the sex of a writer are interesting. In Yandro there has been a running debate on women vs men writers on the handling of the opposite sex. Panshin in RIITE OF PASSAGE does a very good job, but most men get black marks. Leigh Brackett does a good job with her he-men heroes as did C.L. Moore. But mainly I like women writers such as C.L. Moore, Andre Norton, Marion Zimmer Bradley and Leigh Brackett because they seem to make their landscapes more vivid to me. A story that I can "see" really turns me on. With the ladies above I "see" mostly where, while with writers like Doc Smith and Edmond Hamilton I "see" mainly what is going on. That seems to be the only sex difference I can draw and it's by no means inclusive.

Rec Dragonette was a name hooked to a Feb. '47 ANALOG short short story. I have no more info.

Jack Gaughan Yeh Ted White. Chip Delany IS some kind P.O. Box 516 of writer. And I share your solicitous Rifton, NY attitude that we may overrate him and over-
pöbße him and like that but knowing Chip (as well or as little as I do) I know damn well it isn't going to affect him and he'll go on writing and living and doing and being what he is and growing. So don't worry. True, when Chip writes "He opened the door" the words may not have come hard. But I HAVE seen him pacing the floor for drom a half an hour to god-knows-when searching out ONE WORD. The right word for the right place. Craft applied where it counts. He's not the be all and end all of the current crop (hate that term) but he's the best we got, bubelih.

I talked (listened, actually) to Hannes Bok. I knew Hannes. he was annoyed by the flopping ((of his F&SF cover)) whether he agreed to it or not. And the selling season may indeed be ad agency superstition. I'm from that briar patch, after all. And some superstition is well founded. Would you believe "reading season"? I had lunch

with Ed Fefman today. He believes. Sol Cohen believes (that's a recommendation?) and I think Fred Pohl and Lester del Rey believe. That's a superstitious lot if ever I saw one. The Summer months are good and November (in particular) is bad. I don't have the figures but if you wish I'll get 'em. I really don't know what it will prove except that the point of "selling season or no selling season" is arguable.

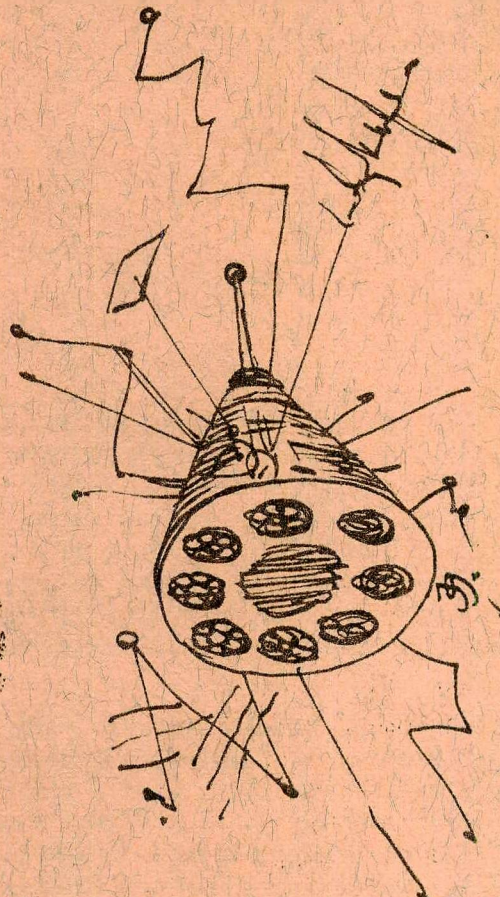
What has a bad summer of comic books to do with SF mags which are (I'm sure) not distributed in the same manner to the same outlets?

There's a helluva good drawing on page 18 ((of PSY 26)) and the initials look familiar but I see no credit on your contents page. But it's a good drawing. It creates a sort of disorientation without being over distorted or too slavish to perspective. A dignified and tasteful work and a moving one. Whoever did it, if he keeps it up, is a comer. Watch him.

((Yes, an apology to you, sir, for goofing on the credit. To make amends I ANNOUNCE that PSY 28 will have a beautiful full-size fold-out InMate by JACK GAUGHAN! AND PSY 29 will have a JACK GAUGHAN cover!))

Now. The preliminary stuff is out of the way. To the business at hand. Do you know what you got, Sharlie? Look at that cover! ((PSY 26)) A nice boidie? Bah! It's a wondrous thing. I must take the chance of insulting you (Geis) by assuming that you did not pick out the type for the title.

((Correct. Richard Bergeron sent the cover complete with



the logo. I added the caption.))

It's perfect. Perfect for that drawing and that layout. It's a gawdawful ugly body-copy face but it is well used as a title. Each letter is an interesting use of space and contour...even the dot over the "I" is right. You think I'm being funny? I am not. The drawing itself is the sort of thing I love. It's the result of years of study and thousands of lines. It is the work of a real pro. I know not this Bergeron nor do I claim that this is the greatest thing that ever happened to graphic art. But it IS a fine and good thing...I don't have the words to express my appreciation of the professionalism of the drawing AND the type layout. Dammit!...it was good. I don't mean to sing paeans but when a thoroughly competent thing like this appears it must not go as just another funny-clever drawing. Years and study went into that. So you gotta put that blotchy type-writer scribble on it in a bad place and tell me a joke which wasn't even funny as grafitti. What a clod! If you did the type layout yourself you're partly forgiven. Otherwise... REALLY! In such a beautiful zine and amidst such readable material that paragraph was visually bad and, as far as humor or writing is concerned, a terrible lapse of good taste. For shame. Ich. Ich.

P.S. Steve Stiles was great! Watch him too!

((The first person who saw a copy of the cover laughed long and hard and snatched (with permission) a copy to put up on her apartment wall. So...

I wish more readers would comment on the art work in PSY. Too often the artists are given short shrift in the egoboo department. "Applause," cried the theatre cat, "For pity's sake, a little applause!")

Andrew J. Offutt I must ask this: what chance does a man
Drawer P have when an editor typogoofs his clever-
Morehead, Ky. ness? My last letter's "nunnishly" be-
40351 came "ninnishly" in your SECTION 8. My
 back to back use of "unalterably" mean-
ing incapable of being changed and "altar" meaning a place
at which marriages take place dissolved when "altar" became
"alter". You do that to me and I will squeak. Do that to
either of the above, though, and you realize that soon an-
other fanzine will print their attacks on YOU!!

((Sigh* Apologies.))

What's this about Geis writing racies too? Under what name/publisher?

((Mostly under my own name and that of Peggy Swenson. Mostly for Brandon House and Midwood.))

You invite comment on kay anderson's (mention of) nipple color. VERY pale pink or pinktan, generally, among caucasians. But one of the things many women do is add makeup (rouge is much less messy than lipstick) to their nipples. How silly to doctor the face and wear bras for purposed of sexual attraction—and then fail to enhance the sexual and secondary-sexual parts themselves! (Please let me add that

brassieres do NOT enhance.)

Gollydamn—is Ree the Dragon still around?

Re your parenthetical remark: i use four pennames, thus far. The first sold the first racy novel in August 67. since then 6 have been printed and 2 more bought. Yes, a lot of people would be interested in knowing one or more of those pennames.

Those writers have a definite Mission, by which they can be recognized (aside from their being good writers in a field marked by incompetence, of course). The Mission is to show that:

1/ Cruelty is normal/innate, and that it has little to do with a very serious (and seldom-found) illness called "sadism", one of the most-overused and least-understood words in the language;

2/ Women almost invariably need clitoral stimulation to achieve orgasm, and lack of knowledge of this simple fact by both sexes is a tremendous cause of trouble, doubt and guilt;

3/ Simultaneous male-female orgasm is damnigh unheard-of;

4/ A man can't just go on and on and on as racy-novel protanonists frequently do;

5/ Spanking is fun to both sexes. Women like it (even when they don't know that they do, or think they don't), and men like doing it (repeat previous parenthetical remarks).

Such a mission, in our lights, will lead to some happy people, and thus ~~we~~—my pennames and i—are proud of our work.

((So why not give us the names and titles of your books? I'd like to read some of your stuff...if only out of curiosity to see how good you are.))

Peter Singleton
Block 4,
Broadmoor Hospital,
Crowthorne,
Berkshire,
ENGLAND

A word about the artwork: I was amused by the overt phallic symbolism on the cover of PSY 26, but the total artistic merit as far as my aesthetic appreciation goes, is only slightly above nil. I found the special In-
teresting Mate and is quite the most striking illo in the entire issue. I would like to know what causes me to find a prominent display of a feminine backside so fascinating. Is there a Freudian in the house?

Among the insular squabbling pro and con New Wave, a single ray of hope shines in the shape of Norman Spinrad. There is indeed room in our microcosm for more than one branch from the SF tree. If some fen must have insular ideas as to what constitutes an "acceptable" SF yarn, what measure of blind conceit causes them to impose their own petty restrictions upon the shoulders of others? What has happened to all those Broad Mental Horizons fen are supposed to have a monopoly on?

Bob Silverberg
5020 Goodridge Av
New York, NY 10471

PSY 26 blew in today — a little top-heavy with White and Spinrad, but still interesting in its grumbly way. I weary

greatly of the LeRoy Tanner controversy and I'm starting to get bored with the anticipatory discussion of BUG JACK BARRON. Nevertheless the discussion on taboos and censorship continues to sparkle, and Deindorfer goes straight to the heart of it with the remark that a real writer doesn't worry either about breaking taboos or adhering to them, but simply calls his shots as he sees them. S-F is not now and never has been "adult" in the sense that writers can unself-consciously organize their material with reference to truth and maximum emotional power, rather than with reference to editorial requests; but we're at last getting there, at least outside the magazines, and in another five or ten years we will come to take for granted what so proudly we hail as revolutionary today. (Remember when THE LOVERS was deemed madly radical?)

Deindorfer hits Harlan in his most vulnerable point. Harlan, as I've been telling him for fifteen years, in uncool. He dresses cool, he walks cool, he winks cool, but under his skull he's hopelessly uptight and doesn't realize it. His high-pressure talking-up of his own material, his compulsion to boast to waiters and barbers and airline stewardesses that he is a Man Of Letters, his morbid preoccupation with his own role as writer, his recent self-elevation to the post of guru of a literary revolution, all are symptoms of fundamental squareness, which he attempts to disguise by superficial hip. (Ah, there, Harlan!) Harlan's insistence that he knows where it's at, as Deindorfer points out, is a mark of insecurity; a writer who really knows, Wm Burroughs, say, simply goes about his business of writing, instead of becoming a walking, talking jacket blurb for his own copy.

Of course, Gary blows his cool a bit by touting his own book, thus committing a low-grade Harlanism. I will not make the same mistake; and so I will not reveal where I saw the red nipples that figure in THORNS, nor will I comment on those who (unlike your estimable self) think that the advent of two-way time-travel at the end of HAWKSBILL STATION is a "happy ending" copout, thus failing to notice the real ending at all.

((But I would say that Harlan Ellison's insecurity is a major factor in his tremendous drive and talent. His "uncoolness" is one facet, one corner, of his personality, and cannot be separated and isolated as something he should perhaps try to alter. More apt is to visualize him as a volcano; we may not like the cinders and ash fallout, but he is, after all, building a mountain of books and short stories and scripts, lighting up the sky, doing things and doing them well.

I wouldn't want to say, "Stop erupting, Harlan." For even if he did try to change, and became self-conscious and cautious of speech and action, the change would, I think, be harmful to his writing, and the subsequent internal subconscious pressures would.... How the hell did I get into this analysis? End it, Geis!))

FILLER NOTE: A few copies of PSY 21 and 22 are left—25¢ each. PSYs 23 and 24 are sold out.

Vaughn Bode
B-9, Apt. 1
New Slocum Hts.
Syracuse, NY
13210

I sold my Anti-Vietnam Lizard Strip & The Man for a 2nd printing in the New York underground paper, EAST VILLAGE OTHER.

I got commissioned to do a one page satire cartoon in each issue of the new satire magazine, INKLING.

I am commissioned to do a one page Church Wizard for each issue of DARE magazine.

I am collaborating on a series of SF novels with Dean Koontz.

I am working on a children's book with Roger Zelazny.

I got canned from that goddamned GALAXY.

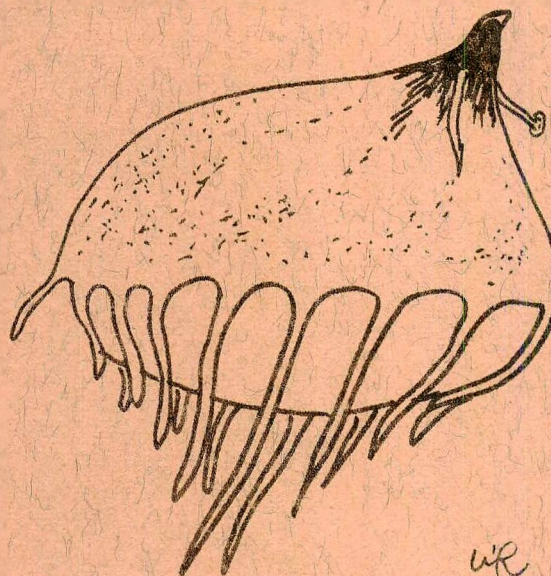
I resigned from SFWA.

I got an offer from Will Eisner to do ten children's books for \$10,000.00 which I'm turning down.

I got a sunburn.

I pulled a muscle.

Other than that things have been pretty stagnant... So your very entertaining #26 relieved my abject boredom. Thanks,

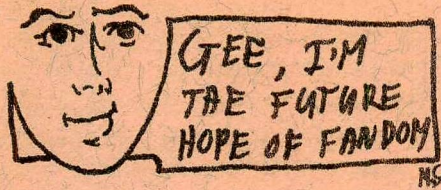


I do really enjoy PSYCHOTIC and I'm proud and pleased to be there.

((Proud and pleased to have you, sir.))

