

SCIENCE
FICTION
REVIEW

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

29

JANUARY 1969

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Dialog

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

"What is that you have in your hot little hands, Geis?"

"This is a fanzine called DIFFERENT, published by Sam Moskowitz when the spirit moves him..."

"About once a year? I see it is number 30."

"Yes, and aside from a front page editorial by SaM, the remaining 39 pages are taken up by an "essay" by J.J. Pierce titled "Science Fiction and the Romantic Tradition."

"An "essay"?"

"He calls it an essay. It isn't, really. It is more a propaganda tract."

"Let me see it. Hmmm. Well. It seems to have the form of an essay. It has all kinds of quotations in it. It looks scholarly as hell."

"It doesn't have footnotes."

"Oh, come now, Geis!"

"Hah. A little joke. To get laughably serious...as Pierce is...his effort is to show that the mainstream of American writing has been dominated and controlled by a small band of "literateurs" who prefer stories about "frustrates, jerks, homosexuals and commuters who are unhappy with their wives." This is a quote from Heinlein and Pierce is very fond of it—he repeats it about a dozen times through his diatribe."

"You are harsh, Geis."

"I'm trying, believe it or not, to be objective. Pierce rails up and down about these "literateurs" and their dragging realism into fiction. Pierce is for Romanticism, which he takes to mean stories with idealism and faultless heroes...heroes a growing boy can look up to and try to emulate."

"And you—"

"I am presenting the gist of his argument, not taking sides...yet."

"Your words are colored a bit by a value judgement."

"Possible. Possible. But to get on with it—he then goes on to assert that science fiction has developed its own set of Literateurs who are trying to Take Over and Ruin sf by injecting the hated realism, or Naturalism. Hence, claims Pierce, we are getting more and more stories and novels about 'frustrates, jerks, homosexuals—"

"Geis, are you sure he uses that quotation that often?"

"Check for yourself."

"Umm...umm...two...three...four...five...six... I'll take your word for it. This ^{is} really fanatic stuff, isn't it?"

"Well, I'll say there is an argument to be made in the area Pierce is thrashing around in, but he is not the one to make it. His presentation is shallow, juvenile, insulting, uninformed, obtuse, slanted, sophomoric, and likely the despair of a logical and fair person like Isaac Asimov and of Lester del Rey whom Pierce claims are With Him in his 'Holy War against those who seek to destroy science fiction.'"

"Who are 'those'?"

"Those are, in Pierce's view, the writers and promoters of the New Wave or the New Thing in sf, and specifically, Judith Merrill and Damon Knight, along with J.G. Ballard, Tom Disch, Harlan Ellison, Norman Spinrad, Brian Aldiss, Michael Moorcock, Kurt Vonnegut and John Barth, to name those I can find quickly in the text."

"God only knows what he will say when he reads the Philip Farmer and Hank Stine books reviewed in this issue of SFR, eh, Geis?"

"Pierce writes like a neurotic high school kid. And, right, I imagine he will NOT like the new Farmer and Stine books. If he is allowed to read them. They're for adults."

"Aha, a zinger. Why do you dislike the boy?"

"I dislike bad writing...and bad thinking. J.J. betrays enormous quantities of both in this weird effort that Moskowitz

saw fit to publish."

"Do you think SaM embraces this Holy War, too?"

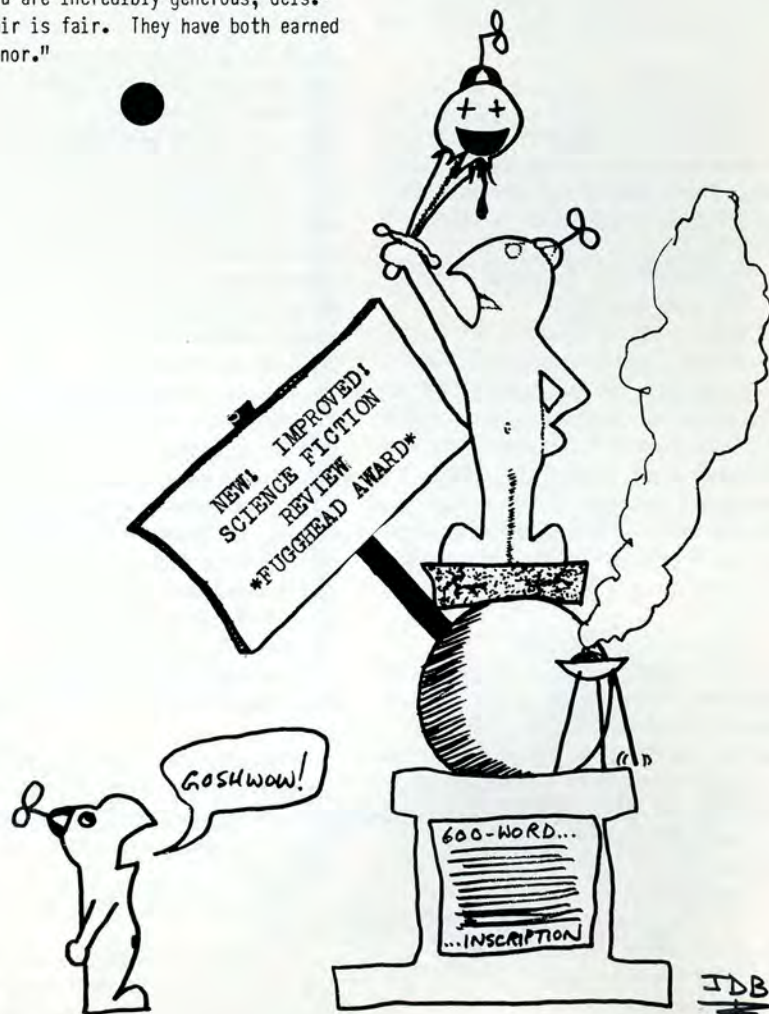
"He says he does in his editorial. He also says J.J. Pierce is the physical incarnation of Hari Seldon."

"Eh? Is SaM putting us on?"

"I would like to think so, but I fear not. SaM has been nominated for the PSYCHOTIC (and now SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW) Fugghead Award in the recent past, and now, by Ghu, I have to give it to him, and a Fugghead Award of similar weight and import is hereby given to John Jeremy Pierce!"

"You are incredibly generous, Geis."

"Fair is fair. They have both earned this honor."



"As a conscience-carrying, indoctrinated-as-a-child, residual puritan, Geis, I must say I am disturbed by a recent movie you have seen."

"What do you object to?"

"CANDY. Surely you don't think that was a good movie?"

"Well...a fair movie, but I have reservations for reasons other than yours. The picture had two enclosing science fictional scenes (a shimmering pure-mind alien comes to Earth from inter-galactic space and inhabits the mind of Candy at the start of the picture, and departs at the end of the picture) which I don't recall being in the book. The obvious purpose of the alien presence is to provide a built-in copout. A pretty, normal, 16 year old girl wouldn't behave THAT WAY with a variety of men, including her father and uncle unless she was controlled, the object of an experiment, the tool of an alien who wanted to investigate this weird planet and its weird inhabitants."

"But the picture was crudely done!"

"Yes, in many respects it was. There was too much of our good old American handed bad taste in it and not enough of the sly mockery the British are capable of—as in BEDAZZLED."

"And those Big Name actors behaving so insanely—"

"It was a romp for Aznavour, Brando, Burton, Coburn, Huston, Matthau and Ringo Starr—doing segments that too often were not funny, weren't funny enough, or simply dragged on too long...the Brando-as-yogi bit, especially. But there were some fine lines and hilarious scenes."

"If you want my opinion—"

"I've had your opinion. There is more I wish to say, however."

"Oh, do go on, Geis. I know you must hog the spotlight all the time."

"Exactly. Now, I think the basic trouble is that the particular kind of satire and sexuality present in CANDY—the-book is not possible to translate to the motion picture. On the screen the actors are too real, too solid and too obviously human beings, and their posturing in this movie just doesn't "take" and fails to even come

close to the wild fantasy-satire required."

"So the movie should not have been attempted!"

"It isn't that bad. But I would have liked it to have been conceived and executed as an animated feature. It might have been superb in that medium."

"You have a bleery-eyed look about you, Geis. Been seeing a lot of movies lately, hah?"

"Yup."

"Care to give out with some capsule pearls-of-wisdom comments?"

"Yup. THE GRADUATE was superbly directed and acted...but the ending was old-fashioned incredible happy-ending, and even though the audience cheered and clapped when the suddenly determined hero got the girl, I felt sceptical."

"Cynic."

"Yup. With THE GRADUATE was PRUDENCE AND THE PILL, a bedroom farce with David Niven and Deborah Kerr. It was amusing."

"Cynic."

"I saw THE YELLOW SUBMARINE and loved it. There is more to it than meets the dazzled eye."

"Cynic."

"Yup. With THE YELLOW SUBMARINE was PAPER LION, a surprisingly good, entertaining movie."

"Cynic."

"Yup. I also saw CAMELOT, a curious two-level blend of comedy and tragedy that doesn't mix. But for all that it was a worthwhile film. Great songs."

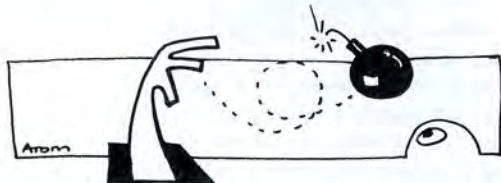
"Cynic."

BITS AND PIECES...

• If anyone knows of the whereabouts of Roger Nelson, who ran a "Collector's Corner" at the Baycon, please send me his address.

Continued on page 18

A Column By Ted White



FIRST THINGS FIRST: This will be my last column within these pages for the time being. It is an accident of fate that an earlier version of this column was not in PSYCHOTIC 27 — I had it written and ready to mail when an advance copy of that issue reached me by first-class mail — and perhaps the things I have yet to say would have been better said in that issue. But I missed it, and that is that.

The long arm of coincidence has plucked at my sleeve and beckoned. By the time you read this, I shall be hard at work as the new managing editor of AMAZING and FANTASTIC. The timing is exquisite.

One has to appreciate the ironies, of course. Only a few months ago I wrote my column for PSY 26, and put both my feet solidly into what might easily have been a most enjoyable feud with both the just-retired editor of AMAZING and FANTASTIC, Harry Harrison, and the then-new editor, Barry Malzberg. Subsequently, at the Baycon, I won a Hugo as Best Fanwriter of 1967, and was named as the Fan Guest of Honor at the forthcoming St. Louiscon. Both events locked me solidly in as a fan.

Last week, following a conversation with Bob Silverberg, Sol Cohen — a man I had never before met, never talked to, never even written a letter to — called me on the phone to tell me that he was looking for a new editor for his magazines. Two days later we had lunch, and he informed me that he and Malzberg had come to a parting of the ways. He wondered if I was interested in the job.

Now you're chuckling.

I told Mr. Cohen I was indeed interested. We discussed details. We have yet more details to discuss. But unless something totally unforeseen occurs, I expect you'll be seeing my name on the mastheads of both magazines within a few months.

It's not a big-money job. In fact, if I was interested solely in money, I would have to turn it down. It is going to demand more of my time than it will reasonably pay for. I understand that: I accept it. AMAZING and FANTASTIC will be my new 'fanzines'. It will be fanac, in the most important sense: a job done more out of enthusiasm than for money.

I am enthusiastic. I believe that I can, working within the limits described by circumstances, make both into better magazines, more worthy of your interest. I will not have anything approaching dictatorial powers over the magazines — and very little control over their appearance, the visual package — but I will be allowed considerable editorial rein, and I intend to exercise it.

Those of you who are old friends will recall that this job is in many respects a long-cherished dream I've held: a goal, never too specific, which I've long worked for and hoped for. My years with F&SF laid some of the groundwork, but my ambitions predated that.

Last year I announced a cooperative project, STELLAR. Originally designed to be a low-budget semi-prozine, it grew — when I entered into partnership with Al Shuster, the printer — into an ambitious project. Too ambitious: it floundered on the dry sands of under-capitalization. I had high hopes for the magazine, because it represented a new approach to sf magazine merchandising and production. Produced in some respects like a book, STELLAR would have been sold, at a dollar a copy, in bookstores, its profits shared as royalties with its contributors, both authors and artists.

I still think the idea is valid, and I offer its details to anyone who wants them, but I am not sufficiently the businessman to handle all the necessary details, and I have not had either the money or the time to sacrifice (without pay) to put STELLAR into production this last year.

STELLAR — project STELLAR — must now die aborning. I shall return all subscription monies as soon as I can, and with them, copies of the cover for the first issue, already printed, as a memento and a Thanks, to those who encouraged us. As much of the material I collected that I can I will rebuy, if the contributors are willing, for use in AMAZING or FANTASTIC. Some of the material is lost to me by virtue of the time lost. Roger Zelazny's "At The Carnival of Life" has already been sold elsewhere as part of a larger work, *Creatures of Light and Darkness*. Lee Hoffman's "The Caves of Karst" will be published this coming spring by Ballantine Books. Her

second novel, *Always The Black Night*, may still be available for serializing in AMAZING or FANTASTIC, before its book publication. Samuel Delany's "The Fisherman's Net" will probably appear in one of the two magazines, as also will "What's Your Excuse" by Alexei Panshin.

I'm sorry STELLAR could not be, but I'm pleased that what I could not do with STELLAR I will be able to do, in part, with AMAZING and FANTASTIC.

I have not yet made firm plans in my mind for these two magazines, but I can promise the return of the letter columns, the retention of the present book-reviewing staff, and the addition of a fan feature — probably fanzine reviews. I want to rebuild the personality of these two magazines into challenging, involving organisms. I don't think that phoney controversy is the way: there will be no more "Leroy Tanners" under any names. Beyond this, my mind is open. I shall inherit a sizable inventory, purchased by both my predecessors, not all of which I shall care for, I'm sure. It will take more than a year before I will be able — I hope — to point to a pair of magazines concretely mine in editorial outlook and expression. In the meantime, bear with me.

Under the circumstances, you can understand why this must be my last column. I shall be curtailing all fanac in general, simply because I can't figure out a forty-eight-hour day — and in specific it seems to me now that the nature of this column is incompatible with the stance



"IF YOU DON'T MOVE, I'LL PUT A BULLET IN YOUR HEAD..."



the editor of AMAZING and FANTASTIC must take. The Bludgeon started out a fannish column, but PSYCHOTIC is now SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, and the Bludgeon had already evolved, with some uncertainty, into a column of commentary on the sf community rather than fandom itself. To some degree, this change was prophetic; it was also unfortunate.

OLD BUSINESS: The ferocity of response to my last column came to me as a shock. It was primarily shocking because I had not expected to witness the spectacle of two men of stature — or so I'd thought them — in our field stooping to mindless mudslinging. It was shocking because I had expected a defensive response — one doesn't question someone's morals without raising his hackles — but not one which in its very viciousness so completely confirmed my charges.

As Ted White, fan, I could thoroughly enjoy a slam-bang, knock-about feud with Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss — two individuals for whom I now have absolutely no respect — not alone because I know the ease of besting them. But as Ted White, editor, this pleasant recreation is denied me. I regret that. Life is about, I fear, to become a little tamer for me.

Nonetheless, I think a final statement is called for, and I thus tender it:

My entire discussion of the "Tanner" case was concerned with principles, not personalities. The purpose of that column was to examine the "Tanner" attack on Budrys, and, by exposure, to discredit it. I might add that one of my

motivating reasons was the fact that I myself was initially taken in by the false statements of supposed fact published over "Tanner's" name, and that bugged me quite as much as anything.

Brian Aldiss' reaction to this was a counter-attack: I was defending Budrys' 'crime' of reviewing his own book. (In the same column in which Budrys wrote his review of the Harrison-Aldiss Nebula Awards volume, the review "Tanner" attacked in AMAZING, he also offered some rather apologetic remarks on his *The Amsirs* and the *Iron Thorn*. It was an explanation of his intentions, and seemed to convey his uncertainty that every reader would appreciate them.) Budrys is not the first reviewer to review his own book, but he is the first to do so under his own name, without pretense. Aldiss dragged in a red-herring, and it smells.

Harrison's reaction was more vehement, if no more perceptive: "His entire column boils down to a personal attack on me and I wish I knew what motivates him." Since the "Tanner" topic occupied roughly three-fifths of the column, then I take it this is a tacit admission that Harrison did write the "Tanner" review under discussion. If this is so, Harry's inability to understand what motivated me is obvious: anyone so purblind as to write and publish that piece would be in no position to understand anyone's motivation in opposing him.

I am not surprised. Harry's entire letter is a classic example of its kind: a blind, gut-emotional reaction of invective, condescension, smears and lies. He offers several totally irrelevant (and incorrectly remembered) anecdotes, but refrains from once confronting the facts, either to deny or confirm them. His entire letter is, except in what it says by implication, totally beside the point.

There is little point in my replying to Harry's excessively inflammatory descriptions of me, but he does offer a number of (supposed) facts. Some of these deserve reply.

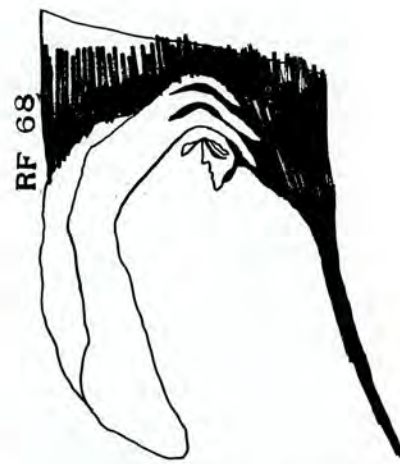
At least one is given the lie in the same lettercolumn in which Harry's letter appears. "After the first [Tanner] reviews appeared," Harry states, "I received two letters about them; one pro, one con. I printed them both in their entirety." The 'con' letter, he makes clear, was mine. But mine was not the only letter which criticised "Tanner's" negative review of *Lord of Light*: on page 42, Piers Anthony Jacob states, "I wrote an objection to the Tanner review of *Lord of Light*, feeling that a fine book had been wronged..." and notes a reply from Harry in confirmation. Additionally, Terry Carr

tells me he too wrote Harrison to object to the review. I suspect others did as well. A minor point, perhaps, but an example of Harrison's veracity in this case.

Harry also takes exception — as does Aldiss — to my quoting a Moskowitz criticism of Harrison & Aldiss from the sacrosanct files of the SFWA FORUM. But Harry ignores the fact that Moskowitz's complaint was not confined to the FORUM; if it had I would probably not have mentioned it. But then, Harry didn't even read my own statement carefully: "In the first SFWA FORUM, as well as in his FAPAZINE, DIFFERENT, Sam Moskowitz..."

The story about Jack Vance's Hugo is not only totally irrelevant to anything previously discussed — and obviously raised by Harry solely in an attempt to embarrass me by counter-attack — but is also riddled with false statements and several outright accusations of lies on my part. Since Jack Vance now has his Hugo, has discussed the entire situation with me on quite amiable terms, and has accepted my apologies for the delay, I cannot see the point in rehashing the story. Suffice to say, Harry, who offered his services in accepting Jack's Hugo for him at the Nycon 3, returned it to us immediately afterwards, with the excuse that he lives "some 600 miles from Jack." Harry overlooks the fact that we live some 3,000 miles from Mr. Vance. Soon after, the Vance Hugo, like two others (Meskys' and Panshin's) became parted from its epoxy glue at the base, and gathered dust on a high shelf while I concerned myself with the neglected duties of earning a living for myself — postponed by convention preparations for some six months. It was reglued. It again came apart. It was reglued once more, and taken to the Baycon, where, upon arrival, it was discovered to have come apart again. Jim Benford and I bought fresh epoxy cement, and it was once more reglued and presented to Jack Vance. Harry makes a great deal of this story, and says I am lying when I said the Hugo became unglued. His omniscience is staggering. It is also wrong.

Harry is correct only once. His is correct in stating that John Campbell is not receptive to "ass-licking," and I very much regret that implication in my remark about Harry's editorship of the collected volume of Campbell's editorials. Indeed, I herewith apologize to Campbell for the implication. However, the entire point was paranthetic to the core of that particular argument, which was this: If a man who appears to sell the bulk of his work to ANALOG edits a volume of ANALOG editorials, and then



plugs them as a "must-buy" in another, widely circulated, book, what are we to make of him? Cannot Harry realize the extent to which he has compromised himself?

Finally, need I point out, that if "ass-licker" is a phrase Harry finds repugnant for his own use, the context of his letter and the language it uses hardly confirm the fact.

I have discussed the Harrison and Aldiss letters in PSY 27 with a number of people and some of their reactions disturb me. None of them think the more highly of Harrison or Aldiss, but several held the impression that my own original comments must have been no better — and no better phrased — than the replies, in order to generate such heated replies.

Perhaps they are right. If so, clearly in letting my own emotions run away with me I prejudiced my case. That would be too bad, because I believe this is one dispute which deserves to be judged on its merits, and not by the volume of its invective. I believe the principles I stood for are right and correct ones, and if I stooped to the level of Harrison and Aldiss, then I have violated those principles as surely as have they.

But I suspect too that many of you, like some I've talked with, having no great involvement with the case in question, retain only the most generalized memories of anything but the most recent salvo published. And if this is the case, I suggest you dig up both my column in PSY 26 and the replies in 27 and read them side-by-side. I think the contrast will be (or should be) illuminating. And I say it now, because this is my own final comment on the situation and I shall not be replying to any further

responses. Enough is enough. If truth be known, reading those letters sickened me. They are not what I expect of grown men, nor what I expected in reply to that column. They made the title of the fanzine in which they appeared all too explicitly true. And that's not what I'm here for.

THE GOOD GUYS ARE HERE: The reason I missed the deadline for my column last issue is a simple one: the Baycon. It was one of those cons that starts early and ends late, and the good in it lives on yet.

We drove back via northern California's redwoods, Idaho's lava beds, Wyoming's Grand Tetons and land of the big smokes, South Dakota's Black Hills and Badlands, and Illinois's Bob Tucker, and it was not the breakneck three-thousand-miles/four-days trip that our drive out had been. But I was still exhausted. Seven thousand, one hundred miles, in round figures, all in three weeks. And somewhere, sandwiched in the middle, the best worldcon I've ever attended.

I'd been planning to offer an apology to Bill Donaho anyway — and would have last time if that column hadn't run away with me — for accusing him in several spots of being the Devil behind all those minor aspects of the Baycon's preparations which annoyed me. Bill wrote me a letter (still buried somewhere under the recent precipitation of mail) in which he plaintively suggested that he was not, himself, solely, the Secret Master of the Baycon, and, more specifically, not the one responsible for the Baycon's curiously capricious handling of the Art Show. He felt that in suggesting he was carrying a feud with Bjo Ioo far I was missing the mark. And I was going to do the Right Thing and publicly apologize to Bill. I still feel that any policy which can consider Jeff Jones a "fan" artist and Jack Gaughan a "pro" artist for purposes of discrimination is blind in one eye and deaf in one ear, but I simply can't protest the point with anything approaching my former vigor. The Art Show was empty this year, and I suspect that the Baycon policies are responsible, but I really just don't give a damn. I enjoyed the con too much.

It was a subjective Baycon of course. In my case I skipped all the program but the opening session (itself a drag), the Banquet (a bore) and the consite bidding session (tense, exciting, and victorious), and concentrated upon that which I firmly believe a good convention should be — at least for me: good times with good friends.

