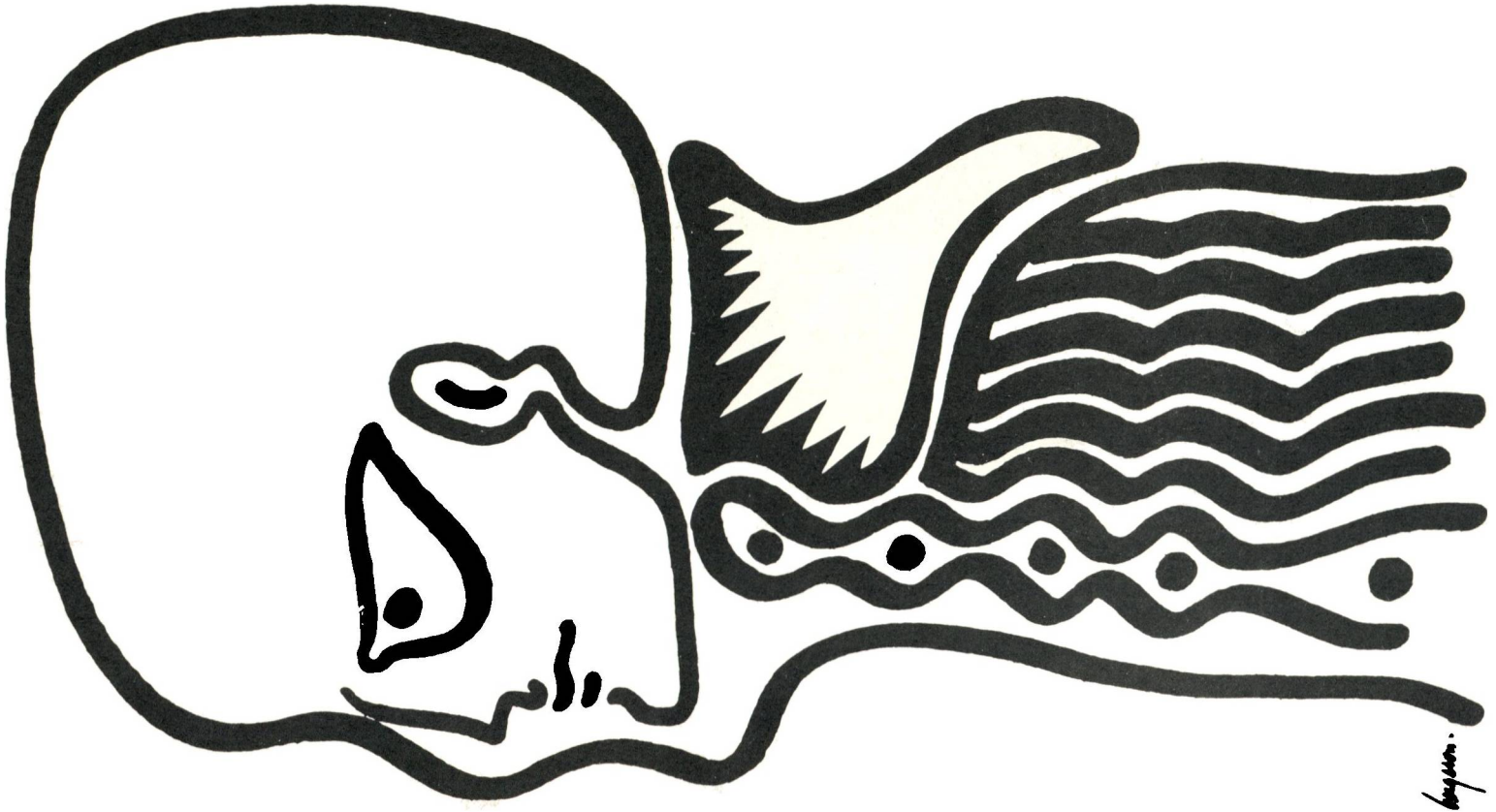
SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW 28



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28

NOVEMBER 1968

COVER BY RICHARD BERGERON

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (formerly Psychotic) is edited and published, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, by:

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...and our agent Over There is...

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SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW is an incredibly non-profit magazine devoted to science fiction and fantasy.

Dialogs

WHERE THE EDITOR TALKS TO HIMSELF...AND TALKS...AND TALKS...AND TALKS...

"Alright, Geis, what's this SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW business? Why the change in title?"

"Well, PSYCHOTIC seemed to me—"

"All the fans are muttering in their beards, you know. Even thosewho haven't grown theirs yet. They feel, and rightly so, I might add, that you have gone serious-constructive! That a joy has gone from sf fandom. That you have shown your true colors!"

"Yes, well, see—"

"It's about time you answered the question! We were all willing to make allowances last issue when you announced that you were going to change over to photo-offset to avoid all that mimeo cranking and assembling and stapling... But to suddenly change the sacred name of PSY to...to...something so mundane and formal!"

"I know, it shocks your faaanish soul."

"It is a betrayal of all we fans hold dear! It smacks of commercialism!"

"Is that worse than communism?"

"It is the Ultimate Sin!"

"Then, fear not, for SFR will probably never make a profit. I imagine it will run a nice tax loss for as long as it's published. Now, to answer your first question—"

"Bah!"

"Your mind is set against me. Nevertheless, PSYCHOTIC seems to me too much a misnomer for the magazine now. I had originally intended a small circulation personal-zine. PSYCHOTIC fits that role. But the magazine grew and grew, with a dynamics of its own, in size and circulation, and the function changed until it has become, nearly, a "little" magazine...a place for serious comment and discussion—"

"Yah, just what I said—serious constructive! No place for humor or lighthearted faanish in-group jokes!"

"—of science fiction and fantasy, as well as the worlds of sf conventions and fan and professional personalities. And, I admit I like a name that is self-explanatory. Call it a yearn for dignity—on the outside. Now—"

"Egotist! Pompous ass! Pretentious idiot!"

"—all this does not mean the policies have changed. Not a bit! The magazine is the same violent, humorous, interesting, engaging gem it has always been."

"Oh, sure! So I see around fifteen pages of book reviews!"

"Yes, that department has been expanded, as a service to authors, readers, publishers. Any other questions?"

"It isn't the same. I miss the pink fibre-tint mimeo paper...the gestefaxed artwork...the amateur aura!"

"There, there..."

"You'll never convince me this is better, Geis. NEVER!"

"But...I thought fans had open minds, could accept change, were non-conformists—"

"Sure, sure, but not when the primacy of the truly pure, amateur, mimeorgraphed fanzine is concerned. That's sacred! Deviation must be punished!"

"Nevertheless, I must go my way and do my thing."

"Bah! May all your typos be catastrophic!"

+++

"Say, Geis, this issue of your mag is kinda funny looking."

"That's because I'm re-discovering my way in the photo-offset process."

"The type—"

"Thick in some places...thin in others...is due to the use of three different ribbons in this machine. For this editorial, and other last minute finishing-up, I am using a silk litho ribbon which seems to give the sharpest copy. I imagine I'll stick with it in the future. On the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

REAP

By Philip Jose Farmer

Some time ago I mentioned to Robert Bloch that the last—and the first speech I had ever given was at the Philadelphia World Science Fiction Convention of 1953. Since my speech-making experience was so limited, I was apprehensive about delivering this speech at the Baycon, 1968. That is, I was scared stiff, worried about stage fright, etcetera.

Robert Bloch said, "You have nothing to worry about because (1) you have a captive audience which is not likely to leave, since they will want to find out who wins the Hugos, (2) you have many well-wishers among the audience, and (3) just keep telling yourself, I am Harlan Ellison, I am Harlan Ellison.

I am not Harlan Ellison, although he has many characteristics I'd like to have. Many of you have characteristics I'd like to have. But we are, for better or worse, what we are, regardless of the causes, genetics, society, the freedom of will of the individual mind, demons, deros, or what you will. I do believe, however, that many of us, without much talk among us about it, share a certain feeling. It is the feeling that anybody must possess who is not entirely selfish, or afraid to look at things in their hideousness and fatality.

I noticed this common attitude and concern toward certain subjects Friday afternoon during the programs. Almost all the speakers mentioned or stressed their concern over the crises of this moment: air and water pollution, civil rights, hypocrisy of our leaders and elders, population pressure, the impact of TV, the misery and suffering in the midst of plenty, and so on. I was gratified to hear these subjects mentioned because it meant that I was far from being alone in my deep concern about them. And the remarks of the speakers, if put together, could have formed a prelude to my speech, a warming-up for me.

Please keep this in mind because I will return to this subject.

I am going to experiment. I am going to present this speech, not in the linear, sequential, logical, and thus obsolete method, according to Marshall McLuhan. I am going to present this speech in the modern "mosaic" form. Instead of proceeding logically from point to point, developing each fully before going on to the next, I am presenting a verbal mosaic. If the mosaic effect works, there should be a participation in process by you, an involvement in depth by you.

I don't mean by this that I will try to imitate a TV set. I have no intention of pausing frequently for commercials, unless you can call pleas for humanity commercials.

During this talk, you will say to yourself, "Who does this guy think he is? A Messiah? The Second Comer?"

No, I don't think that. I have always been too uncertain, too doubtful, too flexible. And confused.

The confusion made for a negative feedback effect when I was a child; I became more confused as I grew older. When I was a child, I could not understand why I was told by my relatives and, later, my teachers, about the rightness of love and compassion and tenderness and trust and correct conduct and yet my relatives, and teachers, and, in fact, everybody, acted as if they feared and hated and despised any number of things, actions and people.

Part of this mental and emotional state originated from a conflict between my conditioning and my mind, which was inclined to fight the conditioning. That is, to try to see

things straight.

This confusion bothered me for many years, most of my life. I thought I must really be stupid, because I did not have the solid confidence, the undeviating certainty and conduct, the black-or-white-this-is-it-and-nothing-else attitude of so many.

Then I came across a statement in Paul Goodman's Growing Up Absurd, and I was enlightened. He said for me what I had been groping to say. Now I know that it is the absolutely certain man who is stupid, and that confusion is, to quote Paul Goodman, "the fertile void where surprise is possible again. We should be wise to cultivate confusion."

I am going to suggest that modern man, as shown in modern art and literature, is confused, because he has fallen into the "fertile void." This state is no cause for despair. On the contrary, the confusion means that man has become fragmentary, disparate, unwhole, but this is a necessary effect of the dying of the old and the formation of the new. And, I hope, the better. It means that it is possible for man to change into something that has never existed before; it means that he can perform the changing himself.

I'd like to quote Marshall McLuhan, whom I mentioned a minute ago. But first, I want to make my attitude towards McLuhan clear. I think he is an extremely perceptive man, perhaps a genius, whatever that word means. He has stated the nature of the past and of the present with brilliant insight. He is stimulating and seminal. And we science-fiction authors, supposed prophets, seers, crystal-ball inlookers, knowers of past, present, and future, should be ashamed of ourselves because we failed to make these analyses.

However, I don't believe all of what he says. I believe he is right about three-fourths of the time, and thus he beats Sturgeon's Law, which says that 95% of everything is crud. But McLuhan, to prove his theses, quite often strains the bowels of his mind; you can hear the grunts and groans and the result is flatulence. Despite which, he must be listened to. He is three-fourths right.

I quote three statements from him because they are relevant to science-fiction and to my thesis.

(1) "The concept of the arts as prophetic contrasts with the popular idea of them as mere self-expression. Art is, or should be, an 'early warning system.'

(2) "...I am curious to know what would happen if art were suddenly seen for what it is, namely, exact information of how to rearrange one's psyche in order to anticipate the next blow from our own extended faculties."

(3) "The artist is always engaged in writing a detailed history of the future because he is the only person aware of the nature of the present."

Keep these quotes in mind. They are part of the mosaic of this speech, and I will refer to them again.

Immanuel Kant says that dreaming is an involuntary surrealist art. That is, the unconscious mind yields strange, wonderful, and frightening images and dramas during sleep. These icons and stage-plays are also 'early warning systems'. They tell, or try to tell, the sleeper that he is disturbed, troubled, and threatened. The deeps of his psyche are boiling. Monsters gnaw at the foundations of his sanity.

Dreams are also, according to the Freudians, wishes. Even the most horrifying nightmare is the expression of a wish. Part of the dreamer loathes and rejects the nightmare, but, at the same time, part of him is neurotically gratified by the nocturnal horror.

Recent experiments suggest that dreams have a third use. They may have a mechanism which scans the events of the preceding waking hours, deciding what is or is not important and then storing the important and discharging the unimportant. Great gaps exist in our memory, and

nothing, hypnosis or drugs, can make us remember what has been wiped out.

This theory remains to be proven. But I suggest that man, as a whole, should find some social mechanism which will scan out the soul-killing traditions and compulsions that have made man's history a nightmare.

The ancient theory about dreaming was that dreams were prophetic. The best known example of this is the series of dreams which Pharaoh had and Joseph's interpretations thereof. And Dunne was the modern expounder of this, his theory being that dreams are a form of time travel and hence prophetic.

Whatever other functions dreams have, dreaming is, as Kant said, an involuntary surrealist art. And the dreamer, to make the dreams significant, to convert its matter into the energy of action, must transform the surreal into the real, act out in daytime those truths revealed at night.

Keep this in mind. The dreams must be turned into action. Otherwise, the dream is a cry for help unheard, a bright light unseen.

We science-fiction people were once content to be entertained by the dreamers of our field or content to criticize the dreamers because their dreams did or did not agree with our dreams. The dreams, by which I mean the stories published in the science-fiction field, were, from the beginning, didactic. Often, they were entertaining. And almost all tried to be prophetic. The author—the dreamer—was the divinely inspired hermit who staggered in out of the desert, after having lived on wild honey, psychedelic locusts, and tormenting celibacy for forty years or so, and proclaimed his vistas of the future to any who would hear. Usually, he had exchanged one wasteland for another, because there were few to listen and fewer who would hear him all the way through.

"It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stop'st thou me?'

.....

"He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he."

When I was a child, I was more than willing to be stopped by the ancient Mariner of the science-fiction space-seas and listen to his fabulous tale. However, much as I gloried in the old stories then on rereading some recently, I can see just where the ancient Mariner—the author of pre-1939—hung the albatross. It was around the reader's neck.

The themes were limited, although there was a certain variety within unity. Not much. Some. These themes were, however, grand ones, nothing trifling about them. Mostly, they were invasion by extra-Terrestrials (frequently Martians). Or the landing of Earthmen on an outre and viciously hostile planet or asteroid. Or invasion by a supertechnologically advanced people from the Andean mountains or the hollow bowels of Earth. Or travels via time machine. Or the awakening of a contemporary man from suspended animation after the passage of yea so many centuries or millenia. Or threatened collisions of planets and Earth. Or the blowup of the Sun, or dying of the Sun. Or super-scientists who became evil because of the Doctor-Jekyll-Mr.-Hyde-type drugs or devices.

Or, this was a favorite ad vomitum, the revolt of robots or of a superscientific superdictator who established 100% control over the entire population of Earth. Only to be overthrown by a single white Anglo-Saxon Protestant American Republican capitalist male.

Or a war in which atom bombs or biological warfare killed all but a handful. Or invasion of America by a yellow peril or a red peril. Or giant ants or evergrowing amoebae breaking loose from the laboratory in which they had been conceived by an incredibly hellish mind or an incredibly innocent mind, and threatening to overrun all of Earth until one rugged individualist invented and built, inside twelve hours, a machine which killed the ravening monsters.

These themes were used so many times, over

and over, that, after several years, even as enthusiastic and uncritical a fan as I began to roll my eyes upward in anguish.

"The wedding-guest here beat his
breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon."

Despite which, I continued to read, but I felt like detaching the albatross from around my neck and shoving its pointy beak where it would most stimulate the author.

We had a field wherein, theoretically, the writer was unlimited in choice of subject matter, wherein he had the whole cosmos to roam, or could even go outside the cosmos, wherein he could write superb prose if he wished, develop character as he wished, take any physical science or philosophical or psychological idea and explore it, and so on.

But he didn't!

Yet the writer was far from being unlimited. He avoided any sex except for the inclusion of the dummy figure of the professor's daughter or an occasional superfemale who was almost always evil. I don't think that a heroine even kissed her fiance or the man who finally won her. She would kiss her father—and God knows what Oedipean implications we could go into there—but this was about as far as it went. Perhaps the hero and the woman kissed as the story ended, and red Mars sank in the background, but this did not take place often.

There was one story which did deal with sex, which had a sexual background. This was THE SCARLET PLANET by Don Lemon, published about 1931, Science Wonder Quarterly. The story was not as specific or uninhibited as it can be in The Magazine of Fantasy & Science-Fiction, for instance, but it was much more daring than any you'll find in the pages of Analog, 1968.

The experiment in printing this type of thing, however, was the last for many years. The readers were outraged; they condemned the story for its "filth".

The readers did not mind implied rape, and if you've ever been raped by implication, you know it's a fate worse than death. The idea of the sinister sentient centaur-scorpian from Saturn abducting the heroine with copulation in its evil insectal mind was, if anything, titillating. And any form of violence, except sexual violence, was permissible, especially if it took place on a worldwide scale or had the hero kicking in the chitinous sides of the horney scorpian-man.

The only stories about a sexual revolution were those involving an actual physical political-military revolution. That is, the females had taken over the government, and the males had been reduced to appendages (although their appendages were never mentioned, of course). Our hero, usually a time traveler, is appalled by this mess. It's always a mess. No author tried to extrapolate a story in which it might be beneficial for humanity if women did take over. It just did not occur to the author that this might be a fruitful idea.

The hero pumps lost manhood back into a few males, usually by beating up a female to show the males how easy it is, and they overthrow the females and re-establish a male hierarchy, and everybody, including the women, are happy. The very few women writers of this period, from 1929 through 1939, never wrote about this subject, or, if they did, their stories were rejected.

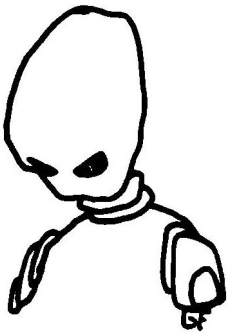
The science in the science-fiction was, usually, pseudo or pitiful or both. There was a story by Hendrik Dahl Juve, for instance, in which the hero stumbled across a group of skeletons. He suspected that the missing heroine might be one of the skeletons. To identify the female, he counted the ribs of each skeleton.

The themes of the s-f magazines then were restricted in number and range of extrapolation. This emphasis on a few themes: revolt of the machines, invasion by extra-Terrestrials or yellow perils or intelligent ants, space exploration, superdictators, mutants, supermen, brains without bodies getting mental control of people, and so on, this emphasis was significant. It showed that the editors and writers either had very limited imaginations or their imaginations were inhibited by the times in which they lived. They strove to get beyond the bounds of the present, and when they soared into the future, they took the present with them.

Of course, even the best, the boldest and most imaginative of today's writers, do that to some extent. But the writers of 1929-1939 did not question certain premises of our society. If they had, they would have found it difficult, probably impossible, to get published in any field of literature. If you questioned certain assumptions, certain motives, you were automatically denounced as a Communist or a free-thinker.

That spirit, you all know, has not died as yet.

For instance, I doubt that there was more



than one man writing before 1939, writing magazine s-f, who would have even thought of exposing the bases of our society to a critical light. Or of writing a story which extrapolated from the psychical trends of his day and showed what sort of society would evolve. Oh, he would write about the gimmicks which would develop, or the strange powers of the mutant with his ESP. But the revolutions and the movements shaking our world today were existent in definitely visible form in those days.

What were these themes which the author of 1936 did not touch, or, if he did, failed to extrapolate, to prophesy, truly?

These were mechanization, civil rights, space travel, population expansion, the failure of capitalism, communism, and socialism, the revolt of youth, and psychedelic drugs.

Mechanization is a theme which still bothers many people and a number of s-f authors. They worry about the mechanization of man, the deadening or soul-killing effect of machines upon man. In the stories of pre-1939, the machine has become sentient, self-conscious, and resentful of man and lustful for man's power. Machines revolted and enslaved man or got rid of him entirely. Or androids, artificial men, did the same thing.

Today it is mechanization under a different name, cybernetics, or cybernation, that disturbs many. By cybernation, I mean the combination of the computor with the automated, self-regulating machine. Those howling against cybernation seem to be protesting with justification. Certainly, cybernation is putting men out of work and could put many more out of work if the large industries that have refused to use cybernation were to change their minds.

However, none of the s-f writers, the Gernsbackian specialists or the mainstreamers, or, for that matter, any fiction writers between 1939 and 1960, and damned few after that, if any, saw that the mechanical age was almost over and the electrical age had already begun. Or that the mechanical and electrical were of different kind, not degree.

Now, the 1936 s-f writer described swift air travel, TV, atomic power, cybernation, and a number of things that have not yet occurred. But none, as far as I know, accurately described the change in society, in attitudes of mankind, resulting from quicker transportation and instantaneous audio-video communication. All these devices: TV, cybernated factories, airplanes, cars powered with atomic energy, etc., were things of wonder. But the wonder stopped with the description. No one predicted that sexual mores, financial systems, the entire Zeitgeist, would take the strange shapes they did as the result of cars, planes, supermarkets, gas furnaces, antibiotics, radio, and especially TV. Nobody made any attempt to extrapolate into psychic terms the effect of the physical things around them or soon to be.

We can thank John W. Campbell, Jr. because he originated the idea of stories which would reflect the impact of technology on minds and habits. But, again, the stories resulting from this renaissance in s-f did not really deal with the dangerous issues of the day, except for the blazingly obvious one of the effects of the atomic bomb. And most of the atom bomb stories were about the mutations—monsters—resulting from radiation. There were exceptions, notably Sturgeon's THUNDER AND ROSES. But most of them seem silly and, indeed, blind when read nowadays.

Fallout. Nobody foresaw the effects of the fallout of education.

Which brings me to the next theme: civil rights.

Nobody tried, in 1936, to extrapolate what the effects of a more affluent and educated Negro, and his increasing numbers and social consciousness, and consequent eruption of long-buried hate, would be. For one thing, most of the s-f authors really believed in Negro inferiority, in his "natural" place at the bottom of society. Yet the findings of the anthropologists in regard to race were available; and even a modicum of the imagination employed in dreaming up a new gimmick would have shown them what a Negro felt.

Any writer who could have even half disengaged himself from his society's attitudes for a little while could have seen that someday there would be many educated Negroes, that the Negro was bound to strike for equality when he got strength enough. Every repressed group rebels as soon as it has some educated leaders

and the pressure is released a little by the oppressors. I call your attention to the 1775 American Revolution and the 1789 French Revolution for two out of many examples.

The s-f writers, editors, publishers, and readers of that day all believed in equality, of course, as guaranteed by the Constitution, in which they believed even more strongly than in equality. But the definition of equality and its applications, ah, my friends, strange, wondrous, and sometimes disgusting are the ways of the minds of men.

I'm not really blaming the writers of those days too much. If some did write a story which extrapolated the Negro movement, I apologize. Because, if it had been submitted, it would have been rejected. And, to be fair, some authors wrote stories which were disguised tracts for tolerance, usually aimed at a plea for understanding between Earthman and some strange form of extra-Terrestrial life. The author may have intended for the reader to substitute the Negro for the Martian in his mind or to see the analogy. But any society in which a true integration of Negro and white, of any other race and white, occurred could not have been published. Any s-f editor would have rejected a story in which miscegenation was a taken-for-granted part of a future society.

I was talking about the s-f field between 1929-1939, but now I will tell you what happened in 1952. I outlined a novel about a Negro underground movement, a science fiction novel, to the editor of a prominent science-fiction magazine, probably the greatest editor, in terms of influence, that the field has so far known.

This story, which would take place around 1965 or maybe 1970, just to be safe and not rush things, would describe in vivid detail the oppression and hatred American Negroes really felt, riots, repressions, attacks by militants, and so forth.

The editor halted my enthusiastic telling of my idea by saying that Negroes were inferior, that they'd made no contribution whatsoever to civilization, except possibly magic, that segregation should be rigidly maintained, because the goal of evolution was the differentiation of the human species into races (for some unknown but no doubt worthy purpose). For these reasons, he could not even consider my story.

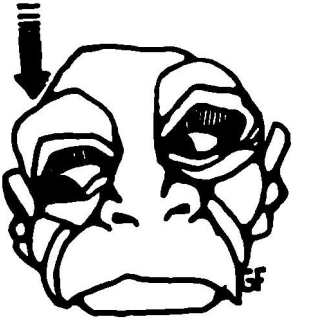
Besides, he was sure that almost all his readers agreed with his view of the rightness of segregation.

I was shocked, and I argued with my ex-hero. No use. The mills of the gods grind exceedingly weak compared to the grinding of the mind of this editor. Later, I told myself, well, maybe I'm the one who's prejudiced. I'll study his arguments, his thesis. Perhaps he's right. So I reviewed all the scientific evidence about the relative abilities and potentialities of the races of man. And I still believe that segregation is an evil and I believe that the white in this country has cruelly and evilly oppressed the Negro. And, even if the Negro were inferior to the white as a race, and he isn't, even if he were, segregation would be evil.

I mention this incident to make the point that even in a field supposedly distinguished by very intelligent, open-minded, and forward thinking people, prejudice flourishes. This editor has always been characterized by his insistence on freedom from dogmatism in science and open-mindedness on subjects which many dismiss as "crank". I've always admired this attitude in him. But my conversation with him, and my reading of his essays on the subject, convinced me that he had perverted his powerful intellect to justify what his conditioned reflexes told him. The rationalizations about the purposes of evolution were evidences of a superb mind's efforts to validate emotions that were exactly those of an Alabama redneck.

It's a strange thing. At that time, as late as 1952, there were many thousands of science-fiction readers willing to accept blue-skinned, six-tentacled, four-eyed, ten-legged Martians as brothers. But only one in fifty, if that, would have accepted a Negro family living next door. This average of acceptance, however, would have been much higher than the average in the non-science-fiction field.

Our minds tell us that we are free, open, fair, loving, and really, all told, very decent persons.



Our conditioned reflexes tell us otherwise. Jump the hoop, they say, and we jump—body and mind.