Gray Boak
7, Elm Drive
ST. ALBANS,
Herts.,
ENGLAND

I was afraid of having missed PSY 26. All would have been well had I dared to enter a Post Office and ask for an International Money Order. The last time I tried it was highly traumatic: the girl behind the counter glared at me — a traitor to the Empire...daring to send STERLING abroad! Eating into the country's Balance of Payments! Precipitating a National Crisis! I was enforced to sign a pink form in multiplicate, using a pen chained to the desk! If the girl had been even halfway pretty, my weakened resolve would have totally collapsed. As it was, I man-



aged an ineffectual sneer and scrambled for the door. I suppose that you will insist on receiving money....sadist!

((PSY now has an English Agent, Ethel Lindsay by name. Your problem is solved.))

Mr. Ted White uses your column to attack P.A.M. Terry for writing an anonymous attack on the NyCon for BADINAGE #4. BADINAGE #5 printed replies by Mr. White and his friend Andy Porter: replies that exhibited flaws in their personalities — much the same flaws they criticize Pat for possessing. Rob Johnson had by then assumed the editorship of BADINAGE, and was forced to cut editorial comments on these letters because the 'zine was getting too damn big. I wouldn't have been so kind to these gentlemen. Please note that I am not criticizing their handling of the convention, merely their replies to criticism.

Point 1: Pat Terry always writes under a pseudonym. (Gadfly.) It wasn't any lack of decency, merely a request for privacy.

Point 2: Andy Porter stated that there had been no dissatisfaction with the NyCon anywhere else:— later to contradict himself on the subject of Jack Gaughan. I suggest he read some US fanzines.

Point 3: Ted White said that if any more complaints about service were received, the overseas rate would be raised to that of the attending member's rate. This is nothing short of black-mail. Thankfully Mr. White is unlikely to be associated closely with any other World Con in the conceivably close future, so it is an empty threat.

Bombast, contradictions, insults, and out-and-out lies. Perfect for a fan-column, of course, but a little restrictive when the time comes to take him seriously. Which is a shame, because I read a good story by Ted White once.

George Ernsberger
Editor,
AVON BOOKS
959 Eighth Ave.
New York, N.Y.
10019

It seems to me it's time I said a word or two about Norman Spinrad and BUG JACK BARRON and Avon Books.

It would be unseemly of me to enter into a debate on the novel's literary or other merits — I am BJB's editor, after all. (Not that questions of propriety or decorum, or seemliness, have restrained your correspondents to this point — or Norman Spinrad, for that matter.) But allow me a comment on Avon's contract for BJB, with its "no-cut" clause, and about Mr. Spinrad's professional relationship with his editor. Oh, and do allow me to snap at Ted White's exposed ass, though it be unseemly.

There's been some foofraw — though not much in your

pages — about the "unique" set of terms we've agreed to in contracting to publish this book. Now, even though this is the first time we've been asked formally to cut the clause in our contract that gives us total control over a book's contents, it is not by far a unique set of terms, in practical fact. At least, it isn't unique at Avon — I don't know how other publishers treat their books and/or their authors.

Having determined that the book was publishable exactly as it stood, and indeed that it would be a real shame if it weren't published, Avon made its offer to the author's agent. I was counting, as I commonly do, on such insidious weapons as reasoned argument to persuade Mr. Spinrad that some minor rework would strengthen the book — and if he turned out to be bullheaded, well, I'd determined that the book was publishable. We didn't buy it unread, after all; we agreed to publish the ms. we had in hand, as it was, if it came to that.

Mr. Spinrad's first communication with me was a friendly expression of eagerness to hear my suggestions. He came to see me in my office later and we discussed the book at some length. During this discussion, he listened thoughtfully, agreed with some things, disagreed with others, argued reasonably and courteously when he did not agree, and, in short, behaved like a sensible man and a serious writer. We are at this moment in agreement as to what changes should be made, what suggestions of mine were valid and which invalid when closely examined, and how to solve such minor problems as those raised by the murder of Senator Kennedy. Spinrad is now at work on these revisions.

They are, be it said emphatically, minor revisions. I don't want to leave the impression that wholesale rewriting of the original is going on, or that I made any unusual contribution to the book. BJB remains, in essential fact, the same novel I first looked at. It remains, in a word, Spinrad's novel. Happily for us both, he and I came to agreement on the book's final form. That does not always happen, and when it does not, unless revisions were given in advance as conditions for signing the contract, it is the author who retains the last word. Is there any other way to publish books?

Now, as to Ted White — and here I wander, helpless to resist, into the fringes of the critical argument — Mr. White, I promise him, is going to learn from this book that lesson every critic since Aristotle has had to learn anew: that one had better keep one's fat mouth shut until one's had a chance to read the damn thing. He may not like BJB when he's read it whole; he may, if he's looking for it, find plenty to disapprove of in it; but he will not find the political extrapolation silly. Not now, not in five years, not in twenty. Things beyond the capabilities of any fantasist to foresee will certainly happen; and things will not turn out just as Spinrad envisions. But Spinrad understands what American politics is all about, as very few novelists ever have. And Ted White, I'm confident, will see that, when he's seen the book. (White is, or seems to be, a man of intelligence, wit, and some good sense — though none of these find much room in his letter.)

It does not look, in 1968, as though we will come, in

1984, to the precise pass George Orwell described; and so what? It is a good bet that Spinrad's "facts" for the 1980's will prove to be more accurate than Orwell's; will Ted White, on that basis, think BUG JACK BARRON a better book than 1984?

There's nothing much for me to say to Spinrad's article on censorship and so on. Cut the hysteria out of the piece and there wouldn't be much left, but what there would be, would be uncomfortably near some unpleasant truths. But we all know that, don't we?

Finally, I can't resist expressing my wonderment at that variance in manners Mr. White and Mr. Spinrad share. (With other of your correspondents, as well.) I've met both at least casually and found both reasonable, courteous, even-toned, gentlemanly. Why in the name of sweet Jesus must they both either yammer or shriek in the pages of PSYCHOTIC?

((Because I sprinkle an insidious drug on the pages of certain copies of PSY before mailing. I, OF COURSE, AM IMMUNE!!))

Ed R. Smith In answer to your question, there is
1315 Lexington Ave. a reliable mail order house or store
Charlotte, N.C. or whatever that publishes monthly
28203 lists and has about any new sf (and
 a list of Out-Of-Print titles as well)

you would want. Write to Stephen's Book Service, 67 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10003. He doesn't even charge postage, so it would be cheaper to get them all from him. I've been getting sf titles from him almost every month for about 3 years now.

I did not know ALPHA had been used as a fanzine title before, tho I often wondered why such an obvious title had not been used before, or if it had. Don't worry, I am now pubbing FLIP, which I later found out is the title of a teen-zine. Oh well...

((Call your zine EDSMITH and be done with it.))

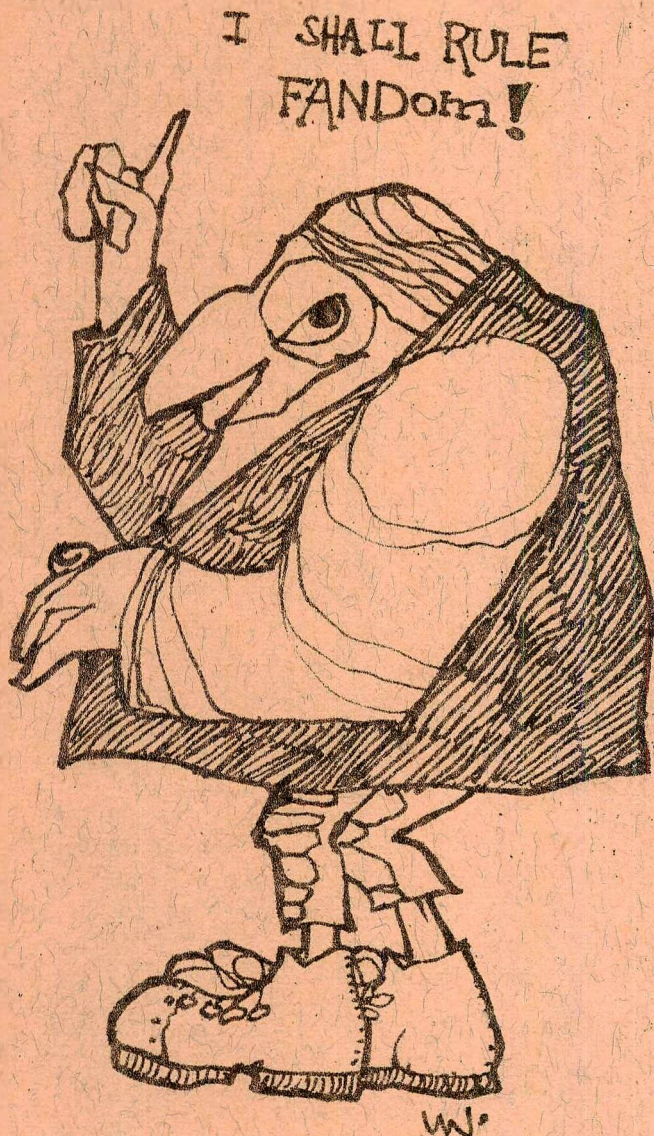
Earl Evers Here are some replies to the comments
131 Pitt St., Apt. 8 on A Primer for Heads in PSY 26...
New York, NY 10002 Harry Warner says, "I have yet to
 see a sensible explanation of why
those favoring the wider use of drugs are so careful to use euphemisms. Certainly grass and pot and high and all the other terms are well enough known in the mundane world to provide no camouflage..."

I think the use of drug slang is more for convenience than camouflage. Sure, a long time ago jazz musicians and other groups of heads used slang as a sort of camouflage, not just drug slang, but a whole big vocabulary that changed often enough so the squares had trouble keeping up with it. But I don't think most present-day heads are naive enough to think slang provides adequate cover for public drug talk — if they're paranoid about rapping about drugs in public or in print, they usually keep their mouths shut. Of course a lot of heads don't mind who knows they turn on, so they talk

freely.

And of course the use slang, simply because most of the slang terms are shorter and easier to use than the words they replace. And some of them have no one-word synonyms in ordinary speech. It's obvious that "pot" is easier to use than "marijuana", and "acid" comes off the tongue a hell of a lot easier than "El-Ess-Dee". Then too, a lot of drug-slang has passed into the regular vocabulary since psychedelics have become common — "trip" for one, "spaced out" for another. Neither of these have synonyms already in the dictionary, so words had to be coined.

These are the real reasons for the use of head slang, but a lot of it is mystique, too. Every group of people has its jargon — occupations (Harry, you should be familiar with newspaper jargon.), hobbies (You seem to be fairly fluent in fanspeak as well), and virtually every other group people join. Sure, most of these jargons arise from reasons of utility, but they gain a lot of their popularity because the user gains a sense of belonging. The same with heads — any group of people sharing common interests sooner or later end up sharing their own special words.



L. Sprague de Camp's comments on drugs killing the critical faculties are essentially true, but misleading for several reasons. Pot and all of the strong psychedelics do temporarily knock out the critical faculties. Temporarily. Meaning while you're high. When you come down they return to normal. However, your memories of any creative flashes you had while they were out will remain, and you can sort them out of the gallons of bilge and use them.

To be perfectly fair, I'll have to add that a number of authorities report that psychedelics do affect the judgement for a long time after the actual trip, but that I don't accept this. For one thing, I recently went eight months without an acid trip, then started again. I've been writing for fanzines steadily all through the gap and up to now. Have any of you noticed a marked deterioration in my writing lately? If so, when? I most certainly haven't, in fact I think I've been constantly improving, and so do most of the people who've commented on my writing. (But of course if my critical faculties were knocked out, I wouldn't know it. I'd think everything I did was the Last Birth of Time.) No, I think I've been making steady, if fairly slow, progress in learning to write the last couple of years, and that drugs have helped rather than hurt me...

L. Sprague de Camp Thank you for PSYCHOTIC #26. I have
278 Hothorpe Lane little to cavil at in Mr. Spinrad's
Villanova, Pa. reply to my comments on his article
19085 on tabus, pp. 21f. A few quibbles,
perhaps - for instance, I did not say

that Mailer was ridiculous, only that a particular feature of one of his novels was, which is not quite the same thing - but not enough to support a full-dress logomachy. If Mr. Spinrad had sounded as reasonable the first time around, I should not have been impelled to take some of the statements in his original article to task. But if everybody were always reasonable, wouldn't the world be a dull place?

((Damn! My insidious drug didn't work on you.))

Jerry Kaufman I said some nasty and unjustified
2769 Hampshire Rd. things in my last letter about Nor-
Cleveland Hts., man Spinrad and I must apologize for
Ohio 44106 them. This time I want to say some
more nasty things about Spinrad, but
this time they're justified, all right.

Spinrad says in PSY 26: "THE FINAL PROGRAMME is light-years removed from sword-and-sorcery." and later, "It is useless or worse to try to force modern reality into the molds of the old myths."

Out of the mouths...

Buck Coulson was the first to point out that the first section of THE FINAL PROGRAMME has nearly the same plot and development as the first of the Elric stories. Another reviewer in a fanzine showed the parallels that even dialogue in the two showed. If you're interested, Dick, it'll



only take you a minute to compare them. ((If I had them.))

What no one has pointed out is that there are further "parallels" between the Elric series and THE FINAL PROGRAMME. The events that complete that book are an ^{exact} copy of the last of the Elric stories. Elric/Cornelius is a psychic vampire who gets his energy from Runesword/Miss Brunner, who in turn is a psychic vampire. The struggle for supremacy between the two continues through their "association". Chaos is loose in the world, and in stopping it, the two end their age and start another. At the end of their world, the two are merged into one, thanks to the efforts of the Runesword/Miss Brunner, and the new being goes off on an obscure mission of its own, to wait for the new age to begin.