We arrived Wednesday evening and checked in to the Claremont. We quickly ran into the Benfords, and then the Fishers. Somehow (my memory is foggy) we consolidated them. (Or was that the next night...? Well, this isn't a con report, anyway.) It was like that the rest of the con. Thursday we rose around noon (our standard hour for facing each new day) and discovered the pool and the whirlpool bath next to it, with the Benfords and Benford wives. The Silverbergs happened by our poolside roost. Etc. Parties in the evening. Dinners in exotic restaurants. Fun. The fannishness flowed like Pepsi. We never got enough sleep, but a bracing time in the pool and the whirlpool always restored us well enough to function. I was on a fatigue-high much of the time.

The con was divided into Good Guys and Bad Guys, and a lot of unnecessary neutrals who cluttered up the halls but kept out of our way and (surprise!) never invaded our Closed Door Parties.



ies (most of which wound up in 127, our room). It was amazing how completely the convention stratified; this may be a function of the Truly Large Con. This was my first year in three years to Just Take It Easy, and the first year in which I could observe this phenomenon. With so many people about (1200 in attendance), it was easy to preserve privacy among one's own clique: the Big City Phenomenon (as opposed to the Small Town Phenomenon of everyone being in to everyone else's pockets which prevails at the chummier regionals and smaller worldcons).

Good Guys vs. Bad Guys: a purely subjective description, that. To me the Good Guys were Our Gang. To the Bad Guys we were the Bad Guys. (I still relish F.M. Busby's perfect retort to Bad Guy Harriett Kolchack when she hectored us in the

hall one night.)

And, for me, the Baycon was a con where the Good Guys won. In fannish terms, anyway.

A month before the con, Ray Fisher phoned me to ask if I'd be the St. Louiscon's Fan Guest of Honor. I was flattered as all hell, but I asked Ray if my rather vocal support for his bid would not be embarrassing if I was named Fan GoH. "Well, hell, Ted," Ray said. "We're bound to get some beefs, no matter what."

I did withdraw from my role as Seconder of the St. Louis bid, and asked Terry Carr to speak in my place (which he did, quite effectively). And I wrote absolutely nothing more on the merits of the respective bids for the fan press (or anything else, comes to that). But I was not surprised when, after Ray announced that I would be Fan GoH, there were some strong boos mixed in with the applause. The Bad Guys, after all, had lost, and I was possibly the chief villain in their eyes.

Still, the reactions I received after Ray made that announcement rendered me (for the first, but not the last time) almost speechless. So few people have made it a point to shower me with congratulations in the past that I never developed any instinctive reactions for such a situation, and I floundered. Bjo stuck out her hand and smiled and said "Congratulations, Ted," and for a minute I couldn't figure out what she was saying. I'm sorry about that, Bjo.

I think the St. Louis bid was one of the most popular in recent convention history. Before any of the speeches had been made, someone waved a St. Louis sign (the room was plastered with St. Louis and Columbus signs) and a cheer went up. A Columbus sign was raised to boos. And that was before Harlan seconded.

And St. Louis won by something approaching four to one. Wow. A victory for the Good Guys.

Then there was the Business Session. I wasn't there. I was up till seven-thirty that morning, and didn't feel like skipping badly needed sleep. But Andy Porter took complete notes and later showed them to me. By my way of thinking, all the Good Stuff passed, and all the Bad Stuff was tabled or defeated. Alex Eisenstein's assinine notions of what would qualify a voter didn't make it; Jon Stopa's chauvinistic National Con was tabled; the Bad Guys lost. On the other hand the Five Year Rotation Plan succeeded (meaning: the out-of-the-country con will be held once every five years and thus cycle between regional bids, instead of always falling between the mid-

west and the east, as it will in 1970, and the selection of consites two years in advance succeeded (thus allowing con committees to nail down hotel commitments a year earlier, which should be of enormous help in this competitive era). Etc. Hooray!

I received my own second Big Charge when the Hugoes were handed out. Phil Farmer's speech will probably read damned well in print, but an hour and twenty minutes of his delivery almost put me to sleep (thank ghod Rotsler was at our table, turning out an endless supply of marvelous cartoons!), and after AMRA and George Barr picked up the Fanzine and Fan Artist Hugoes, I turned to Greg Benford and said, "Ruth Berman is going to win the next one."

I'd said this before, in gloomy tones. After both Alex Panshin and Harlan Ellison withdrew from the race, the remaining nominees were Ruth, Harry Warner and myself. Harry and I would be competing for the fannish vote, while Ruth would, unopposed, sweep the Star Trek nuts who voted her onto the ballot in the first place. (In my opinion Ruth is not a bad fan writer, but she has written so little for fanzines that her nomination completely surprised me.) Harry I was willing to lose to, and to lose gracefully to. I wasn't quite certain about what my reactions would be if Ruth won. (Others told me they'd rise in a mass and stalk out.)

It was all idle speculation. Harlan's voice held a delighted chortle as he read my name, and when I rose to stumble through the maze of tables towards the podium, I could not feel my feet and I felt totally disconnected from myself. Stage-fright, almost. I managed to accept the award and was afterwards told that I told everyone to vote for Harry next year — a thought I still find commendable — and somehow I made it back through the forest of outstretched hands to our table. Sweating.

The sheer egoboo contained in that single day was beautiful. So in a sense, then, this final section of this final column (hardly trenchant at all) is a Thank You to all of you who voted for me, and to tell all of you who helped me find myself next year's Fan GoH. Heady stuff, and if you don't look out, you're going to find yourself stuck with a really kissy (as Calvin W. "Biff" Demmon might say) column on your hands, here — one that isn't easy to wipe off.

Maybe that's a good idea.

At the core of every science fiction novel, from the most sublime to the sheerest pandering drivel, is an attempt to resolve a paradox which in the final analysis may in fact be unresolvable. Unlike the "mainstream" novelist, the sf novelist really starts out with blank paper: he must not only create characters, theme, forces of destiny and plot but (unlike the mainstream novelist) must create from scratch a universe entire in which character, plot and destiny interact with each other and with the postulated environment.

This is why that rare creation the genuine sf novel (a work of art that is both genuinely sf and genuinely a novel) is, all other things being equal, a higher form of art than the "mainstream" novel. (Of course you knew that already on some visceral level, else why would you be reading this publication?)

However, the infuriating thing about writing sf novels is that the novelistic imperitives of plot, destiny and character are in conflict with the sf imperative of universe-creation. While one is in the process of creating in detail the sf context, the characters and plot hang in limbo; while one is advancing plot and characterization, one's grip on one's created universe tends to loosen. This explains, among other things: why New Wave advocates dislike "Old Thing" novels in which the sf imperitives over-ride the novelistic imperitives; why "Old Thing" fans dislike hard-core "New Wave" in which traditional novelistic imperitives over-ride the sf imperative; why so few sf novels satisfy both camps; and why God felt constrained to rest on the seventh day — creating a universe and real people is no mean task, even if one has the advantage of omnipotence.

Basically, sf novelists have attempted to solve this fundamental problem in

one of two ways. The first alternative is to hold up plot and characterization here and there and throw in chunks of background either with overt author-exposition or long quotes from non-existent books or worse still by having one's characters describe the scientific and historical background of the universe they inhabit.

The second alternative is to stay strictly within the viewpoints of the characters and let the reader pick up the background by a kind of osmosis, by letting him live the lives of real people as they move through their environment. It would seem that these two techniques or an unsatisfactory combination of the two are the only ways of writing a genuine science fiction novel.

Now, however, John Brunner has come along with Stand On Zanzibar and invented a third alternative.

One needs no crystal ball to predict that much will be made of this book for the wrong reasons. It is probably the longest sf novel ever written and there is some mysterious force operating in the sf field that tends to create a worship of gigantism. But after all, a long dreadful novel has no real advantage over a short dreadful novel except in the eyes of a confirmed masochist. Perhaps the worship of huge sf novels is merely the extension of the traditional American equation of quantity equals quality. So, in a way, it's a shame that Stand On Zanzibar is so long because it is not its length which makes it an important book but its form.

This is stated quite candidly in the table of contents (one of the longest table of contents extant).

Brunner lists the sections of the book that constitute the novel about the two main viewpoint characters, Donald Hogan

and Norman House under the heading "Continuity." The essays are listed under "Context." The independent short stories about minor characters who inhabit the world of 2010 (and which have only tangential relationships in most cases to the "Continuity" novel) are listed under "Tracking with closeups." The schticks, the bits and pieces of such things as headlines, tv shows, commercials, quotes from books, etc., are listed under "The Happening World."

What we have here is the cinematic technique of the split-screen applied to the "novel".

Perhaps the only way to discuss such a book is to borrow some of Brunner's own technique.

Context

The world of 2010 is overpopulated. An interminable semi-war is being waged by the U.S. and China for control of the Pacific Basin through a series of proxies. 'Sound familiar? Eugenic legislation is prevalent throughout the Developed World. A Developing Country which fits the description of Indonesia but which Brunner calls "Yatakang" is developing a program for producing genetically-engineered supermen, the news of which program is producing political turmoil in the developed countries where the masses chafe under the eugenic legislation which forbids people with proscribed genes from having children. In the tiny impoverished African country of Beninia, the Shinkas, despite their squalid condition, have somehow achieved a tranquil "noble savage" culture.

Continuity

Norman House and Donald Hogan are

roommates in super-crowded New York. House, an "Afram" (Brunner's 2010 slang for Negro, a mistake only a non-American would make), works for a large corporation which closes a deal with the dying President of Beninia to develop that country, a kind of benevolent neo-colonialism. House is appointed to head the corporation's effort in Beninia; in Beninia it is discovered by Chad Mulligan (sociologist whose works are quoted extensively in "Context" and "The Happening World") that the Shinkas' non-violent nature is a genetic mutation.

Meanwhile, Hogan is activated as a kind of CIA agent, "euphorized" into a human killing machine and sent to Yatakang to kill Dr. Sugaiguntung, the key scientist in the Yatakang superman breeding program.

After many twists and turns in plot and motivation, Hogan achieves his end, which, in light of the discovery of the "peace" gene in Beninia has ironic but not totally tragic overtones.

The Happening World

Legalized pot. Bizarre parties. Chad Mulligan's HIPCRIME VOCAB. Various sinister psychedelics. Yonderboys. Shalmaneser, the conscious (?) computer. Shiggies. Bleeders. Muckers. The shiggy circuit. SCANALYZER. TV shows.

Tracking with closeups

Chad Mulligan, sociologist playing at misanthropy and not making it. Various old colonial types dying to get in on the Beninia project. Eric Ellerman blackmailed, then murdered by yonderboys. Poppy Shelton, pregnant flower-child taking drugs so that her unborn child will never have to see the dreary straight world. Bennie

Noakes, psychedelic vegetable. Guinevere Steel, Bitch-priestess of fashion.

Brunner has dealt with the paradox of sf imperitives versus novelistic imperitives by the simple process of dissociation. He gives the reader background in the "Context" and "The Happening World" sections. He writes a rather conventional unexceptional and unexceptionable sf novel in the "Continuity" sections. He gives his world depth and extention in the "Tracking with closeups" sections.

"Continuity" with a minor rewrite could've been published as an ordinary sf novel. "Tracking with closeups" could be re-edited (in the filmic sense) into a series of conventional sf stories.

If *Stand On Zanzibar* proves anything, it proves that the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. None of the sections (the unedited film) are particularly brilliant by themselves. The total book is. It's all in the editing.

William Burroughs produces slices of his novels by randomly cutting up pieces of coherent prose. The result is gibberish which adds nothing to the coherent sections of his novels.

Brunner takes a lot of ordinary sf and speculative non-fiction and edits it non-randomly into a brilliant non-novel.

John Brunner would make one hell of a film editor.

Stand On Zanzibar is a brilliant and dangerous book. Brilliant because with it Brunner has invented a whole new way of writing book-length sf.

Dangerous because what he has done looks so damned easy. I predict (while hoping I am wrong) that a lot of other sf writers are going to try their hands at books like this. It looks like the easy way out: write a conventional sf novel, a few short stories with the same background and a bunch of essays, and put together a most successful novel from them. Then go collect your Hugo.

But unfortunately, most sf writers (and especially those who would stoop to copying another man's success, the trend-riders) are most deficient in that area in which Brunner proves himself the master in *Zanzibar*: sense of structure.

Brunner is not a great master of prose, nor a great master of characterization, nor a great master of plotting. Yet he has written a great book. So there is the temptation to conclude that he has simply invented a gimmick which lesser writers can copy.

But what he has really done is applied a film technique to prose fiction and it works because Brunner has a great talent for film editing, whether he ever thought of it in those terms or not.

Those writers who believe it was all done with mirrors proceed at their own peril. Not to mention at the peril of their readers.

Fungus Poem

The fungus five was not alive.
The fungus four was dying.
The fungus three had climbed a tree
And sat there softly crying.
The fungus two had muddled through
A problem in addition.
The fungus one had just begun
A lengthy, signed admission.

The fungus one was guilty but
He wasn't sure of what.
The fungus two would help him
But his thoughts were in a rut.
The fungus three was sure as sure
There wasn't any way.
The fungus four said nothing
And started to decay.

—Rick Norwood
(from NOLAZINE #1)

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD SAID,

LET THERE
BE LIGHT.

AND THERE WAS....UH.....

SO THERE WAS...UH...THERE WAS...

LET THERE
BE LIGHT!

...UH...ER...

GOD DAMN
IT!!
LET THERE
BE LIGHT!

AND THERE WAS
LIGHT.

Fans We All Know...

And Perhaps Wish We Didn't

THE OLD GUARD

I have a friend — I think of him as The Old Guard, or as the Cosmic Wardheeler, or sometimes under other names, but let us call him Joe — I have a friend (I insist) who is often solemn too. But genial. Geniality is his most famous trait. When somebody complains about some little artifice Joe has resorted to, or some incident in which he has arrogantly, albeit figuratively, shoved somebody else around, the inevitable reply comes:

"Yes, but he's so very genial!"

He is always striving, manipulating, feuding, politicking, attacking this or that person, working individuals and groups around to this or that little end he has in view, yes, but he is so very genial. That is, he is so smiling, forward, talkative, expansive, generous at his board and hearth, so unstinting in his expressions of sympathy and loyalty, that...that...well, he is the most genial bully I know.

But I mentioned his solemnity. Joe has a curious sense of proportion. You would imagine from the earnest way in which he discusses some little happening in the club he belongs to (actually, the relationship would seem to be the other way around), that he is discussing matters of the greatest import and that there is something more at stake than his self-esteem and love of a good fight. When he describes for your open-mouthed edification the thunderous personality and policy clashes which took place in his club during the 'thirties and 'forties — Joe's turf, by the way, is considerably east of the Los Angeles Country Club — he invests them with so much retrospective urgency that you forget for a moment that the actors in these terrific dramas averaged sixteen and seventeen years of age.

But I like to hear Joe tell these stories. The urgency, the gravity of his manner, raises them from gossip to a kind of melodrama fraught with unconscious humor. Some of the actors, and most particularly Joe himself, remind me of the old rough-and-tumble, ward-heeling politicians of earlier decades, as described, say, by Edwin O'Connor (who felt that since they were fading from the scene and being replaced by larger goods and larger evils, he could afford to give them one Last Hurrah).

I spent an afternoon at Joe's house some time ago, and our rather one-sided conversation — he was half-bullying, half-joshing me because I had disapproved of some "tactic" (i.e., deception and fraud) he had lately resorted to — our



rather one-sided conversation was constantly interrupted by the phone; and I heard him giving his instructions to unseen and unheard persons, like a general issuing orders. One or two of his callers were evidently excited but he was calm, quietly marshalling his forces and surveying from afar the scene of battle, concerned but confident of the outcome.

Joe gets a lot of satisfaction from this. If you question him as to his further ends, that is, as to what he hopes to achieve beyond the small, immediate satisfaction of scoring a point or imposing his will, he retreats to generalities — and geniality. "Don't you think," he will begin, smiling (and Joe's rhetoric often begins with a question), "that everyone should live up to their obligations?"

If you say yes, but want to point out that the question is not quite relevant to the present discussion, or that it is Joe himself who is not living up to some specific obligation, he cuts in first with a beaming face and a genial nod, as if he had scored a real point and that the two of you, if you would only admit it, are in complete agreement.

Joe is in the habit of having the last word. He has a vast store of anecdotes which all have the same ending, in which he triumphantly has the last unanswerable word. For instance:

I rose (for I had been sitting down). "Horace," I said, "when your magazine wins a Hugo, like my fanzine, Stef & News-Sense, then it'll be okay for you to reject my advice on how to run GALAXY."

I once quoted in Joe's presence George Eliot's remark, "In all private quarrels the duller nature always wins, by virtue of its dullness." Joe smiled knowingly at this and said that this George fellow obviously didn't know what he was talking about — and overawed me with an impressive personal anecdote proving the opposite. He had won again!

(Tertius Quimby once remarked that he would like to hear Joe's last word — just as they hand him the cigarette and put on the blindfold.)

But Joe has his virtues, too. His solemn sense of the importance of his own interests leads him to undertake kinds of work which would not seem fully worth the time and effort to... well, let's say to Grey O'Hare, any small sample of whose learning and wit could easily, as we all know, leave the slow-plodding Joe seven leagues behind. With this curious result: that Joe has totalled up an impressive score of accomplishments and publications over the past

three decades, whereas Grey, who has been considered "promising" for almost the same length of time, remains mute and inglorious...and no longer seems quite so promising.

Joe does a lot of insufficiently appreciated labor compiling bibliographies of the works of obscure but prolific writers, mimeographing lists of all science fiction published during the year, and diffusing to the faithful glossaries of unknown tongues. He loves to search the brittle pages of whole shelves of old magazines, sometimes finding in those yellow rifts nuggets of the true ore. And other times finding fool's gold.

For example — to assay but a single specimen of the last named metal — he had invested a good deal of time in solving the mystery of the identity of Warner van Lorne, ingeniously deducing from certain clues that he was an electrical engineer from upstate New York who had had a letter published in "Brass Jacks" in 1937 and that this was the very same electrical engineer who, in 1958, as reported in Otto Binder's syndicated cartoon panel, This Space Age, saw the little men get out of the flying saucer and splash about playfully in the creek where he was fishing. But before Joe could break this terrific bit of news to an eagerly awaiting public, Sam Moskowitz cut in before him with the information that the celebrated author of "The Blue Men of Yrano" was none other than Nelson, the brother of editor F. Orlin Tremaine.

For once, Joe didn't have the Last Word.

He seriously thought, he tells me, of challenging the revelation but, after a sleepless night from which he rose haggard and worn, he wisely decided to refrain.



By

Arthur Jean Cox

If we feel any interest in, or have any use for, these things, we can be grateful that Joe is there to do them, even if the solemnity with which he pursues his tasks and announces his results does sometimes tend to raise a smile — though never, I hope, a supercilious smile. No, it can't be said that Joe has contributed nothing and, such are the vagaries of literary history, that it may be that some day more learned men will be conjuring up his name in the white and unbristle pages of PMLA.

But our consciousness of the debt we owe him for his workmanlike service doesn't, and needn't, quite cancel our awareness of how disruptive an influence he has been in our social life these last few decades. He has not been the friend of justice, graciousness or peace.

Joe already seems to belong somewhat to the past, like the stories and writers he most admires. His heavy bulk is taking on a curious insubstantiality, as if his figure — as in one of those old mildewing snapshots showing the youthful Joe and his friends standing stiffly in pin-striped suits, ties and hats on the porches of shabby clapboard houses in Philadelphia, Flatbush and Newark — were already fading from the scene. "I rose," said Joe to me one night, while reminiscing before his kitchen stove, like a scarred old warrior before his fireplace —

"I rose and, assuming a grand indignation which I knew would be impressive, I said to them, 'Gentlemen' — I was being sarcastic, you see — 'Gentlemen, I will not remain as director of the Greater Cosmos Science Fiction League of Flushing-Down-the-Hudson, knowing as I do that you have no intention of following me in effective, not to say ruthless, action against the cowardly and dastardly insurgents of the SLSFSL-FL.' And flinging down my gavel, I stalked out. My resolute words and action must have thrilled and moved some of them, because as I went out the door I distinctly heard several voices cry, 'Hurrah!'"

I mean to echo those anonymous voices. When Joe and his few surviving minions have walked out forever into the clear perspectives of history (or, more likely, into the mists of obscurity), I, if I am left behind, will give one last hurrah.

Ted Paule kipples Peggy Swenson every two weeks in her box!

DIALOG continued

● Last issue my alter ego put a curse on me: "May all your typos be catastrophic!" he vituperated.

Weeelll...it was effective. In the letter column last issue I mentioned that Season of the Witch was Philip Jose Farmer's book. It is Hank Stine's book. I got calls.

And, of course, I misdirected everyone to the wrong pages in the continued editorial sections.

● On the whole, aside from a few die-hard faans, the readers of PSYCHOTIC approved or grudgingly accepted the change-of-name to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW.

It was about half and half on the type size—so I decided to run parts of this issue at less reduction and see what she looks like. What say ye now, readers? That's what I thought.

● Copies of Ted White's controversial column in PSY 26 are available from Ted at 339 49th St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11220. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

I sent him a goodly number of copies for another purpose, which fell through, so now all you readers who missed "that column" can read what you missed.

● Bill Rotsler deserves the Best Fan Artist Hugo this year, by Ghod! And Harry Warner, Jr. is overdue for the Best Fan Writer Hugo!

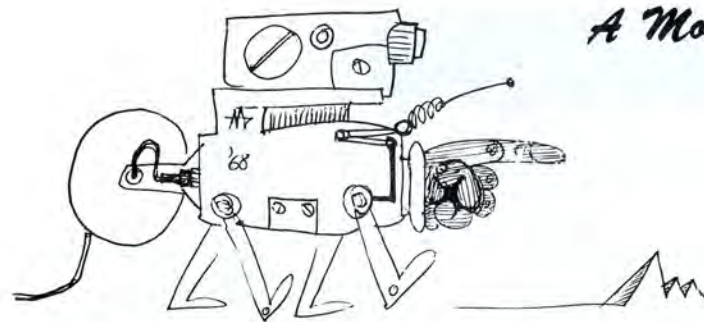
● A thorough monthly checklist of sf and fantasy books (hard and softcover) is available from Andrew A. Whyte
Riverview 303
221 Mt. Auburn St.
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Andrew sent me the first (January) checklist (printed, on high-quality 3-hole, looseleaf stock) but included no info on price.

•••••
Yin: If I sin

Yang: I will hang

—Rick Norwood
•••••



The Yellow Submarine

THE YELLOW SUBMARINE is a Beatles' inspired animated cartoon, with the Beatles singing various songs and speaking through their animated caricatures.

It is somewhat surprising to note, therefore, that the story line is straight out of PLANET STORIES. Also the sciences.

The movie starts with a sequence in which the Blue Meanies — far more satisfying villains than most; they are evil with a capital A — set out to destroy Sergeant Pepper Land. They zap the people with petrifying rays, smash the K and W in KNOW to leave NO, and drop giant green apples on people's heads. Only one man escapes, a gallant if somewhat adlepleated Sea Captain, and he leaves for help in The Yellow Submarine.