Space travel. Most stories in those days were about space travel. But the space travel visualized was nothing like what actually occurred. As a romanticist and an individualist, I prefer the Gernsbackian, the E.E. Smithian, and Bradburian space travel to the reality. The point is, that the writers did not envision the effects of space projects, such as satellites which form instantaneous TV transmission for the entire world, which warn of storms, detect plant diseases, forest fires, and mineral masses, locate lost ships, find buried cities. They did depict satellites as spies and as platforms for launching missiles and, I don't doubt, for dropping bombs or even hand grenades. The writers did not predict that the greatest results from space travels would be the side-benefits, the discovery of principles and products unthought-of and immensely valuable, the rewards of serendipity.

The function of the spaceship as a warvessel was the most used, and this was natural. The stories were aimed at young audiences, and the young, in those days at least, liked stories about war. The bloodier and more holocausty, the better.

As for the population explosion, a number of stories depicted a crowded world. But I don't believe that the use of contraceptives or temporary mass sterilization by drugs in drinking water was mentioned. Or that there was any description of opposition by religious groups to contraceptive devices. And, generally, the writer solved the population problem with an atomic war and knocked off everybody except a few who swore that they had learned their lesson and never again would the Earth be jammed with human beings. You want to bet?

There were some stories in which an authoritarian society had sterilized or poisoned off undesirables and then reared people on scientific (mainly genetic) principles. Some stories showed societies that were highly desirable (according to the author's lights), but there was always a maverick trying to overthrow the Utopia for his evil ends. Or, if the society was a cruel one, there was always a maverick trying to overthrow the society for his good ends.

The rugged individualist, the rebel, was struggling against a future society which differed from the society of 1932. The hero wanted to make the society revert to the values of 1932—with the exception of the depression, of course. And, of course, the society would retain all the wondrous gadgets which 1932 lacked. The hero never stopped to think that these gadgets had shaped the society forever out of the possibility of reverting to the social values of 1932, that these gadgets had helped form men whose minds would forever be alien to his.

There were also many stories about the conquest of men by aliens from outer space. I suggest that these stories were forms of the same stories in which the machine conquered man. The alien, the hideous, the unhuman, the soulless, can be a Martian as well as a machine. In fact, the Martian was a sort of animated machine which originated on another planet.

But the writers did not have their fingers on the pulse of the future, or, indeed, on their own present. Their theme was already old. Because, in fact, man had already become mechanical.

You become what you observe, Nietzsche said, and man had been looking at the machine since the 18th century. And, before that, he had been looking at the greatest machines—the state and the church.

So man had long been mechanical.

And the s-f writers of 1932 wrote many stories of what I call THE SON OF CRANKSHAFT type story. When they tried to describe the men of the future, they were looking into a mirror, not a crystal ball. The 1932 writer failed to portray any future-man who was as alien and weird as the 18-year old of 1968 A.D. This youth is the result of the electrical, not the mechanical, technology. He is the result of

everything-acting-at-once, everything-seen-at-once, of TV as a baby-sitter, of demand feeding, of seeing events as they happen.

Unknowing of the lateness of their discovery—indeed, the obsoleteness—the writers and readers of s-f were scared about the threat of the machine. The machine—or the Martian in another context—would enslave mankind! Beware the machine! Beware the Martian!

Where was the cry: Beware the economic system?

The world had been felled by the crash of the stock market, surely the most fantastic gimmick ever thought up by man, too fantastic to have been conceived by any s-f writer. The stock market, more complicated than any mad-scientist invention, more intricate and essentially nonteleological than any Rube Goldberg device, had collapsed. And the entire world, not just half of it, was in misery and want. And eventually the world, the financial and economic system, began to recover. When war came. War was the father and midwife of economic recovery. And war—plus space projects—has been the doctor, pharmacist, and midwife since. Earth does depend upon Mars—Mars, the god of war. And the system has been kept alive by artificially maintained employment for a long time.

I want to be fair, so I will say that I am not condemning the s-f writers for failures of prophesy. I gloried in the stories, I would have been much poorer without them. And one of the main functions of science-fiction is the intellectual—and emotional—joy gotten from extrapolating a concept. It is the joy that a dolphin must feel as it gambols on the waves. Indeed, the s-f writer and reader is a sort of intellectual dolphin playing in the sea of ideas. And so the majority of stories are for entertainment.

But, if the arts are considered as prophetic, as "early warning systems," then science-fiction, which is presumably a literary art, must be examined for its successes and failures as a prophet.

The revolt of youth. No writers extrapolated the effects of almost instantaneous communication and of the flood of publications pointing out the silliness, savagery, and hypocrisy of their elders. None, as I said, pointed out that a generation would arise which would have the TV set as a baby-sitter, would have been raised on demand feeding, would be accustomed to money, cars, etc.

Not, you understand, that I am saying these are the only reasons or that there are not plenty of protesting youths who were not raised in poverty. But it is significant that so many youths, who seem to have so much, have reacted violently against their affluence or dropped out.

And psychedelic drugs. There were a number of stories in which exotic drugs were invented by an evil genius or by a kindly mad scientist, from whom the villain stole the drugs. These drugs might have peculiar internal effects, but the big thing about the drug was its use in controlling people. Control. People feared being taken over, their minds seized and made zombie-like.

The fear of the mechanical—again.

Nothing was written about possible uses of drugs to change personalities, except as a means of control. There were no stories suggesting that whole groups, amateurs, would try to restructure their psyches by hit or miss methods. Or that union with God, or seeming union with God, would become a direct result of swallowing a pill.

And it did not occur to the writers that far more insidious drugs had already been used, were being used, had been used from the beginning. These drugs, the really numbing, enslaving, zombie-making, Yes-Doctor-Svengali-I-am-your-slave drugs were the unconscious assumptions of the society in which they had been born. As ubiquitous and penetrating as the air they breathed, these assumptions said that (1) the earth is poor, goods must be scarce, (2) he who controls the goods may force others to pay his price or to die, (3) it's a natural law that "Ye shall have the poor always with ye", (4) the white man's burden is heavy but worth it, considering the profits, (5) there will always be plenty of clean air, plenty of water, plenty of grass and trees, plenty of arable land, plenty of minerals, never mind the poisons spewing out or the lands and cities made hideous, that

will be taken care of some day, and (6) the many people in the madhouse, the many who should be in it, cannot possibly have anything to do with contradictory or hypocritical mores.

The civil rights crisis is only one of many man is facing. Even more important than this one, because it threatens the survival of all of us, is one which I will describe only briefly.

Do you know that insecticides have been found in the phytoplankton of the oceans?

Why do I mention insecticides and phytoplankton?

Because the combination of the two means a shortage of oxygen in our air.

Phytoplankton are, mainly, minute plant organisms in the sea. They provide small fish with food, the small fish in turn provide larger fish, and so on up the scale of size. The phytoplankton, together with animal plankton, form the broad base of sea life. Without plankton, a good part of fish life dies.

Phytoplankton also provide 50% or more of the oxygen in our atmosphere. Yet, the phytoplankton is being poisoned, killed off, by insecticides originally sprayed on plants on the land.

What happens if this insecticide continues to be used? What happens when our air is cut off? Do we have to find ourselves gasping for breath before we start to do anything about it?

There are many things I could talk about, but it would require a book to present everything fully. I plan to write such a book.

At this moment I'll go on to my next thesis. I'll speak briefly of science-fiction and neoteny.

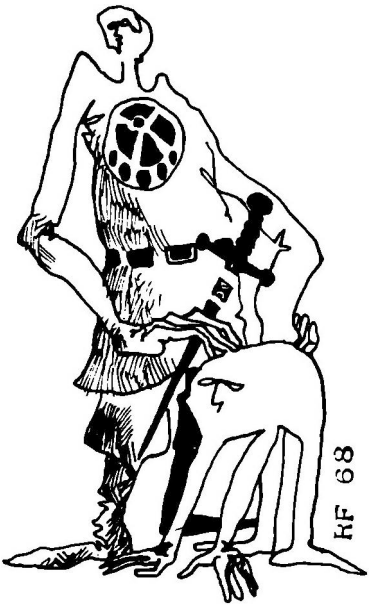
Neoteny is an originally biological term "referring to the condition of having the period of immaturity indefinitely prolonged, as in the axolotl." The axolotl is a salamander which lives all its life in a larval stage.

Man and the dog have been described as being in a state of neoteny.

Man is a foetalized ape. The dog is a foetal wolf. Man has the characteristics of a foetal ape, the relative hairlessness, the big head, generalized features, etcetera, and the dog has the characteristics of the unborn wolf. Man also has the characteristics of the juvenile ape, just as the dog has the psychic and physical characteristics of the wolf puppy.

Now, you know what science-fiction is. Science-fiction, if it is an art, according to McLuhan's definition, would be precise advance knowledge of how to cope with the psychic and social consequences of the next technology. Science-fiction would be exact information of how to rearrange one's psyche in order to anticipate the next blow from our own extended faculties. (By extended faculties, McLuhan means our technologies, which he considers as extensions of our nervous systems. By the next blow, he means the impact with the changing technology and the numbness resulting from it.)

If s-f is an art, then the s-f writer is engaged in writing a detailed history of the future because, being an artist, he is, according to McLuhan, the only person aware of the nature of the present.



As I've tried to show, the writer of 1929-1939 did not know what was going on in his present. Perhaps this was because the field of s-f was then too neotenous, too foetal.

Science-fiction has been a foetalized literature, or, I may say, juvenile in spirit. By juvenile I mean immature, playful, adaptable, sensitive in some areas and calloused in others, essentially optimistic but suffering at times from Weltschmerz, romantic, flighty, impatient with tradition, looking to the future, bumbling but willing to learn, gauche, eager to establish a group identity yet crying against conformity, hateful and loving, fickle and loyal, impulsive.

It had, and still has, the distinguishing characteristic of the juvenile, which is a potentiality for growth, for improvement. It is not, like adulthood, fixed or fossilized.

But there are adults and there are adults. Some adults, though they gain certain adult characteristics, still retain a neoteny.

Science-fiction has shown signs of becoming adult. A wave is sweeping through it. I am not talking of the so-called New Wave of writing. The wave I speak of——the indication that we are putting the larval stage behind us——is a growing concern for the world as it now is and as it will be in the next twenty years. It is a concern for the injustices, the oppressions, the miseries and madnesses, the hypocrisies, the savageries and stupidities, and the physical fouling and poisoning of this world.

Some people in the science-fiction field have gotten out into the streets, among them, where the action is, and stood up, or sat down, to protest against the abominations and desolations of the spirit and body. I know that Kris and Lil Neville, and Harlan Ellison, have done so, and if there are others I do not mention, please do not feel slighted.

Also, a number of us have protested in our stories and in private speech, but we did not get out there where the sun and the blood were, carry signs, and run the gauntlet of police billies and redneck shotguns.

Most of us—I among them—were, I suspect, too busy just trying to make a living and take care of the chores and family duties, or too timorous, or too inhibited.

(Let me pause to make clear that, when I speak of demonstrating, I refer to demonstrations in the civil rights movements. I am against the Vietnam War, but I will not pour blood on selective service files or try to persuade youths to dodge the draft or desert the services. I'm too old-fashioned for that; I'd feel like a traitor.)

Besides the reasons I've given for not demonstrating, I am by nature not an activist or very gregarious. Crowds either depress me or unnerve me. When I see the streets jammed with human beings, I think of the old stories about invasion by giant insects, and I think that the insects have already taken over, but subtly. We have become the insects.

But I've always felt somewhat guilty because I was not demonstrating in public—with attendant danger to myself—against what I did not mind denouncing in print or in intramural dialog. But talk is cheap. Action can be costly.

And so, to my next thesis.

I wrote an afterword to a story of mine, RIDERS OF THE PURPLE WAGE, in which I spoke of THE TRIPLE REVOLUTION document. This was originally a letter sent in 1964 by The Ad Hoc Committee on The Triple Revolution, of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara, California, to President Johnson.

To be brief, the document said that the world was in a hell of a mess. If the policies suggested in the document were not adopted, the nation would be thrown into an unprecedented economic and social disorder. The document listed the atom bomb and biological warfare threats, the worldwide civil rights revolution, and the effects of cybernation as the chief culprits in the situation. Its main theme, however, was the disasterous effect of cybernation as it operated in the present economic system. This system, on which capitalism and communism and socialism are founded, is the economy of scarcity. Its basic philosophy is that goods are naturally few and that the would-be consumer must pay for goods or go without. This is the basis of the capitalist system, which makes and distributes goods primarily for profit, not for use. The system has had its ups and downs, and only the blind would maintain that it is not a shaky structure. Think of, among many examples, of the 1929 stock market crash and the recent gold crisis. The economy of scarcity functions like the internal combustion motor which is fouling our air, that is, at about 30% efficiency, top efficiency, and quite often between 11% to 20%.

A permanently depressed class has been developing in the U.S.. In fact, fourth-generation welfare recipients are being born as I speak. Each year, the permanently depressed class gets larger.

I don't intend to give you an economics lecture. Most of my statements and their proofs would take far too much time. But I believe that the facts warrant my statements, warrant the overthrow of the economy of scarcity in favor of the economy of abundance. As I said, I intend to write a book about this. I intend to do more than this, as you will soon hear.

It is the thesis of THE TRIPLE REVOLUTION document that goods do not have to be scarce. All the minerals we need are present, and fully cybernated factories could turn out more than enough goods for everybody. This is not a fantastic statement; we have the techniques

and knowledge to bring about the economy of abundance.

Under this economy of abundance, we could have free, and good, housing, free food and medicine, free medical care, a lifelong free education. In fact, everything would be free. Money would become obsolete. Men and women would not have to work, if they did not want to. The only necessary work would be in the fields of medicine, teaching, scientific and engineering research, the arts, the building crafts, and various personal services. Education would be directed towards instilling the ideals of community service in the young. There would be no lack of helping hands.

The transitional period would take a long time—perhaps 40 years—and the work would be enormous. In fact, so many people would be required, capitalism would flourish as never before—although briefly. It would go out in a burst of glory.

And the communistic and socialistic systems would follow soon after because they would have to do so.

I've been thinking, reading, and studying about this for three years. I've talked to at least a hundred people, almost all of whom had arguments, many heated, against the idea. The arguments have, in the end, helped me overcome some of my own doubts and objections, because, after discussing them, I suddenly saw how the problem could be solved. And I also understood, during many of these discussions, that the objector was arguing from a religious viewpoint, not a rational or even economic viewpoint. To him, the economy of scarcity was sacred.

I admit that such a system as I—and many others propose will not bring about Utopia. Far from it. I quote Paul Goodman. "A society cannot have decided all possibilities beforehand and have structured them...Doing the forbidden is a normal function of growth." And "...all value requires an open system allowing for surprise, novelty, and growth. A closed system cannot make itself valuable. It must become routine and devoted merely to self-perpetuation."

But I maintain—and many others, too—that, under the present economy of scarcity, the situation will get worse, and nothing in our present so-called planned economy, our jerry-built planned economy of the space program and the war program, will help except momentarily. Even the poverty programs, the talked-about tearing down of all slums and rebuilding of cities, will be nothing but band-aids. As long as the present system is maintained, the situation will get worse. The permanently unemployed class will get larger, the jobs for the unskilled and semiskilled will get fewer, opportunities for the Negro and the poor white will lessen just as the Negro and poor white are in a position to demand them, riots and city burning will increase, the burden on the tax payer will become staggering as his group shrinks and the welfare group expands. Also, capitalism has shown that it isn't going to solve the problem of air and water pollution and is afraid to deal with the population explosion. Economic forces hold back the action needed to cleanse our land and water.

Do you want the world to die in its own poisons—mental and physical?

Do you want the mismanagement of our nation to continue?

I was struck by Harlan Ellison's speech Friday when he called Mayor Daley an evil old man and said, in effect, that our country is being run by men who are hogs, selfish and destructive as hogs. He is right.

Now, do you want our democracy to be, as Joyce said, "the impovernment of the booble by the bauble for the bubble?"

Do you want our children, and our grandchildren, to inherit a stinking, suffering, perhaps doomed, world? Doomed to choke in its own waste products—mental, emotional, and certainly physical?

I don't think you do, and that is why I am talking about THE TRIPLE REVOLUTION document. And why I have talked about the s-f field, its failures, its neoteny, its maturing, its increasing concern for the world of now and of the next 20 years. All these concern YOU because you are science-fictioneers.

THE TRIPLE REVOLUTION document maintains that, for the first time, man has the means to shape his own society into a disirable form. Instead of drifting along, a slave to circumstance, he can restructure his economy, his politics, his psychology. With an economy of abundance, he has the ability to research and treat mental illness because research won't be limited by budgets. And, of course, the restructuring and the education of the young will be cutting off the roots of mental illness, preventing mental illness instead of trying only to cure it.

The chief goal of education in the beginning will be to keep those now wearing diapers from being permanently twisted, psychically

twisted, by the assumptions of our present society.

As Coleridge said, "To have citizens, you must first have produced men."

Many of you are thinking, "Impossible! The man's an idealistic fool!"

Perhaps. But I am thinking that we must do something, that the present system has failed, that this failure points to chaos, disorder, suffering, want, which the world has always known, and also to, perhaps, the death of the world, of its air. I am thinking that it will be far better to start working now for a genuinely radical system before things get so bad that we act out of desperation and panic and suddenly become fascist.

No conscious planning to restructure man's society and to permit his psyche to grow with love should omit the tribute to the dark, the irrational, forces of man.

I quote William Barrett. "...the whole man is not whole without such unpleasant things as death, anxiety, guilt, fear and trembling, and despair, even though the journalists and the populace have shown what they think of these things by labeling any philosophy that looks at such aspects of human life as gloomy or merely a mood of despair." And, speaking of the darker sides of life, which he calls the furies, "in their own way as holy as the rest. Indeed, without them there would be no experience of the holy at all."

Thus, man must take no steps to learn, and to shape, his own nature without recognition of the dark forces and of the fact that, if we did not have them, we would be truly mechanical.

But, and I quote, "...a man is not free if he cannot see where he is going, even if he has a gun to help him get there."

The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions has been studying the economy of abundance and restructuring of society in desireable directions. As near as I can determine, its activities have been mainly theoretical. No plan for immediate action or even action in the next few years has been issued from it.

But action is demanded——NOW!

An effective group for dissemination of the principles of the economy of abundance and directing of the future, and for bringing these about through action, must be organized. Action has to start NOW.

So, I have decided to quit being a quietist, a passive person. Though it is contrary to my nature, which wants a sedate, peaceful life, I have decided that, for the sake of my grand-daughter, for the sake of all the innocents, of all the infants, to become active, to do something.

With this in mind, and knowing full well that I have to struggle not only against my own nature but against a hostile and reactionary world, one which would rather die in its physical and mental problems rather than admit that the poison exists, I propose the founding of the organization which will carry out the action needed.

This organization will be called REAP. R-E-A-P.

REAP means that mankind must reap the products of his technology and wisdom, and soon, or he will reap the whirlwind of his greed and stupidity.

The letters of REAP could stand for Rights, Economy of Abundance, Peace...or...Rich Earth And People...or whatever is appropriate.

REAP should become a legally established organ, and, if the response to my proposal is satisfactory, I will contact a lawyer to put REAP upon a nonprofit-organization basis.

You—the science fiction people—have always dreamed of the future. You have been too neotenic to do much more than dream, and this was good, because a long period of juvenility means a more intelligent adult. Now, you are "the fertile void" mentioned earlier. You are ready to convert dreaming into action. And you have a long-standing—if loose-knit—effectively operating group which contains many compassionate and idealistic people.

You showed just a hint of your potentiality when you organized to keep STAR TREK from cancellation. If you can do this for a TV show, what won't you do, what can't you do, to shape a better world?

I am inviting you to join REAP when its principles and its programs have been definitely formulated and published.

When REAP becomes established, then REAP will offer its services to the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions as an activist auxiliary. If the Center should accept our offer, then we advance with the Center. If it rejects our offer, then we find other channels.

You and I—we—must not just speculate about the future. We must inseminate the future We must bring the future to term. We must deliver the future!

Otherwise, the future becomes still-born!

Ladies and gentlemen, shapers of the future —perhaps—reapers of wisdom, science, and love —perhaps—I thank you.

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DIALOG continued from page 3

other hand, thick,black printing may be more readable in the final, reduced form. We shall see."

"this is the experimental issue, hah?"

"Yup. So is the amount of reduction. If this is too small to read with ease (and I'd like reader-feedback on this), I'll narrow the columns a bit more and reduce the reduction."

"Which means more pages to make up the wordage."

"Ahh...yes. Keep those subscriptions coming in, folks!"

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"I see in Charlie Brown's bi-weekly newszine, LOCUS #11, that Ted White has been engaged as the managing editor for AMAZING and FANTASTIC."

"Yep. A good thing. Now he'll be able to test his theories of sf magazine circulation and reader involvement."

"It says here, 'Ted will be reintroducing the letter column in both magazines and will be running fan features. There will be fanzine reviews in AMAZING and fan articles (some reprints) in FANTASTIC.'"

"I'm looking forward to the first Ted White edited issues in three or four months."

"Yes. Ahhh...the Good Old Days are soon to be reborn!"

+++

BITS AND PIECES

NEXT ISSUE — Norman Spinrad's review of John Brunner's Stand On Zanzibar in his column, "New Worlds Coming."

+++

NEXT ISSUE will feature Ted White's last Trenchant Bludgeon column for us for a while. Pro work demands he cut back on his fan writing.

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BUT, to fill in, Banks Mebane will start a prozine comment column, as yet untitled. He writes: "My idea for the SFR column: I'd treat only a few stories, perhaps trying to put each in perspective with the rest of the writer's work or with a trend in sf; occasionally I'd discuss wider topics using specific recent stories as examples. Now and then I'd really rip into somebody."

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Column

AS THE POST-CONVENTION BLUES settle slowly over the BArea landscape, nestling into fannish hearts in Berkeley, San Francisco, and Palo Alto, My thoughts turn once again to PSYCHOTIC. This bastion of trufannishness in the twilit world beckons me...another deadline approaches...and Dick Geis waits patiently for the ancient prophesy to be fulfilled. "And next issue the columns of John Berry and Ted White," said Geis. I have no power over Ted's column—that must be left to older and wiser ghods—but I take typer in hand now to effect the works that Fate has set for me.

This fine old column has not been too regular, in relation to that disgusting regularity of Geis's. I mean, in the middle of the summer, with notices of a Change of Address for Dick and rumors in YANDRO that he was moving east, and his having said that PSY would be late—while I was relaxing gracefully in New York and wasting gobs of time—he goes out and with no concern for his columnists at all cold-bloodedly publishes another issue of his sterling fanzine. And now if I don't arise at 7:00 each morning and put in an eight hour day writing for him, he's liable to do it again. And right after a convention, too.

How cruel.

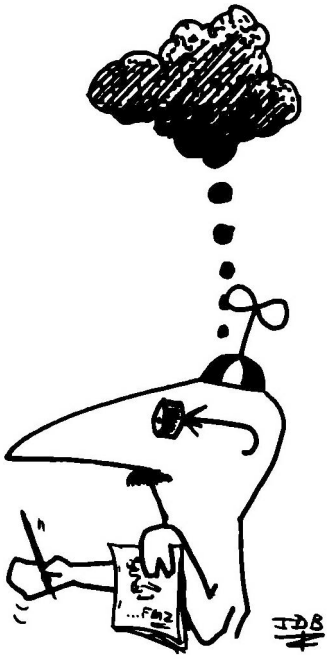
But I suppose you people are expecting me to discourse knowledgebly again on some aspect of Fandom Today. Presumptuous of you, I must say. Well, I do have a few silver coins to toss to the crowds, even though it isn't coronation day.

* * *

"THE FUGGHEAD FACTOR" Yes sir, behind that alliterative title hides an entirely new concept of fannish behavior patterns. It's another label for an area of human behavior; we keep labeling different areas until finally, maybe, we'll have a coherent picture of ourselves. Fat chance, ahaha. Anyway, we have a problem. It seems that every time we have our friends properly identified as Good Guys, when they are irrevocably placed on our side of the fence, they go out and do something fuggheaded. This sort of human inconsistency is very frustrating to the orderly mind. Some of you will simply steel yourselves and intensely ignore the glimpses you get of clay feet, but others of us are just plain bothered by it. So I've propounded a theory. Everybody, but <u>everybody</u>, has some element of fuggheadedness em-

By

John D. Berry



bedded in him. This is the Fugghead Factor, and it operates without exception. Now some of us are so filled with fuggheadedness that very little else is apparent. Others of us are so devoid of it that we appear to be pristine Good Guys. But every once in a while the Factor shows up, and about all we can do is acknowledge that statistical probability is catching up again. Then there are the people who seem equally divided between fuggheadedness and normality —or "unfuggheadedness" in the vulgar—and they present a definite problem.

All fans are fugghead, but some fans are more fugghead than others.

* * *

AFTER TWO NATIONAL political conventions going awry, it is vastly encouraging to see that at least the World Science Fiction Convention can do things right. Amid thousands of falling balloons and massive floor demonstrations, the delegates at the Baycon selected St. Louis as the site of the 1969 worldcon.

This happy news makes us think ahead and wonder...what will the St. Louiscon be like? Well, as we have been touting for the past several months of conbidding, Chairman Ray Fisher is a highly competent man to run a worldcon. I think the St. Louiscon will be an extremely successful convention, incorporating the good ideas and innovations of the last couple of years and abandoning the rejects. It would seem that the two year jinx of having each con committee do something which arouses the wrath of half of fandom will be broken; I can't honestly think of anything that fandom could get mad at the St. Louis committee about. They are not the types to make foolish blunders or antagonize everybody for miles around. The major additions to the Hugo awards structure have been made now, as the Baycon made both the new Best Novella award and the Best Fan Writer and Best Fan Artist awards permanent; and the St. Louis people pulled no such bidding tricks as the Baycon a year before.