Since I've forgotten most of the innards of both the Elric series and THE FINAL PROGRAMME, I can't draw any further examples from them. I think I've done enough already. Look at those quotes up there, and then consider the amount of transposing that Moorcock has done from an old myth to a new myth. Spinrad maybe didn't read any of the Elric stories he says are "light-years removed" from a book that is nothing more than an "old myth(s)" redressed? Norman Spinrad is a sucker. That stands proven, by his own words.

Harry Warner, Jr.
423 Summit Ave.,
Hagerstown, Md.
21740

Tom Wolfe used to claim that the best way to understand a man was by watching him and his actions soon after he woke in the morning. His theory might not survive The Couch in the new PSYCHOTIC. But I have a new hypothesis to replace it. I may be split off from reality as far as dress is concerned, and I wonder if other people in fandom and prodrom behave in such a schizophrenic manner. I dress pretty much as I please at all times except when I'm actually on duty at my regular job and there I carry out the letter of the apparel law without heeding its spirit. That is, I'm expected to

wear a coat while at work, even in the hottest summer weather. So for the past six years I've been wearing a sports coat that has begun to fray uncontrollably around the bottom and has some undetermined velvety substance gradually growing from under the collar, emerging ever more prominently. I must wear a tie while working, so I try to choose one that clashes to the greatest possible extent with the color of my shirt. It is a protest against the silly demands of management; I've found nobody else in Hagerstown who cares how I dress, as long as certain key portions of me are sufficiently camouflaged, and there is only one place in Hagerstown known to me where a coat in summer is requisite, the diningroom of the snootiest local country club.

Delusions brings into prominence one matter that irritates me immensely about paperback bpps. It is the handling fee demanded by publishers for orders direct to the source for just one or two books. This makes no sense unless it's intended to discourage the nuisance of small mail-order transactions. If the firm does a great deal of this sort of business, the nickle or dime per book is an imposition on the purchasers, because whatever extra labor costs result from mail order business, the elimination of middlemen's profit on those sales would balance out. If there are only a handful of such orders weekly, obviously the firm is still losing money on those orders, for the dime a book wouldn't cover the time and expense involved in trips to warehouse and post office for three or four books per day. It's difficult enough to order from a publisher a book you can't find at the newsstand, because you must determine the cover price and the particular firm's handling charge somehow (unless you read about it in PSYCHOTIC), then try to decide whether there's more danger of losing your money if you send change or having your check altered to dollars if you write one for cents, and then wait perhaps three weeks for the order to arrive. I've tried in vain to find a dealer somewhere who would make things easy for science fiction enthusiasts. All I ask is to receive every month a mimeographed list of important new releases, on which I could check the titles I want, enclose my check, and get return mail attention. The paperback specialists known to me are either horribly slow to fill orders or demand handling fees for all but the high-priced quality lines.

There was a Rita Dragonette in fandom. All the more reason for everyone to order a half-dozen advance copies of my history of fandom, just in case it should by chance include all the exciting details and should be suppressed by all the Grand Old Men of prodrom the day following publication.

Jonah was splendid. I'm still not clear about one thing: if the date at the end is for real or is supposed to be the final fillip to the fiction. I hope it's the latter, because that would mean you've successfully revived yet another fan.

((I'm not sure, either. I just print 'em, I don't explain 'em. Larry, are you still fannishly alive? Speak to us!))

I caught myself holding PSYCHOTIC several inches furth-

er from my eyes than normal, while I read the Ted White material and the letters from people who felt in the mood to discuss Ted White. It seemed safer, somehow, to do it that way. I have begun to wonder if all the discussion over competition for future worldcons might be rendered superfluous by events during the coming Labor Day weekend. It seems more and more probable that all the principals in the pro-TEW and anti-TEW factions will be jammed into that one worldcon, and all fandom as we know it may be atomized in one awful moment. Bob Tucker's dream may turn out to be nothing more than an unheralded instance of precognition.

Mercy, people are still arguing about STAR TREK, and none of them has been in my position: that of helping to decide if the series shall remain on the air. For a week, I was a Nielsen family. I accepted the role under a slight misapprehension, that the remainder of the family would come along with the materials for keeping track of what I watched. I was wrong about this, but nevertheless went through with the solitary duties. Friday was the last day of the viewing week that was assigned to me, and I had this terrible decision to make. Should I watch STAR TREK and perhaps provide the extra weight to cause the decimal point after its rating to rise by one-tenth and send it ahead of some other program and thus cause an executive somewhere to make a sudden decision to keep it on the air another season? It would have been cheating to do so, because I usually watch only one episode a season and I did that last September, and it would have been mean not to do so, because a lot of good fans will be awfully unhappy if STAR TREK stops. Channel Nine suddenly scheduled a ball game that Friday night and so my uncertainty was automatically removed; not even the start of a television series devoted to the complete works of Robert Bloch would cause me to miss a baseball game. Well, not if I knew I could pick up the start of that Bloch series on a rerun six months later.

The gatefold or whatever the Bode drawing is called was magnificent. I haven't seen a rump as prominent as that since the time Pearl White had to crawl through a sewer pipe in The Perils of Pauline and the cameraman apparently forgot to bring down his wide-angle lens. I can see already the advertisements in future dealers' lists: PSYCHOTIC, 26th issue, complete, \$25; with Bode illustration missing, \$2.

Jerry Lapidus
54 Clearview Dr.
Pittsford, N.Y.
14534

I can add a little to Ted White's "LeRoy Tanner" story. In the latest AMAZING (September, I think) Tanner reviews Panshin's Heinlein In Dimension. Amazingly, he rather likes the book; he does

have two strong criticisms of Panshin, however. This criticism comes from the inclusion of Alva Rogers' A Requiem For Astounding and Moskowitz's Seekers of Tomorrow in the listing (at the end) of books concerning sf and sf criticism. As Ted pointed out in PSY 26, he (Tanner) has a tendency to get very worked up over little things. And he closes with a comment that it's too bad Panshin didn't have a chance to "experience the wonder" of Heinlein's 1940 work as it came out. Somehow the whole thing didn't help my impression of Tanner.

at all, whomever he is.

Glad you share my enthusiasm for Ellison, or at least for "Pretty Maggie Money-eyes". Buck Coulson has some sort of thing against Harlan's work, and notched Maggie and "I Have No Mouth" last in their respective Hugo categories. I personally felt the latter to be one of the top stories of the last several years and, like you, also liked Maggie.

Do you realize that both Harlan and Delany have a chance for triple Hugos this year? And that Zelazny could take two himself?

Joseph Green 1390 Holly Ave Merriitt Island, Fla. 32952	Piers Anthony Jacob loaned me PSY 25, which I enjoyed muchly; fanzines have certainly improved in quality since the early fifties, when I was editing a couple of sf poetry columns.
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In this particular issue I enjoyed your editorial comment—the split personality bit is a good gag (if it's a gag!)—which you kept to a pleasantly restrained length.

Robert Bloch's review of 2001—of course we Bloch fans are easy to please (mostly it takes his name as author to create an immediate favorable impression /hullo there, Bob, if you're watching! Many thanks for your kind encouragement and help in days of yore...though your agent, to whom you steered me, up and passed on the the Friends paradise before selling any of my junk, and I eventually managed to break through on my own/—a show I am scheduled to see shortly, and the book review Delusions, I liked, too. All the rest were good, and some of the letters, such as Jack Gaughan's (Dear Mr. Gaughan: I have been longing to tell you that your pictorialization of the seal people in my April 1965 GALAXY story was poor; too much human, not enough seal. That was a dandy ice grotto, though...) were as detailed, provocative and interesting as the columns.

Alex Kirs, who says he is returning to the fold after ten years absence, said everything I am tempted to say about finding the scene much the same, and goes on there to some very trenchant comments on Campbell and the current magazine scene.

With Lee Hoffman, I feel like doing about 50,000 words on the changes during the many years of my absence, but have managed to strangle the impulse (well, perhaps pinch of its head and flush it down the commode would be more appropriate; it was aborted).

I enjoyed Avram Davidson's letter (hello, Avram! And what the hell are you doing in Br. Honduras? When I visited you in Mexico I seem to remember you advised me to go there, since I no speak Spanish, and the writing career needed long and cheap nurturance. Mayhap this proves the sincerity of your advice! /And yes, I have seen the Busby Bathroom, many times. Unfortunately, Avram, we share that experience with lotsa others; the Busby's are notoriously hospitable types; also very good friends of mine./) as I enjoy all of his shorter works, Greg Benford's, Harlan Ellison's...and I've been wondering when someone would point out the rather obvious fact that there is room enough in

sf for both New Wave and Old Drag /which I 'spose shows where my sentiments lie; and let us kindly not let us have a thousand alert readers rising in righteous rath to point out that I carry the Old to extremes by writing even fact articles yet! I have an excellent excuse...I do it for the money, being by trade an engineering writer nohow/ which Harlan did nicely), and many others.

All in all, one of the most consistently enjoyable fanzines I have ever read; a very nice way to return from the unquiet land of gafia. I am impressed.

((*Whew* Do you use this writing style at work??))

Isaac Asimov 45 Greenough St. West Newton Mass. 02165	As those of you who have evdr driven in the Boston area know, Boston driving is anarchy on wheels. But I learned to drive in Boston and I know no better.
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Once I had a passenger in my car and after I had negotiated my way around a "circle" while chatting in an amiable sort of fashion, the passenger, perspiring noticeably, said, "How did you avoid those six other cars?"

"What six other cars?" I asked, and he got out of the car and wouldn't get back in again at the next red light.

I take the place of the passenger when I read PSYCHOTIC.

Such vituperation! Such sharp-honed, acid-pointed, sting-barbed, whip-lashing tongues. Such a combination of wild insistence on saying things exactly as you please and wilder insistence on no one else saying things exactly as he pleases.

My goodness!

Anyway, I went through the issue, perspiring noticeably on my own hook, fearing that I would be casually mentioned and as casually ripped apart and that I would then be forced to write a reply. ("I don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if I do—")

Fortunately, I wasn't mentioned and I'm not sure I like that, either. After all, here I've gone and written two introductions to DANGEROUS VISIONS, the most discussed book of the fanzine century and I'm never mentioned. Is it that I am Above Criticism or Beneath Contempt—and be careful what you say.

((You are an Elder Ghod of Sf...and you never seem to offend anyone or provoke an unkind or contentious thought. Now, to remedy that, first you write an article for PSYCHOTIC...))

But the real reason I write is that someone questions the existence of Ree Dragonette. Yes, she did exist. I met her on two different occasions in 1947 (well, you know me and my fabulous memory). She was married to Charles Dye at the time, and told me lots of hair-raising things I won't repeat. Having mentioned her, however, I find I had better state, on oath, that if she was a gang-mistress, I was not (I repeat, NOT) a member of the gang.



Kay Anderson
4530 Hamilton Av.
Oxnard, Calif.
93030

Well, I'll tell you what.
If Ted White will accept the situation that since the Captain and First Officer on STAR TREK are the leads, the stories pretty well have to lean

a bit so they will be in the action, I'll accept the situation presented in his SPAWN OF THE DEATH MACHINE, wherein a full grown man bleeds to death of a bite on the penis, in almost less time than it takes to tell about it. An ordinary sized man contains seven to ten quarts of blood. I read a report in which a doctor had, through a deplorable lack of technique, taken a bite out of the thoracic aorta during a spinal operation. The fountain of blood was under enough pressure that it hit the ceiling of the operating room (they have high ceilings, too) but the patient didn't die for about five minutes. Anyhow, Ted's character showed a deplorable lack of technique in his rape attempt, says I.

((As I remember, Ted implied that the man in his book was completely unmanned by the "bite". But I agree with you; the loss of blood probably wouldn't be fatal, not for hours, since the brain would shut off the flow of blood to the penis—as it does after orgasm. The severed organ would certainly bleed, but not huge gouts as would be required in his book. Pleasant subject, eh, men?))

Rick Norwood
111 Upperline
Franklin, La.
70538

My copy of PSY 26 was upside down from the Ted White letter on. Are you trying to tell me something?

((Only that I assemble PSY in two stages and goofed in joining your two halves.))

That letter contained one sentence that gave me a new insight into Ted White's character. He apparently does not realize that he is a rude person. I had assumed that Ted's rudeness was a deliberate device to win arguments and influence neofans. Now he writes with a wounded air, "I do not recall being impolite (to Mr. Searles)." In the dozen or so times that I have met Ted White personally, I have never known him to be other than impolite, snubbing those he considers beneath him, interrupting while others are talking, failing to give any sort of consideration to opinions which conflict with his own. This sort of thing is part of

the New York way of life, I know, but Ted should at least be aware of the impression he makes.

Leave it to Ted White, a comics fan himself, to use "comicbook" in its pejorative rather than descriptive sense. Actually there is not much difference between series television and adventure comic books. They both offer mass-produced, sub-standard entertainment. Both have more to offer visually than they do in the way of story content. Both are entirely derivative, borrowing plots and ideas from outside sources. And both occasionally rise above themselves and produce an entertaining series. If I must place STAR TREK on a media-spanning spectrum of excellence, I would put it on a par with "Fantastic Four" and Phoenix Prime rather than on the level of Krazy Kat and Lord of the Rings.

I hope this makes my position clear to Ted. If he chooses to interpret my rather obvious observation that STAR TREK is an adventure series and Captain Kirk is a Hero as implying that STAR TREK is on a par with "Batman" and the crew of the Enterprise are "no-talent types," that's his hang-up.

To answer Ted's direct questions, one more time, very slowly: The Enterprise is not a warship. It is primarily an exploration vessel. The analogy to a battleship does not hold. Try comparing the voyages of the Enterprise to those of Captain Cook. The crew of the Enterprise consists of specialists from physicists to dieticians. You might get an interesting show centered around the problems of the ship's dietician, but I think it is understandable that the emphasis is elsewhere. If Captain Kirk is killed (or incapacitated) the Enterprise runs for home. No one can replace Kirk except Spock. All this has been established on the show many times.