A splendid machine in the best tradition of Brick Bradford's "Time Top" and the "Skylark of Space", the YS takes the Captain to Liverpool (naturally) where Ringo asks a Bobby: "Would you believe I'm being followed by a yellow submarine?" "...errr...well, NO." "I didn't think so."

Presently, however, the Captain tells Ringo the tale: Gabble gabble gabble gabble Blue Meanies!, and they go off to round up the other Beatles. This is a quite entertaining sequence visually, and considering that I am a non-Beatles fan and hence oblivious to any in-joke/in-symbolism that may have been flying around, this is saying something.

So they take off, and encounter strange adventures in the Sea of Time (like getting younger and older and meeting themselves going in the opposite direction). Also in the Sea of Monsters and the Sea of Holes. (Ringo picks up a hole, roles it into a ball and... "I've got a hole in me pocket.")

A Movie Review

By

Alexis Gilliland

The use of colors, visual effects and visual concepts is original and amazingly good. The music is effective, and the use of language is fresh and funny. Specifically, when they make a pun, it has a contextual point, like when the Blue Meanie commander screams: "Ob-blue-terate them!"

In short, I enjoyed myself thoroughly.

On a second level, when you consider what these funny creatures are "really" saying and "really" doing, the story is telling it the way it is, and despite the Beatles' heroics this is rather sad.

The analogy which comes to mind (my mind, anyway) is the Russian aggression against Czechoslovakia. The picture was made before then, so obviously the authors were thinking of something else, but where is the Yellow Submarine that will liberate Prague?

Anyway, art, music, story, language and symbols are all interwoven to create a fabulous entertainment, at least parts of which are science fictional. Let's see...one Beatles record, one 1950 vintage PLANET STORIES, one animated cartoon...sure it's science fiction.

See it when you get the chance.

BOOK REVIEWS

SEASON OF THE WITCH By Hank Stine—Essex House 0112, \$1.95

Brian Kirby, Editor of Essex House, has a classic line on the back cover of this book: "She Was The First Woman He Had Ever Been." I understand the basic idea for the book was his. Brian is a highly creative and dynamic editor. He is doing things in publishing that have never been done and is publishing some extraordinary fantasy.

For that is, basically, what *Season of the Witch* is—fantasy. Science fictional elements are present to give some degree of believability to the basic situation—a man's mind imprinted in a woman's brain.

Stine manages this by asserting a future in which it is technically possible to transfer the total mind (personality, character, memories) of a rapist-killer into the dead-but-now-alive body of his female victim. The woman's mind is gone.

PIERS ANTHONY
ED COX
RICHARD DELAP
EARL EVERS
RICHARD E. GEIS
ALEXIS A. GILLILAND
DEAN R. KOONTZ
CREATHE THORN
ROBERT E. TOOMEY, JR.

But the technology is not detailed—it is simply Given. The situation is the thing, and all else is subservient to that.

The book is divided into Prologue—Crime; Part One—Sentence; Part Two—Punishment; Part Three—Retribution; Part Four—Expiation; and Epilogue—Redemption.

Stine is a remarkable writer both for his style, which is turgid with evocative detail and intense psychological insight, and for his use of the second-person technique, which in fiction is used very infrequently, but which is required for the *Punishment* and *Retribution* parts in his book.

'You shake your head and sit up, the soft fan of your hair swirling in front of your face, sticking to lips and eyelids, and you reach up, pulling it out of the way and staring through curdled eyes at the half-open bathroom...'

What happens to a man's mind in a woman's body? Stine shows you. He makes you inhabit that mind and slowly, imperceptibly, absorbs you into the existence of a woman until you as a man no longer exist. You become a woman, different from the one you raped and killed, and a better woman, at the end.

There is eroticism in the book. The sex act is the most important sphere of life for this book, for Stine, for you, in the working out of the changes of psyche involved. Sex is where it's at in marking the differences between the sexes, and it is there that Stine takes you to show the subtle altering of man to woman in the body of Josette Kovacs, deceased.

Finally, if four-letter words bother you, don't read this book. If graphic sexual descriptions bother you, don't read this book. But, then, perhaps you are precisely the person

who should read it!

—Richard E. Geis

THE RING OF RITORNEL By Charles L. Harness—Berkely X1630, 60¢

A careful look at the table of contents suggests that this is not an ordinary novel. The chapters ascend to #12, then back down again, and the chapter titles are mirror images of each other. Harness has been around for twenty years, but it is obvious his vitality has not been sapped.

James Andrek, younger brother of the galactic poet Omere, is orphaned and raised at a private academy. He is smart but naive, and in the course of his rise in royal service he is marked for extinction by the monarch of the Great House of the galaxy.

What follows is fast-moving, wheel-on-wheel counterespionage type action, exciting but hardly enough in itself to make the story memorable. What lifts it above routine is the evident organization and the wealth of intriguing concept. I have not seen notions of this calibre and frequency since I first encountered the work of Delany.

example
A single excerpted from a far more complex harmony: James is accompanied for a time by Raq, the spider. He has to feed her by injecting some of his own blood into a pseudo-insect that the spider can then prey on in the normal manner. But James has been drugged by a bad guy, unknowingly, and this drug in his blood now affects Raq. So she builds a complex three dimensional web that reflects the effect of the drug, and the interpretation of this web betrays the drug's identity so it can be counteracted. Neat, no?

This novel appeals on two levels. It is entertaining for the reader who likes to be carried along, but also offers some intellectual challenge to the one who prefers to anticipate the conclusion and interpret the larger designs.

Alas, the author is too careful; I had unriddled the major surprises long before they were posed as such. But I believe this is the best sf Berkely has published in the past couple of years, and perhaps one of the five best of the year. Not perfect, but well worth reading.

—Piers Anthony

OMNIVORE By Piers Anthony—Ballantine 72014, 75¢

In some ways, OMNIVORE is the peak, to date, of Piers Anthony's work. It is a more fluent work, and more tightly structured than *Chthon*, more rational than *Sos The Rope*, and less traditional than *The Ring*. In fact, it is not stretching the point any to say that it is an excellent little novel that accomplishes all that it sets out to do.

On the surface, it is two stories. It is the story (in the present) of Subble, a superman detective working for the government. Subble is a unique sort of fellow as far as sf detectives and secret agents go: he has no past life and knows nothing about his case when beginning it (thus to avoid pre-judgements). He is investigating the circumstances of the return of three individuals from the planet Nacre. It is also the story (in the past and told in successful flashbacks) of what happened on that alien planet. The two story lines are integrated in a semi-alternating pattern in such a manner that one is not jolted between the two but flows from one to the other with delightful fluency. The ecology of Nacre is beautifully done, entirely realistic, and completely fresh. I think the "manta" is one of the most awesome aliens I have ever read about with an air that is most definitely unearthly and not just pseudo-Hollywood. It inspires fear and respect at one and the same time, no mean feat.



This book will get some Hugo and Nebula nominations and will well deserve them.

—Dean R. Koontz

STAR WELL By Alexei Panshin—Ace G756, 50¢

This is the first of a series of Anthony Villiers novels. The next one will be The Thurb Revolution. My normal reaction upon hearing such news would be, "Aha! Panshin is going commercial!" "Potboilers!" I would hiss.

And I would be wrong.

Because Panshin has turned in a confection that is in no way hackwork, and is, in fact, a fine, funny piece of writing.

The plot is standard. You will recognize all of the twists and turns as they go by, much like driving a familiar road. However, the meat of the book is in the characters and in their interpersonal relationships. And...yes, of course Villiers wins the duel, who could doubt it? But finding out how and why he won is something entirely different.

And then we have Miss Louisa Parini, a ringier in Miss McBurney's Justly Famous Seminary and Finishing School. Her parents, members of a clan of notorious entrepreneurs have arranged her forged papers and sent her off to learn to be a lady. A prospect which she finds appallingly dull.

By the by, the society which Panshin sketches is a very interesting construct, sort of like a mixture of Mafia, Boy Scouts, and 18th Century Landed Gentry from England. (Russian Gentry, no. French Gentry, no. Definitely English.)

Back to Villiers a moment—he is evidently a younger son of an aristocrat, collecting a remittance to travel and stay away from home. A gentleman, duelist and idler, he wanders around the galaxy, living as well as circumstances permit. Currently, he has become separated from his remittance check. Rather small, handsome, and a thorough gentleman, he gives us considerable insight into what a gentleman is.

Incidentally, if you get the feeling that a lot of Star Well is written with tongue-in-cheek, you are perfectly right. Panshin makes snide comments on everything, and much of the time steps to center stage to address his audience directly. Some people might be annoyed; I was thoroughly grunted. Panshin can write when he makes a side remark, he has something to say.

Some other elements in this brew are thumb smuggling, inspector generals, and Levi, the dumb thug who liked to play jacks.

The cover is a beauty, by Freas, featuring Torve the Trog, who spent a lot of time discussing physics with a clergyman who thought he was talking about theology. Freas has caught Villiers very nicely, also.

Star Well is excellent light reading containing elements of farce, comedy of manners and space opera. Also wit and a rather dry humor. Heartily recommended.

—Alexis A. Gilliland

Editor's Note: I concur. Panshin has shown us a completely different style in this book from that of Rite Of Passage. I wonder how long he will be content to write Villiers books now before the itch to experiment and do something different becomes overpowering.

—REG



SWORDS IN THE MIST By Fritz Leiber—Ace H-90, 60¢

I'm still trying to figure out why Ace Books insists on lumping together interrelated stories and calling them a 'novel'. Despite two very short connecting episodes written by the author

especially for this book ("Their Mistress, The Sea" and "The Wrong Branch") and obviously intended as no more than the feather bridges they are, the book is not a novel.

As Damon Knight correctly defines: "A novel is one structure, built toward a known end. A series is an open-ended Tinkertoy chain..."

This, then, is another collection of Leiber's deservedly popular Fafhrd/Gray Mouser stories about the most rascally wicked and irascibly wicked and irascibly clever scoundrels ever to wangle their permanent way into the sex/gore/blood-lusting hearts of fantasy fans.

The first tale, "The Cloud of Hate", is fast, brief (like a small excerpt lifted from an idea for a longer story), and opens with a scene that reads like a biting take-off on an old Columbia voodoo serial scene of pagan temple-worship. Despite its lack of being a story, it is a slickly written incident loaded with efficacious, broad humor dialogue.

"Lean Times in Lankmar" is one of the best stories in this series and is a crackerjack jab at the hypocrisies and disorganization of organized religion. The satire is rapier-pointed at Christianity in general (and Catholics in particular?), and even the two heroes don't manage to get away scott-free: Mouser gets a potgut and Fafhrd gets shaved.

"When The Sea King's Away" takes the venture some twosome to a strange undersea kingdom in what, after a third or fourth reading, I still consider one of this series' least appealing tales. I can't explain why I have this reaction to this particular story, but it strikes me as being 'wrong' in some respect...because I don't quite know what a "squidgy death" (p. 82) is, or just that I'm confused by the arabesque detail? I don't know really, and I venture that maybe Leiber was rushing a deadline on this one for even he can't decide if the undersea creature with which Fafhrd is forced to do battle is an octopus or a squid — he refers to it by both names and zips on by without further ado.

"Adept's Gambit" brings the reader face-to-face (so to speak) with the Mouser's fearsome (?) overling, Ningauble of the Seven Eyes. Though a bit overlong, the tale is an amusing mixture of wry and burlesque humor, again spoofing the pants off religion (with not so surprising undertones of a real understanding lurking beneath it all) and the whole sword-and sorcery genre as well.

Characterizations are clearly marked and their conversation sparkles with some of the

wittiest dialogue in the field (and out of it). Eroyicism is woven into all like the tiny, textured designs of an oriental rug — individually unobtrusive and essential to the overall design.

Leiber, when excellent, is unapproachable by 99% of the other writers of this ilk; when merely good, as here, he is unapproachable by only 97%.

*In Search Of Wonder, Advent (pap.), 1968, p. 250

—Richard Delap



THE RIM-WORLD LEGACY By F.A. Javor—Signet P3183, 60¢.

Northrop Frye, one of the few professional scholars and critics who also reads science fiction, has stated that the purpose of literature is to educate the imagination. I think he is right. I think that the great virtue of science fiction is its ability to fuse the imagination of science with more traditional forms of story telling. The all-important word is imagination. If science fiction doesn't in some way stretch the minds of the people who read it, it's worthless.

The Rim-World Legacy by F.A. Javor is worthless. The cover describes it as "A Science Fiction Novel" and "A Mystery Thriller." It is neither. It belongs to that peculiar genre known as "space opera" which combines the worst aspects of science fiction and detective stories without any of the virtues of either.

All of the science in this story is centered around a matter-transmitter (how original), which will allow its owner to control all of the galaxy. There are also, for God's sake, stun guns, space-warps, etc. None of these devices are essential to the story, which consists of that perennial, worn-out theme of the hero who doesn't know what is going on, but who manages to blunder through to the end, defeat the bad guys, and end up the champion.

In short, there's nothing new here at all. Nothing. Everything in this book was said years ago and has been said so many times since that no meaning is left. A machine could have written the book. And a machine could read it. I

suppose if there were a reader with nothing to do, nothing to think about, who wanted to waste a couple hours this book would serve his purpose as well as any. I'm not that kind of a reader, and I doubt there are many people around unlike me. The people who waste time watch television, now; people who read books demand something more than what the average tv show offers. They won't find it in this skimpy, over-priced book.

—Creath Thorne



THE MASKS OF TIME By Robert Silverberg—Ballantine U6121, 75¢

Bob Silverberg has written an excellent book, and is different from anything he has done recently

Bob Silverberg has written an excellent book, different from anything he has done recently. The story is so close to reality that it almost might have been non-sf. That is not a defect. The book prospers because it so resembles some mainstream work.

The basic story deals with Vorman—19 who returns from a thousand years in the future to the year 1999. The world is in upheaval as the apocalypsts preach the end of the world at the change of the millenia and proceed to enjoy them-

selves (rioting and orgies, etc.) while there is still time. The government grabs on to Vorman without knowing if he is genuine or not—if they can convince the masses he is a true time-traveler, the people will have been given at least 1,000 years of future. One soon realizes that Vorman, coming from an exact thousand years in the future, could be an apocalypticist from his own day.

We have the hippies here, and, I suspect, when Silverberg wrote of Vorman's "charisma", he was thinking of Bobby Kennedy. There is an enormous similarity. Even their fates (though the book was written before June 5, 1968) are similar.

There is sex here, a thing Silverberg is exploring more openly than any writer in the field (even considering the teeny-bopper approach of the Spinrad books).

Buy The Masks Of Time. A delight. Well written. It should be an award contender for the Nebulas if not the Hugos, too.

—Dean R. Koontz

BALLROOM OF THE SKIES—Gold Medal R1993, 60¢
WINE OF THE DREAMERS—Gold Medal R1994, 60¢
Both by John D. MacDonald

Of these two reprints, I liked Ballroom of the Skies (1952) best because of the greater depth and breadth of characterization, convincing alien organizations and their very convincing psi-powers.

Wine of the Dreamers (1951) suffers, now, from formula plot and stereotypes...the young genius scientist in charge of a huge space project, the attractive young woman psychiatrist, the antagonistic general. The decayed colony of human Dreamers who interfere with Earth life by way of misused "dream" machines (which allow the taking over of an Earthman's body) is handled well and given that touch of realism which is necessary for fine sf.

MacDonald, in an Afterword, betrays his ignorance of how sf has developed since he left it some years ago. He said, "I ached to doctor much stilted conversation, but to do so would have been to cheat, as somehow the pretentious and overly grammatic speeches made by the actors are touchingly typical of the genre."

"They are both more accurately categorized as science fantasy than as science fiction, in that they are neither space-adventure, nor mad-scientist, nor doom machine epics."

Perhaps such speeches were typical, but they are not now. And science fiction was not then, and especially is not now, limited to the three types of plots mentioned.

It's a pity Mr. MacDonald isn't likely to attempt any major sf again. He would likely turn out a superior novel. The challenge and change might do him good after all the private detective fiction he's done.

But as a final word—these two reprints are on the whole as good or better sf than probably 90% of the current crop. They are well worth reading.

—Richard E. Geis

Not since the big Tarzan boom a few years ago has one writer had such a number of books hit the stands with one swell thud. With six books by William Tenn on the stands in one release, a gap on the library shelves has been filled and, at the least, a precedent has been renewed. The six books are:

- (Novel) OF MEN AND MONSTERS U6131
- (I) THE SQUARE ROOT OF MAN U6132
- (II) THE WOODEN STAR U6133
- (III) THE SEVEN SEXES U6134
- (IV) THE HUMAN ANGLE U6135
- (V) OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS U6136

All are, of course, from Ballantine Books. (Each 75¢) The Roman numerals are index numbers to identify the books during this summary.

Despite an absence from the current science-fiction scene for many years, the name, William Tenn (behind which Philip Klass peers at the world), has retained an aura unlike that of almost any other writer. For as much as anything else, he appears to be revered for his genuine humorous science fiction. It is here that I depart from tradition. William Tenn seldom wrote humorous science-fiction and about as seldom wrote straight science-fiction in the first place!

In the main, he turned out a string of excellent modern horror and fantasy stories. I would venture to say that the sf field was more than once put-on a little bit! Nothing was safe from the sardonic wit and ironic comment of Philip Klass when he had on his William Tenn glasses. Rather than plod through all five volumes of shorter stories, I will attempt to illustrate these points, and single out particular gems, letting the reader later make his own particular discoveries should he choose (assuming a lot of

newer readers have seldom sampled the particular wonder of William Tenn).

He hit the scene in the late forties when science fiction was, other than pure product hack ground out in such as AMAZING, overly, but understandably, preoccupied with two main topics. Two alternate futures. Man's Idealistic Struggle Toward the Stars and During/After Man's Atomic Self-Destruction. Tenn sailed in and took on the theme with a vengeance. "Alexander the Bait" (I), his first story, was illustrative of one way, by ultimate trickery, of getting selfish mankind to strive toward the stars. This was possibly the first to depart from the traditional one-man-backyard-spaceship theme. "Consulate" (I) was another: Man had tried to get to the nearer planets and failed...due to that ol' debbil, the SupraGalactic Federation, which Tenn really loads on the reader in the old migod-they're-so-much-more-advanced-than-us theme. It's told in the stereotyped comic manner (the guy's wife will



Kill him for staying out late bit).

At about this same time, Tenn was turning out latter-day horror stories and Unknown-type gems, had it continued and evolved to that day. Among these are the "classic" "Child's Play" (III) (the super-Mattel toy from tomorrow, the Bild-a-Man Kit), "The House Dutiful" (III) (one of the best of this type, later and shorter than "With Folded Hands...") and "The Human Angle",

(IV) right out of WEIRD TALES (via FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES) as a believable modern-day vampire story. "She Only Goes Out At Night" (IV) carries this last theme a little further, more common-place, here-and-now, everyday.

By 1950, while he continued to amaze and amuse science-fictiondom with the above type stories, he entered into what I call the "double-talk" phase. Here he departed from standard themes, satirized them and seemed to be putting us all on! "The Remarkable Flirgleflip" (shortened to "Flirgleflip", V) is such a one. It is structured entirely on the doubletalked gimmick of the title. "The Flat-Eyed Monster" (IV) is a multifaceted take-off on space-opera heroes, the Alien, the inadvertent human-type plain ordinary guy hero, etc. "The Malted Milk Monster" (III) is another non-science fiction horror story as is "The Discovery of Morniel Mathaway" (IV). As these go to show, it doesn't pay to be the hero in a Tenn horror/UNKNOWN type of story. These stories are so structured that to give much of a synopsis would be to somewhat ruin the effect for the first-time reader.

Yet there are those stories that can yield some hint of their content without letting the punch fall flat. In "The Last Bounce" (I), we are treated to an excellent encounter with alienness while being presented with one possible path-finder explorer-corps operation. In "The Jester" (I) we do have a deliberately funny item. I laughed. Out loud. In the presence of others. While reading this story. Tenn was/is definitely a craftsman. He came, he saw, he did better than conquer.

He took one theme and ran three variations on it, at least. The future-altered-by-monkeying-around-with-the-past caper. "Brooklyn Project" (II), "It Ends With A Flick" (II) and "Me, Myself and I" (V) all utilize this theme and, in various configurations, parody a number of other manifestations of mankind.

"Lisbon Cubed" (II) parodies the spy-story and political intrigue, among other things and is another modern horror tale. He really pours it on in the department of Category Stupidity

and Greed, Mankind, in the famous "Venus and the Seven Sexes" (IV) and rings in the Military for similar treatment in "The Deserter" (II). Politics and stupid, faddist mankind deserve it in "Null P" (II) and a tour de force in all these respects, and more, an utter indictment, is "Eastward Ho!". It's a post-atomic destruction story when American history gets the reverse as far as the Indians are concerned. All of these have a bitter humor, but it is more to cry than to laugh. It is seldom that William Tenn looks through rose-colored glasses strictly for laughs.

Two stories hit especially closely to current fadism. "Venus Is A Man's World" (I) takes us to a future where the matriarchal bent of today would no doubt put us if continued. Women are the only citizens. Men take on the frivolous, if stereotyped, character of women, as they were once presented, years removed from now. While many of the stories have definitely been shunted off to a never-happen obsolescence by the actual events and findings of science (Venus won't ever be colonized as in the above story), "The Masculinist Revolt" (II), while a more recent story (1965), hits terribly close to what is already happening. The subjugation of masculinity for the sake of fashion marketing. Already it's upon us, as witness the so-called men's fashions. As stupid and senseless as the annual women's fashion foolishness (only the miniskirt has made much sense in the last few years and the younger women seem to stick with it, bless 'em!). Item: Los Angeles Times, 17 October, 1968. "Unisex"—New Word For New Fashion" Follows a typically meally-mouthed press release concerning fashion, the masculinity of women's clothes, the femininity of men's clothing, so that, at last, complete freedom, or unisex. What they neglected to say was that it opens a multimillion dollar market if they can get men to go through the same rat-race women do in clothing fashions. In "The Masculinist Revolt" it has gotten to that point and worse. Not simply in the matter of clothing, but the whole structure of society and the role men, and women, are to play in it. Reading this story, we are not too surprised to find a not too subtle

examination of what some of the obvious masculine traits, or stereotypes, have been. And are they really?

All the above has perhaps not made very clear as to what exactly is in each story mentioned. By now the reader has long been aware that my purpose is to illustrate what to expect in Tenn's output. To fully enjoy the stories, the reader must make the investment and take it from there. For under five dollars, you're getting a Conklin-size compendium, of one man. His style and technique are a bit outdated by today's standards. He used a method which could've poured out a thousand breezy first-person detective pulp tales, would-be Scott Fitzgerald stories, show biz, underworld and Broadway, Hollywood types. You'll find a lot of these touches here and there. He's facile. But only in his brand of science fiction could he say the things he had to say about our world, its people, its science, stupidity, and science fiction. It's a worthy investment of money and time if you aren't acquainted yet.

The novel.

In his only, and we hope, first, full-length effort, he has fighting room to really sock-it-to-'em in all the respects mentioned above. And he really took a running leap at it. The first third (Part I) has all the old punch of Tenn at his best, hitting mighty blows against values of our society, showing up the self-delusion in which Man happily indulges and so on. A particularly pungent passage is the ritual where the protagonist of the story, Erik, starts his Rite of Passage. In this first segment of the book, we learn the structure of the society which Man has become since Aliens invaded and took our planet for their own, reducing, literally (by their own giant size) Man to nothing much more than irritating pests.