In short, who could get mad at them? And the St. Louiscon shows every sign of being an excellent convention. The con committee is made up of fannish fans who are also perfectly at home in confandom and the other aspects of the con game. They know how to put on a good party, as anybody who has been the recipient of their hospitality at a bidding party knows. At the Baycon, when some of us were suggesting to Ray, only half-jokingly, that he put on a boring program so that none of us would feel guilty about missing it, he replied that his object was to do both at the same time: good parties and an interesting program.

The Baycon was the first worldcon, I believe, to feature rock bands as part of the entertainment. It seemed a shocking thing to some fans that the committee should spend its money on the convention itself (i.e., rock bands and light shows at the masquerade), rather than passing it all on to worthy charities (such as the next worldcon). (Actually I don't mean to say that the Baycon spent all their money; they provided fine entertainment and will have plenty of cash to pass on.) The St. Louiscon will most likely also provide rock entertainment, although I wonder if perhaps they will separate it from a function like the masquerade, because it did bug a small but vocal minority.

Next year also will bring up the subject of foreign worldcons and the proposal of a national convention when the worldcon is out of the United States. From talking with Elliot Shorter, one of the members of the committee set up to study this problem, I have become convinced that there is a lot more to this than just the question of a national convention. There is the question of just what a worldcon is, or should be, and of how U.S. fandom is going to conduct

itself now that fandoms in the rest of the world are coming into their own. Evidently the direction of future relations between U.S. and foreign fandoms and the future of the worldcon will hinge to a great extent on what happens with Heidelberg in 1970. I suspect that the questions being deliberated by that committee will split the whole worldcon scene wide open. Fandom is definitely entering an entirely new era.

St. Louis in '69. Yes, indeed.

* * *

IT'S TIME FOR Striking Out Against Injustice, or something like that. Now, one fine evening at the Baycon I spent some hours sitting around a table in a huge, darkened room crowded with all those 1500 fans who attended, bored almost to the point of gibbering and rolling on the floor, while various strange people did obscure things in the limelight somewhere nearby. No, it wasn't the banquet; that was another fiasco entirely, and it, at least, was enlivened by Bob Silverberg's amusing commentary.

What I refer to is the costume masquerade. I am at an utter loss to understand why this piece of musty tradition attracts virtually everybody at the conventions. I stayed in the room for two reasons: one, there were one or two good rock bands (plus one poor one); two, because everyone else of interest was either there or milling around just outside. There weren't any good parties to go off to even if I had wanted to—and I did. The masquerade seems to draw all convention members to it, much like the proverbial batch of lemmings diving off a cliff into the proverbial sea, proverbially.

Strike a blow for insurgentism! Why should we attend these boring parades of costumed fools when we can inspect the few outfits worth considering in the first five minutes of milling about? Oh, sure, I know there are lots of people who enjoy the whole affair, and that is their problem. But, for instance, afterward Boyd Raeburn was declaiming mightily against the masquerade and specifically the "presentations" that certain participants cannot be talked out of giving. Yet Boyd was sitting around the same table much of the time.

I've been assured that there have been successful masquerades, particularly at some past Westercons, but in my estimation the best masquerade is the shortest and most efficient. I'm not sure of St. Louis's plans for next year's costume thing, but if I'm at the con it will take one helluva lot of enticement to make me stay in that room for more than fifteen minutes.

* * *

DESPITE LEN BAILES'S REMARKS in SHANGRI L' AFFAIRES 74, the fanzine scene is vastly superior today to what it was, say, one year ago. Of the four fanzines that I would rate as the best appearing, two were non-existent a year ago, and only one was as good then as it is now. (That is of course LIGHTHOUSE, which hasn't had an issue since a year ago, but it's still very much alive despite its leisurely schedule.)

The other one that was around a year ago is QUIP. A year ago, Q was a mediocre fanzine that produced some good material and had never quite succeeded in attaining the top quality that its editors wished. But with the last two issues, nos. 8 and 9, QUIP has improved so fast and so far that it must rank as the best faaanish fanzine around, and one of the top four genzines.

All the factors of the "QUIP Gestalt" that never quite came together properly before have finally gelled to produce an outstanding fanzine, which attracts some of the best writing currently being done in the faaanish vein.

The other two top fanzines are both retreads. The first is of course PSYCHOTIC, these very pages that you are reading now. PSY has managed to reflect nicely the essential bent of fandom today: that is, a combination of fannishness and new developments in science fiction. The fannish renaissance has been building for some time, and it is not unexpected. The stfnal concern, however, probably began with the running fight over the "New Wave" but has landslid its way into a general interest in science fiction and the new vitality that stf seems to have

found. A great deal of this discussion centers around Harlan Ellison, although sometimes he is not the major concern of the debate. Much of the development of these twin blades of modern fandom has taken place outside of PSYCHOTIC, but with its lettercolumn and its aura of focal-pointedness, PSY has managed to reflect it all quite well.

The fourth top fanzine is WARHOON. When I wrote my column in PSY 25 about the revival of WRHN, it was done entirely with the information that Bergeron sent me. I had not seen a copy, either old or new. Now there have been two issues of the new WARHOON, and I can safely say that nobody could ever leave it off their list of best fmz. The sheer quality of writing by Walt Willis, Bob Shaw, Harry Warner, and Bergeron himself over-shadows any of the mediocre fanzines that have been acclaimed as "best fanzine" by default in recent years.

This is not a list in order; I would find it very difficult indeed to attempt to rank these four fmz. They are all fanzines to be watched, and read, for the renaissance of this fandom has not yet reached its peak. It has only begun.

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DIALOG continued from page 18

AND, Al Snider will provoke some Los Angeles fans with "Push-Pull: Clique-Clique or Lazy Days In Old L.A."

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I hope to have another A Voice From The Styx column from Harlan Ellison, but he is currently busy working on a film script at MGM, so we shall have to wait and see.

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SIMILARLY, I can only hope John D. Berry will have time to do his column.

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PRO NEWS

Hank Stine, in a phone conversation, claimed some credit for the psi plot of Larry Niven's A Gift From Earth in an unofficial collaboration. Incidental information: the book was originally titled The Bleeding Hearts.

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Doubleday will publish Jack Vance's Emphyrio in June, will release the second book in his TSCHAI cycle in January. He is currently working on the third book.

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Norman Spinrad's Bug Jack Barron will be published simultaneously in April: Walker (hardcover) and Avon (softcover).

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Dean Koontz , 4181-E King George Dr., Harrisburg, Pa. 17109, has, in two weeks, sold a story to GALAXY, sold a story to F&SF, had very encouraging comment on two books...

...and is organizing a Library SF Review project for the benefit of SFWA members. It will be strictly a review magazine; reviews by sf pros; distributed to librarians for their guidance in selecting sf-fantasy, to pros for their files and egoboo, and to fans for their files and entertainment. Fan subscriptions are $4 for six issues; pro subs are $3.50 for six. It will be photo-offset.

The Library SF Review project has no connection with SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW.

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The Third Generation is the tentative title of a projected sf anthology being put together by David Gerrold. The emphasis will by on stories by writers of "the newest wave."

For particulars write to David Gerrold, 13615 Debby St., Van Nuys, Calif. 91401.

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Peggy Swenson loves Ted Pauls

Blast Off With BARBARELLA

A MOVIE REVIEW BY LEO P. KELLEY

From the moment the movie begins, you know you're in for something special. Her name, like the name of the movie, is Barbarella. What is that thing up there? Oh, it's an astronaut in the cabin of a spaceship (which has floor-to-ceiling fur walls), fully suited and helmeted, rolling and floating in free fall. So far so good. But it gets better. The astronaut removes a glove. Slowly. Sensuously. Such a slender hand for an astronaut! The second glove comes off and drifts away. Now you know something's happening. The space suit slowly—oh, so slowly—comes apart, piece by clumsy piece. That's no astronaut, you tell yourself. Why, that's Barbarella of the frothy mane and—look! By God, she's doing the science fiction strip! Right down to her bare you-know-what. And if you haven't already blasted off, buster, get ready, because you will.

The President of Earth calls Barbarella. His face appears on an oval screen.

"Wait," says Barbarella, "I'll slip something on."

"Don't bother," answers the President of Earth with barely a leer and proceeds to tell Barbarella that Durand Durand, an astronaut from Earth has disappeared after landing on Tau Ceti and that it is up to Barbarella to find him. Why? Because he has the Positronic Ray, a most ultimate weapon that can destroy whole worlds if it falls into the wrong hands. He may be a prisoner on Tau Ceti.

So Barbarella splits in her space ship for Tau Ceti. She runs into a magnetic storm and crashes on Tau Ceti.

From this moment on, adventure piles on adventure. Bright, gaudy images fill the screen. Sex rears its beautiful head—over and over again.

One of the most striking scenes in the movie comes early on. It occurs right after the crash on Tau Ceti. Twin girls—children—appear and capture Barbarella and take her to the burned-out hulk of what was once Durand Durand's space ship. Here she meets other children—and their mechanical dolls. Barby dolls? Barby and the dolls? The dolls, cutesy little cutups that they are, have steel fangs in their tiny mouths and they attack Barbarella. It's a brilliant scene. Move over, Dracula! There is poor Barbarella tied to two poles with the ghastly children sweetly snickering as the dolls inch forward toward all that lush female flesh—click, chomp, clang—and they bite and bite and poor Barbarella bleeds very photogenically.

The dolls as props are horrifying in their design and deadliness. Everything about them is right.

Barbarella is grateful to the man who saves her from the terrible toys and the children. "What can I do for you in return," she innocently asks.

"You can make love to me," he replies matter-of-factly.

Barbarella quickly learns that the men on Tau Ceti are hopelessly primitive. On Earth everyone takes an exaltation pill, touches fingertips and—that's it. Palm to palm instead of cheek to cheek. Tau Ceti's men are obviously behind the times. They still do it in the old way. So what's a girl to do under the circumstances? You guessed it and Barbarella does it. Lying on fur rugs. While The Glitterhouse provides the music. "Down, down, down. You drag me down."

Later, Barbarella heads for the city of Sogo. But once again her space ships conks out and she crashes into the Labyrinth. Here she meets the blind angel, Pygar, whose wings are undamaged but who has lost the will to fly since being blinded and imprisoned in the Labyrinth by the Black Queen, alias the Great Tyrant. The leader of the inhabitants of the Labyrinth, Professor Ping, explains that Pygar was imprisoned here because of his innocence. (Later, as the Black Queen straddles the unresisting Pygar and asks him to make love to her, he will tell her with only a trace of indignation, "An angel doesn't make love. An angel is love.")

The city of Sogo, Ping says, exists on Evil and expels anyone who is not Evil. Those who are not Evil are banished to the Labyrinth. Pygar can fly if he really wants to, Ping insists.

"Where do you live?" Barbarella asks Pygar.

Pygar takes Barbarella to his nest (literal-

ly) and , after doing it to her and making the feathers fly (literally), he regains the will to fly and Barbarella recovers from her ecstacy to find him soaring happily and , presumably, hornily overhead.

Sex is where it's at for Barbarella. Sex with Dildano, the leader of a revolution against Sogo, who can't make anything work right including his secret passages. Sex with Pygar, her freaky feathered friend. She soon decides that, "Some of the old fashioned ways are best."

The movie, despite being something of a Gallic put-on that works on several levels—sex, science fiction and psychoanalysis, to mention a few—created in this reviewer a true and valid sense of wonder. The movie has, for example, an ice sled to end all ice sleds. It has the terrible tots and their toys refered to above. It has hints of perversion that are enough to send anyone with an unchained id into a temporary tailspin. It has Buck Rogers' style battles in the sky where Barbarella, carried aloft by the dynamic (aerodynamic?) Pygar, blasts the Black Guards and their patrol ships right out of the sky. It has the corniest plot since Little Women—at least in science fiction terms. But the wonder of it all is that it all works wonderfully. The movie makes one laugh, think and enjoy.

In other words, it succeeds in doing exactly what good satire should do.

The movie is chock full of sly hints concerning sex in its many morbid forms. It lets you pick your perversion—or at least spot it. There are scenes right out of a twenty-first century Marquis de Sade:

A girl, bound and helpless, sways upright in a palace room while another girl laconically brings a flaming torch to her toes, away, back again, away. Two men recline nearby, watching with obvious pleasure.

Voluptuous girls lounge about, smoking a Turkish water pipe. But this is a water pipe with a difference. It has an enormous glass bowl half-filled with water in which a near nude young man writhes and caverts. Barbarella is offered the pipe. She asks what it is. "Essence of man," answers her dreamy companion.

The leader of the revolution wears leather garments; chains form an interesting part of the lower half of his costume.

The Black Queen tries hard to seduce Barbarella, her "pretty, pretty."

The movie is a delightful montage of images. A superb put-on without a really nasty put-down of anyone or anything. At least, not too much of a put-down. Come to think of it, it's more of a turn-on.

Barbarella's space ship has a huge rendering of a painting by Georges Seurat—La Grande Jatte. She is subjected to torture by a pleasure machine, that sexual fantasy to end all sexual fantasies. But the machine gives out before Barbarella does! It literally blows a fuse and burns itself out. So much for pleasure machines. Long Live Barbarella!

Oh, yes, she finally does find Durand Durand. And she escapes from the Black Queen's infamous Chamber of Dreams even though the invisible key (!) to the Chamber has been stolen from her. The Positronic Ray, in the hands of a demented enemy, destroys the city of Sogo. Zonk! Bam! Zowie!

Pygar saves Barbarella—and the Black Queen—in the proverbial nick of time. Barbarella, somewhat chagrined, wants to know why Pygar saved the evil bitch after what she had done to him. (The Black Queen, in one scene, has Pygar pinioned against a wall. At Barbarella's demand, she orders, "Decrucify him!"

"An angel has no memory," Pygar replies, soaring sightless into the sky, Barbarella in one arm, the Black Queen in the other.

But we movie-goers have memories. All the better to remember BARBARELLA!

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FAN NEWS

Howard DeVore announces: "The Michigan chapter of the SECRET MASTERS OF FANDOM is undergoing a reorganization."

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Ed Reed (668 Westover Rd., Stamford, Conn., 06902) intends to publish a fanzine in French. It will feature reprints.

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A PRIMER FOR HEADS

PART FIVE

By **Earl Evers**

Several different drugs have been marketed as "STP" and I don't recommend any of them. The "real" STP is a higher amphetamine with chemical similarities to mescaline and its "legitimate" use is as a war agent: the military has been experimenting with it for several years in their search for a drug which will render an enemy temporarily insane and incapable of resistance. From my own experience with STP, I'd say the stuff makes a much better weapon of war than it does a psychedelic drug.

The STP high comes on rather slowly and gradually, but it just keep on building till you literally lose contact with reality. Instead of distorting the senses as acid does, STP seems to knock them out entirely until all you're left with are your own dreams and fantasies. It unlocks portions of your memory track at random, and most of the people who've taken it also claim to have experienced memories from past lives or various mystical glimpses into the history of the race.

On STP, almost anyone will experience the sort of vivid delusions usually associated with severe forms of psychosis—"walking and talking with God", the illusion (or maybe reality) of being totally telepathic and able to read the minds of everyone around, astral projection, various forms of precognition, etc. At one point on my STP trip, I seemed to be floating down the middle of a street about ten feet off the ground and minus my body. I was drifting along at about twice normal walking pace and no one seemed to see me. Later on during the same trip, I was back in the room again, but lying about two feet below the ceiling. I can't recall that particular incident without laughing, because I not only imagined myself to be levitating, but I'd carried the mattress up there with me, too! All this can be groovy if your sanity is strong enough to hold up under it. A lot of STP trips actually exceed the average conception of the "ultimate" in hallucinations, and if you have any psychotic tendencies at all (and who doesn't), I don't see how an experience like this can help but aggravate them.

I've heard that an "average" STP trip lasts 72 hours. My one trip lasted about 24 hours with about two more days spent in shuddering, shivering paranoid limbo. I literally cowered in a room, trembling at every footfall outside the door, and afraid to get up and see what was going on. I've never had a fear reaction like this on any other drug, and while I don't think the experience hurt me permanently, it was bad enough so I've never felt the slightest inclination to try STP again. And my experience wasn't at all unusual—I've heard that 60% of all heads who've taken STP have had a bad enough trip so they were afraid to take another one.

STP has so far been much more a drug of fad and legend than LSD. When it first hit the market, there was a lot of publicity about how STP was an entirely unknown drug, invented by underground chemists and as yet undiscovered by the straight world. I took this with a grain of salt, mostly because there are a lot more professionals than amateurs searching for new drugs and other potentially useful organic chemicals, and the orthodox chemists have everything in their favor regarding equipment and access to materials. So I don't doubt the FDA's word when they say that STP was discovered several years ago and news of it was suppressed because of its properties as a potential military weapon.

The second legend was that STP is "the next step beyond LSD." As far as I can tell, STP is headed in an entirely different direction than acid. I wouldn't call it a "mind-expander" at all—it seems to stir up everything in your mind, subconscious, racial memories, body-consciousness, and all, and dish it up into your consciousness. STP isn't a physically messy drug

like DMT, but I think it has the same effect on a mental level. If anything deserves the name "mind-distorting drug" STP is it.

A third rumor I keep hearing is that STP leaves you permanently high to some extent, and that after a few STP trips you can stop taking drugs entirely, having no further need of them. As far as I know , you come down from an STP trip just as completely as you come down from an acid trip, except that STP doesn't (as far as I know) lodge in the tissues for later release the way acid often does. Of course the experiences you have while tripping remain in your memory, and will work some changes on your outlook, but this isn't being high, it's only remembering what you learned while high. The only reason a lot of heads stop taking drugs for several weeks or months after an STP trip is because they feel too disoriented and mentally confused to take the risk. Most of the people I've talked to who've taken STP didn't think the experience was at all good—they were mostly proud that they'd come through the ordeal without serious hurt, but pretty dubious about the value of such an experience.

Remember when they used to ask "Can you pass the acid test?" The idea that an acid trip or an STP trip is some sort of an initiation or test of courage and strength of will is one of the most dangerous drug legends I know. It's only another form of Chicken or Russian Roulette, but a lot of otherwise groovy people go around talking about it. If you're the sort who thinks taking some enormous, unnecessary risk and then bragging about it is a groovy thing to do, then you're a perfect candidate for an STP trip. But if you aren't, I really hope you've got sense enough to stay the hell away from the stuff.

A lot of the "STP" on the market isn't STP at all but but a concentrated form of Belladonna extract. This produces very vivid visual hallucinations, but it leaves you sick for several days afterwards, and in general is just as harmful and dangerous as unprocessed Belladonna. It's probably less dangerous than real STP, but I still don't recommend it, even though I rather enjoyed my own three trips on it.

A final note on STP—I've heard from several different sources that you can kill yourself if you try to abort a bad STP trip with Thorazine or any other tranquilizer, so I wouldn't recommend trying it. I've seen people try to abort an STP trip with niacinamide, and while it didn't produce any ill effects, it didn't abort the trip either. So if you're foolish enough to turn on to STP in the first place, you'll just have to sweat it out. I know of nothing that will bring you down.

• • •

COCAINE and the OPIATES

I've never been able to figure out why anyone would want to take any of these drugs. The opiates relax you and they have strong euphoric properties, but there's nothing about the effects that even begin to make up for the risks of physical addiction.

• • •

SPEED

The various amphetamines are the real "problem drugs" of the current drug fad. They're dangerous as hell—habitforming, damaging to the nervous system and mind if frequenrly used, and physically tiring in any dosage—but the effects are groovy enough to tempt a lot of heads to try them and to keep using them.

First of all, speed increases energy and ambition and the will to work and produce. That's why so many successful artists and writers and musicians are A-heads. Amphetamine is also one of the strongest euphorics I know of, and it always sends me into a state of wild elation when I take it no matter how bad I feel before. So speed actually does have a few things going for it. It also has quite a few things going against it.

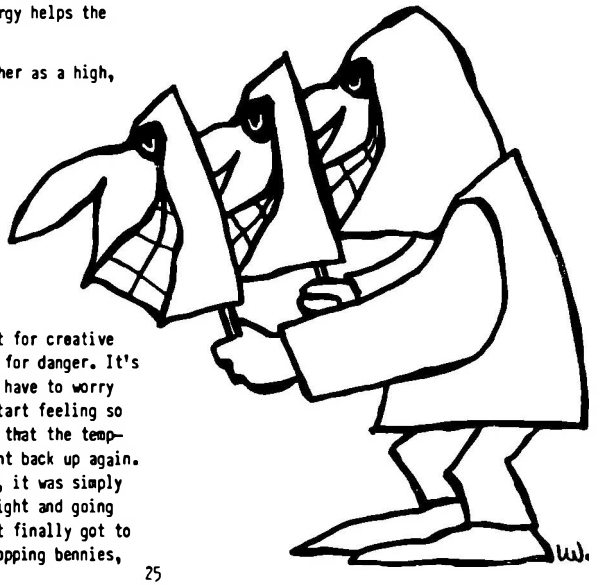
For one thing, it kills appetite. If you're strung out on speed, you can count on losing weight steadily till you either kick the stuff or look like an Aushwitz victim. And of course

all that extra energy you feel on speed has to come from somewhere—mainly from your body's energy reserves, and eventually from the cannibalization of muscle tissue. Put these two factors together, and you can easily see the dangers in speed—you tend to burn up energy without replacing it, and this is true whether you use speed in large doses or small, rarely or frequently. All this really means is that you can count on a letdown and a period of extreme fatigue each and every time you turn on to speed.

The effects of speed cover a wide range, depending on the dosage and the duration of use. It doesn't matter which of the amphetamines you take—they vary only slightly from one drug to another. For instance, it's just as easy to get strung out dropping pills as it is from shooting or sniffing pure crystal. Methadrine is actually no stronger in either its good or bad effects as benzedrine, it's just that meth is usually sold in concentrated form, so when you score a nickel or dime of meth, you're getting a lot more actual amphetamine than when you get five or ten dollars worth of pills.

A lot of heads take small quantities of speed to enhance the effects of other drugs. This is a groove, especially with pot and hash and other drugs that tend to make you sleepy—the speed gives you extra energy to stay awake and enjoy your high. Speed combined with acid also increases the energy level of the trip and usually makes for a happier time as well, due to the euphoric effects. But this can also lead to a more severe bad trip-if you're headed in that direction anyway—the extra energy helps the whole trip to be worse.

Taking speed by itself, either as a high,



or to get temporarily spaced-out for creative purposes is when you're heading for danger. It's not even physical addiction you have to worry about, it's just the idea you start feeling so bad when you start to come down that the temptation is very strong to go right back up again. The first time I got strung out, it was simply because I was taking speed at night and going to school during the day, and it finally got to the point where if I stopped dropping bennies, I'd have to crawl away and crash for a couple of days and miss a lot of classes, so I went ahead and let myself get strung out.

If you use speed continuously for ten days or two weeks, you probably won't be physically addicted yet, but you'll be strung out in the mental sense. By this time, being spaced out on speed, just floating along and having about twice as much energy as anyone else will seem like the normal state.

• • •

Aside from pot, all the drugs I've described in this five part article are dangerous to one degree or another. I've tried to not play down either the dangers or the good effects, but I still think turning on requires a certain amount of mature judgement. I've tried to describe the drug experience as I've been through it, and I'm assuming throughout that whoever reads it is capable of making his own decisions.

I'd like to leave you with one thought—taking LSD is nothing to enter into lightly. It might not have a major effect on your view of life, but then again it might. It's changed lots of lives and it's going to change lots more. So I'd say the decision to trip is as important as a decision to drop out of school or stay in, or pick a career or enlist in the Armed Service.

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BOOK REVIEWS

EARL EVERS
RICHARD DELAP
BILL GLASS
RICHARD GEIS

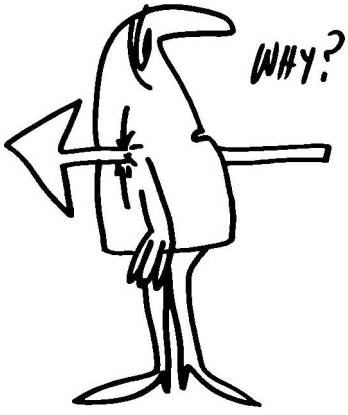
BLACK EASTER By James Blish—Doubleday, $3.95

This is the best pure fantasy I've seen in a long time. It's a long way from being a great book, but it held my interest right through and even gave me a few chills.

Black Easter is the third of Blish's trilogy "After Such Knowledge" which includes Doctor Mirabilis and A Case of Conscience and is easily the best of the three. The theme, of course, is black magic as it would be practiced if it were actually possible to call up demons to do the magician's bidding. As Blish says in his introduction about previous black magic fiction, "I have never seen one which dealt with what real sorcery actually had to be like if it existed, although all the grimoires are explicit about the matter."

Blish says his source material is "the writing and actual working manuals of practicing magicians working in the Christian tradition from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries, from the Ars Magna ... to the grimoires themselves." "All of the book mentioned in the text actually exist; there are no 'Necronomicons'..."

As far as I can tell, he's extracted a fairly logical and consistant body of magic lore from various sources and used that as his fantasy element, fitting what he considers the most logical alternative into his system when he comes across one of the numerous contradictions in the literature. The resulting demonology and sorcery isn't particularly plausible, if only because the magical literature itself contains some of the weirdest fantasy the human mind has come up with yet. (Remember, magicians have had maybe a thousand years longer to think of crazy ideas than sf writers.) But Blish still manages to come up with a pretty believable background —at least his magic is detailed and specific enough to be a major factor in the plot instead of being vague and shadowy as is the sorcery in most fantasies. In fact, the magic takes such a prominent part the story is almost an "idea as hero" story, cardboard characters and all.



Black Easter is a short book, only 165 pages, but it's more solid than most fantasies in that just about every paragraph is concerned with magic and the advancement of the plot. The story itself isn't particularly strong—a black magician working for a corrupt industrialist calls up demons to commit sundry murders including that of the Governor of California, a white magician monk of the "Order of Mont Alba" (Does this order exist? I've never heard of it, but Blish says all his references exist. Maybe he meant only his references for the black magic. I've certainly never heard of a Catholic order that receives special dispensation from the Pope to practice magic...even white magic.) who can do very little to oppose them because of a mysterious "Covenant", seemingly between the Catholic Church and black magicians, or maybe between the Heavenly and Infernal Powers themselves. So there's no real conflict in the book—the white magician is there as an observer and never does much except argue with the Theron Ware, the black magician. But the book gets along fine without major conflict except the underlying conflict between the forces of Good and the Forces of Evil, and suspense is maintained throughout.