((Nevertheless, Rick, the Enterprise is a ship-of-the-line, a Starship, and apparently as heavily armed as any other Starship in Star Fleet Command. In fact, the Enterprise is a warship, one of the largest the Federation possesses, and is not primarily an exploration ship. All it seems to do is patrol the fringes of the Federation sphere of influence and go on special missions within that sphere.))

June Moffatt
9826 Paramount Blvd.
Downey, Calif. 90240

"Mommy, what's a LeRoy Tanner?"

"I don't know, dear, but Ted White thinks it might be a Harry Harrison, because of certain similarities in its writing style and use of commas."

"Oh—you mean like guilt by punctuation?"

"That's right, dear."

Marty Helgesen
11 Lawrence Av.
Malverne, NY
11565

I find Earl Evers' version of Project Head Start interesting as a "view into another world" type of thing, but I disagree with the basic idea of using drugs. Rather than try to discuss the issue on my own, I'm going to cop out, for the time being, and resort

to two quotations. The first is from C.S. Lewis' autobiographical Surprised By Joy which was written before psychedelics became a big thing:

The first [blunder] was made at the very moment when I formulated the complaint that the "old thrill" was becoming rarer and rarer. For by that complaint I smuggled in the assumption that what I wanted was a "thrill," a state of my own mind. And there lies the deadly error. Only when your whole attention and desire are fixed on something else — whether a distant mountain, or the past, or the gods of Asgard — does the "thrill" arise. It is a by-product. Its very existence presupposes that you desire not it but something other and outer. If by any perverse askesis or the use of any drug it could be produced from within, it would at once be seen to be of no value. For take away the object and what, after all, would be left? — a whirl of images, a fluttering sensation in the diaphragm, a momentary abstraction. And who could want that? This, I say, is the first and deadly error, which appears on every level of life and is equally deadly on all, turning religion into a self-caressing luxury and love into auto-eroticism. And the second error is, having thus falsely made a state of mind your aim, to attempt to produce it.

The second quotation is from a recent newspaper column by Sydney J. Harris:

The finest and tersest rebuke to psychedelic drugs was the sign I saw scribbled in the dressing room of a hippie men's shop: "Love is the ultimate trip." Drugs, whatever their diverse dangers, are simply a sad substitute for the ability to love fully and freely.

((That second quote, Marty, is altogether too facile and hypocritical and sanctimonious...and irrelevant. Are drugs substitutes for an ability to love fully and freely? Is that true of tobacco? Sleeping pills? Diet pills? Aspirin?))

Steve Johnson
1018 North 31st
Corvallis, Oregon
97330

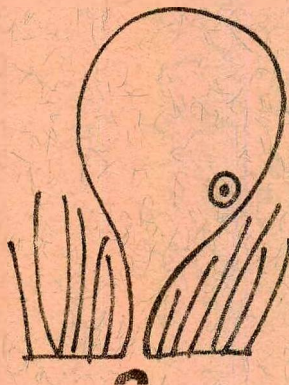
People continue to rail on and on against the use of drugs. ((No, only the "rebel associated" drugs.)) Dave Locke mentioned the "sleep-walking unreality of drugs." And other people said

things in past issues. And I ask them: what's so great about reality? Certainly, there are some good things about it, but most of it is mundania — and some of us read sf and f to escape it. What's wrong with taking drugs in addition to that some of the time? Not always — I'm willing to admit I've got a responsibility to pay my own way in this world — but what's wrong with weekends and summer va-

cations for turning on? Would I be better off watching TV or an all-night movie? Fantasy in any form seems to me as legitimate a way to spend one's time as "real life" diversions.

A lot of people say that dopers (& hippies in particular) are no talent bums who couldn't make it in the *real* world. I always accept that hypothesis — and ask back why I should bother beating my brains out trying to accomplish something in the *real* world when fantasy in a number of forms — books, drugs, writing — is available to me. No one seems to be able to answer that one, except to say that, "If Reagan was President, people like you would be thrown in jail where you belong!"

((("Reality" really takes a beating, doesn't it? It's curious that the Christian dogma—mind over matter and "the spirit shall triumph over the flesh"—somehow doesn't apply to drug or pot or alcohol created "spiritual" experiences. The puritan work-ethic is a direct contradiction of Christian theory.))



Piers Anthony Jacob
800 75th St. North
St. Petersburg, Fla.
33710

Dear Obligation of
Honor; (Well, you
see my dictionary de-

finies it thusly:

GEIS—pronounced
gesh, plural GEASA, n., Irish—An obligation of honor, generally restrictive, attaching to a rank, order or individual in the ancient Irish aristocracy.) (All of which is to reprimand you for not living up to your name.)

((But, I have lived up to my name; GEIS is German, not Irish, and in German, GEIS means GOAT! I'm the goat around here all the time:))

In the first issue of PSYCHOTIC you sent me, as I recall, you did not list the addresses of letterwriters. So I sent you a letter—whereupon you began listing addresses. It seems that you have a responsive circulation; anyway, I've lost count of the fanzines, etc, I've received stemming from that first betrayal of my identity to the fans. For five years I got along fine on my own, my only commentary going to NIEKAS and YANDRO, both of which honored my pseudonym... now the damn cover is blown.

(Trouble is, some of them are mighty fine publications, and some have reviews of my work, so I can't just ignore them. Matter of fact, I'm glad to see 'em. But then I have to comment on them, and that takes time, and I've almost forgotten what the word means. So here's to you, S.O.B.)

Several things of interest in #26. Your working schedule appalls me. You only write 2-3 hours a morning? Whew! Today I typed 2800 words submission draft, wrote a couple hundred first draft, did a laundryload or two of diapers etc and hung 'em out to dry (yes, it rained!) and spent most of the day chasing my baby girl around. She's 9½ months old at this writing and has taken her first walking-type steps,

which may give you some notion just how active she is. I can not type at all while she is up; I can tote manuscript pages, fanzines, etc., around with me and read snatches while, with the other hand, propping the phone back on its stand, taking newspaper out of her mouth, catching falling books and so on. Thus I do accomplish things during the day—but not on any relaxed schedule like yours. But look: I understood that this sex-type literature paid only from \$80 to \$750 per novel (I know people who have been paid at both ends of this scale). Even if you do only first draft and submission (I do three drafts); can you make a living from such hours at such rates? (A matter of morbid curiosity only.)

((I got screwed by a publisher once and ended up with \$100 for a book, but now Midwood pays me \$800 for 40,000 words, and Universal paid \$900 for the last one to them, and Brandon House and Essex House pay \$1,000...but these rates, I think, are the top for them as advances. There are additional payments for reprinting. And, too, I'm not a big spender. Not having a car or a wife and family helps immensely. All I have is PSY.))

I once pondered the field. I went to a stand and selected a book more or less at random, bought it (75¢ for a small paperback) and read it. There were things on almost every page that deeply shocked my sensitivities and bruised my sense of fitness. Things like—well, here, let's be specific:

The book was Passion: One Flight Up, by Andy Widmer, published by Pioneer Pub. Corp., with a Nevada address. It is marked Adults Only and has a suggestive cover. So far so good. Page one is a half-page, ok. Then page 2: passages like this: "Mavis Bayliss, when she realized her daughter Lil had indeed gone. (sic) She grieved as much as her shallow nature would permit. But this wasn't a great deal because she was (sic) a woman who should not have had (sic) children in the first place, was capable of only one love at a time and her entire capacity was directed at her rather useless brother, Martin, who was far more skillful in demanding it than either of her two daughters." (sic, sic, sic!) There were two other typos on the same page and an omitted comma. In addition the book was clumsily plotted and given to confusing shifts in viewpoint, inconsistencies, etc; and I assure you this stemmed from bad writing, not "new wave". Finally, there was less (and less effective) actual sex in it than I put routinely into my science fiction novels—and sf has a reputation for, er, conservatism in this area.

((You bought the book about five years ago, I'd guess, from the price, and you got ahold of a book by a marginal publisher in the field who no longer exists. His stuff was always badly edited and most of his writers were marginal, too. If you want to try again, be advised that most sex novels now cost from \$1.25 to \$1.95.))



Um, I have noted that a number of your letterwriters take good care to advertise their own work, and I prefer not to do this. If your readers don't know me or my work, I would find it unbecoming to push for such acquaintance. But since I have made a statement here, I'd better back it up. SO: there is more plain, low-brow, stiff-member SEX in my novel Chthon than in all this Passion novel, and the grammatical level is higher. OK?

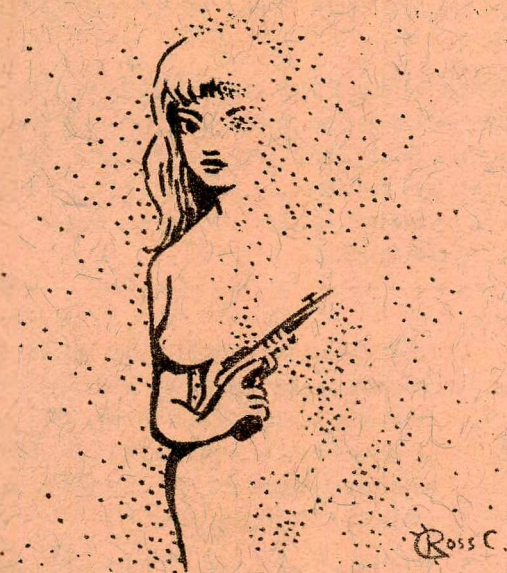
But tell me: is this the kind of thing you do? Frankly, this scared me away because I would never want my name on such crap, and reputation is about as important to me as money. I use a pseudonym, yes—but I mean, I want that name to achieve reputation. If I had to hide behind a series of genuinely concealing pen names, I would have nothing but the money—and that would be easier to come by in some non-writing area of endeavor. So I really am curious how you see it.

((But if you wrote sex novels, Piers, they wouldn't be crap. And why can't a writer attain a reputation as a fine sex novel writer as others are fine sf writers, western writers, etc? Because "sex is dirty and sinfull"? My first two books were published under my own name. Then Midwood bought THE BLONDE in 1960 and because I had written it first-person-female I dreamed up the pseudo "Peggy Swenson." The book was a sellout. It was reprinted. It was recently reprinted again. But Midwood insisted after that that all my books be by "Peggy Swenson". Peggy developed a big following. And so a large portion of my books are published with her as the author. But most of my books are by me. And (I cannot help adding) thirteen of my books have been reprinted.

Okay, in this issue of PSY I've given a rundown of my production and bragged a bit. It makes me a little uncomfortable, but I did it. I suppose I feel defensive about being a "sex writer".))

By Damn, I think Ted White has got something there: LeRoy Tanner = Harry Harrison. I can see Harry chortling sinfully as he compounds heinous statements to confound the curious reader. Even the errors fit: naturally he would insert some blunders, to convince people that it wasn't him. I mean, if I were a Communist, the first thing I'd do would be to join the local John Birch chapter; it figures, doesn't it? The thing is, Tanner is too tasteless; he has to be a parody, not reality. I wrote an objection to the tanner review of Lord of Light, feeling that a fine book had been wronged, and Harry seemed pleased. "I'll tell Tanner that you hate him," he said. "Everybody does." (quote from memory, but essence correct, I'm sure.) Damn! I think Harry has pulled a masterstroke of audacity off.

I like your foldout InMate. Is it coincidence that that branch looks like an elephant's head, with the two eyes peeking at the nude and the mouth (out of sight) lapping the vulva? Silly question!



((The InMate is like an ink-blot test, isn't it? We'll have to ask Bode if he intended such Freudian significance. But I'm more and more convinced, Piers, that you would make a great sex novelist.))

Ted White says that the average paperback sf book sells between 30,000 and 50,000 copies in its first six months, while sf magazines sell 50,000 within one month, and takes that as an indication of magazine life. I disagree (perhaps because I have trouble finding a magazine like IF on sale, cannot get my subscriptions to it honored, and receive no copy of issues wherein my work appears—this upsets me, I admit): suppose there were several hundred magazines competing for the buyer's attention at once, and only six paperback books. Would those sales figures stand up? I'd say that the market is channelized for magazines, wide-open for books, and no wonder sales figures differ.

Gary Deindorfer suggests that a story be done about the creator stroking his rod and creating the universe. Sorry, Gary—unoriginal. Richard Burton (the original one—translator of the Arabian Nights last century) said: "Read how Yahveh created the universe by forty-two acts of cosmic masturbation..." It seems this is from the Babylonian Talmud, precursor to our Bible.

Kay Anderson inquires about red nipples, and you tell her you know of none. Question: what about when the femme blushes?

((That would have to be a mighty blush, to reach to a girl's breasts. I don't know any girls who are so ashamed of their body (so modest) that they would react to that extreme.))

Lyn Hickman
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My favorite pieces of art in this issue (#26) are Bode's fold-out, Bode on 17, and Rotsler on 39. Of course Rotsler has always been a favorite of mine.

I will agree with you on "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" by Harlan. The best short fantasy I have read in years and

undoubtedly his best story. It is my choice for a Hugo this year.

I hadn't read the story until I purchased his book, LOVE AIN'T NOYHIN' BUT SEX MISPELLED, at the Detroit Triple Fan Fair. It is a book that I recommend. Not to read at a single setting, however. The stories in this collection should be read individually and savored for each idea. There are some fine ones. I would say that you should take at least a month to read the book.

Alan Shaw
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I was intrigued by Earl Evers' "A Primer For Heads" and by Ted White's remarks thereupon in PSY 25. Also by the lack of any other discussion of the topic (except for Deindorfer's few, and well-said, words).

I have encountered a wide spectrum of attitudes toward the real and imagined legal dangers of drug use, ranging from that of, er, "Fan X", who will never so much as mention drugs in print, through Ted's cool reasonableness, to the utter disregard of a (nonfan) friend of mine who smokes continually in circumstances you wouldn't believe: in subways, in cars, at concerts... And it's precisely the fact that you wouldn't believe the situations in which he smokes that keeps him out of danger, for the fact is that of those people who would do anything about it, the class of people who realize he is turning on is vanishingly small. I would invite the reader to take this test:

- (1) If you saw someone smoking pot, would you do anything to get him busted?
- (2) Are you familiar enough with pot to know when someone is smoking (e.g., do you know what it smells like, would you know a reefer if it bit you)?