The reader is given Erik's beliefs and ideology exactly as it is and then experience's befuddlement, with a growing concept of what's happening much more rapidly, of course, than his, as he enters Monster territory in Part II.

Erik learns rapidly that all isn't as he thought, even more than he'd been startled to learn just before he commenced his Theft (after which, if he survives, he is a Man). Things happen rapidly and his whole world is disrupted, his beliefs nullified when he returns to his area. It is about here that the novel starts to fall down. While it is cleverly constructed, well-plotted and carried on with logic befitting the plot, the reader must quickly realize, or assume, that this is an allegory (akin to Planet



Of The Apes). Otherwise it is difficult, especially in Part III, to accept the philosophical discussion emanating from what is supposed to be a semi-barbarian mind. Once this is swallowed, it is still difficult to read through the pages of Message no matter how justified the writer is, or may be, in his appeal.

Yet the whole book does lead up to what could be a stunning concept of the true nature of mankind. It does not end there but goes into an anti-climactic last chapter which leads to a final irony based on one of the fundamental themes of science fiction. It is beautiful, well-conceived and bitter. But it too is spoiled by a final small paragraph or two that knock the temper from the blade.

I've tried to evaluate the book without revealing much about the actual story line, for I recommend it. Yet, finally, it does prove that Tenn is a master of the short story but not quite a novelist. All six books of this set belong on the shelves of the well-read science fiction enthusiast.

—Ed Cox

THE RING By Piers Anthony & Robert E. Margroff
—Ace A-19, 75¢

I was struck by the classic plot structure in this book as I read it—The young man determined to avenge his father's death by forcing his father's ex-partner (now rich on supposed ill-gotten gains) to confess to framing an innocent man; the partner's spoiled-rotten daughter; the revelation in the last chapter that the vengeance-minded young man is really the partner's son by way of adultery... It is reminiscent of an old English play.

The book exists on two levels, however: the manipulative plot, and the social-psychological personal environment imposed by the ring.

The ring is this future Earth society's ans-



SYMBOLS OF OUR TIME

WR



wer to crime—a ring on the convicted criminal's finger (on the big toe of female criminals) which is grafted into the flesh, connected to the nerves and triggered-to-pain by a puritanistic, indiscriminating conscience imprinted into the criminal's mind. Thoughts of wrongdoings are punished by pain via the ring. Violence is punished (even self-defense) by pain. The ring cannot be removed short of surgery, which is detected by robot police.

Being a ringer in this future makes a person a special kind of untouchable; he must be an informer—the ring forces him to report all crime he sees or hears, no matter how minor.

Anthony and Margroff explore the implications of the ring, its effects on those who are sentenced to wear it, and its impact on the society they have constructed.

But the two levels of the book exist separately and are not actually necessary to each other. The Revenge-Revelation plot doesn't really need the ring gestalt, and the ring idea cries out for a better presentation and delineation.

—Richard E. Geis

THE TECHNICOLOR TIME MACHINE By Harry Harrison —Berkley X1640, 60¢

Few writers can handle an sf adventure yarn quite as well as Harry Harrison. His Deathworld stories are immensely rewarding works of their type, and his other books (Make Room, Make Room, Plaque From Space, etc.) are eminently readable.

Perhaps the trouble with The Technicolor Time Machine lies in the misleading cover blurbs. The back cover tells us "...wild and hilarious. A funny book and a welcome facet in the science fiction field." That is from the Oregon Journal.

One immediately assumes, if one reads the cover blurbs, that we have a follow-up to Bill The Galactic Hero, surely the funniest novel ever written in the sf field and—in this reviewer's mind—Harrison's best.

But TTM is not really all that funny. There are the stereotype Hollywood characters:

Slithy Love, the over-sexed movie star, draws close to being a humorous character in the first pages, but she falls apart and is lost in the story.

L.M., owner of the studio, also at first an interesting character, is left in the future when the crew goes to the Eleventh Century to film a Viking Epic with real Vikings, and we lose L.M.'s endearing greedy character.

And here we are careering onward toward the chief flaw of the novel—the idea becomes the hero.

The only character that stands out at all in the story is Ottar, a Viking who loves Jack Daniels. But that is hardly enough—one well-drawn secondary character—to make the book warm and friendly.

Perhaps the original concept is a bit weak, too. We are to believe that a genius professor has invented a time machine but that no institution or foundation will hear him out. No one will loan him the money to develop this marvelous device.

Okay, I was hooked that far. But it is a little much to swallow that a nearly bankrupt movie company (Climactic Studios) will provide the loot in order to shoot films in the past to avoid building scenery or hiring extras.

At least Mr. Harrison hits you with the idea and goes racing on without giving you time to stop and consider the basic silliness in the idea. Well, maybe not silliness. Had he taken more time to delineate the lead character (Barney), had he taken pains to show Barney as truly desperate, and—above all—had he shown his readers how Barney happened to meet up with the

professor, maybe this stumbling block could have been avoided altogether.

But this is not a put down. The book has flaws, yes, but there are just as many other things to recommend it.

For instance, Ottar is well done and does carry the book when it threatens to get slow. The development between Ottar and Slithy is interesting and a nice twist. There are some funny scenes. I urge you to especially watch for the "water-throwing" scene wherein Ottar is play-acting a stormy sea—sequence that works the humor just perfect, just right.

All in all, an ininteresting night's reading, a book that will entertain, and what more, really, can be asked of good fiction?

—Dean R. Koontz

THE BEST SF STORIES FROM NEW WORLDS Edited by Mike Moorcock—Berkley X1513, 60¢

These stories date from the NEW WORLDS of 1965-66, and impress me as some-fine, some-good, but none exceptional.

A lot of praise has been given Roger Zelazny's "The Keys To December", and it is a fine story, but I suspect the excessive praise given it is at least partly due to the philosophical and idealistic buttons the story pushed in reviewers' minds.

"The Small Betraying Detail" by Brian Aldiss may just be the kind of subtle story with a makes-you-blink ending that will stick in your mind for ages.

"The Assassination Weapon" by J.G. Ballard: I have to join those who find Ballard nearly impenetrable. This story is a series of surrealist psychological "trips" in emotional space-time and is perhaps significant, perhaps meaningful to the author, perhaps is clear to some intellectuals who understand him and his symbolism or style or techniques. And maybe I could figure it out if I re-read it several times... but, frankly, Ballard doesn't make me want to work that hard, and I doubt most readers will want to.

"Nobody Axed You" by John Brunner is a story of the relatively near future in which tv violence is used to impell people to kill others... in order to thin out the overcrowded population. Brunner has taken stated and unstated present-day values and given them a sharp, vicious twist of emphasis to create a very good satire. In

his future the Catholics have won—any hint of birth control is socially unacceptable. But the killing of adults is encouraged. Inevitably this story will be presented on tv, perhaps in a new hour-long "Twilight Zone"-type series in a few years. It's a natural. This man can write. He has the mind and the skill.

"A Two Timer" By David I. Masson, with great fidelity to social and psychological background, brings a 17th century man through time to the 20th century and records his authentic reactions. There is a thin plot involving time paradoxes as trips are made in a time machine, but the main interest and emphasis is in the conflict of culture and ways of thinking, and the 17th century man's reactions to and observations of our time. It all may be a bit too exhaustively done, but not by much.

"The Music Makers" is a mood piece, mildly incredible in a hard science setting: a colony on Mars. Can a dedicated musician be so sensitive to alien, yet Ultimate Music, that he will accept death willingly because his life is now pointless? Langdon Jones almost makes it credible.

Thomas M. Disch, with "Squirrel Cage" has a go at the a-man-in-isolation theme. The man in this instance exists in a padded room, reads a daily paper, is fed from a wall tube, sits on a stool, types on a typewriter but cannot see the result. The story is what he types in his boredom and frustration...his speculations, jokes, questions—that are never answered. He makes the point that possible change from a boring, pointless existence can be terrifying to the person bored and pointless. And how many of us, knowing or unknowing, are the man in the padded room?

A better than average collection of stories. Well worth getting.

—Richard E. Geis



THE DEMON BREED By James H. Schmitz—Ace H-105, 60¢

Buy this book by all means. It is absolutely delightful, even better paced than The Witches of Karres, and that is saying something.

Part of this appeared in ANALOG, which shows the old mag can't be too close to death, though things this good are rare in its pages, now.

The story concerns Nile, a young girl, and how she outwits the Parahuan invaders who have secretly set up advance headquarters on the driftwood islands of a nearly completely water world. The world is well drawn—or at least the immediate vicinity of the floating islands is well-drawn.

Nile has only a few gadgets, her otter companions (great mutated otters that speak and are exceedingly amusing and likeable beasts), and her native intelligence. The Parahuans have everything else, including a farm.

Tarm?

Well, it's a sea creature by nature, but it can move among the trees and bushes like a flying manta with tentacles. It is a singularly horrifying beast, somewhat of a more ponderous manta than Piers Anthony envisions in Omnivore, though lacking the touch of goodness that Anthony's manta possessed. The farm is pure evil.

Nile manages to wreck the Parahuan invasion with her gadgets and otters and native intelligence. It is somewhat of a problem book, and the way Schmitz works out the answers is exciting and rewarding. I have nominated it for Nebula. It's good enough.

—Dean R. Koontz



THE THURB REVOLUTION By Alexei Panshin—Ace G-762, 50¢

I enjoyed the first of Panshin's Anthony Villiers adventures, Star Well, but this one less, because I think a little of this type of novel goes a long way, at least with me.

What is this type of novel? It is easier to know than to explain. Words come—light comedy, witty, fluff, comedy of manners... None fit exactly, because Panshin's Villiers style is not easily classified.

My main complaint about his Anthony Villiers adventures is their lack of visceral involvement: there is no real concern for Villiers in the reader's mind, because the writing is kept on a frothy intellectual level, all fun and games and you can see the villain waiting in the wings for his cue.

This is fine, I enjoy it, but, again, enough is enough. Will an average sf reader pay 50¢ for this non-violent, non-involving and non-serious material more than once?

I can hear Panshin saying to me across the miles, "Thurb...thurb...thurb...."

I hope, Alexei, that you do a serious book again soon.

—Richard E. Geis

SOS THE ROPE By Piers Anthony—Pyramid X1890, 60¢

Although Sos The Rope is predictable from beginning to end, it is rather an interesting novel, one which is certainly entertaining enough for an evening.

First, let us look at the flaws of the book, then go on to praise. Predictability: it is not easy, any longer, to write a post-A war novel which is original in concept. And Piers Anthony has not done anything that breaks the mold.

Basically, the world of Sos is divided into three social orders: the nomads who find fighting in the circle the basis for manhood, the "crazies" who cherish the old pre-war knowledge and still live much like the pre-war society, and finally the underworld which produces the hardware for the other two in exchange for food from the "crazies." Nothing special? Correct. What is worse, we are given relatively little background to the "crazies" society or to that, as the story progresses, of the underworld people. They are called the Underworlders, by the way, because they live in this hollow mountain of

debris. Anthony does, however, develop the nomad society fairly well—or at least the fighting within the circle part of it, for this constitutes much of the book. Yet the author sets up the story as a sort of mystery by having his character stop here and there to wonder just what the crazies are and what they mean to society in general. This becomes a bit painful since every sf reader who has followed the field for more than a few years knows that the "crazies" and the mysterious third power that must be present control the nomads and keep the threat of another war from developing.

Next we run into trouble with the lead character, Sos. First of all, it is difficult to identify with an idiot. And, despite his supposed education, that is what Sos seems to be. We are to believe that the "crazies" raised him but never did he know their true nature. For a fellow who is supposed to be so damnably curious, he wasn't able to discover much even while living among them! Of course, had he discovered anything, then the reader would know too, and what little mystery there is would become nonexistent. Furthermore, despite his education, he believes that the circle is the true test of manhood, thus indicating he never gained much common sense from his education. We are supposed to look upon him as a brave, brawny man, but he generally resorts to fighting, wishing he could fight, or ordering others to fight for him.

Now I must be honest and say I realize the next, and greatest, example of Sos' idiocy is only a by-product of the necessity of getting him from one plot locale to another. It seems that it is the custom, after being badly beaten in an important fight, to forsake the world and go to the mountain to die. No one ever returns from the mountain (you guessed it, the Underworlders live in there!). So, after losing to his friend Sol, Sos makes for the mountain. All is lost. Honor, you see, means more to him than life. I could swallow that if he had not so easily fallen into dishonor before. See, he fathered a child by Sol's wife. True, he beat his breast a little before banging her, but the chink in his honor was there nonetheless. Too much. But, after all, unless he went to the mountain, the book would be 15,000 words short. So onward plods Sos the Rope with his pet bird Stupid on his shoulder. And the reader wonders if the names have been changed to protect the innocent.

Sos: Inside this mountain he meets a girl who eventually becomes Sosa, his wife. She is a super fighter, able even to topple this giant. Mr. Anthony constructs a wonderfully entertain-

ing scene in a gymnasium where idiotic Sos chases the girl over equipment and up rope-like nests even though it is obvious she can whip him in this environment. Anyway, it is fun. However, the explanation given for this exciting chase-fight is poor science fiction: "You see (Sos), you were almost frozen in the snow, and we had to bring you around before permanent damage was done. Sometimes a full recovery takes weeks, but you were so healthy we gave you the energizer immediately. It's some kind of drug—I don't know much about these things—it scours out the system somehow and removes the damaged tissue. But it has to reach everywhere, and the fingers and toes and things—well, I don't really understand it. But some good, strenuous calisthenics circulate it nicely. Then you sleep, and the next thing you know, you're better." Well, well, well. That entire paragraph said nothing whatsoever. All the girl is saying is that she doesn't know how the energizer works. But she says it over and over and at great length. Perhaps Mr. Anthony does have in mind how the drug works and just wishes the charming lady to be ignorant, but then a single line would suffice. Chiefly, though, he is trying to justify that last long scene in the gymnasium. Of course, the reader wonders what such advanced people as these Underworlders are doing with a drug that doesn't distribute naturally with circulatory flow (apparently just lying in the veins in clots). Or perhaps Mr. Anthony is of the misguided opinion that blood doesn't circulate readily to little places like toes and fingers and must be cajoled, stirred, and literally forced there.

From the Mountain—that-is—really—a-super-society-in-disguise play, the reader is introduced to the old man-converted-to-superman trick. With his new body so reinforced as to give God Almighty second doubts about tackling the man, Sos sets out under orders from the Underworlders to break up Sol's empire before it is a threat to future world peace. Sos goes, leaving Sosa, his love, behind. But that is all right,



because Sola, his real love is waiting ahead, his when he defeats Sol, as surely he must. Or does he love Sola? As he progresses, defeating one of Sol's officers after another, he is not so certain. Then, when he is headed for the showdown with Sol, he is sure he loved only Sosa. Until he sees Sola. Then he knows it has to be Sola. Now, most of this is not presented in the air of good-meaning uncertainty or even good old lust. Each time he changes his mind, it seems irrevocable. Just changeable? Just wait.

Finally greedy, power-hungry Sol and righteous, determined Sos meet. And they fight? No. Sol, who looks upon the sword almost as phallic and the circle almost as vaginal, gives up. They agree not to fight. So they march off into the sunset? No, they fight. But what could it be that would make two such honorable men disavow, in such short moments, their agreement not to enter the circle? Why, the officers taunt them for being cowardly, and Sol's little girl (fathered by Sos, remember) cried when she saw her daddy wouldn't fight. They fight. Despite his powerful body, Sos almost loses. But he wins after all. Sol marches off to the mountain with his little girl.

With all these characters standing around in the lukewarm water of the ending, Sos changes his mind about his love—twice. On page 155, speaking of Sola: "It was premature to discount his love for her; it had not died." On the last page (157) as he realizes Sol will be with Sosa inside the mountain, he thinks: "He...knew that the woman he loved more would belong to Sol. Nothing had changed. Dear little Sosa—" Okay, apparently Sos is just a big baby who wants what the other guy has. But the rest of the story tries to set him up as a hero, not an anti-hero. There is a clash, a constant turning of character that is implausible.

What, then, makes Sos The Rope an interesting book? Well, few writers have the command of the English language to the degree that Mr. Anthony has it. He can generally tell a story in clear, concise prose. One does not have to wade through purple passages to get the plot. But one wishes, still, that we could have another Chthon and not some bastard child of sword and sorcery like Sos.

—Dean R. Koontz



PROPHECIES ON WORLD EVENTS BY NOSTRODAMUS, Translated and Interpreted by Stewart Robb—Ace H-99 60¢

Some of the predictions seem to be remarkably accurate, others have to be "interpreted" to within an inch of their lives to be made to fit events. And, of course, Robb doesn't mention the prophecies that bombed out.

—Richard E. Geis

ASSIGNMENT IN NOWHERE By Keith Laumer—Berkley X1596, 60¢

This may very well be the worst book Keith Laumer has ever done. And it seemed impossible that he could ever go beyond Catastrophe Planet for sheer blandness of imagination, incredible misuse of science, and just plain insulting prose. I say insulting, because this novel is apparently aimed at the adult market. Forget it.

At first glance the book appears interesting. It is an Imperium Novel with Brian Bayard (relegated to a minor role this time). And it is structured oddly. There are eleven chapters; each chapter is divided into parts. All together, there are 69 separate parts along with a prologue and an epilogue. The book is only 143 pages long, and this tends to give it a fractured look on casual glance. On closer glance, the fractured look remains. The only possible reason for portioning the story out in these units is to give the illusion of great activity when—in fact—there is little or nothing happening. And what is happening is so absurd that one wonders whether Laumer had some dreams of writing comic book continuity, tried it but couldn't do it, and turned the whole mess into a book just to get something out of it.

The story starts well enough, just as all Laumer starts out with a hook. The world is entering a fluid stage where reality is not as concrete as it was. The reason, as we find out in a rather improbable scene early in the book, is that there is a power agglomeration on the vast plain of world lines ruled over by the Imperium. Unless that power is drained through the correct object, all the world lines will suffer irreparable damage and perhaps extinction. From this discovery on, Laumer propels us through one van Vogtian surrealism after another in an effort to disguise all the weird flaws in the book. The hero never has to work. There are always marvelous devices that just happen to be handy. As a result, the reader never has to work either. After all of his books, Laumer should have learned enough to avoid this. From other things he

has done, I know he has learned enough. This, then, must be considered a put-on.

—Dean R. Koontz



THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST By Philip Jose Farmer—Essex House 0108, \$1.95

To a lot of unperceptive people this book will seem a come-down for Philip Farmer, a descent into simple pornography. And to a person who can see only the sex in a book where sex is used as a tool, then the issue is settled and the work labeled.

Except that Philip Jose Farmer is not a simple man, nor is he a simple writer, and any book he writes is always more than it seems.

The Image of the Beast begins sometime after 1970 with the city of Los Angeles covered by a penetrating green smog. Private detective Herald Childe is in the film room of the L.A. Police Dept. He views a film showing his partner's shocking murder: a woman using steel teeth half-severs the man's penis at the moment of ejaculation, and a man dressed in formal clothes, a cloak and blue sneakers enters, cackling, and finishes the "beheading". The film ends with the message: TO BE CONTINUED. The film had been mailed to the police.

Herald sets out to find the weird killers.

On the surface this is a grotesque private-eye story. Yet what are we to think of a name like Herald Childe? And on the title page the book is amended: (An Exorcism: Ritual 1). And we learn on the opposite page that there will

be a continuation of The Image of the Beast titled, Sketches Among the Ruins of My Mind.

What happens when Childe finds the man and the woman of the film in an old, secret-passaged mansion in Beverly Hills? He encounters a very horny woman goast, a woman with an incredible snake-like creature living in her womb which emerges to enter her throat during a solitary sex act, plus assorted werewolves, witches, vampires.

Is there erotic sex in the book? Yes, some. Mostly the sex is to strange, and humorous, and grotesque, and mind-stopping to be arousing. The text may produce an erection or two in male readers, but Farmer's intent is clearly not pornographic. He is using sex as a tool, perhaps as a weapon, as symbol; using it...for what purpose? Toward what end?

I'm not sure. The book ends with death and destruction of the mansion by fire. Herald kills or causes to be killed most of the supernatural creatures in the old house, yet the book is obviously only an episode, part of a larger whole, because so many, many questions are left unanswered, and in the end Childe is marked for further contact with these Outside forces.

There are indications that the supernatural creatures are aliens who come into our universe through cracks, rifts, "gates" in the "walls." But this is presented as theory and speculation.

In a Postscript, Theodore Sturgeon mentions shock at encountering in this book the woman who has sex with the creature in her womb. He had never run across an image of that nature before. Yet Farmer used this same idea in his novelet, "Open To Me, My Sister," in 1960.

Until I have read the forthcoming Sketches Among the Ruins of My Mind I must withhold a final opinion of this series. There is more to it, I suspect, than meets the eye. Perhaps more to it than meets the mind.

—Richard E. Geis





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THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST By Philip Jose Farmer—
Essex House, \$1.95

At his best, at his most imaginative, the work of Philip Jose Farmer seems, to quote a phrase Henry Miller once used in reference to William Blake, saturated with the ecstasy of a cosmic vision. Who else but Farmer would set a novel in the Christian Hades of fire and brimstone (*Inside Outside*) and attempt a rational explanation for the whole thing? Who else could come up with the concept of ALL of humanity being resurrected along the banks of a river a million miles long? Farmer's novels and shorter works are wonderfully peopled by impoverished centaurs-mendicants (giving rise to that magnificent pun, "If horses were beggars..."), down-trodden demons, unemployed gods, tricksters, harpies, priests, vampires, ghosts and the rest of the mythic structure man has erected to sustain himself through the long black nights of the soul. Farmer shares the most charming of characteristics with the French philosophers, the ability to take almost anything at all seriously, from Hollywood gangster movies to existentialism to sex.



The process of the intellect is to take things apart; the process of the imagination to rearrange the pieces and assemble them in a new and, hopefully, more meaningful order. By any reckoning, Farmer is the most imaginative science fantasy writer functioning today. Instinct and imagination are closely aligned. They take over when logic and intellect fail. No logic in the world is going to tell me to risk my life or well-being trying to better the conditions of my fellow man when I could be cheerfully exploiting them to better my own. No act of the intellect will lead me to selfless heroism, and in any reasonable lexicon, courage and foolhardiness are synonymous. Farmer, like all great writers, is aware that the only subjects worthy of consideration by art are devotion, death and the absurdity of the human condition. And that nothing but art will endure.

The connective link between Farmer's work and that of Roger Zelazny is their belief in resurrection and immortality. This theme runs like a steel cable through nearly everything they write. That man, petty, obnoxious, eccentric, egotistical as he may be, man, will somehow

survive it all and meet a greater destiny or, perhaps, a greater challenge — singing. We live in an age of Jeremiahs, and it's nice to tune in to the breath of fresh air that dispells the shadows that lie in wait, quietly picking their teeth with the jagged edges of man's hopes.

Having said all this, and adding that Farmer is probably a genius, it pains me to say that *The Image of the Beast* is probably the worst thing he has ever written and, as a bonus in the form of a postscript, contains the worst thing Theodore Sturgeon has ever written as well. On the other hand, in *Isle of the Dead*, Roger Zelazny, who may or may not be a genius but is certainly a brilliant stylist, has written his finest book to date and he seems to be well on the way to conquering his most irritating problem.