The story develops and carries its interest almost completely through the numerous detailed dramatizations of spells and the characters' arguments about magic. The "arcane lore", descriptions of demons, Blish's interpretations of the workings of magic compiled from his various sources give the book most of its appeal because the characters are neither well developed nor well motivated and the plot events seem to occur more to detail the workings of magic than for any self-consistent reason. But for all this the book is well worth reading, especially for its ending.

I'll never look at a "God Is Dead" button again without thinking of Black Easter.

—Earl Evers

THE TWO-TIMERS By Bob Shaw—Ace H-79, 60¢

The publisher's note mentions that this is Mr. Shaw's third novel. I read the previous Night Walk (Banner Books) and enjoyed it (tho from what I've read of others' reactions I shouldn't have), and I've no idea what the second novel was.

In the present book the author's fluid style and simple but effective descriptions remain strong—such a shame that the plot turns out to be a sudsy, unconvincing sf-mystery that is strictly Hollywood-hack, a two-character drama that through a science-fictional plot twist involves three and, eventually (as well as detrimentally), four characters.

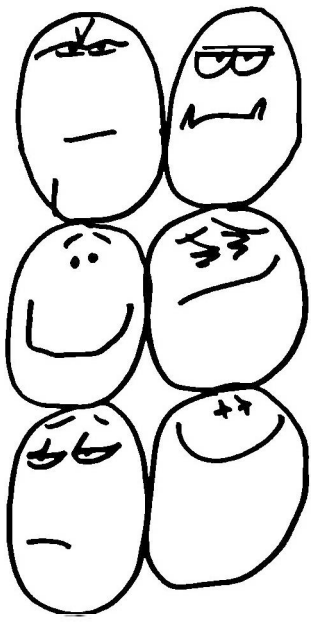
The year is 1981, the two characters are John and Kate Breton, who after an eleven-year marriage find their already crumbling relationship dealt a backhand blow, Jack Breton, appears abruptly on the scene. It seems Jack has made the crossing from a parallel world (where his wife Kate has been murdered) to claim John's wife as his own, his reasoning being that the parallel world exists because of him and is therefore subject to his desires. Mr. Shaw proceeds to fill page after page with empty dawdling over Kate's reactions to the "new" husband, John's confusion over the situation, and Jack's monomaniac clutter of schemes to erase John from the picture and win Kate. The situation is further burdened with the introduction of Detective Convery who is convinced that there is something decidedly "fishy" about the Bretons and for years has been longing to prove that John once tried to murder his wife. The author never seems really sure just how he wants to handle the story, and the plot has a stop-and-start feel. One can almost hear the author musing "...and what would read good here?"

The surface remains glittery and slick, making the story quick and easy to read, but one strongly feels a lack of interest in the plight of the characters, none of whom are appealing or, sadly, interesting. And the annoying jumbles of incident thrown in with ever-increasing frequency seem to have no point other than to make the reader feel that the denouement must be something spectacular. It isn't...just more of the same contrived and silly plotting that has preceded, and involving a trite introduction to the previously mentioned fourth character. It's a feather of a book that, according to the cover quote from Harlan Ellison, "Knocked me cold: painfully good." I wonder what he'd say if he were hit with something really solid?

—Richard Delap

THE TWO TIMERS By Bob Shaw—Ace H-79, 60¢.

I have wondered why Terry Carr's line of Ace Specials hasn't been getting more play in the fan press as a Good Thing. For each of the last nine months a Special has come out, all beautifully packaged with Dillons's paintings, op designs, and a tasteful selection of laudatory quotes (from critics on the reprints, from



pros like Delany, Ellison, and Zelazny on the originals). And, though there have been a few weak ones, there hasn't been a clunker in the bunch.

The last two that I've seen, Bob Shaw's original, THE TWO TIMERS and D.G. Compton's SYNTHAJOY (a reprint from England) were both exceptional books. The better of the two is Shaw's.

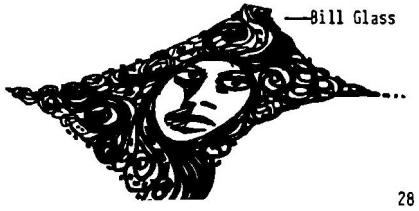
The Two Timers begins very slowly, very subdued, very underplayed Anglic, mired in the mind of John Breton sitting with his wife and her two bore friends in an evening of solid amber. You wander knee deep through immobile prose, wondering what Lester del Rey, Harlan Ellison, and Keith Laumer found so exceptional about the book, and what ever prompted Terry Carr to buy it. Then, very quietly, on page 14, the gaff is set in deep and tight:

> It had been nine years earlier, to the month, that a police cruiser had found Kate wandering in the darkness of 50th Avenue, with flecks of human brain tissue spattered across her face...

Shaw's story is one of a very strange relationship and the changing shades of love. John Breton is bored with his wife. Their marriage is a sterile plate of social culture. Then Jack Breton shows up to claim the wife he loves. She was killed by a homicidal maniac nine years before. Jack Breton (using a mutated migraine headache) develops time travel to kill the assailant, creating another time track—the track where John Breton has lived with growing uncomfort the last nine years with his miraculously-rescued-from-a-rapist wife. Jack Breton, for his nine years of abstinance and labor, now demands Kate Breton for his prize, once John Breton has gracefully bowed out of the scene.

As I said, it is a very finely delineated story of human relationships. Which J. Breton loves Kate Breton more, and to what ends will he go to prove his love? Which of the two J. Bretons does Kate love more; the novelty of the new or the jellied security of the old? And what of the universe which has strong notions about the same person being in two places at the same time?

—Bill Glass



SYNTHAJOY By D.G. Compton—Ace H-86, 60¢.

This is a reprint, but still the first American appearance for the novel. Simply (which it isn't) it is the story of Edward Cadence, inventor of Sensitape, Sexitape, and developer of Synthajoy. The story is in the mind of Mrs. Cadence told (or thought) on days 25 through 31 of her correctional treatment for the alleged murder of her husband. The story of the development of Sensitape from its original conception as a cure for UDW—Uncompensated Death Wish—one of the new leading causes of death, to its (in the mind of Mrs. Cadence) ultimate perversion into Synthajoy is told in varying levels of flashbacks during the few hours Mrs. Cadence is allowed to be conscious each day. Events are seen from different sides—hinted, skirted about, revealed, explicated.

The result is a kind of intensive insanity ...and the best kind of science fiction (according to Old and New writers)—that of the emotional effect of a future society. The writing is vivid, occasionally (depending on the kind of vocabulary you are accustomed to in sf novels) shocking, and, oddly enough, in a prose style that makes very effective use of silences.

As with Two Timers, much of the real power of the book comes from the relationships revealed: young Thea Springfield and Teddy Cadence; married Thea Cadence and Dr. Edward Cadence; Thea Cadence After Cynicism and DR. Edward Cadence; Thea Cadence and Tony Stech; the wardess and the imprisoned Mrs. Cadence; etc. A strange novel of human beings both human and inhuman, and a disturbing story of just where morality lies (and lies...and lies...).

I don't know how Terry Carr does it, finding and packaging a good novel every month. He should be thanked. I thank him every month by laying out the price of the latest Ace Special on the faith that I will get a good, readable, thoughtful, and thought-provoking novel. Go, thou, and do likewise.

—Bill Glass

GARBAGE WORLD By Charles Platt—Berkley X1470, 60¢.

> 'Kopra is a small asteroid, coated with unimaginable filth in all shapes and forms. Its inhabitants, too, are a dirty lot, clothed in soiled rags, underfed and hungry.
>
> 'The garbage dump of the United Asteroid Belt Pleasure Worlds Federation, Kopra's sole

function is to receive specially packaged waste materials from its sister worlds.

'Carefully avoided by Off-Worlders for centuries—the stench alone is enough to discourage anyone—Kopra suddenly becomes the object of extraordinary interest to Off-World government officials...'

So says the blurb on the back cover. It's a concise description of the story background. The storyline is formula: an Off Worlder reluctant hero, a pretty "native" girl, skullduggery in high and low places, and a relatively happy ending, if not a clean one.

But there is more to the book than that. I must flush my toilet in salute to Charles Platt for the conception of Garbage World and for naming his hero Oliver Roach.

Platt tried to rub our noses in our trend toward excessive cleanliness and increasing need to pretend we aren't animals. Animals shit and piss and sweat and smell. We aren't supposed to. It's not "nice."

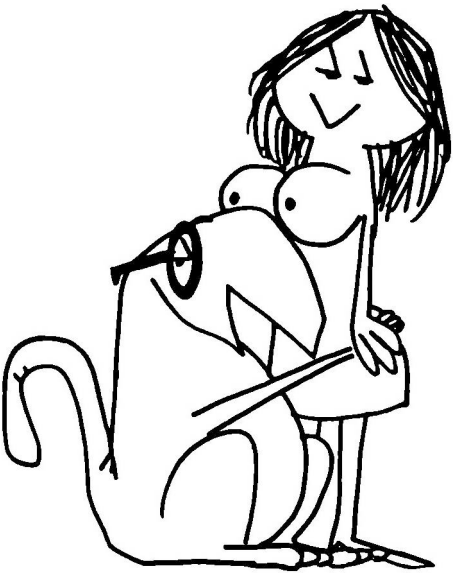
I find it mildly significant that every review of this book I've seen in the fan press has been negative, and I think it is due to a subconscious rejection of all the filth and stink that the book's hero, Oliver Roach, came to accept and even enjoy. Reviewers just couldn't identify with him.

—Richard E. Geis

THE ENDLESS ORGY By Richard E. Geis—Brandon House 2061, $1.25

Heavens to Mympho-Betsy!...what have we here? Those who consider Robert Silverberg's recent sf-cum-sex novels rather strong excursions should read this innocent little piece de piece about the time-traveler from the future, Roi Kunzer, who has come (ahem!) to keep the women of our time happy with his advanced chiropractic prowess.

Chapters 1 to 3: Roi and number two wife Suzy Cum-Cum (he has four—remember, morals in the future have undergone daring revisions) start the book off with a bang (grunt!). Enter Dina Hotpoint and pals who kidnap Roi, beginning 'Operation Nookie.' Roi meets Drs. Payne and von Klamp (evil men), and after close examination of his physiological 'structure' by the doctors, Roi learns he is to be dissected. His belly curdles (and I quote!). After a hasty exit through the back door, he escapes. (Note: Delicate "queens" looking for not-so-delicate



excitement may now move on to My Wife Charles or other advanced literature.)

Chapters 4 to 10: Roi 'calms' Taka-Naka, beauteous native girl; causes Sandi Clay, lovely assistant to step-brother Dr. Mal Clay, to grinch and flurp upon an hilariously traveling examination table; and slogs it to Tina Preek, voluptuous agent for S.N.A.R.F., an ominous international crime organization. In temporary disguise as the late Redd Clay, Roi travels to Mexico with Tina and meets Liz Dildoux, local S.N.A.R.F. boss ("Dykes" can begin reading on page 52).

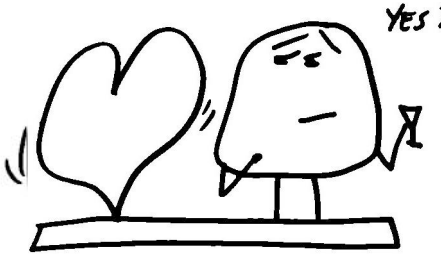
Chapters 11 to 19: Tina 'studies' with Liz. Maria and Consuela, two Mexican cuties, 'diddle' together, and Roi brings Maria to her fulfillment. Roi's wives are kidnapped by Liz who attempts to be friendly but is scorned by the 'straight'-and-true loving wives. Roi reveals his identity to his imprisoned wives, consoling them with a strong sedative kept secreted on his person at all times. Roi slogs it to Tina on the sandy beach—"She had come to come" as he redundantly puts it to ~~it~~ the reader. Dina becomes boss when it is discovered Liz is hiding money, stolen from S.N.A.R.F., in her Dildoux. Dina and Roi/Redd exchange Tit-for-That in a game of 69 high (pok'er is out of season) and Dina reveals they (S.N.A.R.F.) have a double lined up to replace the believed now-dead Roi. Rock, Roi's substitute, tries to emulate Roi with the four wives as teachers. (This chapter

is a bit difficult to follow as it is hard to turn the pages with one hand.) Roi is then imprisoned with Liz and teaches her to overcome her timidity. (Dykes may stop here and move up to My Husband Marilyn). Roi is released but is soon trapped again as he tries to free his wives. The Great Mother Computer of the future pulls a comic book rescue and saves him, however. Venus, a S.N.A.R.F. exec, has a 'painful' session with Roi and reveals plans to corner the market in Wolfram ore by offering to the queen of a Wolfram-rich African nation the substitute Roi in exchange for mining rights.

Chapters 20 to 27: Duma, the Queen's maidservant, farno-farnos with Roi/Redd. Rock/Roi slogs it to the Queen. King and Queen farno-farno. Roi and Venus farno-farno. Rock and native girl farno-farno. The whole village farno-farnos before the phonograph runs down. Roi finally satisfies the Queen, but is then mysteriously poisoned (bark of Yngvi tree... deadly!); however, he overcomes a 'limp' ending in time to outwit S.N.A.R.F. in a final open-air sports session (the farno-farno championship). The book ends as Roi learns of an anti-sex (gasp! at last, that word rears its ugly head!) crusader named Sister Purity, and it seems a sequel is on the way.

I suppose you can give this novel to Grandma for Christmas, since it seems to be one of those old-fashioned Puritan things that, among the slogging, farno-farnoing, grinching and flurping, seems to avoid the basic (dirty!) facts of life. As for me, I've given up this study of 'innocent' literature and am now doing a Freudian study thesis on the Debasement of American Children's Morals. I hope to rid the schools of such filth as Snow White, with its underlying smut of one woman giving herself nightly to seven deformed men, and Sleeping Beauty, which is far too mature in its open-handed dealing with fairies to be allowed in youngsters' hands.

—Richard Delap



OCTOBER THE FIRST IS TOO LATE By Fred Hoyle—Fawcett R1155, 60¢

This book has so many literary flaws it should be completely unreadable. Yet I think it's one of the better sf stories I've read this year. I enjoyed the first reading even though I got lost several times because the plot consists of three or four separate story lines jumbled together, and I enjoyed the second reading even though I already knew that there were no particularly good ideas in the book, and that the apparent complexity of the plot structure was just haphazard juxtaposition of several stock sf ideas.

The basic story idea is an imitation of "Sideway In Time"; different areas of the Earth are shifted into different eras of time, past, present and future, and the hero sets out to explore: finding Hawaii and England in the present, Europe fighting World War One, Greece in the age of Pericles, and so on, until at the end he runs into people from the far future. Each of the "other times" is interestingly drawn, and fairly convincing in detail, but there's nothing of unusual appeal for the average sf reader.

An interwoven sub-plot is a typical Fred Hoyle "discovery of something strange in Outer Space". A strange tight beam of radiation is coming from the sun, and of course it's responsible for the whole mess of strange happenings. This sub-plot brings in interesting scientific detail and characters. Most of Hoyle's science and scientists are completely convincing, as, of course, they should be given Hoyle's background as scientist and science-writer. In fact, Hoyle is one of the few sf writers able to generate dramatic conflict in describing a roomful of scientists solving a technical problem. He can do this, of course, because it has real dramatic interest for him. So he commits one of the basic blunders of bad sf technique—fills pages with involved technical arguments and explanations—and the results are some of the most interesting passages in the book.

Hoyle's characters go into lengthy philosophical monologues or conversations from time to time, and again, the results are interesting even if they do tend to break the overall flow of the plot.

A third sub-plot seems even further out of place in an sf story—the hero and first-person narrator of October The First Is Too Late is a pianist and composer—not a scientist at all. True, he seems to have an extremely logical, scientific-type mind for an artist, but he is completely convincing as an artist. Hoyle must be fairly deep into music himself to handle his

character as well as he does. The narrator's character is the making of the whole book.

The third sub-plot involves the theory and evolution of music, past present and future, and it weaves into the other sub-plots. The first couple of chapters are devoted entirely to the narrator's thoughts as he composes and conducts a piece of music, and have absolutely nothing to do with the rest of the plot. Yet they're interesting enough in themselves to compell most readers to go on into the sf part of the novel. In the same way, the climactic "action" episode concerns a musical duel between the narrator and a female musician from the future. It sounds incredibly weak for the climax of a whole novel, but it doesn't read that way —the episode crackles with tension and suspense, and is an emotional climax in the best sense of the word.

To sum up: October The First Is Too Late is a hodgepodge of a novel, built of fragments of dis-similar stories and tied together with a basic plot that's mediocre at best. The interweaving of plot elements is so poor as to be extremely confusing. There are digressions from the story-line, undigested chunks of pure science, philosophy, and music that do not contribute much to the plot. Yet in spite of all that the book as a whole is better than average because so many of the individual fragments are so good in themselves they make up for the lack of continuity.

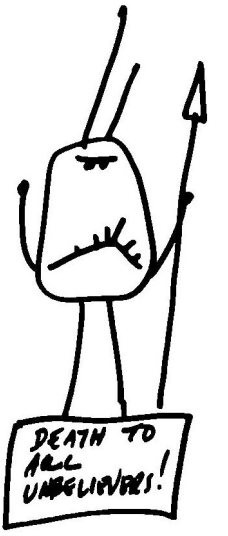
—Earl Evers

THE BLACK CLOUD By Fred Hoyle—Signet P3384, 60¢

I have always been a bit partial to 'doomsday' novels, though I am annoyed as much as the next person by those which dredge up a last-minute implausible rescue. I believe this book was the first s-f novel by Mr. Hoyle, who has since proved his ability to surpass it in both structure and content, especially with such exciting works as Ossian's Ride.

This tale of an interstellar gaseous cloud, which moves into our solar system and finally settles circularly around our sun, has already been dated (would it have been too much trouble for Signet or the author to change 1964 to '74 or '84?).

The story of the Cloud's real nature has been kept from public knowledge until the year 2021 when, upon the death of one of the scientists involved in the Cloud business, a novelized version of the events (the bulk of the book) is willed to a friend unwittingly thrust into



the position of writing a final chapter or a beginning chapter, depending upon his own decision.

Leave it to a controversial astronomer to come up with a controversial astronomer as the lead character. Chris Kingsley, "hotheaded" British astronomer, saves the world by the very fact of his brilliant eccentricity, along the way using every opportunity to emphatically denounce the stupidity prevalent among his own colleagues and, even more scorchingly, to lambast the politicians of all government. Granted, he's given plenty of reason to grouch and the reader easily grows rather fond of him as the story progresses.

When it is discovered that the Cloud has an intelligent nature, Kingsley and his co-workers, grouped to work at a specially-built British center, manage to contact and inform the Cloud that its lengthy pausing about our sun is threatening to wipe out all life from the face of the Earth. The novel's conclusion leaves the world only partially wrecked, with a hope that man can find the way from his present state of disjunction to a future of union and far-reaching communication.

The book's major flaws come not with plot but rather with dialogue that is often stilted and preachy. In an effort to reach and hold every layman, Hoyle groups his scientists into conventions of the most kindergartenish gabble. I hardly think laymen will appreciate it—rather, it would be better had the author discarded the tiresome dialogues along with the thoughtful but relatively useless footnotes of equat-


jack gaughan

ional theory. Evolutional questions seem lightly skipped over, and the implications of theology, while touched upon, are handled rather likely. Hoyle's most touchy conclusion to my mind seems to be the idea that all life in the Universe must follow a basic, similar pattern despite outward physiological differences; and although Hoyle personally may not believe this (according to his preface), it is a rather striking departure from usual science-fiction thinking.

"Pure" science may make a strong backbone to a dramatic sf story, but when, as here, it intrudes upon the story's progression with theoretical asides that consume pages, it leaves the reader feeling rather dissatisfied. I think I'll go back and re-read Ossian's Ride.

—Richard Delap

ONCE AND FUTURE TALES From The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction Edited by Edward L. Ferman—Harris-Wolfe & Co., $5.95

If any proof is needed that science fiction and fantasy can be of "mainstream" (and higher) quality, this collection of stories should be more than enough to convince anyone.

Judith Merril, in her introduction, calls these "typical F&SF stories" but they are obviously among the best ever published in the magazine. If she meant typical in range and variety, I'll agree.

The variety is wonderful. It ranges from a fantasy mood piece, "The Manor of Roses" wherein Thomas Burnett Swann creates the England of the Crusades and adds intelligent Mandrake plants whose babies can pass as human...to "The Case of the Homicidal Robots" by Murray Leinster, which is good, basic, traditional science fiction, as is "End of the Line" by Chad Oliver.

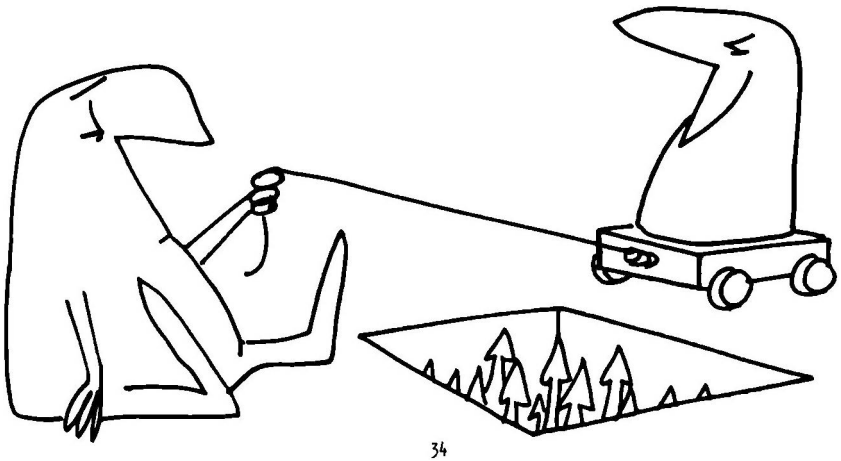
Frederick Bland's "The Fifteenth Wind of March" is brutal in its stark, non-copout ending. It's an end-of-the-world story that will stick in your memory.

"Fruiting Body" by Rosel George Brown is a bemusing study of fungi monomania with tinges of delicious satire, while "Journey of Ten Thousand Miles" by Wil Mohler is even more subtle ...and tragic. It is a story that compels a second reading immediately to confirm and appreciate the tiny, accumulative signs of madness in the central character.

"When You Care, When You Love" is fine Theodore Sturgeon. It tells of a love (or a possessiveness) so strong in the mind of a billionairess, that it will go to any lengths to re-create its lover. But I feel Sturgeon tainted the ending with his gratuitous author's afterword.

Philip Jose Farmer, with "Open To Me, My Sister," has in my view the finest story in the book. It is a devastating commentary on sexuality, xenophobia, sanity, culturally implanted values, and it is a plea for tolerance, and a shattering emotional story while also being one of the finest examples of pure science fiction you'll ever read. His detailed picture of Mars and Martian life forms and ecology is utterly convincing.

"The Masculinist Revolt by William Tenn struck me as too long and too strained in its satire of a future where equal rights for wo-



men has been carried to the point where the sexes have nearly become indistinguishable, at least in dress and cultural activities. A clothing manufacturer hits upon selling men distinction—with codpieces. Tenn explores the consequences economically and politically but at too slow a pace.

However, eight fine stories and one not-too-good one is a superb ratio for any anthology, and I recommend this collection unhesitatingly. Buy it as a Christmas gift for a friend, or for someone who looks down on "that crazy Buck Rogers stuff."

—Richard E. Geis

EARTHWORKS By Brian W. Aldiss—Signet P3116, 60¢

This strikes me as a completely average book, readable, but there's nothing in it that really contributes to the field—the sort of thing you read, enjoy slightly, and forget.

The theme is important, basic, and sketchily handled: the overcrowded world. Aldiss has worked out a pretty fair background and set of characters, and most of his action is properly motivated and well described, so you can't say the book is really dull. I identified with the characters and there was conflict enough, so that some suspense was generated.

But the basic reality of an overcrowded world isn't brought home. Aldiss sits back and tells us blandly and intellectually how bad things are, but he never gets down and rubs the reader's nose in the stink of all those close-packed bodies. Most of the action takes place on board an automatic ocean-freighter with a crew of three or four, and in the apartments of some of the leaders of society. For a book about a Malthusian nightmare, the characters seem to be moving around in a world almost devoid of people. Sure, the packed, stifling masses are there, somewhere in the background, but the author rarely lets us see them.

A book of this type should, if it's any good, scare hell out of the reader...get him involved in the plight of the poor, sick, starving world more than he's involved with any individual character. This Aldiss didn't do. Maybe it's not the best thing in the world for a writer to sit down and deliberately create a shocking, depressing book, but I think it's far worse for him to sit down and do one that should be shocking and depressing and then not be able to get the mood across with any real force.

—Earl Evers

DAUGHTERS OF THE DOLPHIN By Roy Meyers—Ballantine 72001, 75¢.

This may be a book, but it ain't a novel, and I will grant that it is a story only after much argument. Meyers has taken the Tarzan concept and done weird mythological things to it. His prose rests in a sort of timeless haze. Things just happen. Ten, fifteen years pass in this book, empty misty years with isolated incidents. There are plot threads left around like yarn after the cat got through with it. A fluff of rearing children here, a bit of dolphin lore there, the broadcast power up on the shelf, and the diamonds and whalers cohabiting under the sofa. There just ain't any real structure to the thing.