I'd like to hear from anyone who can honestly answer "yes" to both questions.

Dick Ellington
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I think you are right in calling Ed Cox for what he considers mainstream writing, but the basic idea he mentions...is quite pertinent. When science fiction generally reaches this level, it won't really be considered science fiction any more—just as when a good writer today happens to utilize a sfish idea in a story, we are immediately told that that isn't science fiction. I think people in general prefer nice safe categories and labels and fans aren't really any exception to this rule. Science fiction must meet certain definitions for fans to concern themselves with it and one of these definitions has always been a certain banality. 1984, BRAVE NEW WORLD and books of this "nature" have never really been considered in by fans and when the pretty colored shells have been peeled away, the basic reason seems to be that they are too good. How many others can you think of that have been treated this way? Why isn't William Burroughs science fiction?

I think that's the main reason I read so little (labelled) science fiction these days. I read for entertainment and for quality of writing and something like 90% of science fiction

being turned out is simply not worth bothering with by my standards. Perhaps if there was nothing else available but there is. The best of Heinlein or Sturgeon—or Delany or Zelazny et al is hardly worth bothering with when I can read books like CATCH 22 or "V". And that's dealing with extremes. I think it's this same manic insistence on "science fiction" that has kept the quality of science fiction so damned low — and it's reflected even more strongly in the dramatic fields with this sickening adulation of STAR TREK. "Well, maybe it's not perfect but it's the best we've got." fyeccch. Did anyone bother to watch Megan Terry's "HOME" besides us — it was readily available to most fans on educational channels around the country and I never heard to much as a mention of it. But after all, Megan Terry is just a mainstream playwright who happened to use a science fiction theme in a play and therefore, why bother with it.

((Good point. Fans tend to regard mainstream writers as "usurpers" and claimjumpers when "they" use our ideas.))

Ed Cox
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PSYCHOTIC 26 is so damned interesting that I can hardly sort out what I'd like to say. Comparing it with other large and ambitious fanzines that I've received recently only cause the latter to appear amateurish, uneven, incohesive and straining mightily for that which they now fail to achieve. I guess the crux of the success of PSYCHOTIC is that the editor really is! And the editorial personality shines through the thick, meaty, balanced material like gravy. ((Shiny gravy?)) And this isn't arrant flattery. That's just the way it is.

Maybe it's because most of the material is controversial to one degree or another. And whether or not I agree with the writers, Spinrad, White, Moorcock or whoever, what they're all saying, however they say it, is meaningful and sincere. And, by golly, it's mainly about science fiction. That's pretty weird, boy! Fanzines have been so concerned with faaandom for so long, that the redent turn of interests outward toward current Problems of the Day and Science Fiction is really encouraging. I sort of like it. In PSYCHOTIC, the whole fulminating business is tuned to a fine, white-hot pitch.

I probably have/had a pretty solid preconceived notion as to the definition of "mainstream writing". I see what you mean, now. I agree that the pulp method of writing science fiction was the same as that for all the other varieties. A lot of the writers turning out sf were turning out mystery, western, sport, air-war and whatever else they could sell. All to that same formula. It made pretty poor grade science fiction all right. And, true, this style of writing and the markets to which it became in large part directed kept a great body of science fiction writing on a pseudo-juvenile pulp level. But it had started out of that rut, little by little. Today, it appears well on the way. Out. Up. Just as most of the other fictional output has.

I think part of the mistake has been to lump science

fiction writing into one chunk rather than to separate it into magazine sf and book sf.

There is something about book covers that makes them a bit more "safe" than soft magazine covers. I'm not sure what the reasoning is behind this. But I feel that the same, slow revolution...in mainstream fiction...is happening with science fiction writing. A more adult, mature attitude in theme, a flexing of styles, is coming about.

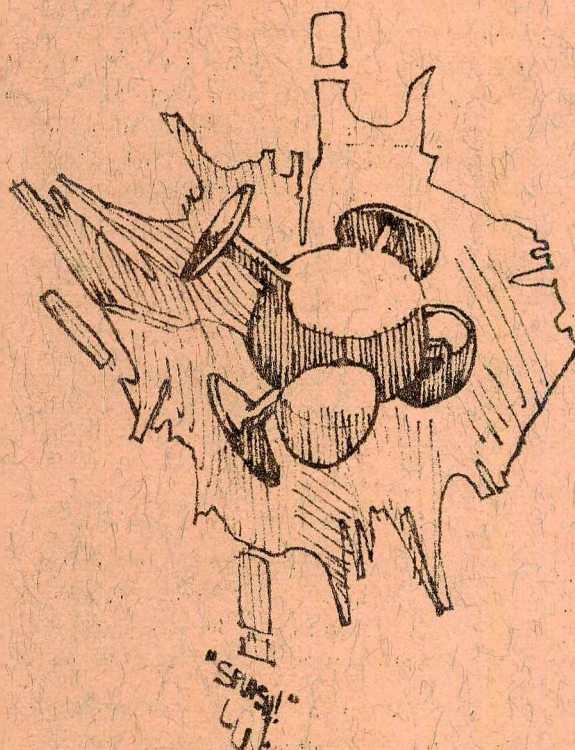
Lyn Veryzer
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Congratulations on publishing the address-
es where we can obtain sf books. Out here
we have a beautiful new library this year.
It covers nearly a city block. My taxes
have nearly doubled. It does not have ONE
new sf book on its shelves. Something is wrong!

If I could, I would make Earl Evers' "A Primer For Heads" required reading for every school child from the elementary grades up to graduation. To the irate parents I have had the misguided bad taste to mention this—I can only say that ignorance is NOT bliss. Have you ever seen young boys who ought to be thinking about going to their high school prom with their best girl, writhing, twisting, vomiting, screaming, scratching, clawing! Then there are those that won't know anything again: just blank-out! Last but not least, those whose "Prom" is a slab at the morgue.

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I had meant to castigate T. White, the
well-known criticaster, and Deindorfer,
whom I never heard of before his letter,
and a number of others. But I refrain.



I'm too dignified. I won't attack their statements or their persons, although T. White left himself open to personal attacks because of his highly vitriolic and very personal attacks against Norman Spinrad and others (in various publications).

I, Philip Jose Farmer, will not speak against White, Deindorfer, Merrill, and others of the scurvy crew. But my alter ego, The Cauchemar Jockey, alias Mantic Manfred, alias Poopout Paul from Peoria, will speak out against White in his alter ego form of The Pseudo-Blish Kid, alias The Shotgun Shogun, who is also wanted south of the border (but not very much) as El Blanko, and is being hunted elsewhere as Axegrinder Axel. Contrary to rumor, The Pseudo-Blish Kid is not the man wanted in Quebec under the alias of Jacques le Bougerie.

In the heat and light of resentment and indignation, The Cauchemar Jockey is going to heave a few bolts at Downwind Donna, Semiconscious Sam (alias S.E. Cotts), The Lisper (alias William Atheling), Fungus Frank, The Episcopalian Epicene, Putdown Pete, Cryogenic Cal (alias Ice Age Ike), Shawn the Shafter, Stentor Steve, and other members of the old BRASS Gang. (BRASS = Book Reviewers' Assassination & Sucking Services.) BRASS is subsidized by the CIA (Critics Isn't Assholes.)

No doubt about it, The Pseudo-Blish Kid will do anything, say anything, no matter how outrageous and nonsensical, to get publicity, to make a name as a BNF critic with, you can bet your herd of goats, the goal of getting Downwind Donna's job. He knows he can't successfully defend his attacks and damn-with-faint-preys, but he does not care about doing this. He makes his brouhaha, and his name has become legion and legend. Let a dog bark loud enough and long enough, and you have to notice him.

One of those shotgun pronouncements: The Lovers broke no tabus. Amazing how many men whose opinions are worthy of respect and whose stature in the s-f field is high think that it did break tabus. Now, The Pseudo-Blish Kid wasn't so young at the time The Lovers came out that he was still wearing yellow-stained diapers, and he was old enough to wipe his own nose (if reminded). But he was young enough to be ignorant about the state of s-f at that time or the furor and boom the Lovers made. He knows nothing of the history of its writing, its submissions, its rejections for reasons of magazine tabus and utterly old-fashioned prejudices and timidities by several editors, and its public reception. Or perhaps he does know but makes the statement anyway as part of his multi-missile warhead (birdshot is a better description?) approach. Like the knight who galloped out of the castle and went off in all directions. He calls Spinrad a liar (in PSYCHOTIC), but when, later, the Kid faces Spinrad in New York, he is mum. A buttered turd wouldn't melt in his mouth. The Pseudo-Blish Kid in print and face-to-face, schizophrenia supreme! Mr. Tiger, meet Mr. Rabbit.

And the Kid's account of how he got Belmont to refrain from censoring The Jewels of Elsewhen really raised the bloodpressure of The Cauchemar Jockey. After what Belmont

did to the Jockey's The Gate of Time (author's title: Two Hawks From Earth)! With no notice to the author, they cut out a rape scene which was logical and was not graphic, just implied, couldn't offend anyone except an ultra-reactionary. This excision left the reader wondering what the hell was going on. Nothing written in to explain, you see. Just a sudden jump. The Belmont editors did change the scene wherein the rapists were punished legally by being hoisted with thin wires around the genitals. In the editorial version the wires were put around the ankles of the criminals. Still no explanation of what had gone on, and the Belmont unethicals had the wires cutting through the bone of the ankle and severing it. The unethicals screwed up the book with no warning to me, no asking of permission. When the book came out, and I saw what had been done, I asked them why. I got the same reasons that the Kid got. But he was able to talk Belmont out of changing it, and obviously because he was there. This is discrimination. Do I have to live in New York, sit on top of the editors, to get the same consideration the Kid gets? If the Belmont reasons for cutting my book were valid, the reasons should apply also to the Kid's. In any case, the editors should have told me before I wrote the book that it would be a juvenile and then I could have written it as such or refused.

I have been the victim of a number of editorial butcherings, done behind my back, and I resent every one of them. (I see I've dropped out of my alter ego. Back to the Cauchemar Jockey.) When the Epicene says that a rejection of a story is due to editorial faults, not the editors or publishers, he does not know what he is talking about. Why should he know? He never wrote anything to offend anybody. He does not seem to know any more about the state of magazine publishing in the old days than the Kid. Nor does he know anything about its state nowadays. Believe the Jockey, there are still tabus operating, prejudices operating, and those who say that there aren't say so because of lack of personal experience or, probably, because they don't want to face the facts.

The Jockey once complained in a letter column in another fanzine, a long time ago, that it was next to impossible to get a story published on certain themes with certain approaches. For instance, the advocating of genocide with seemingly good justification. Cryogenic Cal replied, in the same letter column, that this just was not so, that he had sold a story on such a theme and it came out in such and such an issue of Amazing. So the Jockey dug up the issue and read the story. So the tale is about genocide, but in a vague way and on a planet of some distant star and about some humanoid species. Who cares about this paleness and shadowiness? I had made it clear in my letter that I was talking about genocide for Negroes or Jews or any people you wanted to write about, that the story would concern the Here and Now or the very near future. I complained that anybody who presented such a story, who wrote a "good" story, with seemingly valid reasons for genocide, would be lucky if he got off with a fiery rejection letter, he'd probably get hung. (Let the Jockey make it clear that he wouldn't write such a story, but his point is that there are certain tabu topics.)

The Cauchemar Jockey is shunted off the main track again. So back to the Kid.

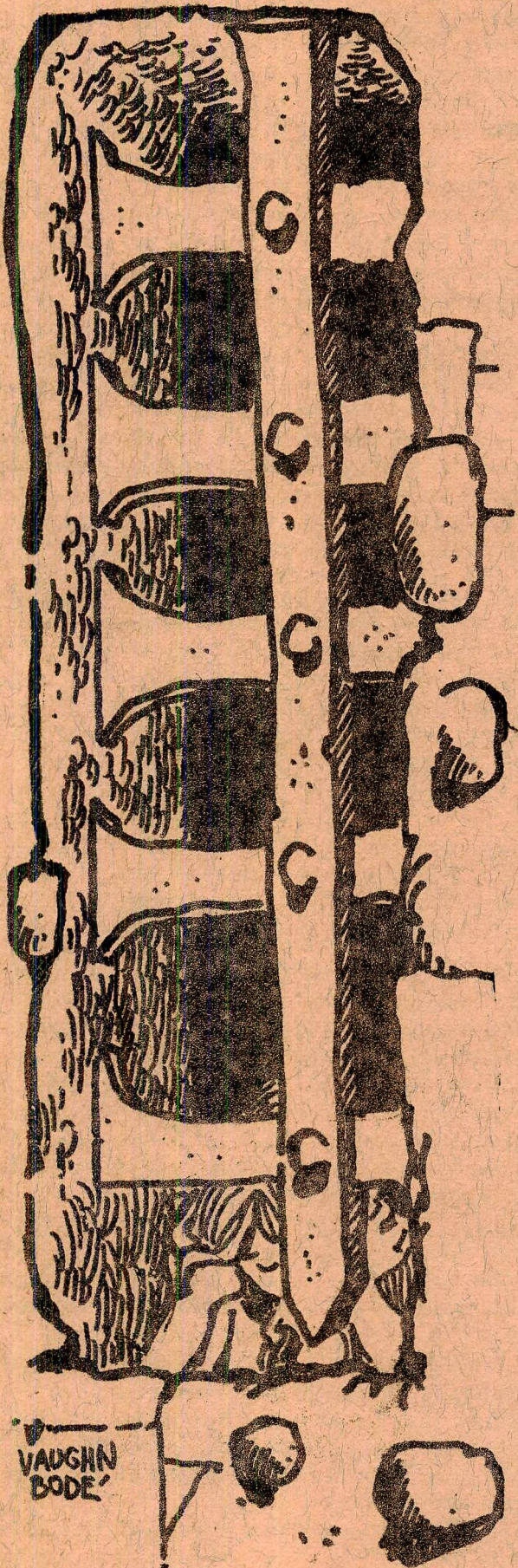
One last comment on the Kid. The Jockey erupted with laughter when he read the Kid's whines about Fungus Frank. The Kid accuses Fungus of being full of jealous hostility (which may be true), but it's so obvious to the Jackey (and many others) that the Kid is as full of the stuff as Frank. It's jealous hostility that drives the Kid to blast out at Heinlein and Budrys and Spinrad and you name them and at anybody who is in the least odorous of superiority to the Kid.