To take them in order. I picked *Image* (which is a beautifully designed and put-together paperback with a truly lovely cover: and for a buck ninety-five it should be) off the rack with high hopes. The publisher, Essex House, allows its writers all the freedom of expression they want (in accordance, as they say, with recent Supreme Court decisions concerning obscenity), and I thought that Farmer, unrestrained by more conventional formats, bursting free of the restrictions, would surely open up new vistas. I couldn't have been wrong.

For one thing, Farmer's style, at its best vividly evocative, has gone to ruin here. Besides taking up fully a third of the (250 page) book with descriptions of things that have nothing whatever to do with the story, and which fail to advance the plot by so much as a single silly millimeter, we get such incredible blurts as this: "She had a beautiful cunt, the hair was thick and almost blue-black and so soft it felt almost like a seal pelt. She lubricated freely, perhaps too much, but the oil was sweet and clean," which is bad, or, "...by one of those coincidences too implausible to be believed in a novel but sometimes happening in 'real' life..." which is terrible, and too implausible to be believed in a novel by a writer of Farmer's calibre.

The setting is Los Angeles and Beverly Hills, a marvelously surrealistic landscape to begin with, but Farmer, who has done so much with landscapes of his own devising, can do nothing with a 'real' one. The story apparently takes place in the near future (there is one, single, fleeting reference to a 1970 automobile) but no use is made of the fact. A dense green, poisonous smog hangs over the city and evacuation is taking place with all the attendant havoc. This too, is wasted. For all the good the smog does the story it might just as well not be there.

The hero is a private detective, but he acts like a fool, and a neurotic one at that. The story drags and drags, primarily because of the endless, useless, lifeless description, until, finally, four-fifths of the way through the book, it all comes briefly to life and roars (lurchingly) to the climax and everything conveniently burns down. Unnnnggggh!

Some thoughtful and judicious trimming would have done this book a world of good, although I'm not sure it would have saved it. Anywhere from twenty-five to forty thousand words could have been dropped without damaging the narrative, and to the effect of speeding things up measurably. One can't help but wonder what editors who don't edit do with their time. Play mah-jongg?

In spite of all this, the book does have its rewards if you can stick it out. There are occasional flashes of fine prose. In the mansion of a Forrest J. Ackermannish collector: "The walls were hung with many pictures and paintings of Frankenstein's monster and Dracula and an original by Hannes Bok and another by Virgil Finlay, all leaning at slightly different angles like headstones in an old neglected graveyard." The same character, Woolston Heepish, provides a bit of marvelous comic relief (in fact, this is the best section of the book): "The collection increased; the house shrank. Furniture was removed to make room for more objects. The day came when there was no room for Mrs. Heepish. THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN was elbowing her out. She knew better than to appeal for even a halt to the collecting, and a diminuation was unthinkable. She moved out and got a divorce, naming as co-respondent THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON."

There are a few brilliant improvisations like the empty skins of people who have been sucked dry by the sexual vampires (who live on orgasms) which, when blown up, float in the air like helium balloons. And the horrid little concept that impressed Sturgeon so much, of the long, snake-like thing with the tiny human head that emerges from a woman's vagina. But is all this crap worth these few gems? I think not.

Farmer will be, and is, writing more books for Essex House. Whether all this freedom is a good thing for him or not is a question that only time will answer. Perhaps other sf writers will follow in his footsteps and all this will lead to something worthwhile. I hope so. Meanwhile, we could do worse than wish upon him the services of an editor who cares. If such a one exists.

In *Isle of the Dead*, Roger Zelazny returns to the lead character of *This Immortal*. His name has been changed to Francis Sandow, and he

is now one of the wealthiest men in the galaxy, a "planetscaper" who shares his identity with an alien god named Shimbo of Darktree, Shrugger of Thunders. An immortal like Conrad Nimikos, Sandow is by turns flippant and poetic, and tells his story in the first person. But Sandow (no pun intended) is a far richer character than Conrad, and I think I know why.

Conrad, with all his charms and machinations, was a provincial, a homebody. Sandow moves around, he builds planets, has a past filled with tears and laughter, loves deeply, hates passionately and, in his own way, is more mature than Conrad. I think this is an echo of Zelazny, finding himself more and more as a writer, daring to go deeper than the brightly shining but shallow surface of his previous writing.

(I sometimes find myself irritated with Zelazny. In *Lord Of Light* there is a scene where a wandering Shan is taken by an epileptic seizure. Zelazny wrote, "Then did the fit hit the shan," and I felt myself believing, irrationally, that the whole book was written just so he could get that one lousy pun in.)

Conrad's story was a simple one, so simple



it was plotless. And this has been Zelazny's greatest problem, his inability to come to terms with his plots. Up to now his most complete work was the amazing Damnation Alley, and his finest character Hell Tanner. But in Isle of the Dead, the plot, characters, settings, resolutions, everything is a complete whole. The flaw has been corrected. When the story winds itself out, it does so with the tragic inevitability of life itself, although I wish Zelazny had left off about the last three hundred words, which smack of expediency.

Also, Zelazny has eliminated the bad habit of having his climaxed occur offstage, but the climactic scene of Isle is delt with with such emotionless, colorless perfunctility (if such a word exists) that it conveys little of the impact intended. But, at least, he is getting away from the all icing, no cake stories he has been producing. And finally. In the past Zelazny has borrowed his elements from just about everybody in sight and done wonders with them. Here he borrows (Conrad) from himself. I think this will cause some bitterness among his readers who will notice this before they notice the wonders. He might have easily disarmed this criticism simply by writing the book as a sequel to This Immortal, but I might be wrong here.

At any rate, I'm waiting for his next book. It should really be something to see.

—Robert E. Toomey, Jr.

A TORRENT OF FACES By James Blish and Norman L. Knight—Ace A-29, 75¢

This is a rather sketchy look at a future world which supports a trillion people at approximately the standard of living enjoyed by middle class Americans today. Obviously, not a subject that can be exhausted in 285 pages. So why do the authors ring in such extras as a giant meteor crashing into Hudson's Bay, a race of mermen produced by genetic manipulation, and assorted psionic phenomena? Why to use up three novellettes, two from GALAXY and one from ANALOG. No other reason.

The very idea that such a world could be achieved with the state of technology portrayed, (not much advanced beyond our own) is only a little less preposterous than the crew of typical ANALOG engineers and administrators that run the whole shebang. There's so much ground to cover that the authors can't possibly go into any one aspect of their background deeply enough to lend plausibility or build suspense, so they skim over many, many surfaces, and generate suspense by a

World Endangered By Giant Meteor plot. They're so busy throwing out engineering details to make their society seem plausible that there's no real wonder left in the basic plot and background, so they have to drag in mermen and psi to create an "imaginative element." I think both Blish and Knight should read "Riders of the Purple Wage" and weep.

—Earl Evers

NEXT ISSUE

Robert E. Toomey, Jr. reviews GALACTIC ODYSSEY by Keith Laumer.

Richard Delap reviews THE FAR-OUT WORLDS OF A.E. VAN VOGT; HASAN (ms) by Piers Anthony; THE GREAT RADIO HEROES by Jim Harmon; PAVANE by Keith Roberts; ISLE OF THE DEAD by Roger Zelazny; AN ABC OF SCIENCE FICTION ed. by Tom Boardman, Jr., and more...

Also reviews by Earl Evers, Ed Cox, John Foyster, Creathe Thorn, and...uh...Richard E. Geis.

MAIL ORDER INFORMATION

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Push-Pull Clique-Clique

Sheila D'Amassa caused all this. I was having a wonderful turkey dinner with Sheila and Don D'Amassa at their place in Attleboro, Mass. when the subject of Los Angeles fandom came up. "I was once an LA fan," I said. "Oh, but from what I hear that is nothing to be proud of," came the reply. I agree, but for different reasons. Too many people, it seems, have the right idea about Los Angeles for the wrong reasons. However, this piece is not an effort to clear the air, since I already assume that it will only further befoul it.

Los Angeles fandom seems to be a little bit of Wonderland stuck away in a valley full of smog. It can be a fun place, but it can have its nightmares, too. It is fandom, but bares little likeness to anything outside LA.

I was never really an LA fan. I was involved in the LASFS (Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society) without ever being a real part. I'm not complaining, mind you, but just counting my blessings for a unique chance to look at a strange creature.

Los Angeles is a world of cliques. The Blackguards, The SF Readers, The Comic Fans, The Galactic Observers, The New Wave Head Fandom, Dwain Kaiser, and the man from MENSA who finds out he came to the wrong place.

It really is a fun place. You can be a member of one, all, or none of the cliques and still have a miserable time. Sally Crayne can hide herself among the Blackguards while at the same time being a loyal member of New Wave Head Fandom. Dwain Kaiser wishes he were anything in any of the groups. Bruce Pelz can rope them all into making the LASFS a corporation. Finally, Don Fitch, Dave Hulan, and Bjo Trimble can marvel at it all, trying to erode the subject by explaining it to death.

If you are a Blackguard there are all kinds of things you can do. You can play miniature golf with Bruce Pelz, Lon Atkins, Chuck Crayne and various other LA types that happen to be "in" at the moment. You can snivel with delight as you realize how clever you are. You can act like a secret master of fandom. Worst of all, you will probably believe you are a secret master of fandom.

Loyal Blackguards stand atop their fannishness and sneer at all of the neofans at the LASFS meetings. They are invaders, defilers, and know-nothing-teeny-boppers! Obviously a Blackguard is better than any of the new members (even the professionally published ones). Just flash that Blackguard membership card and give your unworthy victim the icy stare that Bruce Pelz teaches for \$5.00 an hour. Everyone knows that talent has nothing to do with success in fandom. Why, it's



"I'M ON MY WAY TO IMMORTALITY."

the people you know and how long you've known them!

However, there is a way to get around them. If you are willing to read Heinlein (and all the other important sf, like Tolkien and the Foundation Trilogy) you can be a success. Join the Third Foundation. Lee Klingstein (who is a very nice person, by the way) will sweep you into her fold, and you will become a real live, talking, shouting, genuine Wave of the Future! Tell the LASFS about science fiction, know for yourself

By Al Snider

that only you really care about the New Wave, the future of the prozines, and Harlan Ellison. Meet secretly at Lee Klingstein's place, walk around at conventions with no shirt on and medals glued to your chest, and scream with joy as you find someone else who believes that Glory Road is better than Dangerous Visions.

These are the people who know how to be real science fiction fans. You can read until your eyes bug out and then assume that Doc Smith was Shakespeare incognito. It's not whether you understand what you read, the only important thing is that you keep agreeing that Burroughs is second only to the new "Mike Mars" series.

The secret, my boy, lies in reading the same old thing and learning how to praise it in new and undiscovered ways.

However, if all this tires you, you can always be a new LA Comic Fan! Are you fresh out of the Eighth Grade? Tired of being a misunderstood Junior High School intellectual? Too old for collecting baseball cards and too young for sex? Well then, the best place for you is in LA Comic Fandom. Join with all of your twelve-year-old friends each Thursday night and gasp over the new adventures of Superboy, Krypto the Wonder Dog, and the Hulk. Sigh with animal passion as Nick Fury kicks the hell out of the Red Skull while the Thing proudly proclaims, "It's clobberin' time!" You too can be an important part of that new kids group joining Los Angeles fandom. Get your parents to give you a couple hundred dollars and be the first kid on your block to be a real live member of the LASFS! (Remember, this is only open to mature adults above ten.)

But, maybe this is not your bag and there are other things that appeal to you. How about just sitting around and watching things? The role of Galactic Observer is a great one. See Don Fitch stride around the meetings chuckling over cosmic truths only he knows; see Don let out with an effusive and toothy grin when Bruce Pelz talks about the new clubhouse. What secrets lurk in the minds of these immortal fans? Ah, but to know what they know takes hard work and a long time of studying. Try sitting in on every LASFS meeting for the next ten years, send cold and calculating letters to people you see but never talk to. Mention how you "know all of what is going on, yet cannot tell." Laugh to yourself as the whole bloody mess goes to hell in a bucket. Chortle and the LASFS chortles with you, but snigger and you do so in good company.

But wait! For a brief but very inspiring interlude let us talk of Dwain Kaiser and his

boys. Most of them have gone off to college. But Dwain is still around. He drifts from place to place making friends when he talks to people, and losing them when he leaves. For, you see, that is the nature of the LASFS. When you are with them you are a great guy, but turn your back and you are the worst since Hitler. Not that Dwain is victimized (he usually doesn't let himself be) but he serves as an example of something in the LASFS that I hate—a false sensation of friendship one gets from LASFSians.

Of course, you have heard of all of these types before and maybe you would like something different and more exciting. If you're tired and a bit run down, try a little New Wave Head Fandom, but only if you want to. Meet Ken Rudolph, Ken Goldsmith (such a nice guy!), and all the other young revolutionaries who have rebelled and even gone so far as to grow their hair long and smoke...well, something they must have learned from Earl Evers.

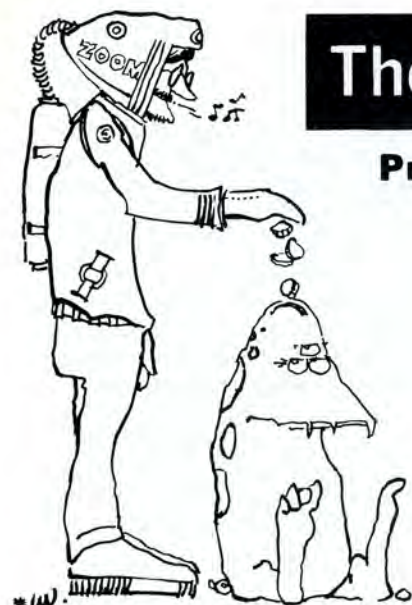
Conclude with them that our world is through. The Old Order is rapidly passing away, and now is the time for a new spiritual revival. Just put some of this stuff in your blood stream and you'll see the light, the millenium, and anything else your faulty brain might need to ease your mind. Follow the leadership of your rather shaggy guru as he guides you to new peaks of logic and reason.

So, this is the spectrum of LA fandom. Put them all together, shake them up, and pour out a rather strange and sometimes pungent circus. LA fans are amazing — divided among themselves, not giving much of a damn about outside fandom, refusing to accept reality, and continuing to devote their time to their shallow egos rather than to a world where real people do real things — they live out their lives in a bedlam of exotic ploys, plots, and good old-fashioned gossip.

I'm not with them anymore. I'm 3,000 miles away and it doesn't bother me a bit. I imagine I'll return to Los Angeles some day to live, but mainly because I have friends outside of fandom there than because Los Angeles is the center of the civilized fannish world.

Perhaps I'm biased because I was never admitted to any one of these groups, or maybe I'm just disgusted because they have found fannish perfection.

But, if they have found perfection, then I guess I'll just continue to have fun in my own barbarous state, as I'm sure much of the rest of fandom will.



First off, let's get the policy statement out of the way. In these columns I'll discuss stories from the recent prozines (recent: within the past year), but I will not try to review them all, or even a majority or fraction.

One time I may take up several stories by one writer, and the next I might use works by several writers to illustrate a current trend in sf.

With luck, I'll cover all the worthwhile short fiction sooner or later, but don't bank on it. Serials will seldom be mentioned, for they are soon paperbacked and are then promptly reviewed elsewhere.

Having set policy, I'm going to semi-violate it on the first trip, by considering the cryptosericals that are certainly a current trend.

By "cryptosericals" I mean the novels that are written to be broken down into a series of magazine novelets before they come out as books. This is a relatively new thing, distinct from the older series like Kuttner-Moore's Baldies (or such newer ones as Niven's and Saberhagen's),

The Banks Deposit

Prozine Commentary

which were first written as individual stories and then collected into a book.

The reason for this new thing is, I fear, pure and simple economics: a writer can get more money for magazine stories and a subsequent book than he can otherwise, even from a serial and a subsequent book. Naturally he's going to look at his bank balance and plot a sausage-link novel.

Damon Knight and Robert Silverberg each have cryptosericals currently running in GALAXY that, at this writing, are not concluded. This is good, because I can talk about them as individual stories without knowing how the novels end.

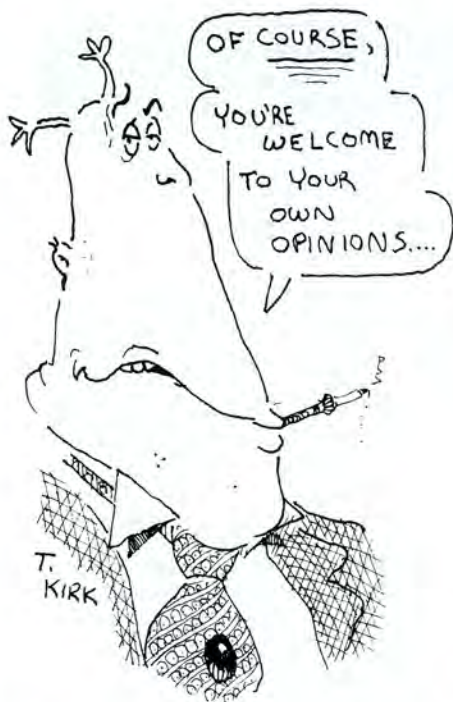
Three links of Damon Knight's Thorinn series have appeared, in the April, June, and August 1968 issues of GALAXY. They represent three stages of Thorinn's quest — yes, indeed, we have here a quest plot with a sword wielding hero, a bastard fantasy. I call it bastard because, although it is a full-panoplied fairytale, Knight has science-fictional underpinnings for his scenery (call it "science-fantasy" if you like).

The first story in a cryptoserical is often the best. It has a beginning and must introduce a sizeable chunk of the background. It must also have a pseudo-ending, and the links that follow must have a pseudo-beginning as well as (except the last) a pseudo-end.

"The World and Thorinn", Knight's first link, sets up the quest. An up-right youth named Thorinn lives in a sod-

A Column By

Banks Mebane



house with his ogreish foster-father and his lumpish foster-brothers, under a rotating sky half-dark half-light. When an earthquake makes the well go dry, his evial adoptive relatives decide to sacrifice him to the demon Snorri, which they do by enticing him down the well and blocking up the top. Trying to get home (Snorri knows why), Thorinn wanders through caverns, fights off rat-like monsters, falls into an underground river, and has a hell of a time recovering his sword from a subterranean lake (he has to build a stone causeway). It is made clear to the reader that this underworld is manmade, and Thorinn finally opens a bulkhead to find himself looking out of the sky into a land that he thinks is home (it isn't — this is the pseudo-ending).

Now Damon Knight is a careful craftsman, and his story, however it sounds in my summary, is not slapdash. He meant to do what he did, and he did it meticulously. On the overt level, the action is so realistic that the reader works as hard as Thorinn does, and I think I've figured out

what Knight is up to on a deeper level.

Some years back he did a critical article on unconscious symbols of intercourse, conception and birth in stories by himself, James Blish, and others (see *In Search of Wonder*, 2nd Ed.). Thorinn's clambering around in tunnels and water channels is obviously more of the same, and while I haven't guessed just which plumbing matters are involved, I'm sure the symbolism is decidedly conscious this time. I'm also sure that it is intended to reach the reader only unconsciously, so in a sense I'm cheating by recognizing it. I suspect that it is a major structural principle in the novel, but that is cheating, because I'm supposed to be thinking about the stories-in-themselves.

The pseudo-ending of "The World and Thorinn" certainly weakens it as a story-in-itself. It's much ado about nothing if the boy went through all that just to get back to his underprivileged home.

In "The Garden of Ease", the second link, our hero drops from the sky into an innocent paradise populated by odd beings who can't cope with his violence and ill-will. He departs through another watery channel, enveloped in a vagina-boat (or perhaps it's a womb-boat, Knight hints both ways). There is no evidence that Thorinn corrupts the Garden or that it changes him in any way, so the thing remains a neatly constructed episode, not a story.

In the third link, "The Star Below", he finds an enormous storeroom packed with exotic goodies, including a genie (a portable-TV-cum-computer) who fills him in on some background. This talking box shows him his world, which seems to be a generations-ship that is a whole planet, roofed over and tunneled out (he doesn't get it, and I'm not sure that I understand it right either). He wanders on to a great shaft, which he starts to climb, still heading home. Then he sees a star at the bottom and decides to climb down instead. That's this story: a man going one way changes his mind and heads another way.

To cheat again, I suppose it's a pivotal point in the novel. We shall have to wait and see.

Robert Silverberg's cryptoserial started with "Nightwings" in the September 1968 GALAXY. He posits a far-future Earth that has passed through a period of galactic glory, a catastrophe, and is now a decadent backwater. The old cities still survive, somewhat altered: Roum, Perris, Jorslem. Many trappings of fantasy abound — quasi-medieval society, butterfly-winged girls, esper-soothsaying, and the like — but it remains sf.

Silverberg's intention is not so serious here as it was in *Thorns* or "Hawksbill Station." He's writing a colorful, rousing tale, he's succeeding, and he's having fun with it.

He's taken one of the oldest plot clichés in sf — the invasion of Earth by aliens — and used it freshly. I won't summarize "Nightwings", because the plot-twists are so important to the reader's enjoyment of it. The characters are engaging: the garrulous old narrator, the Flier-girl Avluela, the despotic Prince of Roum (who has innocent virgins dragged to his bed). Best of all, "Nightwings" is a real story — the pseudo-ending is a satisfying conclusion: Earth is conquered *in toto* and as symbolized by the fall of the Prince.

The second link, "Perris Way" (November GALAXY), is far less satisfying as a story-in-itself. It shows Earth under the conquerors, encompasses the Prince's death, and sends the narrator off to Jorslem with a new companion. Too much is ahead, too much behind, and it is fatally weakened by a large history lesson smack in the middle. In the novel this may not be so out of perspective, but 9 pages out of a 56-page story is too big a bite. What hurts is that it's unnecessary — Silverberg has deftly woven a large part of the information into the storyline elsewhere, and the rest could have been added easily. Maybe he's written so many non-fiction books for teenagers that he just can't stop

explaining.

These two cryptoserials are immensely different, one from the other. Knight's hero is virtually the only person in his series — the others are shadowy and mostly nameless, and the conflict is presented as Thorinn vs. his (shifting) impersonal environment. Knight unrolls his plot as Thorinn's straightline progress from point A to point B. Silverberg has rich surface detail and a large cast of strong characters violently reacting to each other. His stories also embody a quest of sorts, but it's made up of a succession of smaller quests undertaken by the narrator, each concluding to generate the next stage. (Quest-plots now are as common as revolution stories used to be — the writers' yen to do cryptoserials may well be the reason.)

Knight has simply chopped up his main story episode by episode, and the resulting novelets overpower their own pseudo-endings; Silverberg, working with more complex plot-elements, has constructed links that are more satisfying stories-in-themselves. Yet both writers can turn out far better short fiction when they're concentrating on that form alone.

I can't resist speculating on the shape of the novels that these stories will end up as (pace Jim Blish). I suspect that they will be better than the individual stories, but I also suspect that they won't be as good as the novels Knight and Silverberg can write when they're writing a novel *per se*. When the books come out, check me to see if I'm right.