Nor motivation. There are an awful lot of Good Men in this book. Our hero, besides being a radioactive freak whose organs just happen to allow him to breathe like a dolphin, is also the son of Rich (dead) Scientist whose money was handled by Gooood Friends so our hero can buy anything he wants—female companions, broadcast power, super computors, etc. Besides all his father's patents, our hero also has a minimum of 1,368 square feet of diamonds beneath his house. There are also Bad Men, mainly whalers and diamond thieves. Or, rather, singular. A guy named Kurt who is accidentally drowned (while our hero is off stage) by Pussy, the pet octopus. Christ. And Our Hero is cared for by four "darkies" (there ain't no other word for 'em) named Ceaser, Avon, Hercules, and Nero, who think that he is a god. He doesn't mind, it makes them more loyal. There's some Kindly Old Scientists and some Brilliant Young Scientists who worship him as a Good Employer with Unlimited Funds. And a bunch of extras who say, "Who dat? Who dat man dat swim in da sea? Dat cain't be Lord John Averill of posh London society, dat cain't."

Oh wow, the damn fool thing ends with the introduction of two untrammeled children of the sea (Synclaire and Vinca Phelan — Ghod, has that Myers got a flair for names) to the world of men. Boom. End. I just can't wait for the next thirty year slice of life in the seas.

—Bill Glass

ECHO ROUND HIS BONES By Thomas M. Disch—Berkley X1349, 60¢

This is one of those books I would have put down in the middle if I hadn't been reading it for review.

Echo is straight, "imaginative" sf set in the 1990's. The nominal hero is a captain in the U.S. Army of that day, an army which doesn't seem to derive from the present U.S. military or any other military establishment. Disch's soldiers don't ring true to any I've encountered in life or literature, and his army is sketchily drawn and unconvincing.

I say the Army captain is "nominal hero"—the story itself is "idea as hero". A poor idea, handled poorly. It's the old thing with teleport machines that generate doubles of the people who pass through the machine. Disch portrays them as a ghost of regular matter, intangible in the "real" world. (Until he arbitrarily decides to break the intangibility rule near the end of the story so his characters can contact some of their doubles and save the world.) The whole thing strains credibility, especially when Disch complicates and then resolves his plot by going into all sorts of extra (and hard to believe) ramifications of the base idea. (Hell, at the end, they shove the entire Earth through an enormous teleport to create a ghost image of it, then remember that they've forgotten to take the Moon along!)

Overall, the writing is atrocious. Disch keeps stepping out on stage and addressing the reader directly, and every time he does it, the story drags. Other writers have used this technique effectively to fill in necessary but complex background, but Disch misuses it by trying to substitute it for characterization in the body of the story. He also misuses the same technique to present dramatic moments that should have been acted-out before the reader's eyes. The story is but a series of sharp little scenes of violent action with interposed descriptions of the background gimmick, and with characterization and world-background faked in.

Instead of using any of the logical and interesting plots that could be derived from the basic concept of many duplicates of a person existing simultaneously, Disch plods along with an unseen U.S. government about to blow up the world by teleporting bombs, then having his main characters save the world through weird manipulations of the teleport concept. It all appears clumsy, contrived, and doesn't make for interesting reading.

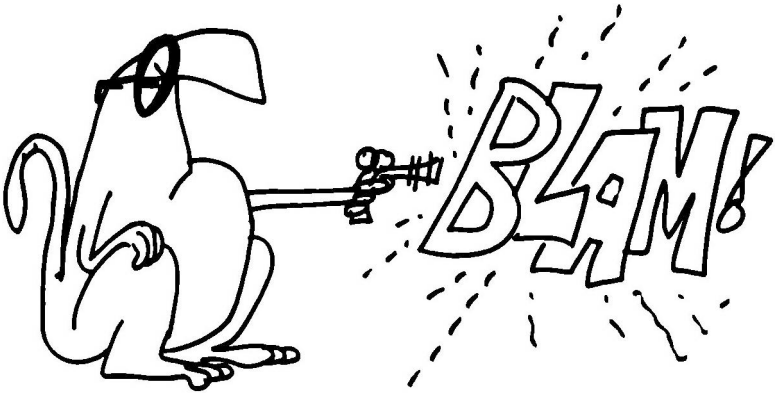
—Earl Evers

ELSEWHERE AND ELSEWHEN Edited by Groff Conklin
Berkley Medallion S1561, 75¢

Who can forget such anthology gems of fantasy as The Supernatural Reader (Collier) and The Graveyard Reader (Ballantine), or the many top-drawer sf anthologies by Mr. Conklin? While not the best of this anthologist's works, the present book is uneven but readable, containing stories not too familiar in a field prone to repeating its best. Elsewhere (interstellar) and Elsewhen (terrestrial) are the categories in this collection, published only two months before the death of the editor; and the stories, all previously published in sf magazines (5 from GALAXY, 3 from ANALOG and 1 from If), are mostly recent.

In the Elsewhen section, the late Mark Clifton offers a humorous yet unsettling view of a major breakthrough in the field of "psi." How Allied, good though familiar, is upped a notch by Clifton's delightful and strong writing. World in a Bottle by Allen Kim Lang, with its intriguing world of scientifically insulated, germ-free people, is interesting and doubly distressing when it ends after beginning like a fascinating novel. The Wrong World by J.T. McIntosh looks at our Earth from an alien viewpoint, with a predictable but nicely handled reversal of standards. Walt and Leigh Richmond's Shortstack makes a light-hearted but heavy-handed spoof of the invention racket which comes off little better than ill-timed slapstick.

The Elewhere stories are also a mixed bag, with one story worth the price of the entire book. Even the lesser stories of the late Cordwainer Smith had more going for them than many other authors have been able to muster up with years of production. The aptly-titled You Will Never Be the Same (Regency) is one of the modern classics of short story collections, and one of Smith's sadly few books. Think Blue, Count Two, to my knowledge never included in any of Smith's own books, captivates the reader with its unique method of intergalactic travel, an imaginative modernization of sailing ships, as well as its fine, sympathetic understanding of human motivations. Poul Anderson's Turning Point also hinges on motivation, albeit reversed to study its influences upon an alien race, but it's a sob story. Trouble Tide by James H. Schmitz is an s-f mystery which Mr. Conklin called "richly circumstantial," a description which I question as appropriate or complimentary. The story is a swift-moving tale, catchy for its inventive "biology" which makes a better plot than the mystery anfle. Michael Shaara's The Book examines an alien race of human beings whose standards are opposed to our own, and the plot wheels fall a bit too patly into place over a shaky premise. Far-future melodrama gets a competent rehashing in Donald E. Westlake's The Earthman's



Burden, a second look at the discovery of "psi" powers.

Not a memorable anthology, but worth getting (especially for the Smith, Clifton and Lang stories) if only for the fact that the stories will be new to readers who exclusively rely on book collections to keep up to date in sf.

—Richard Delap

A PRIVATE COSMOS By Philip Jose Farmer—Ace G-724, 50¢

It is almost impossible to criticize any reasonably well done adventure fantasy of the ERB school—you either like it or you don't. If you don't, then you can put down the characteristics of the school itself. If you do, you can defend them. But there isn't much you can say about an individual book except to point out how well the author operated within the rather restrictive format.

To have swashbuckling adventure you have to have phoney swashbuckling, adventurous heroes and villains. You can't use real people except as minor characters; if you try, the effect isn't worth the effort. (For instance, the hero of Glory Road is Heinlein's attempt to combine a swashbuckling hero with a clearly drawn "real person", and that's all Oscar Gordon is, a combination—elements of several types of personality thrown together in one body.) And you can't even use the real swashbucklers of history as an example—they're all such mean, brutal, immoral bastards the reader wouldn't want to identify with them. So all thhat's left is to use a personality type that exists only in literature—the stereotyped violent but virtuous hero. (And that's why the villains are usually so much better portrayed.)

A Private Cosmos is the third book in Farmer's "World of Tiers" series. The other two are The Maker of Universes and The Gates of Creation. If you haven't read the first two books, you really should before you read the third—the series is set in this very complex universe that's hard to figure out even when you read the books in order. All three are in print from Ace right now, or at least Bookmasters has all of them displayed.

In any case, the whole series is worth reading. If you're an ERB fan, though, maybe you'd better not read it—"The World of Tiers" is Farmer's attempt to write swashbuckling adventure fantasy in the ERB vein, and he shows Burroughs up just about any way you judge the stories.

I have an idea that Farmer designed his "World of Tiers" universe with a fairly lengthy series in mind, and it's the best fantasy universe I've encountered outside Tolkien. First, there's the world itself—an artificial construct of the "Lords", the alien super-scientist race who act as movers behind the scenes in all the books. Farmer has constructed his world in tiers, each tier with more area than an Earthly continent and with its own distinct civilization(s), each people patterned after some people on Earth or from some other sf or fantasy series. (Farmer has lifted elements from just about all his competitors, and manages to use each element as well or better than its originator.) Then there are the Gates—teleportation devices built by the Lords—which allow his heroes to pass from one tier to another and allow the Lords to get around behind the scenes.

(Of course some of the Gates lead to Earth, which is how Kickaha—Paul Janus Finnegan, the hero of A Private Cosmos got into the "World of Tiers" in the first place. And there's some indication in Cosmos that the fourth book of the series will be set, at least partly, on Earth.)

The real fantasy element is the science of the Lords, who are portrayed as the typical hedonistic, lazy, and generally neurotic descendents of the creators of all the shiny machines. Only in this case they aren't actually descendents: all the Lords in the series so far are around ten thousand years old—immortal. The swashbuckling elements are provided by Farmer's heroes, and by the inhabitants of the Tier World itself—the technological level of the world being pre-gunpowder, with swords, etcetera the order of the day.

You can see the complexity of the background from my brief sketch, but you can't see the details that make the series the best of its kind —just about every background detail Farmer brings in comes from either the real world or from other sf or fantasy. For instance, A Private Cosmos starts on the Amerind level of the Tier World and is peopled with Amerinds of various types, from tribes of Plains Indians to the more civilized Tishquemetmoac, who seem to be patterned after the Incas. The rest of the details are straight anthropology, history, archaelogy, etcetera. As I say, a good deal of the appeal of the series comes from sorting out the various details and trying to figure out which element is based on which fact, which is lifted from a particular piece of fiction, and so on. In any case, the elements are fitted together reasonably well...well enough to keep the plots moving swiftly and provide believable motivation for the action. Of course, virtually all the action is deus-ex-machina: the protagonist rarely does anything on his own initiative, but just rolls with the punches and tries to get out of trap after trap and fight after fight. He always triumphs in the end, but his actions from the beginning to the end are all defensive. As far as I'm concerned this is perfectly all right. I don't think any other type of story could be set in this type of universe.

The story line of A Private Cosmos isn't particularly believable in summary, (and I'm not going to summarize it) but the action keeps your eye moving fast enough so you don't notice. The details of background keep the inquiring part og your mind busy, so reader identification is almost total, which is about the best a writer of adventure fiction can hope to achieve.

All three "World of Tiers" books were a hell of a lot of fun to read, and I'll even recommend them to more "serious" sf readers who don't usually go for ERB-type adventure fantasy.

—Earl Evers

CONTRABAND FROM OTHERSPACE By A. Bertram Chandler; REALITY FORBIDDEN By Philip E. High. Ace G-609, 50¢

I must admit to having never been overly fond of Mr. Chandler's Rim World stories and must join the voiced chorus when the author states "...it has been said that most of my output could be classed as 'costume sea stories'." Yessir.

The first sentence of Contraband is nice: "The inevitable freezing wind whistled thinly over Port Forlorn, bearing eddies of gritty dust and flurries of dirty snow, setting discarded sheets of newspaper cavorting over the fire-scarred concrete of the landing field like midget ballet dancers in soiled costumes." It is a striking example of mood-setting sadly wasted as the story progresses to reveal a silly plot about the discovery of a derelict spaceship filled with the bodies of rag-clad men and women.

Commodore Grimes and his wife Sonya (most fortunately holding a degree in Xenology!), along with an able crew, set out to discover the cause of the sudden appearance of this strange vessel. The investigation leads them into an alternate space/time dimension where they discover a race of alien super-rats. I've no idea what Mr. Chandler's opinion of rats really is, but he used them once before in a rather (if you'll pardon the expression) ratty novel titled The Hamelin Plague (Monarch). It wasn't very successful either.

A heavy reliance on coincidence coupled with naive characterizations makes the novel difficult to finish, and the almost constant use of unexplained (as well as unbelievable) 'science' stops the reader so often, and with such annoying regularity, that I feel Mr. Chandler will be lucky if anyone reading for pleasure finishes the book.

++

Mr. High's novel is a little better...but not much. The basic idea of the world of the next century, where the human race is fighting to keep control after the invention of a now-outlawed 'dream-machine' which gives relative reality to individual imaginations, is a somewhat hoary old plot that might manage to get by with the guidance of a top-notch sf writer. Sadly, Mr. High seems to lack the power to bring his story off cohesively. Though several scenes are quite readable and dramatically strong, they are analogous to dandelions on the lawn—pretty if not so misplaced.

Plot wheels turn quickly but not convincingly as it is found that 'aliens' have invaded the Earth and are seemingly responsible for the present turmoil. The story's hero, Gilliad, escapes into Canada where he finds that the dream-machine is not outlawed but used openly; where he meets Vanessa (very good scene) and finally professes his love for her (very bad scene); and, where he is caught up in page after page of cloak-and-dagger shenanigans that snap along briskly but never generate much suspense or real interest. Characters are picked up and dropped nervously, seemingly brought in out of necessity only to clear up occasional plot stickiness. The climax reads like an outdated sf prerequisite rather than a well-thought out conclusion.

Though bearing little resemblance to each other, both halves of this Ace Double-Novel are quite alike in the fact that each is a shallow treatment of a shallow theme. For 50¢ you're better off reading one good novel. Two more like these (and back-to-back, mind you!) and I'll be ready to go back to Charles Fort...lots of laughs there, anyway.

—Richard Delap

MAIL ORDER INFORMATION

ACE BOOKS, (Dept.MM), 1120 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036. 10¢ handling fee.

SIGNET-New American Library,P.O. Box 2310, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017. 10¢ fee.

BERKLEY PUBLISHING CORP., 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. 10¢ handling fee.

PAPERBACK LIBRARY, INC., Dept. B, 315 Park Ave. South, New York, N.Y. 10010. 10¢ handling fee.

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AVON BOOKS, 959 Eighth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019. 10¢ handling fee.

FAWCETT GOLD MEDAL BOOKS, Greenwich, Conn. 10¢ handling fee; no fee on order of five or more books.

HARRIS-WOLFE & CO., 235 No. Main, Jacksoville, Ill. 62650. No fee.

DOUBLEDAY & CO., 277 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. No fee.

BRIEFLY NOTED:

THE MAKING OF STAR TREK By Stephen E. Whitfield and Gene Roddenberry—Ballantine 73004, 95¢.

This goodie I got free at Baycon. It is passing interesting in spots (like some of the memoes, some of the inside glimpses, some views of the personalities involved) but a lot of it is nothing more than the same kind of publicity handout rehash that G. Harry Stine did with "To Make A 'Star Trek'" in the February ANALOG.

—Bill Glass

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THE REVOLVING BOY By Gertrude Friedberg—Ace H-58, 60¢

The slow first half of this book deals with the personal difficulties of a boy who was born in space and who has a special, disturbing "wild talent": he is directionally sensitive to a point in outer space. The second half becomes absorbing and exciting when the signal is suspected by scientists to be from aliens seeking contact with other intelligent beings.

Mrs. Friedberg writes well and has managed to create a thoroughly believeable everyday world of the near future that never obtrudes yet impresses with its detail and cohesion.

—Richard E. Geis

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NEUTRON STAR By Larry Niven—Ballantine U6120, 75¢

Larry Niven has created a future in which hyperspace drive is common and in which Man has spread by colonizing and by trade into interstellar space...and has intimate contact with other intelligent life forms, notably the puppeteers, who are dedicated cowards and who manufacture a spaceship shell which is impenetrable and which is used by Man and others throughout the "known" galaxy.

Beowulf Shaeffer is Niven's hero in most of the eight fine stories in this collection, and he is a whole character, a unique person, a joy to follow through his adventures which usually are springboarded by his need for money.

Larry Niven writes the kind of science fiction—detailed, imaginative, consistent, in depth, that makes you wish his books would never end. Niven's sf is among the best in the field, and I do not say this casually. I enjoy his stories immensely.

—Richard E. Geis

THE MOON MEN By Edgar Rice Burroughs—Ace G-748 50¢

This volume also contains a second novel, The Red Hawk. Both were originally published in 1925 and the fictional techniques are cumbersome, dated and by now cliched. Strictly for collectors and those who are curious or those who have a severe case of galloping nostalgia.

—Richard E. Geis

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DIMENSIONS BEYOND THE KNOWN By John Macklin—Ace H-89, 60¢

Macklin has collected 56 strange tales of bizzare, occult and supernatural happenings and presented them in short fictional form. Some date back into the 1800's. They're interesting and easy to read. It is claimed that each case has been carefully researched and documented.

—Richard E. Geis

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WILD TALENTS By Charles Fort—Ace H-88, 60¢

Charles Fort collected newspaper accounts of unusual events. This book is an accumulationof stories about people and happenings that apparently involve psi powers in many instances. Fort was an eccentric and wove some unusual theories to account for these events. His credo, and that of many others, is "There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio." Excuse my bad memory if the quote isn't accurate. The meaning is there. Good old Charles Fort makes you wonder...

—Richard E. Geis

NEXT ISSUE—

The Masks of Time and SOS The Rope reviewed by Dean R. Koontz.

The Rim World Legacy reviewed by Creath Thorne.

Assignment In Nowhere reviewed by Dean R. Koontz.

The Best Stories From New Worlds reviewed by Richard E. Geis.

Six books by William Tenn reviewed by Ed Cox.

Swords In The Mist and Star Well reviewed by Alexis Gilliland.

PLUS reviews by Earl Evers, Richard Delap, Bill Glass, and more...more...more.....

Fans We All Know...

And Perhaps Wish We Didn't

THE PUNSTER

There is a connection of some sort between punning and science fiction fandom. The persistent, insistent and and even maniacal maker of puns seems to find it his natural habitat and congenial milieu.

Why us? Or is it that other circles know him, too? Perhaps he inflicts himself likewise upon the Shriners and the Mooses and the Elks? Perhaps he wears one of those funny little red hats and makes puns about it? Perhaps. But I don't really think so. We in science fiction fandom have committed some nameless venial sin (perhaps it's our being so ceaselessly preoccupied with words, while failing to insist on any standards in their use) and have received for our punishment—

The Punster.

We all make puns, of course. They are harmless and, taken in moderation, impart a flavor of playful amiability to any social conversation. An adult who puns shows that he still has a childlike heart; a child who puns gives promise of a good head. And there is that rare person who has such a talent for punning that it would be a waste and a pity to see it lodged with him useless. Mr. Forrest J. Ackerman is one such, and distinguished himself pleasantly during an earlier part of his career by his effortless punning (and funning, in general), putting forth puns as easily as a tree puts forth leaves; but his is a dangerous example to follow or to encourage others to follow. For punning, the most mechanical form of humor, is peculiarly susceptible to a kind of abuse. This is because a pun can produce a laugh simply by being obvious and outrageous. And this places it within the grasp of hands which are too thickfingered to take up any subtler device.

And so we have the Punster. He comes among us and reduces us to groans. Seldom to laughter but always to good-natured groans. He reduces every meeting, every conversation, every attempt at a business transaction to the same groaning condition. When he's present the clubroom sounds like a battle-field hospital. He rises from his chair and proposes that the club should have a barbecue-picnic at Azusa, where we can Cucamonga eucalyptus trees. That being rejected, he suggests a visit to Marineland, where we'll have a whale of a time. There are the expected groans at this and he advises the assemblage not to blubber about it. The chairman raps his gavel and tells the Punster he is out of ord-

By

Arthur Jean Cox

er, and he replies that he knows it and that is why he is taking Carter's little liver pills — "because I'm out of order, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

A curious thing about the Punster: he always seems to be in an elated state. (We wish he were in some other. Alaska, say.) ((GROANNN)) His eyes gleam and roll in every direction, searching, searching — searching for the occasions for puns, searching for the effects of puns —and his skin glows red and white, as if his head were a furnace in which he is internally forging puns, forging them night and day, forging them even when he is silent, which is seldom. Sometimes people rise to protest his puns. He puns them down. He will take on all comers. He proposes punning matches at the club and world punning matches at the conventions, where he will best, through sheer indefatigability, all comers. Sometimes visitors, distinguished or prepossessing visitors, come to the club, and the Punster is there, too, and glorying in the full possession of his powers. The visitors smile and look at each other, as if they were exchanging notes to be read aloud later...and we never see them again.

I recall that I once complained to the Punster about his monomania, on the grounds that it ruined all conversation in his presence. He punned at me. I persisted...and, suddenly, to my surprise, he vanished! And there appeared before my startled eye another individual, very much like him in mere physical appearance, who greeted me with a wild stare of accusation, as if he had sprung up from the earth to demand the whereabouts of the missing Punster. He was rather stuffy, this fellow; hurt, reproachful, moral, even sanctimonious, and given — as such fellows are — to asking searching questions. Morally outflanked, I retired, abashed.

But something had come to light in this little encounter. The Punster is humorless. He is never truly serious, either; he doesn't know how to be. He is either intoxicated, punchdrunk with puns, or as sober as a prohibition agent, mistaking solemnity for seriousness. And having no feeling for what is truly serious, he does not have — as how could he have? — a sense of humor. He has never been known to make a joke other than a pun. He has no wit. He is completely incapable of turning a phrase, minting an epigram, writing a satire. Irony is inaccessible to him; burlesque is a lost art to him.

That overflowing good-humor and high spirits which expresses itself in a hundred effortless pleasantries, even an occ sional pun, and which is the charm of every social gathering and which (it is not too much to say) liberates life from dull circumstantiality — that easy good humor is a possession of which no one ever suspected him. He is, in fact, with his elated air and his constant punning, a horrible sort of parody of it, a low, coarse caricature of a witty and urbane man.

And, really he is NOT two men, Jekyll and Hyde, the Punster and the solemn Reproacher. They are identifiable as one by a prominent underlying trait: the punning and the solemn reproaching are both forms of aggression. He means to be outrageous when he puns. Being outrageous is, of course, something peculiar to and allowable in puns, but our Punster desists not, neither doth he tire; he hammers them out endlessly. It is a form of assertion, a very successful form which he has adapted to himself, just as his solemnity is likewise a form of aggression, more conventionally respectable if not so socially acceptable. And that elation he shows — isn't it the elation of a bully who finds himself unchecked, the marauder who finds his course unimpeded? Seeing himself without effective opposition, making his presence continually and triumphantly felt among persons who are in most respects (as he cannot help but recognize) superior to himself, and lacking all internal restraints, he puns amuck.

What can we do? There is a remedy within reach. Ruthless though he may be, he has to have an audience. Not an appreciative audience, to be sure, but a responsive one. It is too much to ask that we should laugh at his "seriousness" (most of us not being capable of such social aggression), but I, for my part at least, am resolved never to laugh, or to groan, at his "humor." Silence is a more fitting and effective reply than the most brutal, derisive laughter.

+++

COAs: Mike Ward to Box 45, Mountain View, Calif. 94040.

Damon Knight to 14101 North Bayshore, Maderira Beach, Fla. 33708.

Gahan Wilson to P.O. Box 1052, Key West, Fla. 33040.

Earl Evers to Box 352, 626 So. Alvarado St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90057.

John D. Berry to Mayfield House, Stanford, Calif. 94305.

Al Snider to Box 2319, Brown University, Providence, R.I. 02912.

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HARLAN ELLISON
3484 Coy Drive
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You may have come across Sam Moskowitz's threatened Holy War against those of us he had chosen to call "new wave".

His Magna Carta is set forth in a single, silly fanzine titled Different #30. A copy of this magazine has fallen into my hands, though Sam never sent me one, and my response to his "Holy War" has been mailed to him. I enclose a Xerox copy of this response, which I hope you will run in the next issue of your magazine, along with some appropriate statements on Mr. Moskowitz's insane vendetta.

((SaM didn't send me a copy, either. I have written to ask for a copy, however.))

Dear Sam:

I'm disappointed you didn't send me a copy of the thirtieth anniversary issue of Different. Did you suppose I would be disinterested in a declaration as noble and far-reaching as the one therein? I'm surprised at you, Sam. I would have thought you knew me better than that by now; after all, it has been only a month or so shy of seventeen years that I've been in the field and known you.

But, as luck would have it, a copy found its way to my eyes, and I must say I applaud your stand, and your efforts. They are doomed, of course, and for the simplest reasons. But I applaud you nontheless. In point of fact, I'll help you further your cause. It can only aid and abet the revolution in speculative fiction. It can only help mature the genre faster. The louder you squeal, the quicker the changes will be wrought.

I suggest, however, that you not even bother misquoting me, or quoting me out of context, or dreaming up out of whole cloths such quotes as you attribute to me in Different. Why bother, Sam, sweetheart: I'll gladly give you even more inflamatory statements; merely request same. I'll cooperate in any way possible. I'll give you copy that will terrify and infuriate your supporters. As many as you want, on any phase of the situation you need some fuel to stoke up.

In short, what I'm saying, Sam my man, is this: you want a Holy War? Then get it on, baby,

get it on!

With incredible sincerity,

Harlan Ellison

●

ANDY PORTER
55 Pineapple St.
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(NEW ADDRESS)

PSY 27 is so loaded with acidic vitriol I hardly know where to begin. I think I'd suggest that now is a good time to cut most of it out; it's already gone far past the point of mudslinging into the realm of out and out libel, and exercising the editorial bluepencil, like in the Bjo-Donaho squabling, might be a very good thing indeed for fandom and, for that matter, prodom as well.

((Agreed. Usually, however, these clashes die out naturally after an issue or two, as all that can be said is said, and as interest wanes. Once in a while I accelerate the process, of course.

But the PSY credo as articulated in the PSY #21 editorial still stands for SFR: "Here is a forum. Here is a place for gripes, speculation, appreciation, criticism and reviews."))

Harlan slants things his own way in his column in #27 when he defines the myriad categories of category publishing (mysteries, westerns, gothics, nurse novels, etc.) as subdivisions of mainstream, and then goes on to define sf as a different category altogether. Mainstream and sf, he seems to be saying — just the two, encompassing all modern writing. Building from a base like this, it's easy to see how he creates his case. Not that I disagree with his final results — it's just that I think the base of the pyramid is constructed of different marerials.