Now for Putdown Pete, alias the Hip Hypogene, alias Would-be Woody, et al (&al's brother, too). First, let me make my attitude towards William S. (guess what the S stands for?) Burroughs. The first book by WSB which I read was Nova Express. I loved it, admired it, and was stimulated by it. I was also puzzled here and there. I've read it seven times, understanding more each time. I think it's a very seminal work. I couldn't see why it hadn't won the Hugo, but I didn't know then that the Hugo is was a reward of popularity (plus some other elements), and that if the winner did merit the reward, it was only a coincidence. (The same goes for the Nebula award; Budrys is right, the writers, as a group, have no more (or less) taste and perception than the fans. There are great and wonderful people in both groups; there are also many illiterate swine. (Many literate swine, too.) This does not, of course, apply to you, dear reader, unless you happen to be a member of BRASS or allied organizations.

Anyway, Putdown Pete, I also read The Soft Machine, The Yage Letters, and, finally, Junkie. These illuminated some shadows in Nova Express. Junkie (the most conventional, the autobiography) was the most illuminating. There still remain in Nova Express and The Soft Machine some things which will always be mysterious because they're too subjective, private. WSB will have to annotate them if I, or anyone else, is to understand them. Despite which, I find WSB brilliant and thought-provoking and sometimes scary. I don't know he's a genius. Only time will reveal that. But I do know that WSB is limited. He has his special small field which he created. He will always be the master in this, perhaps because he'll be the only one in it. But he repeats himself over and over in the same book and in other books. All his books are actually volumes of one book. Highly repetitious with slight or no variations, and don't compare him to Bach. But we can learn much from him (what to do, what to avoid, also).

Note: I started reading The Ticket That Exploded, am one-fourth through and have also read the last section. A scan of the remainder shows me it's like the rest of the book and like the other books. No change in theme whatsoever, no development or improvement or even experimentation in style or in anything. Static. Alas, master of the one note.

Sure, WSB is Where It's At, etc., but no more, maybe not nearly as much, as Clarence Budington Kelland in his day, or Robert Ruark, or A.E. van Vogt and not nearly as much as Heinlein, Norman Mailer, Ted Sturgeon, Zelazny, Pynchon, et al, or John or Ross MacDonald. After all is drug addiction, bug-gery, and hatred of women the whole thing, All There Is? I think not. So, though WSB is brilliant, maybe even a genius, he does not, in my opinion, have much scope or versatility or characterization or compassion or, worse, he has no po-



tentiality. He's gotten as far as he's going and he won't stop talking. (I could be wrong, however.)

I had a lot to say about P. Dick but the old Cauchemar Jockey is getting tired and, besides, has a number of other things to do before the big convention. So I'll just say that he's an outstanding talent, a genuine creator, I admire his work very much. But I think his creativity derives from his unconscious, that he generates his stories without acid, and that acid can do only one thing for him. It can act as a midwife, free him of inhibitions which might repress his creativity. I say this because nothing he has written seems, to me, to derive from psychedelic drugs. Any superior imagination could come up with the same or something similar. Every superior talent has a psychedelic imagination. Some need no stimulus to get it going. Some need tobacco or alcohol or LSD, or think they do.

Is this any putdown of Dick? No. Can a man have a mystical experience without the aid of acid or any artificial chemicals (or natural)? Yes. Have I had two genuinely mystical experiences (similar to some described by William James), and these without the aid of drugs, alcohol, or anything (except possibly the finger of God)? Yes. Am I knocking acid per se? No. Do I read E. Evers' articles with interest and respect? Yes. Will I try acid? Not yet. Why not? I'm too scared, I have too many monsters locked up in the deeps. Will I ever try acid? Some day.

That's enough for now.

And, now that I reread what I have so swiftly and furiously written, I become mollified and forgiving towards the Kid, the Hypogene, BRASS, and others. I see that all this vicious howling of pejoratives and bumraps is a form of catharsis, and that it's all in a spirit of good clean fun (dirty, anyway). So I forgive you, Kid, et al, I may be mad at you but I don't hate you. Actually, what it's all about, where it's at, is entertaining the audience (or so Kris Neville told me).

Brian W. Aldiss Thanks for sending me PSYCHOTIC 26. I
Heath House expect you wish me to reply to Ted White's
Southmoor violent farrago concerning Budrys, Harry
Nr. Abingdon and me. He bursts up at the beginning
Berks., ENGLAND of the magazine and again at the end;
 PSYCHOTIC earns its title this issue.

White has also been vomiting forth on his pet subject in the SFWA Forum and, for all I know, in other places. He was answered in Forum. How many times does he have to be put down?

It is difficult to see what his basic grudge is. We must allow that it is probably not that Harry and I omitted to mention an effort of his in NEBULA AWARDS II, because he grunts about that only once. Even his constant attacks on Leroy Tanner seem rather feeble, although he devotes much space to a display of his detective work. His rapier-like precision of thought may perhaps be judged from the fact that he calls Harry's and my SF Horizons, which is mentioned

in NEBULA AWARDS II, "SF Review".

White's basic design, if he has one, appears to be to defend Budrys. Poor Budrys has fallen into a bad patch lately; the crispness of such earlier works as WHO? and ROGUE MOON was sadly lacking in THE IRON THORN. Now he is really in bad with this loud-mouthed defender gushing all over everything. If we look at the Galaxy review, in which Budrys deals with the NEBULA AWARDS II volume, and to which White so frenziedly directs our attention, we shall find something which White evidently has forgotten and Budrys perhaps is trying to forget.

In attempting to defend Budry's, White has chosen the old method, attack. He launches upon Harry and me for mentioning each other's books; "cynical jobs of self-exploitation", he spews. But one ought to find something less tricky to spew - for the climax of the Budrys column (Galaxy, Feb. '68) is a discussion - by Budrys, of course - of his own novel, THE AMSIRS AND THE IRON THORN. He lavishes almost as much space on it as he does on all the stories of NEBULA AWARDS II. Cynical self-exploitation, anyone?

Mind you, Budrys doesn't actually laud his own novel to the skies (advisedly, some might say), but he does let slip that his publishers "call me a classic master of science fiction". Myself, I would not think that anyone with such brass nerve needed defending against the gadfly Tanner. Maybe Budrys needs defending against White.

A wider question emerges here which might be worth discussing if anyone felt up to talking rationally instead of just letting steam out of their head. One can't like what Budrys did in his review, but one perceives the cause of it. No doubt he saw himself, rightly, to be an important part of the little SF scene, and felt his book should have had a mention in Galaxy's review columns; so it should have done - the pity is that he was tempted into an extended puff. But the situation of temptation occurs in the first place because the field is so...understaffed, you might say. Fans become writers, writers become editors, writers become critics, and so on; everyone does more than one job, often out of the best of motives - to lend a hand, to spread the gospel, and so on. It's fine as far as it goes. The trouble is, the field gets so damned cosy as a result. Many of the letters in your columns, for instance, suggest that the writers shut themselves away in catalepsy when they aren't gobbling down SF or attending cons. The whole business becomes unprofessional. As an example, if we may revert to your prima donna, we have White, in trying to prove something or other about NEBULA AWARDS II, revealing that he is Bob Shaw's agent and then blabbing just how much Shaw earns from various sources for a story. Ye Gods! The biggest asshole unhung - maybe one ought to say undefecated - shouldn't do that to a client!

Yet that's the slipshod way things go. Fanzines are fun; but they do promote this sort of unprofessionalism and encourage little White lies.

One point in White's diatribe requires direct answer. I don't mean that White requires an answer, since he's merely out for kicks; I mean that others may question, as White does,

the professionalism with which editors of the annual Nebula volumes are chosen. Damon Knight, as President of SFWA, wrote and asked me if I would take on the job of NEBULA AWARDS II with Harry. We did not need to go touting for the job. I presume Damon asked me because my novel and short story collections are published by a reputable hardcover publisher (the same one for twelve years); because I had won a Nebula Award; because I edit the Penguin SF anthologies and was initiating general editor of the Penguin SF series from which Budrys, among others, benefitted; and because I publish my professional reviews in the Oxford Mail, the Times Literary Supplement, and elsewhere, and because I was co-editor of what our bald prima donna calls "SF Review". Harry's recommendations, as you know, are even more imposing, and plunge even further back into the mists of history. We were pleased to have been asked, and accepted the office. (Here again the under-staffing of the field may have been partly responsible for Damon's choice; that I do not know.)

Anyhow, the slimy words of envy used to describe Damon's invitation and our acceptance are "it was inevitable that such a song-and-dance team would promote themselves to the enviable task". And why is White envious? He gives us three reasons. In his own words, "Much prestige, some money, and next to no work."

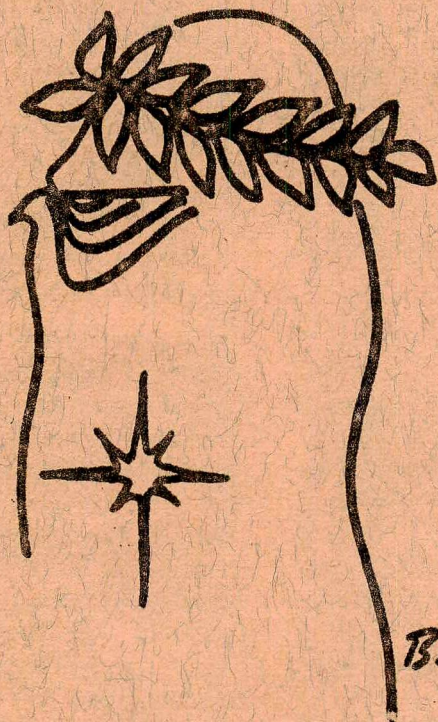
The money aspect bulks large with him, so large he could not stop to think that perhaps financial arrangements may not be in the hands of the editors (they rarely are, as any professional agent would know).

The "next to no work" bit is a reason only a slob could envy. The infuriating thing about editing a Nebula volume is precisely what this upside-downer regards as a sinecure: to wit, that the majority of the stories are pre-chosen and one cannot exercise one's own judgement. We did as much as was possible. We introduced an Afterward, which contains some general ideas as well as daring to mention that we too had published during the year. We invited publishers to send us for discussion volumes published during the year; inevitably, I suppose, the response was a bit patchy, but we did our best in the time available to us with the books sent. White says, with reference to this, that I "apologised without really apologising"; as I recall, I did not apologise because I felt there was nothing to apologise for — though naturally one is always sorry when hopes are not entirely realised. What I did was — not apologise — explain, present facts. I do so again here. Second and last time.

White's third reason for envy. Our prestige. Let's put it this way. Harry and I have earned it. I speak with neither false modesty nor boastfulness, nor with envy to-

ward other writers. We don't need to puff each other; we were both well-known before we met. Separately, we do our work and attempt to deliver of our best. You may not like Harry's work. You may not like mine. But we remain writers who continue in our chosen furrow, without placing reliance on farting and squeaking from the rooftops for a brief notoriety.

It may be opening the gate on the gadarene swine to say this, but I don't intend to enter this particular correspondence again. It wastes time when I have a novel — the novel! — to polish. Writers should stick to their professional commitments, no matter who is playing with mud in the street (but by golly, it's good to see Spinrad out there with a new broom!).



I ALSO GOT LETTERS FROM—Dean R. Koontz who writes about tabus and whose letter, along with a fine one by Lee Hoffman, will be carried over till next issue. Linda Eyster thinks PSY is great! and is confused by last issue's story, "Jonah". So am I, Linda. Lots of things I print I don't understand... Chris Walker says, "Vicious, vicious and nasty is my chief impression of PSY 26." Ted Pauls writes cryptically, "I have refined Luckner's Principle to the ultimate degree, and I tell you frankly it frightens me. This morning, I saw my face reflected in the residue of moisture on an envelope flap that had been licked by Lee Hoffman." Dwain Kaiser says, "Interesting enough the Guest of Honor at the July FunCon was Harry Harrison, words of, the easiest I could go on him would be Idol Worship, were written for the FunCon PB by Brian Aldiss. After reading the words penned by Aldiss on Harrison I wasn't sure who Aldiss was talking about, I mean, it could have been Shakes-

peare or Swift he was writing about. It was put on just a wee bit thick, I ended up finishing it almost disliking Harrison, no one is that good, that perfect, or that famous (gee, I always thought Harrison was a good stf writer, not THE SCIENCE-FICTION WRITER.....)." James Korval was shocked to find that Norman Spinrad writes for fanzines because Norman put down adolescent fans on the Les Crane show. Jim doesn't think much of BUG JACK BARRON. He feels a writer should "self-impose his own set of taboos." ((They do, Jim, but the sets don't always match.)) And later in his letter Jim says, "To a writer—as in any serious artist—there exists a small but significant drive which is sometimes referred to as "creative tension". Now, to lower it's potency—to weaken it by drugs, alcohol, or too much sex—is fatal to the artist." ((I say bunk, re the sex bit, anyway. You sound religion-washed, Jim.)) Also got letters from John D. Berry, Stephen Waller and Bob Owen...

WARHOON SAMPLER

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After despairing over the impossibility of sending a sample copy of the 64pg Warhoon 24 to all the intelligent and talented people who read Psychotic (there seem to be at least 200 I&T types appearing in Psychotic itself), the idea for this page of quotes from Wrhn 24 occurred to me. The following will give you a sense of Wrhn and you can decide whether or not to send 60¢ for a copy to Richard Bergeron, 11 E 68th St, NYC NY, 10021.
.....