— December, 1968

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P.O. Box 3116



JOHN J. PIERCE
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Dec. 3, 1968

Word has reached me that "Harlan the Mouthless" Ellison is screaming again. That's hardly surprising, since Mr. Ellison is usually screaming at one thing or another.

This time, so I am told, I, and a movement I have instigated known as the Second Foundation, are the targets of his ire. This too isn't surprising, since I did severely criticize his literary principles in a manifesto for the October, 1968, issue of DIFFERENT, a fanzine published by Sam Moskowitz, and have continued to do so in letters to *Lightbeam*, letterzine of the National Fantasy Fan Federation.

So my only purpose in writing this letter of comment is to let it be known, by friend and foe alike, that I stand by my statements. So do Lester del Rey, First Speaker of the Second Foundation, and Dr. Isaac Asimov, who has kindly consented to the use of his literary properties by the movement. The latter two, by the way, stand by their commitment in spite of outrageous demands, made by Mr. Ellison's notorious sidekick Norman Spinrad in the Science Fiction Writers of America FORUM, that they renounce it.

My purpose in writing the DIFFERENT manifesto and in launching the Second Foundation was to lend support to science fiction based on the Romanticist principles of storytelling, the vision

of science and the sense of wonder. I believe that the policies now being advocated by Mr. Ellison, by Judith Merrill, and by their assorted apologists, sycophants and hangers on, are having a disastrous effect upon our genre and have seriously undermined its fundamental values. I shall continue to give voice to me convictions, regardless of Mr. Ellison and his cohorts.

In any case, Mr. Ellison's pretense of injured innocence in reaction to any criticism of himself is hard to take seriously, coming from a man whose own idea of literary criticism is to refer to a writer he dislikes (in a book introduction no less!) as "Leon Urine;" whose attitude towards his fellow man is expressed in the words, "You are the monsters." His reported threat to beat me up should I dare attend the next Worldcon is a further commentary on his maturity — let him remember Dr. Asimov's proverb: "Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent!"

I have been castigated at length for advocating a "Holy War" against the New Wave-Thing movement. This shows, among other things, that the New Wavicles are completely devoid of any sense of humor — apparently they expected me to literally march in on them with a machine-gun in hand, or bomb their homes, or something, instead of merely to agitate and propagandize, which was my obvious intention. As for the New Wavicles' call for "unity" on the part of S.F. W.A. members against the Second Foundation, I can only compare it to Mayor Richard Daley's appeal for "unity" in Chicago. I have found over the years that entrenched establishments always yell "Unity!" when their power is threatened.

Not that I have any interest in "disrupting" the S.F.W.A. to begin with. The S.F.W.A. is only a secular organization that will reflect the views of whichever ideological group has paramount influence. While the New Wavicles

may not even have a majority of members in the S.F.W.A. at present, they predominate because of their quasi-religious unity and zeal. Should another group come to the fore, the orientation of the S.F.W.A. will automatically change. And I doubt very much that the New Wavicles would continue to preach "unity" were they no longer in control.

Let the New Wavicles know that the Second Foundation has received, and continues to receive, a sympathetic response from a number of top-ranking science fiction writers, as well as fans. We shall continue to progress in spite of any difficulties.

((I find it incredible that Mr. Asimov and Mr. del Rey stand by your statements in DIFFERENT #30. Do you mean they saw a copy of your "manifesto" before it was published (or since) and said to you they agree?

I would like to hear from them, for publication, on this point, for their sakes, because some of your comments and assertions in that fanzine, John, were slanderous.))

((Now to a letter received from John J. Pierce dated Dec. 30, 1968.))

Received SFR 28, and see that Ellison's comment on DIFFERENT was not as strong as I had been led to believe, though doubtless he does have stronger words stored away someplace.

I had not seen a copy of your zine before, but to judge from the contents, the previous title was more appropriate. In a sense, it's a relief, since various persons have accused me of being unprecedentedly vituperative — I find that this is far from the case, even from the briefest perusal of your cutting board. However, I do not wish to be involved in your more parochial hostilities.

I see there is a big debate on sex in SF; this strikes me as amusing, since most of the New Thing appears to be anti-sexual. At least, I find that practically every New Thing sex story treats the sexual impulse as basically neurotic or even psychotic. These explicit sex scenes appear, almost invariably, to be bedded in a context of cruelty and disgust. Recent works by Robert Silverberg offend in this way; in fact, he has mastered the trick of being completely puritanical while pretending to be a taboo-breaker. I don't regard sex as "filthy;" and I'm not shocked by D.H. Lawrence or, to cite an example closer to home, the explicit sex scenes in Ted White's science fantasy. What I do object to is being handed books in which sex is tainted by sadism and anhedonia, and then be-

ing told that anyone who doesn't like this sort of thing is "prudish." Very little of the so-called sex in the New Thing is even titillating, much less inspiring. And I don't like the treatment of women, either — to make my point clear, let me ask the question: if Barbarella and the Black Flame were both real women, which would you rather sleep with?

Harry Harrison's being Leroy Tanner explains a couple of things. As you'll recall, Tanner blasted Zelazny's *Lord of Light*. Why? For the simple reason that Zelazny "betrayed" the New Thing by refusing to write sick fiction of the Ellison-Disch-Spinrad-Ballard type. And Tanner also blasted Budrys. Why? Well, it seems that Budrys took a less than awed view of recent works by Disch, Ballard and Aldiss. As you know, Harrison, though he doesn't write New Thing stories himself as a rule, has a mysterious compulsion to act as its "Defender-of-the-faith" in print, and woe to him that maketh not proper obeisance to the Great Gods.

I'll say this for SFR: it is interesting, somewhat in the way a snake pit is interesting, and no doubt I will follow future issues in order to better understand what the Other Side is doing.

((You seem to have created an elaborate demonology concerning the "New Thing." I doubt very much if it has as much as a 1% reality outside your mind, however.

I am publishing your letters to give SFR's readership an idea of your style of thinking.

It's like this, only worse, in the "manifesto," folks.

I suppose curious readers can get a copy of DIFFERENT #30, for 50¢, from Sam Moskowitz, 361 Roseville Ave, Newark, N.J. 07107.))

ALVA ROGERS
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Castro Valley, Cal.
94546

I'm impressed with SFR 28, although I must say I kinda miss the pink fibretint mimeo paper, the gestefaxed artwork...

I'm gratified, though, to see that there's been no detectable change in the overall tone of the magazine, the gutsy, no-holds-barred editorial policy. The increased emphasis on science fiction is all to the good. I hope you continue reviewing books regardless of publication date rather than sticking to recent releases. This makes for a much more interesting review section in my opinion.

The entire contents of the issue was at the

usual high and interesting level we've all come to expect of a Geis edited magazine. But the letter section still reigns over all. So, to the letters....

Bill Glass has some rather naive ideas concerning the Hugos which bear correcting, if I may be so presumptuous. Like all of us he had personal preferences in the different categories, and naturally he was disappointed in the way one or more of the categories came out. He wasn't alone in liking Chthon over the others in the novel category. We received a total of 482 final ballots by deadline. Of that 482 ballots there were 70 with Chthon listed as number 1 in the novel category, whereas Lord of Light came on strong with 144 listing it as first choice. Now we all know Ted White is one of the Secret Masters of Fandom, yea, even of the Inner Circle, but not even his Power is so pervasive as to influence a significant portion of those 144 to cast their first place votes to Roger. Chthon held on through three ballots, picking up votes each time, but was finally eliminated after the third ballot. The final vote in the novel category, for those interested (a full breakdown of the final ballot is to appear in LOCUS ((The address for LOCUS is 2078 Anthony Ave., Bronx, NY 10457. Subs are 8/\$1))), was Lord of Light, 200 votes, with Einstein Intersection as runner-up with 169 votes.

Bill is completely mistaken in his assumption that an exact numerical tie is impossible on an Australian ballot. The first ballot count in the Novella category went thusly: "Damnation Alley," 88 — "Hawkebill Station" 74 — "Riders of the Purple Wage" 121 — "Star Pit" 49 — "Weyr Search" 121. "Riders" and "Weyr" were tied right off the bat and "Star Pit" was eliminated on the first ballot, any superior merits it might have had notwithstanding. On the second ballot the count was "Riders" 128, "Weyr" 131. On the third ballot "Riders" and "Weyr" were again in a dead heat at 150 each. On the final ballot there was never more than five votes separating the two stories, and the final count ended with "Weyr" at 213 and "Riders" at 210. "Hah! I told you so!" Bill Glass exclaims triumphantly. But wait. The three members of the BatCon committee haven't cast their votes yet. We take a count. All three of us cast our vote for Farmer. Viola! An exact numerical tie honestly arrived at.

I don't know how the TriCon tie was arrived at, but it was probably in much the same manner as the BayCon tie. I do know, though, that Roger wasn't "given" a tie Hugo because he was the TriCon Guest of Honor, because he wasn't GoH of that con — Sprague deCamp was. Gad!

Ted White is right. Many of the nominating ballots we received had little notes added such as, "Don't read fanzines," or "Saw no movies or TV this year," and so on. In other words, respondents left blank those categories they didn't feel competent to nominate in, and the same held true with the final ballots.

John Berry, in his always fine column, comes forth with a mind-crogling suggestion; a suggestion, an idea, that could only come from a fine young fannish mind respectfully aware of fannish traditions, but not totally zapped by tradition. Why, Mr. Berry asks, hold a masquerade at all at a con? Why indeed. It is something to give serious consideration to. The work involved for everyone concerned is certainly not worth the return: the concon is condemned for incompetency (or worse!) if the affair doesn't come off with clockwork precision, or isn't handled the way it was handled so well at the last con, or the con before that, the participants spend hours and days and weeks and untold sums of money on costumes that are forgotten almost minutes after they're displayed, except for what slides they're captured on, and only about eight or ten of the costumes competing receive tangible recognition in the form of trophies — eight or ten out of hundreds! And, as John so shrewdly points out 90% of the non-costumed audience is secretly bored with the whole thing five minutes after it starts. I'll wager that if we'd devoted the entire Saturday evening of the Baycon to the three rock bands and the light show and dancing and said to hell with a masquerade we'd've received practically no criticism (other than against the type of music employed) from anyone but a few die-hard costume buffs.

Think it over future concons.

Incidentally, Dick, it might amuse you to learn that Bill and Ben and I are going to bid for the 1970 Westercon and have already reserved the Claremont for it. In addition to this we have already announced our intention to make our bid at Heidelberg for the 1972 Worldcon — BayCon II — to be held in San Francisco if we can find a suitable hotel. And Bob Silverberg has graciously consented to again be our toastmaster if we win the bid. We're serious, man! But no splashy expensive campaigns, no sir.

Getting back to John Berry's column. On the question of what to do in the USA when the Worldcon goes overseas, John, the answer is really quite simple and has always been put to the test and found workable. On the year the con goes overseas give added emphasis to the Westercon

for that year. The Westercon is in fact already a small Worldcon in terms of length and general format. In 1965, when the Worldcon went to London, a much greater than usual number of Eastern and Mid-Western fans and pros attended the Westercon in Long Beach as an alternative to going overseas. So it's not held on Labor Day weekend, but so what? Next to the Worldcon, the Westercons consistently attract a larger number of fans and pros from all over than any other regional con. Why fabricate a con in the US to compete on the same date with a legitimate Worldcon held in another country, thus possibly cutting into the anticipated number of US fans and pros who might have planned to go abroad? Let's use the logical, existing US con as an alternative and let the foreign fans have their rightful day.

((To give the Westercons more status, of course, you should consider an award system on a par with the Hugos and Nebulas.))

JOANNA RUSS
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Norman Spinrad told me that my novel, PICNIC ON PARADISE, is being reviewed in fanzines, but I find I'm not getting copies of them.

He suggested that I write to you, asking about having my address printed in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW so that those fanzine who'd reviewed PICNIC would know where to send those particular copies.

((Since I have a fairly complete list of professionals' addresses, if those faneds who publish reviews need specific addresses in order to send review copies...where am I? Anyway, ask me and if I have it I'll provide it, with one or two rare exceptions.))

WILLIAM F. TEMPLE
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ENGLAND

Couldn't resist a grin at Kay Anderson's letter in PSY 26 describing Arthur Clarke's accent as a "mixture of British and American and some soft accent I imagine is Ceylonese." That soft bit is in fact pure Somerset, England, where he was born. British actors attempt it when playing West Country characters (in the profession it's called "Mummerset").

Shortly after the grin, I was listening to the accent itself. Arthur rang from London "for a chat," which in practise means, as ever, a chat about Arthur Clarke. I asked him if he had indeed made (as Kay reported) the 2001 dialogue deliberately banal. He said there was no actual dialogue script, as such. Kubrick preferred the actors to extemporise.

Incidentally, Arthur had just blown in from a Space Congress in Vienna, where 2001 was shown. He'd hobnobbed with the first man to walk in space (a Russian whose name, to my shame, now eludes me). The Russian told him that seeing 2001 was like taking a second walk in space.

Arthur, in one of those carefully rehearsed throw-away lines, mentioned that to date the film had grossed over 10 million dollars. So it didn't bother my conscience that I hadn't paid for my seat — which I had difficulty in reaching. It was the Press Show. Arthur, in the foyer, grabbed my lapels while he impressed on me a list of the finer points I must watch for. Damn me if he wasn't lying in wait to check my reactions on the way out, too. Sometime I must see the film again, but in peace.

There's much comment-worthy in PSY 27 — notably the art-work and especially the lovely 4-eyed monster, a model monster indeed — but space limits me to endorsing the Square Views of John (Sam Youd) Christopher. It recalls Marya Mannes' satirical "Confession of Mark Gutzler to the United States Advisory Board for Literary Excellence."

(Quote: "I was led astray in my youth by the sinful love of words and a slavish attention to the so-called masters of literature of the past. My writing has therefore been progressively sapped of the qualities of accident and error that give strength and importance to the best of contemporary writing. In a misguided attempt, moreover, to perfect the skill of communicating clearly to others, I have sacrificed that priceless ingredient of true talent: obscurity. As USABLE stated, clarity bears the stigma of order, and order is the enemy of the natural state of man, chaos. The true writer reflects chaos...In the future I will make comprehension as difficult as possible in the hope of being praised by the critics if not read by the public. I fear I have favored the latter at the expense of the former.")

I don't blame the hitherto neglected (outside of the "little magazines") Greenwich Village beat poets for exploiting the s-f market, the price of hash, acid, etc., being what it is today. Can't say I'm so happy about the spec-

tacle of opportunist publishers and naive critics aboard the bandwagon reversing into the 'twenties and singing My Heart Belongs To Dadaism. Always the hope, though, that they'll overshoot and reach 1900, when there was some genuine prose poetry around in s-f. E.g., in Wells' The Star or The Time Machine or the Lunar Dawn chapters (which evoked T.S. Elliot's admiration) of The First Men in the Moon. No muddled metaphors, no sloppy similes, no grotesque grammar. No loose running at the mouth.

Incidentally, the rules of grammar were formulated to aid clear and gracious expression. They were still in a state of flux in Shakespeare's time. Sam instances his disciplined writing but "the most unkindest cut of all" still jars.

Admittedly, style is secondary to content but art is communication or it's nothing. The biggest office or club bore is the man who insists on telling you about the funny dream he had last night, in detail. It might interest his psychiatrist but no-one else, because it's a shapeless, pointless pot-pourri of random memories. It resolves nothing, joins onto nothing, doesn't even entertain. He's just wasting your time.

Somehow, while no-one was looking, he's gained the floor. Pro tem, I hope. I rather suspect the other club members are becoming more than a bit bored and presently will drift away looking for a trad-type spellbinder who can induce them to wonder what's going to happen next instead of baffling them about what's supposed to be happening now and to whom where.

How can anyone believe shape is unimportant? Let 'em take another look at the afore-mentioned model monster. Would they prefer to regard a blob of formless protoplasm?

((Up to a point, I like to hear people's dreams. It usually gives me a one-upmanship peek into their subconscious. Heh, heh.))

JOHN BANGSUND I received SFR, and in many ways it is everything I had hoped ASFR would eventually be. Victoria 3156 Certainly the production is exactly what I was aiming at. AUSTRALIA

The Farmer transcript is an inspiring thing indeed, and real soon now I shall get up off my donkey and enlist in his bunch of sf vigilantes.

The reviews leave much to be desired, but the letter column as usual is a sparkling performance, and it provides an extreme example,

incidentally, of the kind of thing which has brought about ASFR's folding - I mean Ted's comments on ASFR 16. Not picking on Ted (does that make me unique?), but #16 seems to have aroused a fair bit of controversy, from what I hear - yet I've only had one LoC on it from the U.S. (yours, as it happens). Maybe I've just been sending ASFR to the wrong people. If any of your readers would like a copy of #16, it's available for the asking.

For the record, SCYTHROP is unlikely to appear before April. If it doesn't get more response than ASFR after a few issues I'll probably turn to a more productive and satisfying hobby, such as playing chess or collecting soft-drink bottle tops.

((I think, after due cogitation, that your problem is that nine out of ten fans don't have a habit of keeping airletters on hand and don't know what the airmail rate is per half-ounce or ounce to Australia.))

NORMAN SPINRAD,
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Los Angeles, Calif.
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One final word from me to Ted White on what I hope has become by now our non-feud. Yes, you touched a nerve, Ted: you called me a liar (your word) and then proceeded to "prove" your case by stating what I knew to be demonstrable untruths. After reading your last letter, it seems to me that your honest problem is that you don't know the difference between sincerity and truth. You say "...the points Norm raised to prove me a liar are not examples of knowing falsehood on my part, but of simple error." In other words, while the things you said were untrue, you weren't lying. I think I understand what you mean—you weren't lying in the sense that you believed what you were saying was true. You were sincere. I really do believe that. But what you were doing, Ted, was committing hearsay to print. What you said was, by your own admission, not true. I point out to you, not in anger but in friendship, that had I chosen to sue you for libel, I would have had an open and shut case. Sincerity would have been no defense at all. I hope this ends the whole business. I only bring it up in the hope that you'll be less prone to shoot from the hip in the future - like, what if there is a Leroy Tanner, and you meet him at a con someday and he's 8 feet tall with the disposition of a wolverine?

As far as my categorizing Lord Of Light as a symbolic novel in my review of The Final Programme

me, the point I was making was that Programme was an attempt to create a new mythos out of the material of our time, while novels like Lord Of Light make use of an already-existing mythos. Two very different kinds of book, which was the only point I was making.

As for why "People like Norman Spinrad don't submit their stuff to places like Grove, New Directions, etc." Ted is 100% right (there, Ted, now I've said something nice about you). In fact, I spent a year submitting BJB to the major hard-cover houses and got some of the weirdest rejection letters imaginable. It seems to me that the only sf such houses will touch is either sf by recognized mainstream writers, a handful of sf writers like Clarke and Bradbury, and sf that is not too s-fy, like John Christopher's stuff. Certainly, they won't do sf by a relative unknown which is "Far Out" or "Difficult" in the bargain. I found this out the hard way.

Dean Koontz' letter puzzled me. I think his comment on Men In The Jungle possibly being too long may have merit. On the other hand, if I had cut it, it might not have worked. It's like a man designs an airplane, and his boss says "Great. Only this one little protruberance should go, because it hurts the streamlining." "Yeah, but that's the propeller."

Of course it's not that simple—because the boss can then say: "You designed a great jet plane around a piston engine."

In the final analysis, the writer must listen to all editorial suggestions with as open a mind as possible and then make all the final decisions himself. For instance, on Bug Jack Barron, one editor who I deeply respect felt that the female-viewpoint sequences were the weakest part of the book and if I eliminated them, the book would be better. Since writing from a female viewpoint seems to me to be a very tough thing for a man to do, and an even tougher thing to judge whether he has done it well, I was giving this suggestion very serious consideration. Then someone else whose opinion I respected flipped over the female viewpoint sections—and she was a woman! So there you are.

The point is that in the final analysis, a writer must make his own decisions because the advice he gets is almost certain to be contradictory. The time to take editorial advice is when there seems to be a consensus on a point. I did make some changes in BJB (minor) on that basis. That's what's so good about Milford - you get maybe 20 viewpoints, not just one or two. I'm not going to go into the Ace business for Dean, which I've already explained, nor into

how I work with editors, which George Ernsberger has already explained.

But somehow I find it interesting that Dean is a teacher. Because his notion of the proper writer-editor relationship seems to be based on the pupil-teacher relationship. And a lot of editors share this feeling. But it is an immature way of going about things. For an example of how a mature editor works with writers, re-read George Ernsberger's letter in PSYCHOTIC 27. As a writer, I don't find it unreasonable to assume that I am the intellectual equal of the average editor, that I probably know as much about writing as he does, and that I certainly know more about what I'm trying to do than he does. Which does not mean that the editor has nothing to add. But which does mean that he has no right to tell a writer to do this or to do that or else "flunk the course" (that is, not sell the book). A good mature editor has no need to assume this kind of posture. If he really understands the book, he can discuss it with the writer in such a way that the writer will see what the book needs and why. If there is a meeting of minds between editor and writer, the "pupil-teacher" relationship is unnecessary. And if there is no meeting of minds, then the editor has no right to order the writer to do it his way.

In short, the healthy way for writers and editors to work on books is as equals - with the understanding that if there is disagreement that cannot be resolved, the writer should have final say, since, after all, it is his name and not the editor's which is affixed, for better or worse, to the final product.

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God help me! Did I say that? Did I lead Lee Hoffman into thinking not only that I was loveable but also a dictator on art? I'm sorry. I certainly didn't intend to. All I said was that your (Geis's) in-expertise in the field of graphic design was sorely contrasted to Bergeron's obvious experience in the field and I hoped to suggest (not dictate) that those out there in fanzine-land who are not initiates (have not worked in the field for half a lifetime) and who might possibly that expert cover on PSY 26 as a doodle be made aware that the doodle was a disciplined and experienced doodle and that by looking at it and thinking a little about it they might discover some of the effort and love that goes into what

may seem to be merely "decorative art".

But, lordlurvaduck, Lee you don't hafta like anything if you don't want to.

I respect and love Lee Hoffman with a respect and love which is true and honest (insofar as I am capable of being honest...being human) and that there might be this misunderstanding between us is disturbing.

Lee, you as an author (out of respect—recalling your remarks anent the "Greenwich Village Authoress"—you'll notice that I did not say authoress) are, in my estimation, a master of your craft. You CAN tell ME what to like because I'm no bloody author and I think the disciplines of that trade are forbidding and mystically remote (you, Lee, have read a little of my writing and you know damnwell I ain't no writer) from my abilities. I allow you, by my respect, to tell me what is good or bad (I can disagree on a personal level but cannot on a professional level). You have never told me what to like. Merely how to like what is in front of me. I had hoped that I may have suggested to a few that missed the point (and I admit to insulting those who did not miss the point) that there was more to the bird cover than met the eye. But I didn't tell you what to like. Oh, heaven help me, no!

Anyone may like what he likes. Who am I to say he cannot? BUT it seems to me incumbent on any living, reasoning creature to search...to know...to grow. What lives without growth? You as an author, must have searched out what works, what moves, what affects, what progresses a story and how is this to be done technically. I'm thirtygoddamne-eight, and have been published since I was sixteen. I fancy that, now that I'm old and grouchy, I have earned the privilege to have opinions based upon an unusually wide experience in the graphic field. Not exceptional...merely unusual. I utilized that long experience to make a remark upon the work of what was clearly another experienced professional in the field. I'm truly truly sorry that I did it artlessly.