What is this vast concern with Ree Dragonette? She did some work for Astounding back in the '40's, and has been around the New York bohemian/beat/hip poetry circles for more years than I've been alive. The last mention I saw of her was a poetry listing a few months ago somewhere in the Village, as recording in the "When-Where-What" list on the back of the Village Voice. I met her once at Steve Takacs' book store. Her address (at least, I suppose it's here—it's listed as Rita Dragonette in the Manhattan phone book) is: 115 West 16th St. Now that you know she's alive and (presumably) well, What Now?...

((Dunno. Several issues back someone asked about her since she was..er..well known...to several sf pros during the '40's, and comment about her has drifted in, and I've published it, ever since. This is probably the Last Word on her.))

For what it's worth, Richard Bergeron is head of an agency — an art agency, not the advertising type — that does much work for places and big companies around the New York scene. And, from what I hear and can see, he's considered quite a good graphics man. And yes, you did botch up his total graphic design with your placement of the typing on the cover of PSY 26.

As far as graphics go, I've learned a lot by looking at what Ted White, Dick Bergeron and others have done — and I'm sure you've seen that reflected in the pages of ALGOL. I've used graphic design in doing up ads, both professional and fannish (look at the Atlanticon ad in the BayCon Program Book) and would really go for an offset ALGOL. Let's see, I'd use a photo-composer, and Gray Morrow—Jack Gaughan—Dick Powers—John Schoenherr artwork ... and about $500 to put it out. Owell, maybe some year...

●

ROBERT BLOCH
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PSYCHOTIC 27, upon appreciative reading, belies its title. Every word therein is lucid and coherent—so much so that I find my comment limited to either a nod of agreement or a frown of disbelief, but in no given instance am I puzzled as to the meaning of the written content.

I must therefore fall back upon the one item which did mystify me, at first glance; namely, that photograph on page 25.

It wasn't necessary for me to refer to the list of contents in order to deduce that this was undoubtedly a Rotsler contribution — to those of us who know the Master's style, the presence of a camera as the center of interest was a dead giveaway. But the identity of the female occupying the right-hand portion of the picture caused a momentary puzzlement.

My initial surmise was that a dedicated fan like Mr. Rotsler would never have included such a female in his photo unless she was in some way identified with science fiction. So my first guess was that she could be, in all probability, one of the women authors mentioned in the current issue; Leigh Brackett, perhaps, or Anne McCaffrey, for openers. However, having recently seen both of these ladies at the Baycon, I immediately realized that their hair-styles are

quite different from that of the person in the picture. C.L. Moore and Marion Zimmer Bradley, according to my recollection, also affect other types of coiffure. This leaves Andre Norton, whom I've never had the pleasure of meeting, but I am informed by reliable sources that Miss Norton is a brunette.

Eliminating the possibility that the subject is an author, I am forced to take the pose at face value and conclude that the female is, instead, a reader. Admittedly, I don't know all the readers of PSYCHOTIC, but can safely rule out some of them; I know this isn't Phil Farmer, Harlan Ellison, Norman Spinrad or Arthur Jean Cox, and I'm reasonably certain it's not Ted White.

It isn't until one examines the pose more closely that certain clues become evident. Prime significance must be attached to the exact position of the magazine held by subject. Customarily, most people read while holding such a periodical much closer to their eyes. This would seem to argue that this female is indeed one of the truly dedicated fen; the type who keep a fanzine at a calculated distance in order to avoid getting eye-tracks on the pages. But this magazine is PSYCHOTIC, and the expression in this lady's eyes is not at all sercon.

The only other tenable conclusion is that the magazine is held at arm's length, as it were, because of a condition known as presbyopia—a form of far-sightedness. This particular affliction is generally found in people past middle age. So, despite the obvious attempts to throw the viewer off through the use of heavy makeup, eyeshadow, and plastic mammaries, we are forced to the only possible remaining identification. The female in the photo is obviously Bill Rotsler's maiden aunt.

●

EARL EVERS
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New York, NY
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As far as I'm concerned, Harry Harrison owes Ted White an apology for his shit-slinging attack in the PSY 27 lettercol. I found Harrison's letter extremely offensive — pure character assassination done crudely and in bad taste. It was almost as if he'd sat down deliberately and penned the most degrading sort of an attack he could conceive of on Ted. Maybe it was an excercise in his skill as a professional writer — using words to move a reader's emotions in a desired direction. If so, it was quite effective. But even so, Harrison is still morally responsible for his words. And in this particular case, he's wrong, dead wrong.

I'm not talking about the issues involved here, only about the methods of debate employed. First of all, Harrison says Ted's original comments about him were a "personal attack" and that they were a reply to a piece Harrison wrote for the SFWA Forum and as such should not have been published openly in PSYCHOTIC. Now I've read Ted's column in PSY 26 several times, and nowhere in it is there even a single phrase directed at Mr. Harrison personally. Unless you consider criticism of a writer and critics work to be a "personal attack". The closest Ted comes to getting personal is when he asks if "Leroy Tanner" is a pseudonym for Harrison himself, and that doesn't strike me as particularly offensive. As for the other claim, the reviews by "Tanner" appeared in AMAZING, so I see no reason why Ted shouldn't comment on them openly.

So what does Harrison do? He doesn't bother to affirm or deny that he is Tanner. He doesn't bother to refute any of the criticisms of his opinions and his logic and his ethics that Ted made in his column. Instead he calls Ted a whole bunch of nasty names, brings in the matter of Jack Vance's Hugo, and generally answers what was essentially a piece of literary criticism with a violent personal attack. And that, Mr. Harrison, is dead wrong. I don't have to defend Ted White's criticism of you in any way to point it out, either. If your views are defensible, let's hear your defense. Maybe you answered Ted's "little popgun" with your "big cannon". But your ammunition was shit. Yes, shit, and nothing more. We still haven't heard your defense of your views, we still don't know if you actually wrote the "Leroy Tanner" reviews in AMAZING.

●

DONALD A. WOLLHEIM
6617 Clyde Street
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Many many thanks for putting me on the comp list for PSYCHOTIC and I want you to know that it is about the only fanzine which I read from cover to cover upon receipt and enjoy it all the way, even though I disagree with various things as much as anybody. I am much too professionally cautious to dare comment on anything, but I do want to ask, along with you (p. 29), all other things aside, is Leroy Tanner Hardson and Aldiss? I note that little point, the whole essence of Terrible Ted's column is still somehow unanswered.

((It all seems academic now since "Tanner" isn't writing reviews for AMAZING anymore.))

"CONFESSIONS OF AN INDIA PALE DRINKER"

By Jack Gaughan
P.O. Box 516
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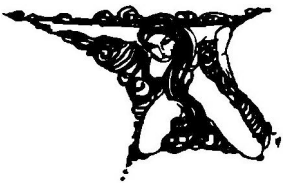
12471



Dear Dick, Thanks for the loverly letter. Appreciation, egoboo, or just an audience is probably among the reasons I do these things. From reading your letter I feel I should tell you why (and myself while I'm at it) I do so much fan work so you won't think there is some ink-stained nut out here in N.Y. madly sending out drawings for no good reason. Tho I must say I've not really thought much about the reasons, not verbalized them or set them down so much as I have just sort of stumbled across my reasons while looking back over what I've done.

It's early in the morning and I'm just absorbing my coffee now and my finger pokes clumsily at the typer and my language flows not exactly freely so forgive some of my opaque sentences.

Once, and, for a very short time because I think such a use of fandom or one's talents is odious, I might have set out to be by-god recognized in this field...having been the invisible man for so long. And by a short time I mean about three days. I did drawing after drawing for the fanzines and made a very simple discovery. And an obvious one. I remember reading The Bad Boy Of Music by George Antheil (autobiography), the late American composer and an idol of mine, and I recall the vivid passages of description of a concert pianist's "lot". If you let up for a minute your fingers like to forget what you've managed to teach them. I found that if I drew constantly and for fun ideas just happened. Whereas if one saved his "talent" only for those times when it was called upon the ideas came hard and with mighty straining and in turn looked mightily strained. So virtually every morning I have me coffee and sit looking at a big blank tablet (which no longer seems so forbiddingly blank) with my pen in my hand and I let things happen.

The nice thing about fan art is you can let it happen. You have no deadlines, space restrictions, particular proportions, stylistic considerations, commercial considerations, etc. You just sit for an hour or two and have fun. I enjoy drawing. I really do. And I find it sad and puzzling that some people who draw find it a chore...a job of work. I'm doubly blessed, I guess, in that I can draw what I like to draw in my work rather than elongated shiny automobiles and skinny ladies beaming at dishwasher detergent boxes (which I used to do). Now this sittin' and doodlin' method produces a lot of nothing drawings but in fandom what-the-hell. They're fun and they keep a page from being too damned bland. But in the process of doing hundreds, literally, of drawings things happen. You make discoveries and when you're swingin' this loose you need only the smallest fraction of wit to be able to take advantage of those discoveries.

When you're TRYING to make discoveries you become so hung up on TRYING that you become blind to the really new things or nice things that are happening in front of you. Only an inveterate doodler, f'rinstance, would have filled in the spaces between the drawings as I did in those drawings I just sent you. And only an inveterate doodler would be able to add that string, however small, to his bow. Someday the opportunity will arise so that I'll be able to use that to make bread with...or do something "springboarded" (ah the old ad game!) by that idea (which wasn't an idea but a sort of nugget stumbled across with big feet and pen in hand. Well, not feet in hand, but....).

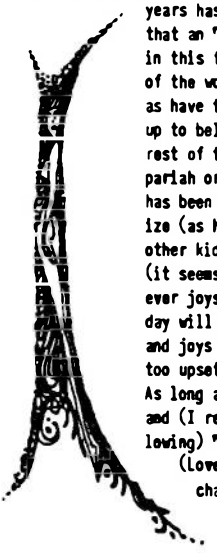
You must have found in your writing that when you loosen up and stop worrying an idea (like a dog a slipper) the thing develops more fluidly than if you force all sorts of forms and imposed disciplines on it. Of course the disciplines, rules, forms and other mechanical considerations of the craft must have been learned so thoroughly that they sit in the spine and like some sort of instinct keep the wandering hand/mind in some sort of order.

Damnit what I'm trying to say on this opaque and thick morning is that if you do a lot of drawings you get many more ideas than if you just sit around picking your nose or lint or worrying about Mayor Daley. So I do a lot of doodling and if a fanzine comes in that morning's mail the drawings go out so that I can share... Aw sheeit, that's not quite true (not entirely false either) ...so that the danged things will see print and I can get nice letters like yours or even not so nice

ones like, "Where do you get off, Charlie, winning Hugos when Ivan Ivanovitch draws better and paints better and is bigger and stronger and better looking than you?" You know, for years I ground away at sf in blackness and silence and it was like singing my song (however weakly) in an empty and unlit hall. Not even a good echo. This way, what I'm doing now, I'm not (pardon the Sturgeon) alone and since I'm geared to work for an audience, my hamnish tendencies are satisfied.

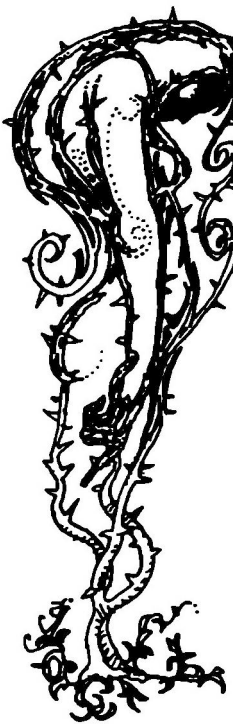
I just re-read some of this. Jeez! I don't really think like that but when I try to put down what I think on this damn typer it comes out all prerentious like. Picture, if you will, a Midwestern Irishman, just turned 38, putting on a little weight, in too-tight jeans and who has to remember to suck in the old gut and who yells at his kids to sit up straight at the table and get washed and go to sleep damnit and who enjoys the crude rude vapid conversation in smelly bars and is a volunteer fireman and drinks India Pale and watches TV too much and whose hair is in need of cutting and who, when he gets it cut, gets farmer-type haircuts and is a lousy pool player and who still cannot get used to the idea that he's supposed to be some sort of pro in this field. And who would be so simple and naieve (and who probably needs a dictionary) to have written this. Someone who after all these years has realized that the idea that an "artist" in this society in this time and in this portion of the world is not (as he has and as have too many of us, been brought up to believe) separate from the rest of the world like a precious pariah or a caged bird. And who has been around long enough to realize (as he when younger, and no other kid in the world is capable (it seems) of realizing) that whatever joys and pains one has this day will be replaced by other pains and joys another day and gets not too upset by the whole business. As long as there is ink and paper and (I really can't help the following) "world enough and time".

(Love that phrase. Use it ever' chance I git).



Aw foogy! I assume that you get what I mean? Tell Miss Peters that I miss her fanzine, OS, and that I have just bought a postcard mimeo and that it's a good thing that this dirty-old-man here in the N.Y. woods doesn't live downstairs from her. As for you. Now that you've gone offset and have a little time on your hands I see you going to fat and smoking big fat seegars and just generally falling apart.

Incidentally, The Christopher article is a wonderfully civilized thing. That might be why I like my beerbar people so much. Pax,



JOHN D. BERRY
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I rather wonder myself how or why AMRA won the fanzine Hugo. I realize this is a personal reaction, but it is a fanzine that I have only once received an issue of, two years ago, and which I never saw at all, even borrowed copies, during the whole of 1967. (Or 1968, for that matter.) It was a total shock to me; I had never really considered AMRA as a serious contender. Although I think LIGHTHOUSE deserved the award more than any other fanzine, I would gladly have seen it go to PSYCHOTIC rather than AMRA. AMRA? Ghod.

Your lettercol is very much of a bring-down; I am verily croggled at the mud and shit being thrown so liberally and with so little forethought at Ted White. I am hardly about to leap to Ted's defense, as he is far abler at both delicate infighting and studiously logical argument than I, but I am provoked by Rick Norwood's letter, since it strikes in a spot that Ted can hardly reply objectively about. Rick says: "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, interupting while others are talking, failing to give any sort of consideration to opinions which conflict with his own."

I have met Ted White considerably more than a dozen times. I first met him over a year and a half ago, when I started attending Fanoclasts and other New York area fanmeetings regularly. He has been a guiding light to me in fandom, especially in my more neofannish days—for instance, I learned the art of layout from Ted—and in July we began publishing a small, frequent fanzine together: EGOBOO. Somehow I suspect I know Ted White better than Rick Norwood does.

Based on this experience, I can say that Rick Norwood's statements do not represent Ted White. In the time that I've known him, Ted has proved himself generous, friendly, honest, helpful, and all around one of the most outstanding personalities I know. Impolite? I am reminded of the time I went over to Ted's apartment to do an EGOBOO, and a lady salesman trying to sell glassware or something knocked and fast-talked her way in by asking for Mrs. White. Ted could easily have propelled her rudely to the door for her mercenary invasion of his home, but instead he was entirely polite and courteous. Snubbing those he considers beneath him? Ted has little time for fuggheads, and when someone shows himself to be a person who is not going to interest him in any way, Ted will not spend time on him that could better be spent with people he digs. Nevertheless, it was Ted who suggested that my slashing review of SOPHISTICATED in EGOBOO 3 was perhaps too strong, when he read that the editor of SOPHISTICATED was in the 10th grade. Interupting while others are talking? I can only say that I've never been aware of it when talking to Ted. He is the sort of person who sparks conversation and tends to dominate it; when he leaves the room there is a vacuum created which takes some time to fill. Yet I have never known him to be impolite and domineering in such conversations. Failing to give any sort of consideration to opinions which conflict with his own? This is the silliest of Norwood's statements, and the one which has been dealt with most often elsewhere. I call Ted on what seem to me to be errors, and he listens when I or someone else he respects disagrees with him. He is the kind of logical person who looks into the facts behind each of his opinions and makes sure he knows he's right before arguing a point; when he isn't sure of the facts of a case, he presents his opinions quite openly as just opinions, and they often change as he learns more about the question. It's sometimes rough to argue with Ted, but it is always informative.

At first I thought Norwood was going to make a good point, when he suggested that Ted sometimes doesn't realize he is rude. Ted's style, especially when writing expository material, is direct and sharp, often including tossed-off remarks that are apt to infuriate some people. I think he does not realize at least in part how his writing antagonizes people, but it is certainly not deliberate. He once said that he thought some people only read 10% of what he writes—in one item, that is, not 10% of his total output. I think he's right, and it is those people who allow themselves to be antagonized and uptight over surface barbs. Perhaps they should read the other 90%. And get to know Ted White.

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KEITH LAUMER
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I confess that I never discovered the existence of the phenomenon called Fandom until certain kindly souls began sending me fanzines after I had published several books, and thus come upon all this verbal beating-about-the-head-with-bladders very much as an outsider. But surely there are better uses for your pages than interminable exchanges of insults? Or am I missing the point? Aldiss said something about people doing this for kicks: was that a double entendre or a Freudian slip?

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DEAN R. KOONTZ
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The way we are waving the word "taboo" around we sometimes sound like Neanderthals squatting before our various totems and scratching our hairy bellies, contemplating. I read about 3 sf books and one "mainstream" novel a week, and I'll be damned if any sf has broken, smashed, shattered, or otherwise damaged any taboo. And neither has any mainstream I've been reading. For one thing, it is getting harder to find any taboos to break. Secondly, the people who set out to break taboos are generally so concerned with being daring (notice how I avoided the word "dangerous") that the entire taboo-breaking becomes sophomoric or—even worse—so personal in its outlook that it is only humorous or unfathomable.

Now, I've read Norman Spinrad's The Men In The Jungle, and first would like to admit that I couldn't put it down. However, as I read, I could not understand what—in the name of taboo breaking—was so damned daring about the thing. The sex is almost nonexistent. It is no breakthrough in that line, surely. Oh, yes, fellatio, but you can't describe it in any more roundabout fashion than Spinrad does here. I am convinced a juvenile would have been slightly perplexed or would have missed it altogether. Yet, in fanzines, I have read pages and pages about the daring man-woman relationships in IMITJ. Had one only read Edgar Rice Burroughs, maybe. With a true acquaintance with modern sf and mainstream, hardly. But do you know what made IMITJ daring? The gore! I mean, if you read it with any compassion, you really wanted to retch. It got boring as hell, but that was his purpose, as he shows in PSY #26, and which I am willing to believe. Still, gore and cannibalism and degeneracy are nothing new to sf. That's old wavish fare. After reading it, thinking about it, and skimming most of it again, I am convinced IMITJ would have been a better book had it been about fifty pages shorter (judging from the 238 pages in the hardback). Quantity of blood and gore worked. But with a little more labor, a trimming shears, and a willingness to search for a cleaner prose in spots would have held the story together (actually a thin, revolution type story) and improved the quality of the story. If it is true that Bug Jack Barron could have sold to Ace for the consideration of style revisions (not content revisions), then I wish Spinrad had done this, for I am certain it would have led to a tighter book. It comes to mind that Spinrad writes a lot like Ellison at times, going into rapturous paragraphs (generally something rather nauseating—sic Ellison's story in DV) that tend to stop the story rather tan advance it.

I agree the kids are more adult about sex and don't swallow half the pabulum the editors hand them. But let me state that kids today aren't any more "hip and with it" than they were ten years ago. First let me establish credentials by saying I'm just 23, and still trustworthy. I have taught three places with three kinds of kids, and I am firmly convinced of this: there are not any more "aware" kids today than there have ever been. The percentage is the same. The difference lies in the fact that the aware percentage is four times more vocal than it has ever been. Previously, the aware kids were recluses. Today they speak up and fight for their unpopular opinions and are, as a result, generally outcasts with their peers. I've taught under the Appalachia Program, in a rural district and in an urban district. All the same.

There is one thing that amazes me about book publishers. They will not allow sex in the book for fear kids won't be permitted to buy it, but then they will feature a sexy cover illustration or will advertise other books in the end-pages that are adult in nature. HEY! AND HERE ARE OUR MATURE READING TITLES: Lust Pigs Of Shanghai, Lovers On The Big Planet, Desire On Dorcon II, etc. It is a complete fallacy that many—if indeed, any—parents read their children's books to see if they are alright. They look at the cover, maybe those ads, and that is it. Then it is back to the TV or Valley Of The Dolls, having judged the book (you'll love this) by the cover.

Harry Warner is wrong when he states that packaging of an sf magazine could not matter that much. In this McLuhan age, it is exceedingly important. First of all, with the new chain bookstores that have the large facilities, there is often room for cover display of the sf prozines. Here, at the two newscenters of size (one with ten thousand paperback titles, the other sister store with over fifteen thousand), the sf magazines have full covers blaring at the buyer. Yet, not until F&SF used the Walotsky cover for the Kate Wilhelm story did a modern-looking psychedelic-oriented cover come out. I have friends who are not sf readers, but who said, "Hey, I bought one of your magazines (they are all my magazines, since I'm a writer) cause it had the wildest coverdrawing!" Others must have done the same. I do know that, at the big newsstand here, F&SF sold out that issue and all but one of the following. But packaging goes beyond just the cover. Interiorally, illustrations have been getting sloppier recently. I think they know this at IF and GALAXY, because

they are underplaying the Brand and Wherle illustrations and using Gaughan on two pages. Actually, since Gray Morrow doesn't seem to do much interior work anymore, there are only four regular interior artists worth their pay: Freas (who works only in ANALOG anyway), Gaughan, Bode, and Jones. Freas and Gaughan have a touch of the thing that is currently much in favor with magazine readers (sf and non-sf) and Bode and Jones are loaded with it. They draw in a form—though each is vastly different—that is somewhat a psychedelic thing, a thing far beyond mere camp art. And to thumb through a magazine and see this sort of art, improves the chances that a non-sf reader will buy the magazines. I buy a lot of books just for the cover!

Also, just read Silverberg's "Nightwings" in GALAXY. It's concerned with sexual relationships. There isn't anything like "...his lava-like semen bursting from the volcano of his..." But, Silverberg captures sexual frustration beautifully in this story. Come to think of it, my own "Dreambird" is about sex and will appear in If. But, dammit, every editor turned down my four million word character study of an incestuous alien slug and his relationships with his two and a quarter million sisters!

((Try Essex House. Brian Kirby goes for off-beat sex novels.))

I think your editorial in #26 was the best you've done, chiefly because it was about a full-time writer and how he spends his day, and that interests me. See, I still teach school as well as write, and when you (you lucky bastard) who write fulltime (you son-of-a-hairy-ape) detail your day (you fucking lucky rat), I am a little fascinated. Does my envy show? ((Jest a tetch.)) Anyway, I think it would be a good feature, if writers are willing, to include a regular column concerned with how this writer spends an average day, how this writer begins a book, where this writer gets his ideas, etc.

((Good idea. Maybe I can arrange something like that in the next issue.))

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RICK BROOKS
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You ask how I "rationalize" (loaded word, that) my attitude on wanting strong four letter words, yet thinking that writer's shouldn't use them. My rationalization is very simple. I don't think that I should use these words either.

I resent your interpreting my use of the term filthy in regards to language to mean that I have sexual hangups. Freud psychoanalyzed Wilson from all of his writings at least. And I still think that Freud was stretching things. I've argued with Alma Hill over useage vs. dictionary meaning. I hold that a word like shambles that still is strictly limited to a slaughterhouse, also means any kind of mess by useage. Filthy words are filthy because they are used that way. I had nothing to do with it. They never consulted me on the matter.

((Yes, but "filthiness" as a concept—as an attitude—is in the mind of the user, the one who "recognizes" a word as "filthy".))

I will admit to prejudice on the subject of dirty words. After my Air Force experience, I tend to take it for granted whenever I see a four-letter word in print that the author was too stupid to think of another term. As far as I'm concerned, my use of these words reflects on me mentally.

Your remark on fans being down on mainstream writers when they use our ideas is due to one main thing. Most sf writers can write sf better than mainstream writers. This is because mainstream writers figure that sf is easy pickin's and that they can hack out something and get away with it. Take On The Beach with its cardboard characters and unbelievable plot. Or even worse, Wouk's The Lomokome Papers which Bloch totally annihilated in THE EIGHTH STAGE OF FANDOM. Brave New World is about the case of a mainstream writer trying sf and not losing his shirt (1984 was better, but Orwell/Blair did little that I know of in the mainstream), and Huxley blew it with Brave New World Revisited. Advise And Consent was run of the mill, and its sequals were worse. Mainstream writers are lately wrestling with sf themes and tricks, and maybe if some of them work hard enough, they'll write good sf-type novels. But I hardly see much hope when Valley Of The Dolls and Peyton Place pull in the dough.

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PIERS ANTHONY JACOB
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I see all these letters by writers explaining how they have so little will-power that they put aside their current novels until PSY has been readin its entirety. I want you to know that I have greater will-power than this; my novel has only been delayed for about 50 pages of PSY (I haven't read the head-primer installment yet) and this letter.

Several minor remarks before I get down to

business: I see you list Ted White as a Hugo winner. I seem to recall Ted's remark in an earlier issue to the effect that if Piers Anthony was an important writer, he (Ted) was the next Hugo winner. So now I can say it: Well, Ted?

Disagreements on your twin reviews of Rite of Passage. I am not a Panshin fan; none of his prior work has impressed me (though I have not seen the Heinlein analyses). But Rite strikes me as a very well done, very interesting novel, one of the best of the year to date. I will not vote for it for Nebula because I consider John Brunner's Stand On Zanzibar the best so far; but Rite certainly deserves better than two pages of condemnation.

Apart from that, I find your various reviews well done, and am intrigued by your suggestion that Samuel Delany's style on a Larry Niven story would be effective. Yes—I'd like to see that. But it reminds me of a cartoon I saw back how many years ago: man and mermaid, between them a little creature with a fish's head and human legs. "I was afraid it wouldn't work out," was the caption. Perhaps, if there were a Delany/Niven collaboration, that would be the result: Niven style, Delany plotting.