HARRY WARNER, JR: The first thing to remember about anything Willis made famous is the probability that there are layers of association and significance waiting to be uncovered by anyone with knowledge of fandom and persistence. JOHN W CAMPBELL, JR: All professional authors of fiction are professional liars, who's business is making their lies plausible and convincing. BOB SHAW: Looking back on the teen-age Bob Shaw, I see him reeling back in dismay from the demanding intricacies of the engineering industry in which he found himself, yet deriving the utmost satisfaction from reading about vanVogt's production line for starships in which it took two hundred years for the first vessel to be produced but in which the subsequent ships came off the line at the rate of one every thirty seconds. JAMES BLISH: The Clarke-Kubrick motion picture is, to the best of my knowledge, the first "talking" science-fiction movie to appear without music specially composed for it. WALT WILLIS: It is curious that the mountainous labours our science fiction authors have devoted to speculation on the unknown should have produced such small mice of original thought. ROBERT A W LOWNDES: The one-life-only philosophies are not necessarily anti-intellectual, although H P Lovecraft's fiction certainly is. WILLIAM ATHELING, JR: While I understand the problems involved, I still think it ridiculous that Analog is still reviewing 1967 books in its June 1969 issue, when very few readers could possibly buy the books being reviewed. TED WHITE: I put off reading "Dangerous Visions" until most of the shouting had died down. WALTER BREEN: But here we reach one of the major criticisms leveled at "2001". HARRY WARNER, JR: The James White who came calling on the Willises that fateful August had from the nose downward a perpetually happy face, topped by eyes and forehead that looked with worried expression toward some disaster that never came. ROBERT A W LOWNDES: Which is not to demean Blish's venture into writing stories "pared down almost to the bone"; it's a legitimate way of writing, and the traps therein are those of picking the right stories for this sort of approach and making sure the knife doesn't slip. TED WHITE: I think this theory grew out of Harlan's love-hate relationship with fandom, from his anger with and need for the love of fandom, of his old peer-group -- because I can see no other justification for it. WALT WILLIS: It is only too obvious it is neither good science fiction nor good mainstream literature, and has no relevance to either. BOB SHAW: Venus I especially liked because it came in two mutually incompatible varieties -- swamp or dust-bowl -- and I felt equally at home in either. RAY NELSON: The superman need not be a hero. RAY NELSON: I greatly enjoyed Walter Breen's analysis of the recurring themes in the work of Philip K Dick. BOB SHAW: There was a time a good few years ago when all one needed for the kernel of a fanzine was a review of "Destination Moon" and a paragraph about Ed Nobel's forthcoming marriage. WALTER BREEN: I salute Clarke and Kubrick for creating, then, what must be called the first genuinely esoteric or occultist film so far put across to the public. JOHN W CAMPBELL, JR: Now most of the arguments made against "primitive psi" in Breen's discussion apply equally to intelligence. TED WHITE: The SFWA honors its own: if you died, or if you're an outstandingly Good Guy and local pet, you can count on a Nebula for anything half-way good. HARRY WARNER, JR: The absence of letter sections from these truncated reprint editions made it hard for potential new fans to find one another, and the British Isles fandom of the 1930's and early 1940's had been confined to England and Scotland, for the most part. WALT WILLIS: It is true that vanVogt was no Marcel Proust but his stories were full of the creative imagination which gives life to the genre. TERRY CARR: I must comment on your poll of the all-time Ten Best Fanzines. RAY NELSON: It says in the Bible that no man can look on the face of God and live, yet Phil's work, it seems to me, is an attempt to look on the face of God.
.....



A FOR PRIMER HEADS

When I've dropped a cap of acid of doubtful strength, I can usually tell within fifteen minutes if I'm going to trip or not—if I'm going up. About that time I become acutely conscious of the passage of saliva down my throat as I swallow. A few minutes after that, I can feel the air rushing past the lining of my throat and bronchial tubes as I breathe. When I reach this stage, I can feel myself going higher and higher with each breath. I become conscious of the pressure of my clothing on my skin, and can feel the weight of my hair pressing down gently on my skull. Shortly after this, visual effects start and the room appears to expand.

Acid doesn't have selective color effects, and it only rarely causes colors to appear as bright and intense as mescaline does. True, there are very strong visual effects of various kinds, but the effects of acid on judgement and the emotions are so strong, the visual effects blend in with other reactions. On mescaline, I get the impression the drug is making the colors brighter. On acid it's obvious the drug is working on me. On pot and to a greater extent on mescaline, I see colors. On acid, I just sort of become them.

Most of the drugs I've described so far make the senses abnormally acute, without much distortion. The same happens to me on LSD, but only when I'm first going up—during most of the trip my sense impressions are distorted by ceaselessly flowing waves of vibratory energy. On some of my acid trips, there's been an interlude of five minutes or so when I was on the way up when my hearing became fantastically acute, in some cases acute enough so I'm fairly sure I was experiencing low-level auditory hallucinations rather than increased perception of actual sounds.

Once, I remember hearing my heartbeat become louder and more distinct till it brought back a memory from early childhood—I was about three, and standing under a huge, churning, laboring washing machine. Somehow, that particular machine produced sounds which were a much louder facsimile of the sounds of the human heart. Since I don't have easy conscious access to most of my memories before about age twelve, the recollection made quite an impression on me. When I'm high on grass, I commonly hear my cats stomping loudly around the floor, but a couple of times on

acid I've heard the scrabbling legs of a cockroach as it ran up the wall. Once the ticking of a clock increased in volume till it brought to mind the old "Inner Sactum" radio show and its adaptation of Poe's "Telltale Heart". If you experience this hyper-acute hearing on acid, you'll not only distinctly hear the breathing of your companions in the room, but you might be able to hear the performer on a record breathing. This hyper-acute hearing phase doesn't occur on most of my trips, and it doesn't last long when it does—maybe that's just as well, because it's a moving experience, but a little unsettling.

As I go into the primary phase of an acid trip, my hearing starts undergoing all sorts of distortions. A common reaction is for recorded music to suddenly sound live. On the ground, or on pot or mescaline, I can always tell the difference between live and recorded music, no matter how good a sound system I'm listening to. On acid, all music sounds live, even scratchy records on my cheap stereo.

Auditory distortion under LSD can take on many forms. Sometimes music seems to deepen and thicken in tone as if someone had turned the bass control on the stereo all the way up. Other times, time distortion distorts the rhythm till it's unrecognizable. Notes often acquire a "ghost echo" as if someone in the room were playing along with the record, following the performer's every note, but a fraction of a second behind.

When I'm well into an acid trip, I find the acuteness of my hearing varies greatly from time to time—sometimes I'm nearly deaf, surrounded by a vast, soft silence. Other times, background noises are greatly magnified and can drown out nearer, louder sounds. For instance, I've heard rain drumming on the window drown out the voice of a person speaking to me, though others in the room, on the ground, could still hear him distinctly over the rain-sounds. Sound perception often becomes much more selective than it is on the ground—sounds you're straining to hear become more distinct than sounds you're trying to ignore. Sometimes exactly the opposite occurs—the creaking of the building, or the footfalls of someone passing on the sidewalk five floors below will intrude on the sounds in the room. And since the emotional effects of acid are so strong, they get tied in with the sensory distortions. For instance, I put my ear to the ground while tripping outdoors and the scrapings and stirrings of unseen soil-

creatures brought me to recognition of the Earth as a living entity. Sometimes I've heard huge, vague rumblings like permanent thunder and imagined them to be the sound of the Earth turning.

I've heard heads praise acid "because it lets you see things the way they really are instead of the way you think they are." This is a little complicated to explain in detail, but I'm going to make the effort because it may help heads learn more about the operations of their senses on future acid trips, and it may give non-heads some concrete idea of how acid affects the senses.

First, only a small part of the information transmitted to the brain by the sense organs registers consciously—the rest is edited out by the brain centers that control the senses. Second, these same brain centers compile bits of sensory information into units with a definite meaning. This is the process of recognition—we just don't see, we see images; we don't just hear, we hear sounds. When acid interferes with these processes of sensory interpretation, it's possible to learn exactly how they work, and to later put this information to work in gaining better control of the senses.

For instance, acid will make you realize that touch is the "forgotten sense" and that most people use it in an almost entirely negative manner. On the ground, about the only touch impulses that aren't edited out are warnings of one sort or another—pain, fatigue, and feelings of heat and cold. When you "feel good", you usually mean you're not feeling at all. About the only positive touch sensations we normally recognize are those related to sex. Other pleasant touch sensations are simply a feeling of relief at the removal of an unpleasant stimulus—for example, the feeling of a cool breeze on a hot face.

On acid, the editing centers function at a decreased, irregular rate, and you become aware of many touch sensa-

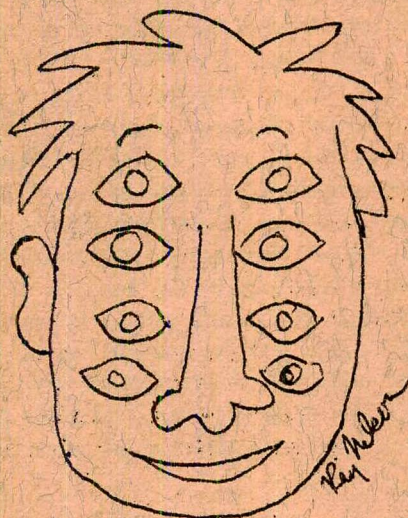
tions you normally miss—and a good many of these are positive in nature. Sometimes, you just lie back and feel touch receptors all over your body sending "all is well", "all is well", over and over. It's a groove, and you can will it to happen on the ground as well. (Most children seem to have this feeling quite frequently, but a lot of adults rarely get it.) Certain forms of yoga teach you to achieve this state at will, but once you have been through the mechanism of the process on acid, you will probably be able to do it without any special training.

Release of sensory editing on positive tactile impulses is one of the most common and striking effects the majority of heads get off acid. On many of my trips I've had very pleasurable sensations just touching a variety of objects. A lot of heads claim this sensitivity is erotic in nature, but I doubt it—since most pleasurable touch sensations on the ground are related to sex, the tendency is to believe all of them are. Maybe it's just a matter of semantics. In any case, it's a groovy feeling. True, acid heads have freaked out a lot of non-heads by appearing to be immensely enjoying stroking some object like a wool blanket or a granite paving stone, but there's nothing perverted about it.

Acid doesn't effect the visual interpretative centers enough to perceptively change editing or recognition unless you take tremendous quantities. On a 5000 mike trip, I've gotten to the point where objects were perceived as pure color and form and seeing them didn't bring to mind their names or any of the usual recognition thoughts, but I didn't find this particularly enjoyable or enlightening. In fact, the only reason it didn't lead to confusion and fear was because my emotions were as cut off from reacting to sensory stimulus as my intellect was.

Hearing, on the other hand, makes extensive use of the editing and recognition mechanisms and normal doses of acid effect these mechanisms enough to produce some striking reactions. Normal on the ground hearing is the most selective of the senses and the easiest to put under conscious control—with a little concentration most people can blot out a sound they don't want to hear or make a faint sound more audible or sort out a desired sound from background noise. Sometimes this mechanism works too well—as when a person stumbles over a word and you hear it as an entirely different word.

On acid, all the overtones and subtle individual variations in the human voice register consciously and the recognition mechanism functions much less efficiently, so it's likely that you'll have difficulty understanding speech at one time or another during trips. If you've seen the oscilloscope pattern produced by the human voice, you've seen how complex a sound it really is. On acid, you'll hear how complex it is. This is one case where the "normal" state involves more illusion and distortion of sensory impulses than the drugged state. Once you've heard how sensitive the ears really are in picking up complex sounds, you'll find yourself hearing more overtones and subtleties of sound than you did before you tripped—it's mostly a matter of knowing what's there if you concentrate on finding it.



Out of sight.

So far I've played down the visual effects of acid, although they are the most written-about sensory effects caused by this drug. I've done this because the color effects caused by other psychedelics fall into one pattern, and those caused by acid are in a class by themselves. At one time or another on acid trips, I've had visual effects similar to those of mescaline and psilocybin, but the most striking effects are entirely different.

When acid heads talk about "feeling the cosmic vibrations" they refer to a reaction that is mainly visual, though with tactile overtones, and closely tied in with emotional effects. Basically, the "vibrations" are patterns of color like a transparent mosaic superimposed on the entire field of vision. These patterns vibrate at a high rate of speed and are always flowing and changing. They are most vivid in darkness and often fade from the center of your field of vision when you focus your eyes on an object in good light, though they're still visible "out of the corner of your eye". Color vibrations are by far the commonest visual effect acid produces and one of the most impressive.

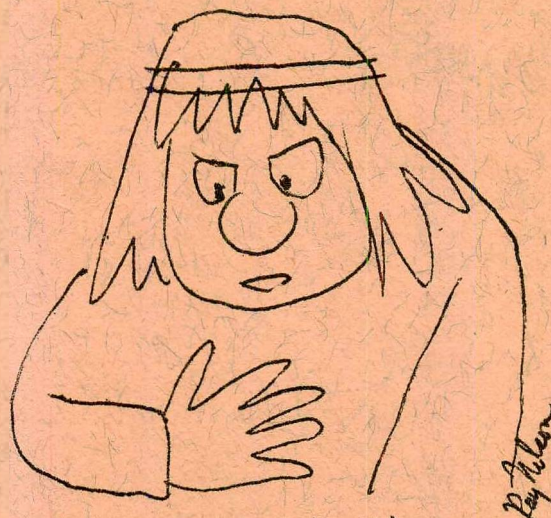
Almost everyone who has tripped has experienced them to some degree, though some heads see them much more easily and vividly than others. If you want to see color vibrations at their most intense, stare at a black or dark colored wall and let your eyes go out of focus. For best effects, light in the room should be very dim and in back of you. Closing your eyes for a while, then slowly letting them come open helps.