In short (ha) there are no rules and regulations other than what any inquiring intelligence (or old man) may impose upon him or herself.

The nature of the inquiry is up to you.

And you, Dick, might be amused to know that (apropos my remarks about doodling and finding ideas) I have utilized some of the ideas from the center-fold in SFR 28 in the cover for the hardcover version of Bug Jack Barron and the unrelated doodle of the thorn-lady on page 47 of

SFR 28 (this sounds a little like a Carleton E. Morse Production..."Fanny, Fanny, Fanny") should appear on the HC version of Silverberg's Thorns. Both, however were begun as doodles and were done originally for PSYCHOTIC.

Just as a point of information....Dean Koontz, I initiated the two pagers. GALAXY did not. I do not mean to de-mean the goose and the golden (if not exactly 14K) egg which GALAXY is to me... but no one there said, "Hey be modrin and go psychedelic." There is, on GALAXY's staff a young lady who is interested in dressing up the magazine (against impossible odds of lack of money and apathy and you-name-it) but if Bode or I or Morrow or whomever came up with anything contemporary or interesting or worthy or lousy, for that matter, we did it, I assure you, largely on our own cognizance. Only one editor (outside of a brief experience with JWC) ever told me what approach to use on a drawing. And that was Lester del Rey. And that was because he (almost alone of SF editors) KNOWS what he wants in a drawing. Most others pretend ignorance of the art or go off into the cloud-cuckoo land of "marketing". Based upon my experience, I venture to say that (in the magazines) any SF art you see is not the result of editors or art-directors or research-teams or boards but of that poor lone slob, the illoer hisownself. So to give credit (or blame) where credit (or blame) is due...the artist ALONE is responsible for what you see in the magazines. Naturally somebody buys these things and pays for them... that much decision is made by the editor on the drawing. But the rest of it is strictly the artist's doing. Which may explain why most, if not all, SF illoers are SF readers...even (gasp) fans. Because no disinterested, hack-illoer would even bother if money alone were the sole object of his efforts.

What the hell would I do without parentheses?

Dick your letter column is so damned knowledgeable and authoritative (with a two-page exception) ((You are too modest, Jack)) that it's almost forbidding to one given (as I am) to writing letters. A bit too good to be true.

Since I did the jacket drawing, obviously, I have read Bug Jack Barron. I didn't like it. Like, I didn't DISlike it but I didn't think it was all-that-great-to-cause-all-that-noise. So it was sexy. Wunnerful! I read it with enjoyment. But I was not moved by it or impressed by it or offended by it. Just amused for a time. Now...all you people out there who read and discuss and dissect and analyze and practice writing...tell me, for the luvvami, what's all the

noise about? I'd be interested (really) to find out what it is I've missed.

I like Spinrad, incidentally.

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Just a quick note to say that the new SFR looks just great — and reads even better which is quite an accomplishment. I would prefer fewer book reviews and more important articles, but the letter column is a dream. Lovely — especially enjoyed the missive from Gaughan whose description of his doodling sounds just like some of the secrets of a fan artist I've been giving in WARHOON. For Sneary's information the print order for each of the new Wrhns has been 250 copies. The stock on #23 is low but there are plenty of copies left of #24 & 25. SFR obviously deserves the Hugo this year and is the fanzine I intend to vote for.

Can you help me with a few addresses? I'm desperate for the following: Bea Mahaffey, Duane Rimel (a fan from the 40's and correspondent of Laney), Burbee. Any suggestions for a lead on Rimel appreciated.

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I, for one, am all a-tingle with the prospect of seeing Mr. Ellison "terrifying statements" in the New Holy War. I know I will do my best to shiver, shake, cower and cringe in appropriate terror: even deep fright is preferable to feeling nauseated by claims that inflammatory speech is the pathway to improved sf, and that morbid, wonder-less, science-less speculative fiction is a maturing of the genre.

So please hurry with the terrorsome statements, Mr. Ellison. Please do.

((Tsk, tsk, Vera. Your Second Foundation membership is showing.))

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What is this damn thing? I don't like it. I like things to stay the way they are, and I'll bet you someday you decide

to go back to using letter-size paper and it'll be just like the mess ANALOG caused when it expanded, then went on a diet. My bookshelves have a jog in them. And this new title—SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW sounds like something I feud with. How can I write friendly, off-color loc's to something called SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW? That would be like propositioning the Pope. More like it, because I don't even believe in the Pope, having never met him, and I do, or did, believe in PSY and the Mad Hermit with the fascinating bathroom acoustics. I guess that's all over, unless your new place is similarly haunted.

((All I hear in my new bathroom is a vague gurgling of water now and then...and on the other side of the apartment I hear church programs through the wall. This sure ain't Venice!))

I've much enjoyed Earl Evers' views on the various psychedelic drugs. One thing which strikes me is the matter-of-factness of his descriptions of the trips and the distorting effects of the drugs. In almost everything written by a user that I had previously read there was a quieting amount of evangelism and proselytizing about how everyone should try it and all sorts of encouragement to trip along. And most of the descriptions of the trips was incoherent. Evers seems extremely coherent and intelligent... I wonder whether he has noticed any effect on articulateness or powers of description in people who have taken psychedelics. Or perhaps my question is so general as to be meaningless...it is something I've wondered, though. I have a friend who was always quite articulate in college. She was in General Honors with me and was always a sharper person than I. The last time I talked to her, after she had been using psychedelics for three years, she kept urging me to try acid, but couldn't really give me a coherent reason why, just a vague description of some sort of bliss, interjected with "You know" and "really" as frequent intervals. I could make little sense of her.

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Greg Benford's article in PSY 26, "VOID Before And After Ted White", was fascinating, because I always wondered how Greg saw the "Ted White" issues

of VOID. Unfortunately, I'm not really sure I do know what Greg thought of them, even after reading the article. But he asks questions, like "how good was it? Did it catch the feel

of the era, should it be held up as a model?"

I can't give an objective answer any more easily than Greg can, but I can say that I was never satisfied with VOID. It was never precisely what I wanted of it. I think most of the material was good, often damned good. I deliberately kept its orientation fanish and sf-oriented in a day when wide-ranging social discussions were more common in fanzines, so that I suppose VOID became, almost by default, a fanish leader. But I was never aware at the time of doing any "leading". VOID was never nominated for a Hugo, although it placed second on the 1961 (or was it 1960?) FANAC Poll.

But I don't think the affection which more recent fans seem to feel toward VOID is a result of my "forceful personality." Arnie Katz and I share a bitter joke about how he's "Ted White Junior", because Arnie and I have gone through long periods of violent, if not public, argument and dislike. (Both of us have long since done some growing up, which accounts for the fact that today we laugh about it.) Arnie has a file of VOIDS which he lends to local fans like Johnny Berry and Alan Shaw, and they talk about what a great fanzine it was, mostly when I'm not around.

I think that VOID's appeal to these fans is that the editorials (in later issues) summon up a feeling of a fabulous fanish era of all these great fans messing around Towner Hall chattering and all, and this is for some a fanish dream. I mean, Terry, Pete and I were BNF's, turning out VOIDS and dozens of apazines, in this place where fans could wander in at any hour (and did), right there in Greenwich Village, for ghodsakes, and wow!

Actually, if I forget the whopping rent on Towner Hall (and how I scrounged for it, which I prefer to forget), it was a pretty fine, fabulous fanish time. Terry Carr in New York, Bob Stewart and Andy Reiss drawing cartoons at the drop of a rapidograph, fanac, fanac, fanac. Why, even Richard Bergeron, NY fandom's hermit, came over to Towner Hall one evening and said he enjoyed it.

Nostalgia: false nostalgia if you were never there, but powerful. Like Burbee and Laney and the Insurgents in the late forties, and all the LA fanac in the mid-forties: I wasn't there, but I probably feel towards it as the new fans do towards the Towner Hall era: wow! And VOID summed it all up on paper.

Forget reality. No matter if Terry Carr's first marriage had just broken up and mine was in the process of breaking up. Fan it up; laugh a lot. We did have a lot of laughs.

But, getting back to Greg's article, what I want to know is this: Why'd you write yet another VOID-Is-Legend piece for the Mythos, Greg?

Regarding my own book, Dick (and thanks for the review), you were apparently unaware that it was a sequel to Android Avenger, in which some of the questions you ask were answered. It's always difficult to know how much should be recapped in a sequel; obviously not enough this time was. Tanner's name was originally "Bob Tucker." Don Wollhein (who edited the original book) changed that to "Bob Tanner." I debated returning to the original name in the sequel, but decided it would only be needlessly confusing to most readers. So I stuck with "Tanner."

(Oddly enough, one of those who liked the book — and called me up to tell me — was Lawrence Bloch, author of the "Evan Tanner" ~~series~~ for Gold Medal. "Tanner" seems to be an over-used name these days.)

Tanner was constructed of both machinery and human flesh and organs — a combination of robot and android. I never went into all the details of this, because I considered them unimportant to the plot, and I didn't want to stop the story (in either book) to explain. But Tanner was built, as an adult, with high-alloy steel bones and framework, some servo-mechs, a laser built into his skull, and a means of atomically converting organic matter into energy to power this robotic machinery. He also was supplied with humanoid bone marrow in his arms, legs and ribs, a full complement of human organs, and flesh and skin. His brain is both organic and solid-state electronic. The latter part contains a radio device for communication with the computer-complex (although the complex's broadcasting and receiving equipment is no longer functioning when the second book opens). When I originally conceived him, I thought of Tanner as a van Vogtian superman.

His problem, in both books, is to come to grips with himself. In the first book he has been equipped with falsely normal human memories. In the second some of these, and subsequent "real" memories remain, despite the complex's attempt to wipe them out. In both books what he wants most is not to be superhuman (as others consider him) or subhuman (as he considers himself), but simply to be human in those areas where it counts: the exchange of love and the genetic ability to perpetuate himself as the father of a human child.

His relationship with the computer-complex is, you'll pardon the phrase, complex. The computer sired him but is less than he. It has

less personality, less self-will, and no ability to go out into the world and partake of life. In some respects the computer is simply a mechanical extension of Tanner's mechanical brain (like Gosseyn's extra brains); in another sense, Tanner is simply a sensory extension of the computer. But they are two parts of one whole: which is why the computer "figuratively shrugs and wishes him good luck."

Remember, it wasn't the computer-complex which brought on Chaos: it was Tanner, acting through the computer. The computer "saw" what this knowledge had subsequently done to Tanner, and, at Tanner's request, had tried to shield him from those memories. But when Tanner reveals he has learned to live with them, why shouldn't the computer be "pleased"?

What really startles me, though, is that your review of Fairman's I, The Machine makes it sound as though he'd written a novel parallel to mine, or one which used most of the same suppositions as a jumping-off place. I doubt Paul ever chanced to read Android Avenger, and Spawn wasn't out when he wrote his book, so I must credit it to coincidence.

Letters:

Gabe Eisenstein wonders just what it was I ever did, comic-wise. The answer, Gabe, is Not Much. Literally, I published one issue of one comics fanzine, back in 1954 or thereabouts. Title was POTRZEBIE, and my co-editors were Larry Stark and Bob Stewart. We were all EC fans. I was a big comics collector in those days (I sold most of my collection in 1964), and I've occupied the fringes of comics fandom ever since, more as a quasi-pro than a fan. I still attend the monthly meetings of NY's Comic Art Group (membership includes a lot of the still-around EC artists, people like Jeff Jones, Archie Goodwin, Larry Ivie, Gray Morrow, and like that), and I wrote the Captain America book, but my claim to fame in comics fandom is nebulous. Mostly it's just having been around a Long Time.

I should explain to George H. Smith that I was not putting down either Harrison or Aldiss for the fiction they write — as I recall I did not comment on that part of their output at all. And it may surprise George to discover that few critics write their reviews for the money involved. My experience is that many specialty publications (in the music field as well as sf) pay next to nothing for reviews, often no more than a copy of the book (or record) itself. But reviewers of surprisingly competency still flock to their doors (I did myself, in the jazz field). It's akin to fandom: the need to ex-

press yourself about a book or record you've experienced. I don't think the money AMAZING pays has much to do with the quality of reviews. (And most of the non-"Tanner" reviews were quite good anyway.)

Note for Ed Smith: FLIP was the title of a zine published by Bill Rickhart, in 1959.

Dick, I think both you and Steve Johnson have put your fingers on the real dilemma drugs are causing our society. What is "reality?" When is escape from it "okay"? Are drugs an escape?

I get the impression from a lot of heads that "reality" is sharper, more vivid, more "real" when they're high. Colors brighter, music deeper, etc. I think Earl Evers, in his column this time ((PSY #27)) points out why this occurs: we condition ourselves to ignore much of present-day, mundane reality. Some drugs restore this reality to us.

But at the same time they restore fully perceived reality to us, they take away our ability to comprehend and evaluate this fuller reality — so that reality becomes also escape from reality — escape from our emotional acceptance of reality. Reality becomes unreal.

A lot of people have a deeply puritanical ethic. It isn't precisely a work-is-good ethic; it's more a I-want-to-earn-what-I-experience ethic. I sympathize with that viewpoint myself. When I experimented with psychedelics (when they were legal) I found that very few of my ordinary perceptions were sharpened very much. Colors were no more brilliant, music sounded no better, etc. Food tasted somewhat better, though, and I found myself aware of body functions and processes I'd long been unaware of, like, for example, the complex sequence of movements involved in walking around a corner, or even just the simple fact of my weight—body weight—on my knees and ankles.

I discovered that I normally see colors brilliantly, and that I listen to music much more than most people do. This was largely a result of self-training. I trained to be an artist (and Jack Gaughan will recall when I was able to match up a swatch of red paint with its mate among a dozen near-shades of red, and to pick out those with blue in them and those with orange) and I've always been aware of color. And by the time I took the drugs, I was deeply into music and shortly to become a professional critic.

So I dropped psychedelics. They offered me too little in that sense. I've tried THC during its legal period, and gotten varying results, but at its best it simply imparts to me a mellow-

ness, an emotional calm which I find very pleasant, but not particularly soul-shattering with insights and imports. Since a fatigue-high gives me much the same, and various other 'natural' experiences likewise, I just don't feel any strong urge to rush out after the currently fashionable drugs.

But I can understand people who do feel they need these drugs, and about all I can wish for them is that they never find themselves becoming compulsive about drugs. At the same time, I can understand those who are afraid of involvement with drugs. It's nice to get there on your own hook; sometimes it's a lot nicer.

This has been a comment for Alan Shaw, who was asking me about this the other night.

The opening of Philip Jose Farmer's letter sent my blood pressure up a notch or two, but by the time I was well into it (convoluted puns and all) I was no longer bugged. As Farmer says in closing, "catharsis." Since I believe in catharsis myself, how could I really object if Farmer decided to choose me to represent every critic ("BRASS") who has ever bugged him? I suppose I should really be honored. I'm sure Jim Blish will be displeased to hear me labeled "Pseudo-Blish," but "Shotgun Shogun" rather pleases me.

I hope Farmer really doesn't think that I "will do anything, say anything no matter how outrageous and nonsensical, to get publicity." That rather sounds more like a couple of west-coast writers I know. In fact, the kind of publicity I've been getting lately doesn't please me much at all. But what I will do, and will continue to do, is to call shots as I see them, irrespective of the feet I trample. And, Cauchemar Jockey to the contrary notwithstanding, I've said very little I can't (and haven't) successfully defended).

Farmer's beef with me seems to be that, in passing, I remarked that "The Lovers" didn't really break any taboos. I can understand that this upset him, but I think he's reading into that statement something other than what I intended, and I think it really boils down to just what we each define as a taboo. But yes, Phil, I remember when "The Lovers" was first published, and I remember the reaction to it (almost entirely favorable). I also recall you had an article in a fanzine a couple of years later in which you wrote about your problems in getting it published.

But I still don't think you broke any real taboos. Most of the magazines in the pulp field in 1952 (those which survived) had shed the con-

ventions of the 1930's (I'm speaking of all pulps; not just sf), and it seems to me your problems with Gold and GALAXY were much less those of institutionalized taboos than Gold's own particular qualities as an editor.

Granted my knowledge of the scene was limited in 1952; I've been around a lot since, and unless things have changed more drastically than I think, the problems lie more in each specific editor's personal foibles than with any kind of accepted taboo. I've spoken with editors who were never shown "The Lovers", but they say they would've bought it — in 1952. I've also spoken with several who say they wouldn't buy it today. This just boils down to the personal and subjective reactions of each editor. And I notice that you did sell "The Lovers." I thought "Mother" was much more a 'taboo-breaker' which it appeared a while later (in TWS?).

This is what bugs me when people (authors) start speaking about taboos and censorship. They seem to presume a conspiracy of editors against them, or a Maginot line of taboos they must not cross. I am convinced that a good and skillful writer can break almost any taboo in sf today — and a lot of none-too-good, unskilled writers are doing it, too. When a story is bounced today, it is bounced because a specific editor didn't want it. His reasons may be rational or irrational, but they lie within him, not in some external set of taboos.

So okay, Belmont did silly, stupid things to your book, and didn't to mine. Okay, Ace did dumb things to mine, a few years back. Even?

ALEX KIRS I had started a reply to New York, NY White's reply (? he seemed rather practiced at point-missing) to my letter, but gave it up: no time. I have a few minutes now which might be put to good use ... but, of course, this is at the office and PSY isn't to hand. If I remember correctly, though, White now claims that magazines are losing out to books because books have longer newsstand exposure, therefore magazines must offer readers lettercolumns in order to increase reader identification and involvement with each issue. I have the dim feeling that several things are zooming past White's head as he busily constructs this little trompe l'oeil of logic, and am much taken with the picture of myself standing there as they fall ripely into my little catcher's mitt. Therefore onwards:

The basic premise (and note that I should

have said "paperbacks" above, instead of "books") is probably true, if one qualifies it to "specialty magazines are losing out to specialty books in newsstand sales, because the latter have a longer per-copy exposure life." Nobody, White, baby, is gonna stop buying TIME and LIFE and LOOK and PLAYBOY and ESQUIRE, etcetera, because the stand happens to be cluttered with paperbacks. Until, maybe, publishing or Communications or McLuhanian achieves whatever will be the ultimate in next steps, enabling a book to be an acceptable substitute. Meanwhile we have Joe Blow faced with a choice between an obviously month-old, dog-eared copy of REEL & CREEL and a slick, shiny edition of New Rodsmanship ... and, at the same or nearly so price, we all know who wins.

So far so good ... but wait a minute, exactly WHAT is being said? Boiled down a bit, "Books are winning because mags have short lifespans; we must shorten the mags' lifespan still more." Yup, White, baby, that's what "issue-to-issue involvement" really means. Think about it a bit.

In a perfectly McLuhanian universe, where paradox is the order of the day (and I am much in love with paradox myself, baby), White's thesis might work. It would, of course, necessitate such small warpage of reality as readers actually preferring lettercolumns to stories, an enormous increase in the numbers of readers who write letters, and the reorientation of most writers toward more rewarding trades ... such as maybe mailman or envelope maker.

I find it curious that the premise "books, especially collections of short stories, especially of hitherto-unpublished short stories, are becoming magazines" should be generally accepted, yet so little attention paid to the obvious corollary. Why, exactly, ought not magazines to become books?

I have noticed lately that subscription mags are occasionally dropped into one's In-basket clad in a transparent plastic pillowslip. If a publisher took a deep breath and (a) pillowslipped his newsstand copies, having first (b) studiously omitted all topicality, printed the date small and/or substituted a prominent number, and (c) arranged for a continuous schedule of top-quality serializations, and topped it all off by (d) providing all newsstands with a spare copy of each issue sans pillowslip and prominently, disfiguringly branded "browsing sample" ... I wonder. I really do. Tied in with an ad/PR campaign to educate the audience to the fact that issues of the mag did not become outdated, it might really work some long-term wonders. Par-

ticularly for the magazine that did it FIRST. It would be a — terribly expensive — gamble ... but in an age where the trend seems to be away from written communication on the part of the "average man" it seems a much more sensible course than that of catering to the always trivial percentage of readers who write letters to the editor.

In the meantime, let White consider this: "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" is probably the most meaningless of all proverbs ... except when it is considered in an evolutionary — Darwinian, if you like — context. Things do change, and where the change is successful it is scarcely sensible to attempt to compete by reversing the change.

((Umph. I am suitably impressed by your knowledge of French. Did it give you a nice little ego-thrill to show off a bit, Alex, baby?))

I have a great deal more to say on the fact that besides promulgating a non sequitur, White was over-generalizing. Mags die, more than anything, because of rising production costs and the circulation/advertising revenue feedback; I mention this now so that White will not be able to casually demonstrate his misunderstanding of everything I say by spouting some new "facts." I will, if you like, go into it sometime else... at the moment I simply don't have time. Rather than continue dragging his feet from his position on the cowcatcher of progress, why doesn't White look ahead and (using the supposedly specialised-expert Eye to The Future fans have always been assumed to possess) make himself a more viable place in a world where, demonstrably, (a) science fiction and/or fandom no longer fulfills its function of giving outcasts a formalized minority group with which to meaningfully align, and (b) all small-circulation magazines that do not fill the needs of a formalized meaningful minority group will die.

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The current issue continues to be as readable as ever. My wife Hilary hates fanzines as a rule, but she thoroughly enjoys PSYCHOTIC.

In many ways it has the ring of Charles Platt's old GARBISIAN — what PSYCHOTIC lacks in undiluted malice it makes up for by having plenty of big names being fairly malicious. Good stuff — and it keeps them off the streets. Charles in fact borrowed my copy as soon as I got it and I've

only just had a chance to reply.

I loved Harlan's piece. He forgot to mention Evelyn Waugh, though...

I enjoyed yours and Ed Cox's reviews very much. Chiefly, I suppose, because I agree with them and I liked such lines as 'a society-wrecking computer with a heart of gold'. It was kind of you to review Behold The Man so fulsomely, also.

Enjoyed Harry's letter. I can testify to the time Harry put in on the collected editorials of Campbell — and to the amount of ribbing he took from his friends because he felt so sincere about it. Is there enough money in the world to pay a man for reading through all Campbell's editorials? It must be the slowest buck Harry ever made, particularly since he did the job so conscientiously (which is perhaps why Campbell suggested him for the job). If LeRoy Tanner is a pseudonym for someone, then maybe the pseudonym should be respected? An author who knows a lot of other authors often adopts a pen-name in order that he can keep his personal friendships free from name-calling and so on. It could be that Tanner, like NEW WORLDS' 'James Colvin', is a house-name used by several writers who wished to remain anonymous. It seems a silly debate.

I wonder Jack Gaughan should be surprised that sf mags are distributed in the same manner to the same outlets as comic books. For some time I've found it hard to tell the difference between, say, GALAXY and FANTASTIC FOUR, except that there are more and more vital pictures in the latter and in colour, too. Surely GALAXY sells chiefly to the same markets — the teenage market? There must be a heavy overlap. I was surprised by Andrew Offutt's letter. A beautiful piece of rationalisation. Does he read the PENTHOUSE letter column?

I'm glad George Ernsberger wrote to you. He's the best editor I have ever encountered in book publishing, but he makes a mistake, I think, in believing all publishers have his degree of integrity, common sense and conscientiousness. For this reason, there are certain publishers to whom Norman was not prepared to send his book under any circumstances. I have had work of my own mangled by one or two of them, so I know. I also know that I have never been as well-treated by any other publisher.