John Christopher says, among other thoughtful things, "The artist needs an audience." Yes, indeed; and what of those who proclaim that they write/paint only for themselves? I have felt slightly embarrassed hitherto when trying to explain that my audience does make a difference to me, that reader appreciation is part of my creative process. It sounds so commercial, so ego-seeking. Now someone else has said it, so I can come out of the cloister and breathe the fresh air. I want to do what I want to do, and do it my way—but I want others to respond, either positively or negatively, to the finished product. I don't see how any serious writer or artist can honestly disown audience reaction.

Letter column: Hoo, you prolific hac—sorry, writers! First Geis with 58 books sold, then G.H. Smith with "close to a hundred." Now at my present rate of sales it will take me—nope, can't be done; my life expectancy is not sufficient to match those figures. Of course, my novels are longer than yours, ranging from 61,000 to 194,000 words—but if you make $800 for forty thousand words, your rate per word matches mine. Of course you neatly subvert my pretext for going into titillations of envy by suggesting that I could aspire to good sex writing. Well, let me get at you another way, then: Sir, your defensiveness shows. In several places you seem to interpret as a personal affront comments that are not intended as such, and to read accusations of prudery where none exist.

Hm, this was supposed to be a minor point in passing, but I find I must soapbox a little. I am not a literary prude, and I have written straight sex fiction. I stick to sf because it caters more to my ambition, is all; if the market ever busts, be sure I will come to you for advice how to make my fortune in your field. In that context, then: I feel that your reply to Rick Brooks is unfair. I don't agree with him about who handles sex best in sf. But the points he makes are worthwhile. A writer can say what he has to say without using the so-called four-letter words, and overuse of such can demean the form. I once worked in a warehouse (part of the ubiquitous education comprising the experience of every writer, it seems) and listened to a truck driver conversing. His thing was "fuck." Every sentence had to be interspersed with the word, it seemed. (Reminds me of a joke—oh, you've heard it.) Then a bale or something dropped on his toe and he had occasion to really express himself—but he had already used up his word. So he said "Fuckety-fucketyfucketyfucketyfucketyfuck!" Like, what an imagination! But you accuse Rick of denying to others what he wants for himself, missing his point. It is your bias that shows, not his; he was protesting the overuse of the words, not the use. So Rick uses the word "filth"—well, I was in the army too, and I can appreciate what he meant. At that time I had a roster of dirty jokes second to none that I know of, and I used them with effect—but there was a lot that went around that wasn't funny, merely dirty. Naturally I can't think of any good examples, now that I feel challenged to do so, but perhaps an indifferent one will suggest what I mean: I was standing next to a sergeant (I never got beyond PFC, if you must know, in two years) when the wife or girlfriend of one of the men came on to the post to visit. She was elegantly dressed and quite attractive. As she went by, the sergeant whispered to me "Wouldn't you like to climb up and suck on that twat!" or something to that effect. That was all; the girl went on by, not (I trust) having heard him, and no doubt made her connection with her sweatheart. But I feel that that sergeant betrayed a mind preoccupied with filth. He did not know the girl, he had no reason to remark upon her attributes except perhaps the normal compliments due a good looking creature. But he saw none of that; all he could conceive was sucking her twat, as though she were nothing more than a walking asshole. This I call filth.

OK, Geis—now you tell me all about how my attitude needs improving.

((Right. Why are sex jokes thought of as "dirty" jokes? Why are anal and genital related jokes "filthy"? (Incidentally, I learned as a kid that "twat" referred to the labia, not the anus. Varry interasting.) So we were taught as kids that sex and excretory processes and products were associated—by our puritanistic mind-over-matter, spirit-vs-body religious cultural tradition. We absorbed it and it sits in us and in subtle ways distorts our view of ourselves and others. We get uptight over preserving "filthy" words from frequent use and wish writers would not reflect reality quite so realistically, please.))

Let's see—I also accused you of reading accusations of prudery where none existed. For that, go to your last reply to my own letter, concerning how far down girls blush. (I am, incidentally, surprised to discover that you were not aware that girls can blush at least down to the waist; the phenomenon has been observed in areas where appropriate visibility is available.) You say "I don't know any girls who are so ashamed of their body (so modest) that they would react to that extreme." Ye gods, man—why do you assume that body shame has to be the cause of blushing? How about a nudist camp and there is an embarrassing case of mistaken identity? One must assume that the gal has been running around exposed, and that thereafter something occurs to make her blush, whereupon the observer can note how far that blush extends. You seem to assume that the act of disrobing has to make her ashamed...maybe you better get married for a while. (Actually, I've always believed that there is precious little a single man can tell a married one, in this regard.)

Back to your lettercol. Apart from those areas where I choose to disagree with you, I find your comments marvelously pithy and apt. That's ever the way, of course.

Everybody seems to be represented. Here is Silverberg commenting on that same red-nipples business. Fine; while you're discussing Thorns, Bob, maybe you'll let me know just what direction is "northwest from the Pole." Page 158, Ballantine edition.

Vaughn Bode: I am curious why you got canned from GALAXY and why you resigned from SFWA. I know it's none of my business; I'm still curious.

Oops, here we are back at my own letter, and one more point to answer. You want to know why a writer can't attain a reputation as a fine sex writer, and seem to attribute to me "sex is dirty and sinfull." There you go again! No, for the record, I enjoy sex. I think that deeming an attractive woman as worth of no more than a lick on the rectum is ridiculous, but it is the squandering of opportunity I object to more than the act. Each to his own taste, after all. I also object to the exploitation of sex for commercial benefit, such as the ubiquitous attempts to sell new cars by means of bikinis rather than price and performance and safety, etc. In such cases the sex is not dirty; it is misused. The sin lies not in man's lust after woman (that's one of the pleasures of life, after all) but in prostituting a legitimate emotion for an illegitimate cause. But that's off the immediate subject.

I feel I can not achieve the kind of reputation I crave, by writing sex novels, because a) such format does not give me full freedom of expression. I'm interested in many things besides sex—spaceships, chromosome structure, undersea monsters, the density of planet Pluto, etc. and I would have little occasion to research and write about such things in a straight sex novel. I also could not experiment very far stylistically or structurally; while I do not consider myself a new-thing writer, I believe I could do that type of thing if I chose, and I want to preserve my freedom to make such a choice. Can you see a straight sex novel structured like Chthon, or with second and third-level mythological and philosophic interpretations? I would feel chained in such a medium. b) I like to show what I write to members of my family, and a number of them are conservative. I can show them science fiction; I could not show them straight sex.

No, the answer for me is not to vacate the one field for the other, more restrictive one; it is to incorporate what I value of one into the other, and thus have both. I don't want to write sex novels where pregnancy is a bad word, likewise contraception; I want to write science fiction where the sexual element is handled as realistically as the other elements. I think the prudery in sf is diminishing, particularly in the novel area (the magazines, as I believe someone else in PSV mentioned, are simply not with it) and I am working to bring this field to a state of relative health. Probably the taboos of the sex field are also diminishing —you are the one to tell me, of course—but they will have to diminish to the point where spaceships and literary allusions are acceptable before I am seriously attracted thereto.

Tell you what: you let me know who wants a sex-sf novel with about equal emphasis on

each, and maybe I'll write one. Better yet, let all your PSY readership know, and you will no doubt have fifteen good novels of that nature on your hands.

((Okay...send your ms to Brian Kirby, editor of Essex House, 7311 Fulton Ave., North Hollywood, Calif. 91605. Scheduled for Nov. release from Essex is a fantasy-sex novel by Philip Jose Farmer titled Season of the Witch, and I am due to start a sf-sex novel for him in December which deals with a crisis of identity in a society in which the distinction between male and female is virtually meaningless. So you see, sex novels can offer you an outlet. And Brian puts out a beautifully printed book on high quality paper...for $1.95.))

Would you believe: I still have not gotten down to the main point of this letter. These confounded asides are killing me.

Philip Jose Farmer: to my admiration of your fiction, allow me to add my admiration of your letterwriting. Bravo!

Now, finally, the letter that got me started: Harry Harrison's. Harry, I am interested in your commentary on Ted White and the Case of the Unmailed Hugo, and, pending presentation of Ted's side of it, agree: this is bad. I had similar, if lesser difficulty with the same person, but it appears that my fuse is shorter than yours. I invoked the aid of SFWA, and I did not wait any nine months to do so. The matter was quickly and amicably wrapped up, leaving me with no further quarrel with Ted, apart from certain misinformation he presented about me in an erstwhile PSY. In fairness, I must say that I have encountered discourtesy in several places—that is, the refusal of some responsible party to deliver promised goods. One case (not connected with sf) I took to a lawyer and am now getting action. But one does pay a price for the combative attitude that demands satisfaction, rather than saying "it's a small matter, let it go." I had trouble getting jobs, before I settled down as a writer, and my insurance company wants a rider excluding all forms of mental illness. (This is oversimplification, naturally—but it does take an ornery type, as I'm sure a number of other sf writers know.) Anyway, the sf field is hardly unique in having its troubles of this kind. I am amazed at your persistence without blowing your top. But I also wonder why it was that you, as familiar with the mechanisms of SFWA as I am (and perhaps more intimately connected) did not choose to employ this private yet sometimes effective avenue of solution before spreading the matter out before the avid PSYCHOTIC readership. I have brought complaints of various types before all three of SFWA's presidents in order, and have been helped considerably by each, though no doubt these worthy gentlemen consider me something of an annoyance. If my own experience is any guide, you could have addressed a single letter to SFWA stating the problem, and had prompt satisfaction. Why didn't you?

((I print at this point a postcard received from Piers dated Oct. 19th, 1968:

"PSYCHOTIC: Followup to my missive of Oct. 6: in the last couple pages thereof I queried H. Harrison why he had not utilized the services of SFWA to solve his problem with Ted White, then posed a more subtle challenge to SFWA policy. Since then I have heard amicably from Harrison (I sent him a carbon), who informs me that he did try SFWA first, without satisfaction, and that he does not intend to write any more letters to fanzines because of the consumption of time. This puts me in an awkward position. If you run those portions of my letter, please append some kind of correction so that I am not left beating straw men. Absence of reply from Harrison should not be taken as admission of guilt in this case, and I wouldn't like to allow any such implication. One must be fair. Thanks."

Geis speaking now: I'm a new member of SFWA (Science Fiction Writers of America) and I did not know the background of the situation that had prevailed regarding the magazines and publisher and other principals Piers shrouds in his comments below. I found it enlightening as I'm sure many other readers will.

There may be those who will feel that this is no place to air SFWA member gripes. But SFR is published for sf writers as well as fans and just plain readers...and the whole of the sf-fantasy field is within the province of this magazine, as far as I'm concerned.))

But this suggests a more subtle matter. I am curious to learn how effective fan pressure can be, particularly when directed against someone or some organization popular enough to win a Hugo. I have certain additional complaints of my own, you see, and if a public airing is the best way to—well, more anon, perhaps. For now, since I do not want to precipitate a battle with you yet do have a certain curiosity and involvement...well, allow me to set up an allegory, a fiction, a supposition, a theoretic situation that fans or writers can interpret as pleases them, and inquire how you, Mr. Harrison, might react.

Let's invent a situation somewhere in Parnassus: there is a literary subculture espoused

by a number of enthusiasts who write missives, form organizations of the like-minded, debate the merits of material in print, and so on. Some even publish amateur magazines, far-fetched as I admit this detail may seem. After a long and turbulent history this subculture comes to be dominated, on the professional side, by four individuals, unkindly and perhaps unfairly dubbed by some as a bigot, a hypocrite, a nepotist and a crook. Let's say also that there is an organization of lesser professionals whose purpose is to right wrongs and promote worthwhile information in the field. This organization in due course comes to grips with the last of the four lofty figures identified (call him C for convenience) and, after some preliminary sparring, establishes a strike against his publication. This state of seige continues for a year or so, with many valiant skirmishes and deeds of heroism on either side. But eventually compromise is approached, and it is announced to the organization (call it O) that the matter will shortly be placed before the membership for a vote whether to accept the terms offered and terminate hostilities.

So much for background. I trust that I have set a realistic scene for what we all know could never happen in life. Now to the plot:

Instead of putting the matter to the promised vote, the new officership of O sends a representative to negotiate with C. The dialog is never published, but after this session, and still without any membership vote, it is announced that the crisis has been solved, C is no longer a villain, and, as a bonus, the very representative sent to negotiate with C will be the new editor of C's publications. Several members of O contemplated the new terms and compared them to the old, and found scant improvement, but had no voice to object. Some of them did complain to the officership, but these were silenced by appeals to their loyalty to O or merely ignored. Certainly no such protests were published by the O house organ. (oops, change of tense in mid-paragraph. ts.) As time went by and C did not change his policies materially, the editorship changed again—but the so-called compromise was never rescinded. Those members of O who were not privy to the high councils but who *did* have to deal with the connected problems were deprived of their voice.

End of story. I know it can't sell, because it doesn't have a happy ending—or any ending at all. While not implying that either you or I would ever write anything this foolish, let alone be involved in it, I'd still like to draw upon your greater experience, Mr. Harrison. If such a situation and plot *were* ever to unfold, and you knew anything about it, how would you react? Would you approve of calling it to fannish attention, or would you consider it a breach of faith for a dissident O member to squawk in public? How, in short, would you write the denouement?

●

ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS
P.O. Box 611
Valley Center, Calif.

About the SFWA, when it was first organized I hailed it with cries of joy, thinking that here at last was the union the writers needed. I soon discovered that it was no union. I do not to this day know what it is but I usually refer to it as *that gutless thing which crept in from lower space* or as *those assholes talking from the inside out*.

Yes, I belong to the SFWA but I do not regard it as a friend and I belong to it only to keep one ear open to what the talking assholes are saying.

●

L. SPRAGUE DeCAMP
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I wish your many correspondents would learn to spell "arse." An ass is a donkey. For the phonetic confusion between the two, see J.S. Kenyon: AMERICAN PRONUNCIATION, p. 173, and G.P. Krapp: THE PRONUNCIATION OF STANDARD ENGLISH IN AMERICA, p. 118, on the dialectical pronunciation of "partridge" & "cartridge" (to which these scholars might have added "parcel" and "arse").

●

GREG BENFORD
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94529

Between Harrison avoiding the question of being Tanner, and Aldiss papering over the fact that his year-end summary was based on inadequate research and reading (a very unprofessional thing to do —odd considering the frequent references he makes to "professionalism"), there seem to be few candid letters in the whole lengthy business.

Harlan on McCaffrey is lucid, a little rambling, and interesting. I generally agree with his point of view, though in the case of *Restoree*, her earlier work, I think the pitfalls of imposing a "novel of manners" on sf themes are

well outlined. Dragonflight was a clear step forward, but to some extent I think the dragons carried the book, and it is going to be hard to find a similar basis for any future book that has as much intrinsic, visceral appeal. It may have been a one-shot success. I hope not, though.

John Christopher's thoughts on modern literature and art add little to what has been said before, but I think he does a good job of summarizing a position with not a little validity in it. Of course we are too close to a lot of this to judge — Beethoven looked like rank heresy at one time — but I do think Christopher has placed too much emphasis on art as a reflection of the times. The uncomfortable truth for some of us is that art doesn't command the best minds of this generation, in contrast to many periods of the past. This is the most scientific/technical age of history, and a huge amount of creativity is going into those fields. It cannot be assumed that artists in this age speak for the best minds, or even for a sizable minority of the culture. So Christopher's warnings of chaos in the future, anomie and the personality death, should be taken with a grain of salt.

Of course science fiction until recently has stood out as a singular exception to Christopher's view of art. Sf occasionally attains the level of Art, I suppose, but it is quite optimistic and even its darker visions have an acknowledged cause, a reason, and are not simply a descent into chaos. I think a case can be made for saying that sf stands closer to the true attitudes of the people who're shaping the future than does the great body of the lit'rary world. That's why I think it is important.

●

VERA W. HEMINGER
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The most remarkable observation in Mr. Ellison's extra-lengthy review of Dragonflight – among many remarkable and somewhat self-contradicting observations – has got to be: "When f'lar...gets justifiably angry with Lessa, he doesn't do what any normal man would do...belt her or toss her up against a wall..." In the light of this analysis of what constitutes "normal" male behavior, I feel awfully grateful that the men I know seem to react quite abnormally when they're irritated. I wonder just what makes Mr. Ellison think that tossing a woman up against a wall is an effective method to make her change her mind?

Mr. Geis, kind sir – are you sure there isn't some sort of deliberate plot against women writers or novels written from a feminine point of view? Evidence is mounting at an alarming rate; just in this issue of PSY, there's Mr. Ellison's contention that to be successful, a woman should learn to write like a man; and then those two very harsh reviews of Rite Of Passage. I'm sure you must be aware of the results of the psychological tests in which two groups of articles (all written by the same author) were presented to a group of men and women. The first group of writings were offered as being authored by a John Doe; the other, by a Jane Doe. Results: most readers were quick to praise the articles they believed written by a man, but pretty well agreed the ones by the women weren't all that good. Need I elaborate?

●

HARRY WARNER, JR.
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21740

Harlan Ellison left me wondering how I would have identified the sex of the prozine writers, if I'd been told that many feminine writers were using masculine-sounding pennames. At a guess, I'd say that I would have instantly spotted Ray Cummings as a woman writer. I might have made the same kind of identification for Weinbaum, up to at least The New Adam. I might also have had my suspicions about Dr. David H. Keller, and most certainly Joseph Skidmore would have qualified for one of those disguises. So I don't think it's altogether fair to claim that I can find specifically feminine faults in most stories by the women. Moreover, there was one case of a Leehoffmanism in the prozines. Leslie F. Stone had an ambiguous first name, and she was assumed to be a man by many of her readers. In fact, one of our famous pioneer fans grew exceedingly indignant when he discovered that this pro correspondent, on whom he'd lavished many letters, was only a woman. I suppose the most famous mundane example of this matter was George Eliot. As I remember the biographies, only Charles Dickens spotted immediately the fact that a woman was writing those wildly successful novels, and some people refused to believe in her existence, even after the truth came out. I really doubt that I would have recognized Andre Norton and Leigh Brackett as female writers, if I hadn't known it from the time I began reading their stories (trying to read their stories in the case of the former). Catherine Moore's solo efforts sound as if they were written by a woman. But remember that she and Henry Kuttner couldn't pick out which sections had been written by whom

in some stories that were collaborations. I cannot find the slightest relevance between sentences in most areas of this paragraph, so I must simply assume that it's a topic which doesn't lend itself properly to generalizing. Some women write very much like women and others don't and some in both groups have undoubtedly cultivated so carefully a masculine-type writing style that we'll never know how they would have written following solely their own impulses.

Greg Benford...in his article in your last issue...was wise to emphasize how VOID was there at just the right time, as a good many fans became active. This is where I was unlucky. When I first began to fool around with fanzines, there wasn't a regularly appearing, absolutely superior title to worship, as I would have gone wild about VOID or about QUANDRY or many another fanzine that came along later. The only thing that even resembled a fanzine hero for me was Los Angeles' IMAGINATION!, and this was such a joint effort that it didn't have the same personality issue after issue needed for idol status. It would be very tiring but quite interesting to try to pin down the time lapse that generally is involved in the influence a fine and popular fanzine creates in the new fans who are strongly impressed by it, begin to publish imitations, which then breed a new generation of somewhat different but still recognizable spirit.

●

ISAAC ASIMOV
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I'll tell you something else that scares me—

I get the notion, reading PSYCHOTIC, that it's the real Thing to talk Sex and Elimination. I have nothing against it in essence though I have always found that an ordinary vocabulary can be sufficiently twisted and arranged so as to be unimaginably insulting without once using the words that might—out of charity—be left to those less-well-endowed members of the human race who have no other method of expressing their feelings. We who have entry into the recesses of the English language ought not to invade the precincts of the illiterate. Noblesse oblige!

Anyway—is it really essential that science fiction novels now contain scenes of sex, "explicitly" stated.

My own books never had them, I must admit with some bashful confusion—not because anything was ever censored out of them, but because it never occurred to me to put them in.

So the question is— If I ever decide to do another s.f. novel, can I remain square, or must I disburden myself of the most wearisome cliche in the history of writing—the explicit sex-scene?

I wish some of the letter-writers would discuss the question for the benefit of the field; i.e. Is Sex Necessary in Science Fiction?

And just to kick it off in a nice controversial way, I would like to say that my s.f. books, all of them as square as can be imagined, are selling considerably better now than they did when they were first published (ten to twenty years ago) and they were selling pretty well to begin with. Seriously—are you fellows leaving a gap that is being filled by my old books, for default of anything else?

I have no objection, you understand.

((Sex as such has a place—as in The Lovers—but erotic sex scenes for their own sake have no place in sf. If a reader wants titilation he can buy sex novels—even sex novels with a sf background. I don't think the two genres should mate.))

●

RICK NORWOOD
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I would like to offer one valid reason for science-fiction remaining the relatively isolated ingroup it is. This is the lowest-common-denominator theorem, which states that the appeal of a work written for an ingroup is inversely proportional to the number of members in the ingroup. Thus the author who writes only for himself is apt to please himself perfectly but not reach anyone else. The author who writes only for himself and a friend must make some compromises. A man who writes a technical paper can make it more interesting to people in his field if it need not be at all intelligible to anyone outside of that field. A science fiction writer need not explain what an orbit is and can assume his reader knows the difference between a planet and a galaxy. A mainstream writer cannot touch on any subject not familiar to a New Jersey housewife without laying the proper groundwork. A television writer must appeal, however minimally, to absolutely everybody, including the inmates of various institutions and the state of Iowa.

The size of an ingroup should, therefore, be determined by economic factors. If it takes n novels a month to satisfy a given reader, who

is willing to pay M dollars per month, and if the cost of publishing a novel (including a little something for the writer) is K dollars, there had better be Kn/M members in his ingroup. This means that expensive productions like films either must aim at a larger ingroup, as television does, or charge more per customer, as movies are doing. But I see no reason for expanding a relatively stable ingroup just to gain greater recognition for its members.

Of course, science fiction as it stands produces work worthy of wider attention than it is likely to receive, but that is a matter of publicity, not of conforming to mainstream standards, which are more restrictive than demanding, if you see the distinction.

Dick Ellington...in his letter in PSY 27... seems typical of those who push the mainstream writers. He sounds very much like the average literary critic. He makes two major assumptions. First, that all mainstream writing is so much better than all science fiction writing that the latter is not worthy of consideration. Second, that science fiction fans read only science fiction and are incapable of recognizing good literature. The first assumption is pure snobbishness and the second can only be attributed to faulty observation.

●

GORDON R. DICKSON
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Thanks for sending me these issues of PSYCHOTIC and pardon me for not writing earlier. I'm the world's worst letter-writer, as too many people already are aware.

Thanks also to Ed Cox for his kindly review of Planet Run, in PSY 27. He misses the boat in his guess of who wrote what ("Dickson sets the stage...and then Laumer takes over...") But this is a minor point. The felicities of the book are all Keith's; and the review is a good one for recognizing a story-teller's story for what it is.

●

LEE HOFFMAN
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Loveable Ol' Jack Gaughan was griping about people who don't know anything about Art but know what they like. Can Jack give me some kind of rough idea of what Art is? I know what I like, but I don't know what the rules and regulations are regarding what I am supposed to like.

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

I think this is the best approach to propagandizing in fiction. People tend to get balky and argue back a lot when they encounter blatant propaganda which conflicts with their prejudices. Sometimes subtlety is much more effective.

It is interesting to see so many sundry fans trying to argue or bully each other out of their various prejudices by violent mud-slinging and name-calling. If I didn't know so many people, I would think it was all a put-on. Like, obviously it is futile as far as changing minds goes. But whatthehell—fireworks are fun to watch as long as you don't get close enough to get burnt and I suppose a lot of people get a great deal of pleasure in indulging in these verbal wars. Relieves pent-up aggressions and such, I guess.

You say, "I mean by mainstream writing prose which is NOT in the pulp mold; it does not use pulp style, pulp techniques and pulp formulas."

A lot of confusion is being caused these days by sloppy use of the term mainstream. A few years back, when magazines were the thing, the terms "pulp" and "slick" were common. People kept using "pulp" to mean "bad" and "slick" to mean "good". But on careful examination, one might discover that the difference was essentially one of the conventions of the material, and "slicks" were just as form-bound as "pulps". The forms were different, and since slicks generally paid more, the more competent writers gravitated toward them, so the average quality of craftsmanship was higher. But the category was defined not by quality but by its conventions.

From what I've seen of mainstream, it is also simply a category defined by its own conventions. There is good mainstream and bad mainstream. There is craftsmanlike hack mainstream, and there is competent intelligent meaningful mainstream. There is mainstream work which breaks with the bulk of the conventions which define the category. There is also s-f which similarly with the conventions of that category. Unlikely as it may seem, there are even westerns which break with the conventions of the pigeonhole.

To many people mainstream denotes a type of

material (or types, since there are sub-species). Others use the word as if it were a synonym for good. Some feel that any science fiction work which breaks with the conventions of the category in a desireable way automatically becomes mainstream whether it fits the conventions of that pigeonhole or not. All this makes for confusion in communication.

Getting the good examples of s-f labeled as mainstream may be desireable because so many people buy according to label rather than content. It could mean more money for the good s-f writers. But aside from that, I don't think it matters much. No matter what you label a finished work, the content remains the same—good, bad or otherwise. But, like mud-slinging, object-labelling is a popular fannish pastime, so whathehell...

Speaking of labels, but not to anyone in particular, the term editorial taboo has a nice resounding ring and seems important. But sometimes an editorial taboo is simply a matter of an editor considering something to be in bad taste. Not nearly as high-flown and earth-shattering a phrase. It isn't nearly as much fun to climb up on a white horse and defend something in bad taste as it is to crusade for freedom from hidebound taboos.

((And, in a subsequent letter, Lee comments as follows...))

PSY 27 may have cost me an exceedingly great deal of money. Like, I was messing around with an idea for a book and all set to put in a hard, productive afternoon at the typer when it arrived. I got diverted reading it, and since then have not been able to recapture the mood to work. So if that book never gets done and I starve to death, it is all your fault, Geis.