With me, the intensity of color vibrations varies widely from minute to minute, but only rarely are they distinct enough to interfere with vision. On large doses of acid, color vibrations merge with the objects I see instead of being merely a transparent overlay superimposed on them. Sometimes objects themselves seem to break down into vibrating masses of color. This is one of the most publicized effects of acid, but I've never experienced it myself on less than 5000 mikes.

Color vibrations qualify as hallucinations under the dictionary definition—"apparent perception of sights or sounds not actually present", but my own definition is much more strict—to me, a hallucination is an illusion of people or things real enough to fool the eye. I've had hallucinations on acid, but only on doses large enough to overwhelm my senses, emotions and intellect to the point where I barely noticed the hallucinations.

It's fairly common to feel the vibrations throughout your body, as if they were tangible waves washing through you. Objects you touch also seem to be vibrating, and sometimes sounds seem to waver and change pitch with the vibration. Sometimes I've felt like energy was draining into or out of my body through these vibrations, and I often felt they were carrying me along with them toward some unknown destination.

Exactly what does LSD do to your emotions and how does it affect the thought processes? This is where most discussions of the effects of acid break down, due partly to



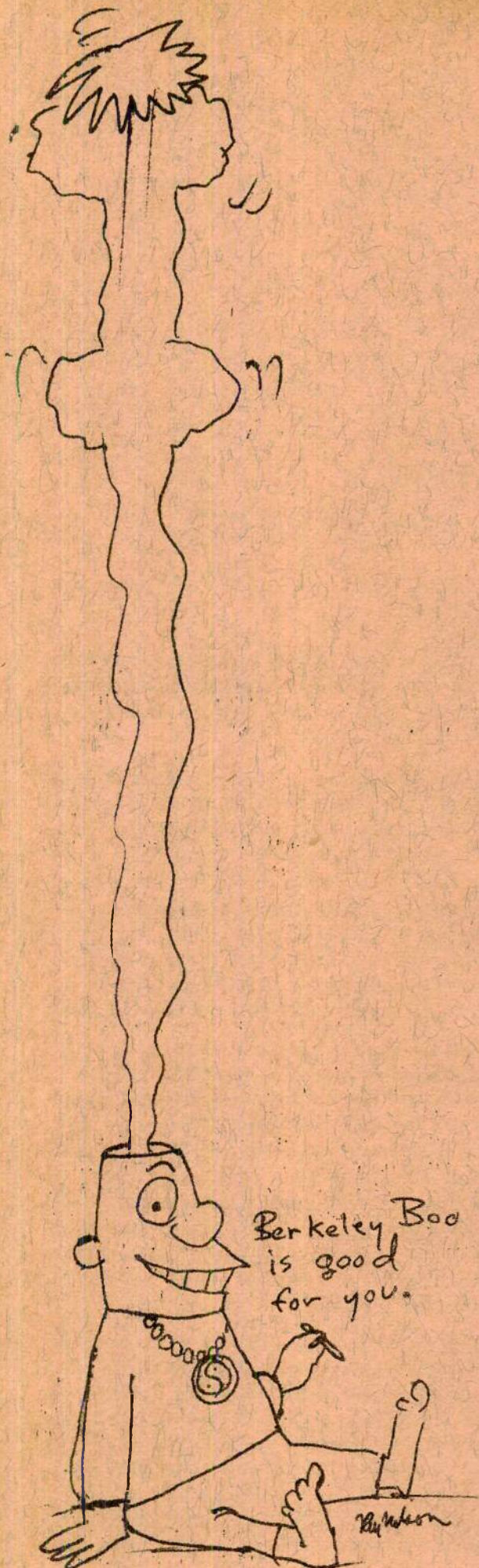
Now, whose little hand are you?

the wide variety of experiences different heads have had and partly to the sheer inadequacy of language to describe emotional reactions. All I can do is give some general descriptions.

"Emotional stability" is one of our society's prime virtues, and if we can't will ourselves to feel what we think we should feel in a given situation, the acceptable thing is to ignore our emotions and behave as reason decides is right. By the time we're grown, most of us have our emotions "trained" so they react to stimulus only along "acceptable patterns". In terms of getting along in society, this standardization of emotions is quite necessary, but it does hamper creativity to some extent. When acid releases most of the inhibitions on our emotions, the effect is mind-croggling.

Moods are many times as intense as they are on the ground, and they change completely in a matter of seconds. Most acid heads find they can achieve almost total emotional empathy with just about anything—objects, people, abstract concepts. The routine operations of the intellectual part of the mind (which isn't much affected by moderate doses of acid) have a tremendous effect on the emotions—every time you draw a conclusion or make a decision, your uninhibited emotions tell you you've discovered a Secret of the Ages. For this reason, it's dangerous to put any faith in decisions you make on acid.

Most of the dangers of an acid trip are also caused by emotional reactions—we all have fears, and acid strengthens them while decreasing the ability to control them. It also knocks out a lot of "acceptance mechanisms"—a lot of things that we don't like but can't change, we've learned to ignore. This can mean hangups, but it can also mean a lot of things there is no escape from. For instance, a lot of things necessary to our society are extremely ugly and frightening even on the ground if you haven't learned to accept them—rail-



road trains, factory machines, busy streets, even crowds of milling people. I've seen a lot of heads get very uptight about living cooped up in New York apartment buildings, and also about the ugly, uncomfortable clothes most of us wear.

Acid can help you see through a lot of small hangups, especially various forms of petty hatred, but it can also give you hangups. When you've spent most of your life learning to accept the various things that are wrong with society, then suddenly have an insight into each one of these flaws, you tend to get very uptight and start planning the total reorganization of society. And on acid, it's quite common to think you can actually do it.

Acid can show you a thousand things you've never seen before because you've trained yourself to ignore them, but I don't believe it really gives you many answers. It lets you see a lot of groovy things, and it lets you see a lot of things that are ugly, evil, useless, or just plain silly. For most people, it brings them face to face with a fact that they already know but don't react to emotionally very strongly because they've learned not to—very few of us are happy very much of the time. Most of us live lives that are more than slightly boring. We waste our time with all sorts of trivia. Most of our friends are people we don't really like. And most of our attempts to "achieve happiness" are foredoomed because we have very little idea what "happiness" is or how to even start achieving it. All we've really been doing all our lives is learning how to ignore pain. And in learning how to make unpleasant emotions less intense, we've also made the pleasant ones less vivid. Acid can show you all this, but I still don't think it can show you much you can do about it. But while you're tripping, you'll probably think you can.

Along the same lines, most of us don't really believe in much with respect to religion, politics, personal relations, etc. Most of our "beliefs" along these lines are based on reason, not emotion, and true belief is by definition an emotional process. So most people who take acid can expect to find they don't really believe in a lot of things as strongly as they've always thought they did.

These are the things that lead to outright freakouts, or if not to an immediate acute breakdown, then to other foolish things like attempts to found half-baked new religions, to "drop out of society" and found a new one, etc. Most of us have been walking around with our eyes closed all our lives, and when acid suddenly opens them, very few know what to do next.

All I'm saying, really, is that while acid doesn't give you any insight into the Ultimate Secrets, it's going to let you see a lot of things about yourself and the world you've never seen before. But you'd better wait till you're on the ground again to do any decision-making. Acid suspends conditioning, brainwashing and self-delusion. It also suspends common sense.

The best way to let an acid trip help you instead of hurting you is to use it only to observe, then draw conclusions and make decisions after you come down. You might not be able to change the world or even to make any striking, immediate

changes in your way of life, but you can always do various small things to make yourself happier. Maybe if everyone in future generations takes acid, the world will be a more different and pleasant place to live in. And maybe not. I really don't know, and in any case, there's very little one person can do about it.

I've made no attempt to describe the total "feeling" you get from an acid trip, because it's just too complex. The emotional and sensory effects all happen together, and all the various reactions change from minute to minute. Time distention is very pronounced and effects all the other reactions. Some acid trips are more intense than others, and some heads routinely get higher than others, so if you've never tripped there's no way you can tell in advance how far out you'll go. Your experience will fall somewhere within the descriptions in this article, but only experience can tell you where.

If, after reading my description of the LSD experience, you say, "I can't see why anyone would want to go through this, it sounds dangerous as hell, and you don't get enough out of it to make up for the risks." I can't say I blame you. As I've already said, if you feel apprehensive about tripping, don't. I'm not trying to talk anyone into taking acid, I'm just trying to describe the experience as fully as I can from my own first-hand knowledge. But it's still my personal belief that acid is slowly helping me teach myself to become happier, saner, and more creative.

What about really bad trips? If you start suffering acute fear or rage that doesn't pass in a few minutes, or if you get the idea you're going insane, about all you can do is abort the trip. To do this, you take either ten 50 mg niacinamide tabs, or three thorazine. If you get them down and keep them on your stomach, you'll fall asleep within about half an hour. Aside from this, there's little I can say about bad trips—I've only had one, and that was when I took 10,000 mikes by mistake. I don't even remember what happened, except I'm told I acted like some sort of violent maniac. Even then, I didn't have any permanent bad effects; I just felt depressed for about three weeks afterwards.

True, I've felt bad on trips many times, but it was always a fleeting thing. I've felt fear or anger or loneliness or confusion one minute, but the next I was feeling some more positive emotion. Observing others who were having bad reactions to acid, my best advice is to try and reduce sensory stimulus if you're feeling freaky. Bright lights, loud sounds, lots of people moving around in the room—all these things should be avoided till you're feeling better. The worst thing you can do if someone else is having a bad reaction is to make a big fuss about it.

TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT
ISSUE

SECOND SESSION

WHERE THE EDITOR CONTINUES TO RAMBLE ON AND ON AND ON

"Alright, Geis, lie down... Why is your arm hanging funny like that?"

"It isn't funny! Over 17,280 turns of that accursed clunkety-wunk machine so far, and more to go!"

"I sympathize. But you did ask for it."

"True. But next issue is for sure going to be photo-offset. I have spoken."

"I have listened. Stop cradling your arm that way and speak of other things."

"Okay. Before I forget: Philip Jose Farmer called a few days ago and asked if I had stenciled his letter yet. I had. He wanted added that he had read Burroughs' NAKED LUNCH, too, as well as the other Burroughs works mentioned."

"Noted. Anything else?"

"Umm...Jim Harmon has moved. He is now at 1255 Seward, #106, Hollywood, Calif. 90038."

"Noted. When are you—"

"Also moved is Creath Thorne to 706A Hudson Hall, Rollins Grp., Columbia, Mo. 65201."

"Now—"

"Ruth Berman now resides at 230 S. Coronado, #35, Los Angeles, Cal. 90057."

"Any MORE?"

"Can't think of any off hand...oh, John D. Berry is living with Felice Rolfe for a few days until he finds a place at or near Stanford...and Earl Evers' new address is 131 Pitt St., Apt. 8, New York, NY 10002."

"Geis, you are supposed to talk a little bit about 2001—A Space Odyssey."

"Yes. I saw it a few weeks ago. Well. The last segment—the space-time "trip" by the surviving spaceman was lovely and necessary to prepare the audience for a departure from reality and from the usual ways of indicating the passage of time in films. I thought the 17th century room-prison sequence, with its viewpoint shifts and panning to a different time was simply marvelous. The finest film concept and execution I've seen in years."

"But...?"

"But the middle segment is flawed where you wouldn't expect it to be flawed—hard science in a spaceship. The faulty antenna franizan need not have been replaced on the outside of the ship to test it. As Ted White pointed out in SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES #73, the unit could have been bench-tested until it either failed or did not fail. But this would have forced the producers and script writers to de-

vice another way for HAL to kill one of the two on-duty spacemen and get the other one away or unconscious long enough to kill the ^{crew members in} suspended animation. Maybe Clarke and Kubrick didn't spot the plot flaw, or were up against a deadline that forced them to go ahead with what they had... or couldn't afford to re-shoot that segment. That one illogicality is like a rotten spot in an otherwise near-perfect apple."

"What about the first "ape-men" segment?"

"I liked it. I was particularly impressed with the makeup done on the actors. I was convinced about 95% that those creatures were pre-men, post-apes. They acted their roles beautifully."

"You don't feel the first segment was a bit heavy-handed in symbolism?"

"Well...maybe, a touch."

"And your overall impressions?"

"2001 is an atypical film. Uneven, but lovingly done. It is a must-see for every science fiction reader. It probably is a must-see for everyone, but many people over 40 wouldn't agree."

"Anything else?"

"Not about 2001. But I received in the mail today such a fanzine!"

"You mean EXILE 4?"

"Yep. I never would have thought it possible to turn out a photo-offset crudzine...but Seth Dogramajian has done it. Amazing!"

"What did he do wrong?"

"He crammed 96 lines of type, double columned, into a half-size format. The resulting type size is so small it is too hard to read. The artwork, with the exception of Jack Gaughan's cover and interior pieces, is bad. Seth is no artist! Gilbert hasn't improved in 12 years, and Steve Coronel, while he draws a fair nude, seems to have but one string to his bow."

"The layout..."

"Is uninspired. And WHY was it necessary to abbreviate the "let. Col." heading? There was plenty of room to spell it out. Faugh!"

"You are too harsh."

"Yeah. Well, it's his money."

"Any other fanzine comments?"

"No, not off-hand. I have a few more things to say about next issue, however. Next issue of MY zine, that is."

"Go ahead."

"I have a fine Richard Bergeron cover for #28. I have a fine Jack Gaughan cover on hand for #29. I have a fine column by John D. Berry for next issue dealing with fandom. And of course I have Philip Jose Farmer's Baycon speech. It is titled REAP, and it's an important document. It is a must-read."

"You will have the usual departments?"

"Umm. I have about five people doing book reviews. I will have an editorial which will surprise a lot of fans, and I fully anticipate the letter column will be as vital and interesting as ever."

"Any last words?"

"Congratulations to all the Hugo winners." *sob*