I did fritter away a piece of time writing you a vitriolic-type letter, as is to be expected of us mean, evil New York City-type fans. But I came out from under the influence of your insidious drug before I mailed it, so I'm writing you this one instead.

Harlan's comments about women writers bring to mind my pet quote from ol' Sam'l Johnson (a man): "Sir, a woman preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well but you are surprised to find it done at all." Many people seem to feel the same way about women writing.

I'll allow Harlan may be correct, but I sure hope not. If I write lousy, I like to think it is because I, personally, am a lousy writer, rather than that it is something I was doomed to at conception by genetics or our culture or whathaveyou.

A pb publisher recently pulled an evil sneaky bit on me. Blurbed one of my books with a quote from a reviewer that points out (a) my being female, and (b) my residing in "Greenwich Village". Can you think of much more likely to turn the typical Western reader off'd buying a book than the idea that it was written by some broad from bohemian-beatnik-hippie New York?

Well, I suppose if he'd bought the book, the typical Western reader would have been turned off if it by its frustrating lack of tensile strength, its inability to deal with the last extremes of the human condition, and its lack of flash-points of conflict that invariably result in emotional, gut-level reformations of character, not to mention naked violence, anyway...

I was muchly impressed with John Christopher's comments on art, etc. I think maybe intellectually we are both of that now semi-proscribed generation that was taught things like form-follows-function and comprehensibility-aids-communication, and such obsolete junk.

Maybe one reason so many people have trouble identifying with female protagonists in fiction is that so many of them are portrayed so ineptly, or as such schnooky characters. I dunno. I don't read books about women myself. Chip Delany has some interesting theories about fictional females. Maybe you could get him to do an article on the subject for you.

Well, since I make my living by writing fiction and since it is vaguely conceivable that someone somewhere out there may actually happen to have read something I wrote, I think I shouldn't ought to write about writing much, lest I end up hoist by my own petard. (PSY seems to have more petards going off under authors per column inch than any other fanzine around.)

But (and this should come as a surprise to him) I will say I think maybe Alex Panshin is RIGHT. ("The fault...is not in our stars but in ourselves.") Editors are awfully much like people, with many of the same weaknesses and problems, among them an occasional tendency to try to break the news gently. There are even editors who would rather say in kindness that they're bouncing a work because of the sex in it than because it is a lousy piece of writing altogether.

Also, there are editors, critics, and just plain readers who don't always know precisely what it is they don't like about a work. Some-

times an editor will just pick the most convenient hook to hang a rejection slip on. Also, there are even people who can't tell the difference between a bad book, and a book they just don't happen to like. Or a good book, and a book that just happens to push their personal buttons.

I commiserate with you, Geis, writing outgroup fiction. (I write that crazy Buck Jones stuff myself.) There seem to be those among us who assume that anyone writing in a category other than sf does so only because he can't make the grade in the Holy Field of Literature. (Are you asking if this is sour grapes? Well, I've sold all the sf I've ever written.

Anyway, Westerns are often cited as the worst kind of crap (ditto sex books), and I don't doubt that much of the worst kind of crap can be found in the category. But non-readers-of-the-genre tend to judge all Westerns by the garbage on TV. (What do they judge all sex books by?) ((The last sex book they bought—which didn't have enough sex in it to satisfy them.)) (Remember when all sf was judged by epic B pictures about giant turnips that ate Cleveland?) Many people seem to find it difficult to believe anyone would intentionally choose to write Westerns, especially for such an idiotic reason as liking them. I guess it's the same way with sex books, eh wot? ((Yup.))

●

MIKE DECKINGER
25 Manor Drive
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Newark, N.J.
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Everything Ted White says in PSY 26 about the enigmatic LeRoy Tanner makes sense, and I don't think he's become excessively aroused by requesting that editor Malzberg drop Tanner as a reviewer. I don't at all feel sorry for Algys Budrys being on the receiving end of Tanner's ill-minded criticisms. Budrys has used exactly the same trick before in GALAXY. In a review of Doubleday's The Best From Amazing Stories about a year ago, Budrys was the small boy with the big toy; the book's jacket revealed the editor, Joseph Ross, to be an English teacher, and with this pivotal (and totally irrelevant) bit of information Budrys constructed a frenzied attack against English teachers, Joseph Ross, and the book. Frederick Pohl neglected to tell him that he was hired to review The Best From Amazing Stories, not Joseph Ross. But I am told Budrys was incensed with Ultimate Publishing Co. because they reprinted a story of his (with their customary lack of payment) and managed to couple it with a blurb from another story. He could have written to Sol Cohen and honestly registered a complaint. Instead he chose to utilize his position as book reviewer to strike out at an editor who disagreed almost entirely with Cohen's policies.

Assuming that Heidelberg is victorious in capturing the 1970 convention, I wonder if many U.S. fans will express their resentment over losing a world convention to a foreign city through a pre-ordained ruling, by refusing to take out memberships. If this occurs, the foreign vote on the Hugo categories will become a significant elective factor. Just how big is the overseas circulation of PSYCHOTIC, anyway?

((Very small outside England.))

For your information—Paul W. Fairman's I, The Machine was based on a novel called We The Machine which he wrote for AMAZING in the early 50's under the house name Gerald Vance. Belmont will be publishing his first "Ivar Jorgenson" novel, Whom The Gods Would Slay in a few months. And, as "F.W. Paul", Fairman has been giving you competition with his "Man from the S.I.U.D." books from Lancer.

Dick Witter, of F&SF Book Co. allows discounts of 10% on orders of $10.00 or more, and discounts of 20% on orders of $25.00 or more. Stephen's and the other mailorder houses do not offer such an arrangement.

●

RICHARD M. SNEARY
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South Gate, Calif.

Your comment on Hugo winners only points up something that a few of us have been saying for years. ...the system isn't fair. Most people when voting are limited in choise to things they have read or seen. Right?! There-fore it follows that the more people who have read or seen a particular item, the better chance it has of being voted for.. If Warhoon is limited to FAPA and a hundred outside readers (I have no idea what the current circulation is) and Niaks goes to four hundred, is it little wonder it gets more votes? — Is it any wonder that tv programs win, rather than movies, or stage plays? You could have the finest stage play ever done, with top actors—and it 100% science fiction, and it probably couldn't even get nominated... — I doubt the Dangerous Visions had all the best short stories of the year—but it was a talked about book —thanks more to the editor than the book's content — and so more people read it and remembered it when it came time to vote..

What has been suggested is that at least part of the nomanating be done by a board of elected judges.. One's who could be counted on to have read or seen all that was good, and be able to judge the difference. They would make at least three niminations with two more being by popular vote... — I'd go even farther, and set up a 25 man pannel, and then let them decide the whole question.. It might not be as democratic, but the results would be more meaningfull... (It maybe the sign of snobbery, but I would value the prase of 25 Acti-fans over that of 200 neo- and fringe-fans.)

((The choosing of the panel, of course, would be an interesting problem.))

●

RAY FISHER
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63108

I was sorry to learn that you aren't immune to that insidious drug you sprinkle on certain copies of PSY, and have evidently nurtured a wrong impression in regard to ODD's eligibility for a fanzine Hugo in 1969. The by-laws governing award eligibility cover this subject rather explicitly. "No member of the then current convention committee, nor any publication closely connected with them shall be eligible for an award." (Come on, Dick! You surely knew this...it was even stated in PSYCHOTIC 26, in Ted White's letter.) ((I knew it...but had forgotten it. I'm not immersed in convention lore as are many fans. Sorry I cast an inadvertent aspersion your way.))

As Joyce and I are co-chairmaning St. Louiscon, ODD #19 could not have been "staking out a claim" for a Hugo in '69. And as for ODD making a strong bid for the '68 Hugo, allow me to point out that, (1) I didn't circulate nomination ballots with ODD; (2) when nominated I made no reference to it in ODD (Because I knew months ahead of time that the next ODD was going to be used to pitch our convention bid, not make a strong play for the Hugo); and (3) when ODD #19 was printed, it was held up and not mailed until after August 1, which was — not coincidentally — the deadline for the Hugo ballots to be received by the Baycon Committee. This is not a recommended course to be followed by any faned who's "making a bid" for the Hugo; it is, or so I like to believe, a rather good course to be followed by a Bidding Chairman who wants the fans to be familiar with the fan-center he represents before the convention begins. That's why I mailed out several hundred copies of ODD to California fans after the ballot deadline—so they'd get their copy just before the convention. That's also why your copy was mailed first class. (Frankly, I had hoped it would reach you in time to be reviewed in an issue of PSY that would come out just before Baycon, as such a review would have also helped to make the West Coast fans more aware that St. Louis has a large and active fan group. PSYCHOTIC 27 was a little late, so it didn't come out until after the convention. But, you can't win them all.) Don't misunderstand me. I by no means believe that the mass mailings of St. Louis fanzines —ODD was not the only St. Louis fanzine that had a heavy mailing in the California area just before the convention— was what won the bid for us. St. Louis has a lot of things going for it, and the mass mailings were only one point out of many. But I do think they helped to introduce to West Coast fandom the fact that there was a large, active and experienced fan group in St. Louis.

Certainly I'd like to have a Hugo someday; what fan editor wouldn't? But I was enough of a realist to recognise that ODD was not yet quite Hugo quality; and equally as important, I realized that there simply was not time available to do the work necessary to win a Hugo and win a convention bid. Putting on a good bid was what I concentrated on. It paid off.

((And my best wishes. I don't envy you all the work you've bitten off. I'm glad St. Louis got the con.))

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I was rather disappointed with the Hugos this year, m'self. I was much more impressed on both readings of Cthon than I was with one reading of Lord of Light. I somehow get the feeling that it won on the log-rolling of Ted White. Which makes me glad that Secret of the Marauder Satelite wasn't up. (Speaking of 'In the Heinlein tradition' books, betcha Rite of Passage will be a strong contender for next year's Hugo. It's an o.k. book, but several stupid things occur because they are Heinlein. Yet, it lacked the essential touch of mysticism Heinlein usually had. It also lacked a bridge game.) Cthon, I hope, will develop into a classic, while Lord of Light will remain "another Zelazny novel" like "The Pod and the Barrier" is "another Sturgeon story" —not one of the author's best, but you'll read it anyway if you're spaced out on that author.

When they said there was a tie for Best Novella, I thought, "Okay, one for Delany who has

one of his better fiction pieces up, and one for Farmer because he's the Guest of Honor and had a fair good story eligible. 'Cause it is just a little hard to get an Exact Numerical Tie on an Australian Ballot. And remember the Zelazny/Herbert tie at Tricon when Dune was well and away the best of the year and Zelazny was Guest of Honor." I just can't see "Weyr Search" winning. I re-read it, and the entire Dragonflight book. I can see "Dragonrider" (the two-parter in ANALOG) being nominated, it was eligible. I could see the book being nominated this year. But "Weyr Search" over "Star-Pit"? Oh come now! If Harlan had won any Hugos this year it should have been for "Pretty Maggie Money-eyes", the best thing he had up. But Leiber's "Gonna Roll the Bones" was the best thing he's done in years and deserves it, so I'm satisfied.

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((Below are some of Ted White's comments on PSY 26. His comments on PSY 27 will appear next issue.))

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You muse over the problem of Hugo votes from unqualified voters. I think this is a decreasing problem. I think that now the fan categories have been widened from one to three, unqualified voters are shying away from casting random votes. I base this only on our NyCon experience, of course, but I noticed at the time we were counting votes that while names I recognized (at least vaguely) voted in the fan categories, most of those I didn't left their spaces blank. It's easy for a nonfan to pick one title in one category out of the air and give it his X; it's a lot different when he's faced with three categories, and must rate them numerically. I suspect the nonfan says to himself: "Hmmm, this is that 'fandom' stuff. I'll skip it." And he does. Fans are no more or less intrinsically honest in these polls than anyone else, but at least on Hugo voting I think they try to vote intelligently. That was my impression from the NyCon Hugo ballots, anyway.

Spinrad's "New Worlds Coming" ... is far and away the best writing he's yet committed to fanzine print, or professional print either, for that matter. Perhaps the fact that he is talking about someone else is the deciding factor; in any case, this column will, if it can maintain the standards of its first instalment, be one of your magazine's best items.

Nonetheless, I have one quibble: Spinrad parenthetically categorizes Lord of Light as "a symbolic novel" or "allegory." I don't think it is. Most good writers are talking about, or implying, a situation to some extent more universal than the one explicit in their stories, and certainly Zelazny does this, but I don't think the major weight of Lord of Light rests in its allegorical or symbolic content. This is, if anything, only the added bonus we've come to expect (in some form) from Roger.

"The Violent Ward": I wish you'd commented at greater length on AUSTRAILIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #16, because I'd really like to check my reaction to Blish's contribution against someone else's.

I was pulling for Blish. As you know, I have a low and maybe even bitter opinion of Moskowitz, and I've always thought of Blish as a sharp and incisive critic who could wield the scalpel with the best of them. I was looking forward to Blish's long-forecast 7,000 word rebuttal to Moskowitz. If anyone could rend Moskowitz and reduce him to his proper role in the field, I thought, Blish could.

I was wrong. Reading Moskowitz and Blish side by side, I was disappointed. It seemed to me that Blish equivocated where he should have stood firmly, that he used Moskowitz's own tricks against SaM (as in his footnote to his title, which lies by implication: SaM's clumsy joke occupied only the first four minutes of his twenty-some minute presentation at the NyCon), and that he picked nits endlessly while dodging the major questions. I do not think that he succeeded in that which he set out to prove: Moskowitz's incompetency. In fact, he compares poorly with Moskowitz on the basis of the two pieces in ASFR #16.

Letters: Spinrad was in New York the week or so before the Milford Conference this year, and I ran into him at nearly every fan gathering held here during that time: a party at Andy Porter's, the Fanoclast meeting here, and the Lunarians meeting (at Frank Dietz's) the next night. The results of our confrontation will disappoint anyone who was expecting blood: we swapped Scott Meredith stories, gossip on the professional scene, Star Trek dirt, and talked about Harlan Ellison. We also decided not to carry our "feud" in PSY any further.

As far as Norm's books and his feelings about their acceptance and/or rejection go, I

think we shall have to agree to disagree. However, his letter in this ((#26)) Psy does bring up some points which I think I can discuss without bitterness or invective.

The first is this business about "truth." My instinctive reaction is that anyone still hung up on expressing "truth" in his art (broad-term sense, there; I don't mean just writers) is still not past the early, self-conscious stage yet. Anyone who writes on a level above hack-work expresses a reflection of his view of truth in everything he does. This is so elemental that it hardly demads discussion.

But I also wonder if a preoccupation with "truth" isn't a bit journalistic. It is not our function as fiction writers to tell any objective truths. This way lies the fallacy of the "one true future". Some people have asked me how I can portray mutually opposed futures in differing books. "Which one is the real one?" they ask.

More recently Brian Aldiss has been telling us we can't write about faster-than-light drive anymore, because it's a 'lie'. Perhaps it is, for Brian. It isn't to me, because I don't know whether it is possible or not, and I am concerned in sf with possibilities more than probabilities.

But if there's any "truth" in my stuff, it lies in an occasional shared insight into human behavior, and that's about as far as I intend to take the whole question. "Truth" is something which occupies the attention of more would-be writers than actual writers. (This is less a reply to Spinrad than a series of comments sparked by him. I've heard this "truth" business far more often from the hippy and avant-garde writers in NYC than I have from anyone in sf.)

Spinrad's reactions to my letter indicate I touched a nerve. But the name-calling he indulged in is more likely to help him vent steam than it is to prove any of his points. I hope I've seen the last of it, because if I was honest in admitting my own reactions to his original article, I think Norman was dishonest in setting down these reactions: I'm sure they overstate his actual feelings.

I'm bothered though by this charge that I'm a liar. I quoted the last paragraph on the phone to Alex Panshin, and Alex said, "You know, that's one thing I'd never accuse you of. You're almost painfully honest." Well, not always, but at least in this case. The points Norm raised to prove me a liar are not examples of knowing falsehood on my part, but of simple error.

I stated that Bug Jack Barron hadn't been written when the first two chapters were read at Milford, and there I was completely in error. (I was also corrected by Terry Carr when he saw my letter in PSY.) However, my point was that no one at Milford had praised the book as a whole, because only the first two chapters had been laid out to be read. I assumed the rest of the book was not yet written, but it was not essential to my point: Spinrad had claimed a reaction to the book as a whole, and this was not true. It is still not true.

It is also a fact that I did not know the actual number of people who disliked what they read of Bug Jack Barron at Milford. This is again a case of my relying on heresay: I wasn't there. I was told "several" people didn't like the two chapters, and I accepted that thatement without inquiring the actual number. If, however, the actual number was two, I stand corrected. Spinrad claimed universal admiration and two of those he claimed abstained from it.

So much for the "lies". Norman is mistaken in believing that I want to "sneak things into my books" as "a kind of judo." There's nothing sneaky about what I've done in my books, as I think Norman would agree, were he to read any of them. I've put across some fairly strong sentiments in my juveniles (the second has been described as "grim"by one reader), but I believe —as I said before—in letting my readers draw their own conclusions about war, killing, etc., rather'n hitting them over the head with a preachy li'l sermon on the subject. That is the judo I spome of, Norman. It's called "subtlety"

Deindorfer's letter is another example of the "truth" syndrome I mentioned a ways back. I think it's significant that Gary has yet to sell anything, and I suspect that the comments on druds by Dean Koontz and Sprague deCamp may be relevant to this fact. Gary is hung up on getting across something real, something true, something spontaneous and with "balls". But what the hell has any of that to do with something good? Gary has sacrificed standards in order to be true to his drug-inspired visions. If he can accurately set down those moments of "now," then he has done all he wants to do.

But who gives a shit?

Several years ago I tried to explain to Ray Nelson why I'd rejected three of his novels at Lancer Books. I couldn't seem to get it across to him that they weren't well-constructed or well-told. "But, they're true," he kept telling me. "You don't understand." But he hadn't understood.

This white-heat method of writing, which Gary seems to espouse, had for one of its strongest exponents Jack Kerouac. But Kerouac's most "honest" book, and his best — the only one to endure — was On The Road, his most edited and rewritten book. The ones that were published as

he first-drafted them remain awful. Maybe a few geniuses can do this spontaneous thing well and bring it off; most can't. And those who most often do are those writers who, like Phil Dick, have practiced their craft as writers for so long that it's second-nature to them and the editing and revision all takes place internally, before fingers touch a typer key. (On a lower level, both you and I, Geis, do the same thing. But at least we don't regarde our first drafts as inviolate.)

Gary also wonders why "People like Norman Spinrad don't submit their stuff to places like Grove, New Directions, Dial Press, etc." I suspect their are two reasons: to begin with, many of the smaller (amd thusly more daring) publishers probably don't pay very well. Secondly, publishers like Grove are swamped with submissions and have lists of regular authors to maintain as well. Grove turned down a Zelazny novel a year ago. (Doubleday has since bought it.)

You might as well ask, "Why not submit to Harper & Row?" Actually, some sf authors do; they are also most often turned down.

Have you really seen things, Gary, which would blow our minds? Will your book, telling it like it really is, threaten our smug and peaceful existences? I doubt it.

However, I applaud Gary's final paragraph. Lowering the barriers and becoming human beings with one another is, perhaps, the most Dangerous Vision of them all. (And that, if I read Sturgeon correctly, is what the man was trying to do in his DV story, before he got hung up on the shock value of incest.)

I really wonder how much word-of-mouth sells the sf magazines. I suspect Harry Warner is living in a fantasy world in which everyone talks to his neighbor or the man next to him on his train about the latest issue of IF. Word-of-mouth is restricted to fandom, I think; in all my years of haunting the newsstands, I've bumped into only one proto-fan — and that was in 1953, when I was fourteen and eager to proseletize. Most of my non-sf-reading neighbors regard it as an arcane literature; I've yet to have a neighbor who did read sf in fact, although illustrator Dick Francis lived two floors below me when I lived in Manhattan. (I'm sure he never read the stories he illustrated...) Too few people buy IF, Harry — and they're too thinly spread across the country. Seventy thousand people out of how many millions?

Andrew Offutt (I refuse to put him in lowercase; the last person I did that for was Damon Knight, and I won't do it any more even for a friend as close as Rich Brown) says all the sex in the GALAXY-Beacon books was on their covers, but he's wrong. He just read the wrong book. The Farmer books were sexy for their day (although they never excited me much on that level), and a number of the Beacon reprints had sex scenes added to them, sometimes by the author and sometimes by editor Gold. I suggest Offutt check out the STARTLING version of George O. Smith's Troubled Star with the Beacon version, for example.

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MONOLOG....
...with a single, whining voice, the editor.....

We come now to a Reply to all those fans who took issue with me and Ed Cox on our reviews of Alexei Panshin's Rite Of Passage. Most of the comment was to me, so I'll undertake to answer.

Almost everyone took me to task by maintaining that too-adult, overcontrolled girls do indeed exist, and Panshin should not be put down for using such a characterization in his book.

I don't question for a moment the existence of such teenage personalities. My point was that the book had been praised for its depiction of a teenage girl...and what I found was not a typical girl, but an atypical one who talked, behaved and thought too much like an adult, and that this characterization was almost mandatory because of the plot requirements.

But my major criticism of the book is of its pace and structure. I thought the book too slow and uninteresting in the first two thirds, and by comparison too quick in the Trial portion; the two parts showed their different origins and welding.

Dean Koontz asks me to excuse the flaws in Rite Of Passage because it is a first novel. He thinks I lack critical perspective. But the publisher didn't mention on the cover that the prospective buyer should beware—first novel, nor was the price reduced. The book was sent out to stand or fall on its merits——and critical perspective comes after we see what Alexei does with his Anthony Villiers series for Ace which is now being issued. I'm reading the first one now: Star Well.

I should have made more clear in my review of Rite that Alexei's handling of fiction technique is quite good, in spots impressive.

There has been a lot of varying comment about the ending of the book: the Ship's destruction of all life on the Trial planet. This area is moot; it all depends on the reader's values and perception of reality...and knowledge of self and others. I think Alexei was trying too hard to point up a Message about the current world situation and Colonialism/Imperialism in general...and that the internal plausibility of his book was strained because of it.

The book obviously has something, though; it was read widely and provoked a great deal of review/comment in the fan press.

Ted White has an interesting comment about the ending: "The ship's crew made the wrong decision. That the author — and Mia — consider it wrong is made obvious in the conclusion. My own interpretation is that Panshin, after writing a Heinleinesque novel, chose not only a Heinlein ending, but did so in a way that would make his readers aware that Heinlein's kind of ending was wrong. (But don't quote me as quoting Panshin on this: it's strictly my own reaction.)"

Richard Delap joins Ted White in maintaining that the on-planet Trial period is not the "story" part of the book, but is the weakest section.

It all comes down to which end you view as the dog and which the tail...and which is wagging which.

Vonda McIntyre makes the point that the natives of the destroyed planet, used as slaves by the colonists, were another reason why the Ship people would not have voted to wipe-out all life because "Half the ship was up in arms because the natives...might have been sentient." True, but to be a devil's advocate for a moment: the natives of Vietnam might be human, too, in those "truck parks" and "storage areas" and "troop concentration areas" which we destroy with saturation B-52 raids...and which we are not told are actually villages. Ah, semantics.

And, finally, let us end this with a note that Rite Of Passage is getting a lot of nominations for the Nebulla ballot as Best Novel.

Thanks to BUZ BUSBY, KAY ANDERSON, GREG BENFORD, ANDY PORTER and RICK BROOKS for their comments on the matter. And thanks to anyone I've neglected to mention. Your comments will be cut out, pasted on sheets of paper and sent first to Ed Cox for his delight-in-reading, and then forwarded to Alexei Panshin, who actually earned them far more than I or Ed.

Keep them cards and letters coming, people, but please don't type on both sides of the paper!

I HAVE JUST DISCOVERED that I have not printed all of Harry Warner, Jr.'s letter that I wanted to print; his comment on John Christopher's article last issue follows.

"There's another possible reason for the state of the arts that John Christopher describes. Increasingly , this is a world in which most occupations require at least a moderate amount of training, and almost all the good-paying vocations demand a large amount of both education and ability. Meanwhile, the arts provide a field for the people who have dubious ability and no training at all to create a commotion and sometimes even to be accepted as geniuses; it's no longer necessary to demonstrate ability to write invertible counterpoint or paint a recognizable portrait to be considered eligible to experiment with advanced composition or artwork. Things used to be just the other way around: financial success in business came to the person who was lucky enough to be born into a rich family or hit the jackpot through a combination of circumstances into which he stumbled by accident, and you had to go through a long apprenticeship to be an artist — there was a time when a person training as a singer wasn't allowed to try anything as complicated as a melody until he'd spent years and years on scales and sustained tones."

And:

"Your letter column amused me mightily with all those pros, scarred by their battles in the marketplace and wise in the ways of literary conflicts, acting as terrified as I am at the violence of Psy's wordslinging. I fully expect to see John Hersey and Tennessee Williams expressing their opinions of Ted White and Norman Spinrad by the issue after next."

Umm...anybody know their addresses?

I-ALSO-RECEIVED-LETTERS-FROM:

...JAY KINNEY...ALEX KIRS...MIKE MONTGOMERY... LEO P. KELLEY...ELLIOT KAY SHORTER...CHRIS WALKER...GABE EISENSTEIN...ANDY MAIN...ED REED...JIM ASHE...TED PAULS...MICHAEL D. GLICKSOHN...JERRY LAPIDUS...LYN VERYZER...NEAL A. GOLDFARB...JERRY KAUFMAN...VAUGHN F. BODE...SETH DOGRAMAJIAN.... LOUIS A. MORRA...TED B. TOM...KAY ANDERSON...BUZ BUSBY...JACK GAUGHAN...VONDA MCINTYRE...DEAN R. KOONTZ...DICK ELLINGTON...JOHN BERRY...MARTY HELGESEN...RICHARD DELAP...ROY TACKET...RICHARD BERGERON...DAVID C. PIPER...ALAN DODD...H.K. BULMER ...JOHN BRUNNER...and others. No room no room!


Jack Gaughan