Jerry Kaufman: Surely the point of my 're-write' (such as it was) of the first couple of Elric stories was to find a way of producing 'relevant' myths — to apply the same eye to the present and the future. Kaufman's revelation doesn't make nonsense of Spinrad's point, it re-

inforces it, as I see it. My initial idea was to try to write something that had a particular relevance to the present day, that was not simple escapism (I'd tried to make the Elric stories more than that, in my own crude way) and yet which shared some of the spirit of the Elric stories. That's, apparently, what I achieved. The Final Programme began as something of an exercise — or experiment, if you like — and then took off. To my mind it was the first book in which I'd discovered my natural 'voice' — where what I wanted to 'say' wasn't hampered by the way I had to say it. I found the Elric stories too restrictive and not doing what I wanted them to do. So I 'rewrote' some of them, in a sense, and in doing so found my feet. The Final Programme was the first book I ever wrote where I felt completely comfortable and in control of every word and idea. But the imagery I chose and the manner in which I used it made a large difference. I hate the word 'myth', anyway. It has too many associations with the past for my liking...

John Christopher (presumably that's the same JC who's Sam Youd?): His argument could be used as effectively against people who pretend to enjoy classical music and painting (there's even more of them) and it doesn't therefore mean that Mozart and Turner are shit. Surely Sam's having us on? Or has he spent too long among the retired colonels of Guernsey?

ANDREW J. OFFUTT
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I note in your letter section further evidence that the older one becomes, the less enthusiastic one is about sexy scenes in writing.

Not a new attitude: "I want today's young to have just what I had way back when I was young — restrictive sex and lots of war!"

I enjoyed the book reviews. I had the feeling they were shockingly good ones. Could your The Endless Orgy possibly be as clever as Richard Delap's review? ((Of Course.))

Let me tell you what your reviews did:

- (1) I ordered a copy of The Endless Orgy;
- (2) I ordered the trio of Farmer novels.

GEORGE SCITHERS
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John D. Berry seems awfully upset at AMRA winning a Hugo (actually our second) — I can't quite see why his not having the good fortune to

subscribe should make him all that despondent — we always accept money. Remember, WARHOON has won a Hugo, too.

As for AMRA's specialization being a factor in its winning, well, maybe. But AMRA doesn't idolize REH, is liked by people who can't stand s&s, and (mostly) has a damn big sub list...of around 900.

In fact, I'd like to see a provision on the "continuing" awards (that is, awards for people or magazines, as contrasted with awards for stories which are eligible but once) that disqualifies any winner for one year after winning a Hugo in that particular category. Which is to say, AMRA, having won in '68, would be ineligible in '69, eligible again in '70; but without affecting my (or any other winner's) eligibility in another category — say, fan artist—for the award given in '69.

((Sounds like a damned sensible idea. Ray Fisher, can this be proposed in the Worldcon business meeting?))

((Umph. I have another note here from George which bears pintnering.))

LeRoy Tanner is real. He is not Harry Harrison. How, ask you, do I know this? (1) because I met him (Tanner) at FUNcon, and we discussed the mutual trouble we were having about AMAZING's unbelievable chinchiness (Sol Cohen is just as bad as you may have been led to believe, I assure me) and (b) a prior discussion of this matter with Harry Harrison, via letter, made it clear that Harrison was not making Tanner up.

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N. IRELAND

To me, the letter section seems to dominate issue #27. It has the same kind of atmosphere as "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?", and I always turn to it with the same kind of fascinated dread. As an Ulsterman (a notably prudent race) the thing that baffles me about Ted White is the way in which he goes out of his way to enrage the very people who can hurt his career as a professional author. Editors are only human. If you go out of your way to make an enemy of one, bang goes another market. This is an ignoble attitude on my part, I suppose, but there are millions of people all over the world saying and doing stupid things, and I can't get telling them off for it—so what odds if a few more escape my stiletto? Besides—

how's this for a loathsome piece of ass-licking? —I think editors in general are a pretty nice bunch of fellows.

So you're another one who likes Moorcock's "Behold the Man." Sometimes I get worried about critical faculties. I started that story, deduced almost immediately that the hero would become Christ, peeped at the last page to confirm the guess, tried to continue where I'd left off, but never made it. And yet I happily read other yarns in which the ending is apparent. In my eyes the flaw in the story was that it was an uneasy blend of character story and twist story. The plot-twist element must always be the more dominant, therefore if the reader works it out in advance the characterization element is thrown away.

It seems to me that many big-name authors recognize this and obviate any risk by deliberately putting the ending of the book first as a signpost to the reader that he is not to look for anything other than character interplay. Thus Howard Fast begins Spartacus with the hero already defeated and dying on the cross, to mention just one example.

There is another thing I don't like about "Behold the Man", but it is pretty subjective. I imagine that like most sf writers and fans (including myself) Mike Moorcock is an atheist. My kind of atheist regards Christ as a good but deluded man, and has very little more to say about him. But some atheists take the stance of being able to appreciate Christ on a plane of understanding which is unattainable by Christian and ordinary atheist alike. This gives me the sour grape feeling that they are placing themselves in an exclusive group composed of them and Jesus. But if they are atheists, why do they want to be affiliated with the Son of God? As I said, this is pretty subjective and maybe not worth the paper it's typed on. I'm the sort of person who even gets annoyed when I hear people laughing at uncaptioned jokes and byplays in foreign films.

((I think most fans sensed the ending of "Behold the Man" even if they didn't guess it outright. For me the depth of characterization and the "realness" of the dialog and scenes were the thing.))

RICK NORWOOD
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I suppose you think by calling yourself all those nasty names in the editorial of SFR 28 you will avoid being called them by an aroused and angry fandom. Well, think again, you serious—

constructive, commercial, pompous, pretentious egotist. All your editorial did was save me the trouble of looking up the spelling of all those long words.

Seriously, though, can you look like a "little magazine" without becoming a little magazine? Remember the password of the day, "Short men have short minds!"

So now you can have typos just like GALAXY and IF and other printed magazines. You can misalign columns and continue your editorial all over the magazine. You can run filthy dirty pictures. (Is that tiny Tim in the centerfold?!) You can get away with publishing an almost humorless issue. But do all these benefits offset the loss of that prime and unparalleled virtue that is lost, fannishness?

((Gee, Rick, you make me feel humble...and sort of proud.))

I am glad to see John D. Berry come to the defense of his friend Ted White. I would not have commented as I did on Ted's personality had I known that the letter column in PSY #27 would be a meeting of the International Dump Insults On Ted club. It does seem to me that John's description of the Ted White personality is rather like my own except that he has used a positively weighted word for a quality I put in negative terms. Still, it is good to know that Ted is at least nice to his friends.

Says Rick Sneary: "You could have the finest stage play ever done, with top actors—and it 100% sf and it probably couldn't even get nominated (for a Hugo)." It happened. Well, almost. The play was fantasy, not sf, but it was based on a book beloved in fandom, T.H. White's The Once and Future King. It starred Richard Burton and Julie Andrews. Music and lyrics were by one of the two top teams in the business. It was full of fantasy, unlike the movie version. Yet with no competition worth mentioning, CAMELOT was not even on the final ballot.

H. K. BULMER
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Kent,
ENGLAND

Ted White seems to have blossomed into an astonishing prodigy. I remember him from my trip to the States, and I had a few short words to him after his 'story & plot' speech at the London World-

con; but this TEW as seen in the pages of Psy and SFWA is a phenomenon. You'd do well to keep him on as your permanent wooden-spooner. The only quibble I have is that I think he's a mite

too hard on Brian and Harry — sure, they've backscratched in public to a degree, but I don't believe they mean much harm by it; just the natural exuberance of two characters mutually meeting in a determination to hoist sf standards. I've said a bit about sf standards elsewhere, and at Buxton, but someone has got to try to cut the pulp umbilical cord, surely?

I dropped a line to Ted Tubb quoting your review (in an earlier PSY) of Death Is a Dream and this cheered him up. It was perceptive of you to say what you did.

At this point I'd like to sound off about the 1969 convention the fans in London are running. It is to be held at the Randolph Hotel in Oxford over the Easter Weekend. Judith Merrill is guest of honor. We anticipate some interesting in-fighting between the exponents of the 'old' and 'new' sf. There will be a general punch (not a punch-up, I trust) and buffet. There will be a fine tournament and jousting session. There will be many serious speakers on serious subjects, as well as funny speakers on quondam funny subjects. It will be a whinging affair. Can't PSY run to subsidising its editor across? Huh?

((I can't afford to fly, and unless I am more important than I think I am, my bike won't pedal over water.))

I find this discussion about sex in sf unrealistic. Sf as we've known it for years will continue to soldier on as always with its garish covers and its absence of and skirting around real sex inside. But the new sf will also have to change for four letter words don't make a story, either. Sex is no longer much of a taboo, if it ever was in the big cold world outside sf, and disguising it to creep past an editor makes involuted reading. The strongest taboo running at the moment is death. When you get writers dealing with that frankly and reasonably and logically we'll be making the first real strides — not forward but perhaps back to a past that understood these determining fates better than we do. Everything we do on this Earth or off it leads up unalterably to death and until that is changed we're still naked savages screaming in a world we don't understand. Hmm. Again very many thanks for PSY which I greet with some passion and affection and I look forward to receiving #27.

I'm falling apart, but if I die I'll remember always that love is just around the corner.
—Robert Toomey, Jr.

JERRY KAUFMAN
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SFR is fine, exciting, engaging, informative, and here's my dollar for the next two issues. The change did nothing but fineness and the result may finally get you a Hugo rocket—half-sized, of course.

((Ah....!))

CHARLES PLATT
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Mike Moorcock showed me a copy of PSYCHOTIC recently, and I was intrigued. I used to do a fanzine myself once and there are more than a few similarities between the approach of mine and yours.

But when reading some of the critical essays on sf, I was irresistibly reminded of parents fussing endlessly over the smallest habits and vicissitudes of a retarded child. They goad him, cajole him, chart his advancement and argue as to which direction he should develop in next. Children of most of the other families have long since matured and grown into far more interesting personalities; but these children are mostly ignored, owing to the parents' long-standing, protective sentimental attachment to the retarded child (now no longer a child, being around 50 years old). "He's said something he'd never have been able to say ten or twenty years ago," they tell one another with obvious pride.

This seems a rather forced analogy, but it does sum up my total indifference to the excitement shown by some writers in PSYCHOTIC regarding the 'barriers' that are being broken in science fiction — 'barriers' being conventions which outside sf only exist in other fields of category fiction, like Westerns and Romances.

If the writers, in your letter column in particular, had only slightly more sense of humour, their pronouncements wouldn't be so hard to take. As it is, even natural comedians like Harry Harrison adopt the elaborate ritual of fierce, angry feuding, snarling and lashing out, only vaguely aware, perhaps, of how ludicrous the whole spectacle becomes. His tirade against Ted White (who, if not already suffering from delusions of grandeur, certainly must be when he's counted the number of times his name appears in the letter column), ignores the fact that he (Harry) is quite capable of being as juvenile as White himself. Indeed, the whole business of LeRoy Tanner no doubt started as a typically boyish prank, perhaps one drunken evening in a conven-

tion hotel bathroom.

Mind you, I wouldn't want things any other way. The snarling and posturing is a beautiful spectacle, unique to this little in-bred group of writers, and I note that perhaps only Isaac Asimov and George Ernsberger really rise above it. Despite Brian Aldiss's protestations of dignity, you can tell his hands are as dirty as those of all the other kids, even though he's better than they are at acting innocent.

Leaving the professional heavyweights fighting in the corner, I can't let a couple of things Earl Evers has said go by without comment. His Primer for Heads is remarkably boring, even for a drug article, and illustrates the one sure point in all drugs/anti-drugs debates: people talking about drug experiences are as excruciatingly uninteresting as patients discussing their diseases. I can't believe that anything which causes such total introverted self analysis can be basically healthy or conducive to 'mental awareness' of anything more than one's own hallucinations. One of these days, I am going to write a book on the subjective effects of consumption of all the various forms of alcohol. (I have been on a great number of 'alc' trips and am therefore something of an authority). I will describe in detail the after-effects, the distortion hallucinations (I once believed with total certainty that my car had been compressed to half its length, like something in a distorting mirror, the headaches, the tingling skin, the sexual side-effects, the destruction of sense of balance, the uncontrollable talking... see, it's getting boring already.

As for Evers' 'proof' that his mind can't be deteriorating, in view of the fact that his fanzine writing is as good as ever, I wonder if fanzine writing is really a good parameter for judging the soundness of mind of an individual. If Evers had said his mind wasn't deteriorating any further than before he started on LSD, that might have convinced me more.

There is a fair amount of pseudo-literary doubletalk in your fanzine, written by people who approach fiction in the same way they would study the workings of the internal combustion engine. Thus Jerry Kaufman's analysis of Moorcock's The Final Programme is a piece of dogmatic, reasoned, eminently logical criticism which is nevertheless at once invalidated by its total lack of sensitivity. I am reminded of the eternal argument as to whether Shakespeare was written by someone else. Here is a guiding principle for people like Kaufman: if you don't get anything out of a book, and if you don't feel in empathy with the writer, keep quiet about it. The fault

is more likely yours than the writer's.

Would Kaufman find it a shatteringly important revelation that, say, *Tiger Tiger* is based closely on *The Count of Monte Christo*? Like all such comparisons, it doesn't matter a damn. What matters is the final, total effect of the writer's book, not where he got it from. The effect of *The Final Programme* is many-leveled and disturbing, as well as funny and horrific and colorful,—and a lot more adjectives. It is not "an old myth re-dressed". It is unmistakably 1960's material. If Kaufman can't see that he must be totally insensitive. "Thick" is our English word for him.

I don't know if I can bear to comment on Rick Brooks' serious, disturbed letter about 'dirty words'. While tempted to tell him to fuck off, I suppose one has to point out that since writing is a mirror of life etc. etc. etc. and since life is full of fucks, shits, pisses etc. etc. etc. it is hard to write something true-to-life without etc. etc. etc. Surely this simple reasoning has penetrated even fandom by now? Surely it's obvious that the language in *Bug Jack Barron* was an integrated part of the mood of the book, and not inserted 'for effect'? It's depressing to find that American fans are as stupid as English fans when it comes to dealing with anything outside of science fiction.

((I would make that 'occasional American fans' for accuracy.))

Leaving the letter column, I am tempted by John Christopher's column of non-sequiturs. This is a horrific, outrageous piece of crap. His primary assertion, that an artist needs an audience, is a debate which is not entirely new, going back as far as Goethe at least. An artist can still be an artist without an audience; a good example lies in Charles Ives, the American composer who wrote for years, in isolation, and abandoned music for fifteen years or so before hearing his first symphony performed. He was merely ahead of his time, just as Christopher is behind his. I get very tired indeed, reading of the artist's duty to communicate clearly with his audience. If we are going to have to use single syllable words following primary school grammar rules to communicate with every dumb, literal-thinking insensitive illiterate, it is going to be more than a little difficult to convey anything of sophistication or subtlety. What an artist wants to do comes first. If it can then collect an audience, so much the better. All this nonsense about disciplines, forms, traditions and techniques is irrelevant. The effect is what counts. Art in any medium can produce pleasure in the mind of the audience without any kind of self-limitation. To say that the acknow-

ledged masterpieces are generally rigidly contained" is true in Christopher's terms, because by 'masterpiece' he probably means anything before 1900 (or earlier); and before then, almost everything was governed by the kind of limitations he is advocating. But then, where his example of Shakespeare is concerned, 'limitation' is the wrong word to describe the form of the sonnet. Not only was this 'limitation' transgressed often to break up the rhythm, but the rhythm itself, as a 'writing style' to put it crudely, provided the essence and mood which is an integral part of the writing. As for saying that Berlioz did not 'improve' on Beethoven, ignoring the fact that Christopher is using a specific example to imply a total philosophy, I am angered by his 'washing powder' approach to art, where one product is compared to another in a stupid attempt to see if it is 'better' (or, perhaps, 'new and improved'). It is obvious to most people, if not to John Christopher, that works of music exist side by side, and the broader the spectrum the richer we are in choice, mood, experience and perception. Is Beethoven better than the Beatles? Is ham and eggs better than corn flakes? Is John Christopher more stupid than Jerry Kaufman?

Psychiatrists will tell you that compulsive punning is characteristic of certain forms of mental breakdown. So Christopher assures us. Is writing illiterate nonsense for fanzines symptomatic of a well-balanced, normal disposition?

I must stop here as I have just noticed a strange powder that appears to have rubbed off on my fingers, from your fanzine pages. The powder has an irritating effect, on my skin and mind alike. It also seems to be a certain form of stimulant in that I am typing at twice my normal rate with half my normal reserve. Well, I suppose if that's the kind of effect you want to have on people, that's the kind of letter column you will get.

I certainly used to enjoy it when I did a fanzine.

((Ah soo, the secret, insidious powder was known in England, too, eh? I'm having the printer mix it into the ink he uses this issue. We'll see what kind of letters I get this time.))

I look forward to seeing the next issue of your magazine. I hope you will expand your editorials, or insert more episodes; it was worth much more than the rest of the articles, if only for its beautifully flexible form. Like having a straight man on hand all the time to carry your jokes.

As often happens in an intelligent fanzine, you, as editor, seem a bit brighter than many

of your contributors. Thrust your false modesty aside and let's see some of your own work.

(((*Grunt* *Mmmph!* *pant* I keep thrusting, but it won't budge! Solid beaverboard!))

HARRY WARNER, Jr.
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I feel just fine now and it didn't take me too long after all to recover from the shock of a new name, new size, new reproduction method and more genial-toned lettercolumn in your fanzine. The next RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY's fanzine column will have some things to say on the topic of fanzines that begin to look like yours, so I won't repeat myself here, except to add that I wish I'd seen SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW before writing the column.

From the standpoint of personal preferences, forgetting philosophy of fanatic, I can find only two things wrong with your new format. It can reduce the effectiveness of some of the artwork, until artists accustom themselves to the kind of subject matter and technique that is best fitted for the smaller page. And I keep wondering if my eyes will hold out, just in case I live to a very old age. It would be frustrating, to be denied the pleasure of reliving these fanzine pleasures, if I found myself three or four decades from now unable to make out the smaller typesize.

The Baycon Guest of Honor Speech reads much better than it sounded, if the people who complained about it in conreports gave accurate appraisals. A fan gathering might not be the best place to give a talk which is loaded down with a lot of controversial matters on several topics and various subdivisions of theme, because fans are so prone to think up answers immediately, and they've probably missed two or three paragraphs while mentally composing a withering retort to what the speaker just said.

But Farmer is wrong on several counts, I'm afraid. It would be easy to think up a lot of exceptions to the rules he claims to have found in science fiction during the decade before World War Two, and it would be even easier to point out that he is apparently following the Gernsback party by ignoring all the science fiction books that were published during those years, many of them more significant than all but the best magazine stories. Then there's his apparent assumption that good science fiction of that era should have dealt with today's current world problems. It shouldn't, and I doubt very much that today's

science fiction should pay as much attention as it does to today's problems. I don't need to read science fiction to understand that some parts of the world are grossly overpopulated today, and I don't think that this knowledge will cause me to prefer a science fiction story about future overpopulation to one about an underpopulated future, assuming equal literary merit between the two.

REAP itself sounds like a slightly modified reincarnation of Technocracy. I'd be interested in the program if it had more scientific knowhow than it can acquire. I don't believe in its ability to succeed under existing conditions. It would need: new sources of power, many times greater in potential than what we have today; ability to alter a person's mental makeup as skillfully as surgery can repair severe lacerations or diseased appendixes or appendices or whatever they are; access to much greater natural resources than remain on this planet; new techniques in controlling the rebels; and a 1984 type government backed up by hypnosis or preferably a more effective means of persuading people that they don't want to do things that wouldn't fit the world pattern.

Take just one basic human impulse: the urge to go places, to live one place and work some distance away, to take the kids to the beach or auto races on Sunday, to get out with the boys after work, to look through several stores before buying his new suit, to get far from familiar scenes on vacation. Given teleportation or three-dimensional life-size images of distant things, all this might be available to everyone with no work for anybody under REAP. How could it be achieved in the next century or two, even allowing for the present rate of progress in technology? The only real alternatives are private vehicles, moving sidewalks of all speeds in every direction, or a tremendous network of public transportation vehicles, and every one of those would be absolutely dependent on vast amounts of labor, increasing as mechanization went forward.

I feel awfully unhappy at having failed to see Barbarella. The stills in the lobby looked dreadfully dull and I didn't use my pass. Has anyone noticed how unimaginative Hollywood has become with its stills, incidentally? Except for those which try to suggest much sexual gratification for the audience, the pictures you see outside the theatre are almost always static in appearance, the stars look uncomfortable or gawky, and almost never is there a situation or a prop that makes you want to know what has caused this scene and how it will come out.

The book reviews were interesting enough for me to read right straight through, not even stopping long enough to see whose name was at the end when I came to a new title. Delap seems to be the most valuable discovery of the past twelve-month as a science fiction critic, and you really should give him some work that would involve longer digressions at greater length.

Oddly, I read Arthur Jean Cox's article (The Punster) on the very day when I reread the only science fiction story known to me on this topic, Asimov's "Jokester." Isaac says at one point: "I've heard puns that were obviously made up on the spur of the moment. I have made some up myself. But no one laughs at such puns. You're not supposed to. You groan. The better the pun the louder the groan. Original humor is not laugh provoking. Why?"

Now, some people do laugh at some puns. Those of Willis are sometimes funnier than anything which is groanable, and Rick Sneary's spontaneous written puns often reach the same level. But in general, the pun is met with frowns even when it's funny, and I suspect that this is because the vast majority of puns are not funny at all. They're not relevant. I know a girl whose last name is Silber and all her life she has been plagued by people yelling, when they want to attract her attention, "Hiyo, Silber." I didn't laugh when I first heard it, she's long been bored by it, and in no instance did this pun have any relevance to the circumstances. It was just a case of conditioned reflex, a parrotlike mousing of a phrase that came to mind without effort. Now, if she were dressed as a horse in a farce and encountered another actor who was in debt to her, the pun would have a reason to exist. The classic Willis puns are multi-level, suited only for the time and place at which they came into existence. But most puns are no funnier than the telephone system's ability to ring in a house a mile from the person you want to talk to, if you dial a number slightly different from the right one.

Fanzine editors all over the nation should feel much better, now that they know how the flood of Gaughan art has occurred. I've sensed an uneasiness as this and that fan editor feared he was directly responsible for the Gaughans living without food for a week, while Jack worked on a batch of fanzine illustrations. But there should be some kind of central repository for Gaughan originals, where fanzine editors could send the art they didn't want to keep after use. It's awful to think of all those originals growing permanently lost through scatter-

ing, leaving only the reproductions with show-through and inking problems to diminish their effect.

PETER SINGLETON
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The only 'mystical experience' I give claim to which is entirely devoid of drug influence is a particularly unexciting habit of being completely unable to move during brief minutes after waking from a deep slumber. On one occasion years ago, I was awakened from a colourful dream by the gentle sound of my father's feet as he pounded up the stairs to my bedroom with a cup of tea intended for me as a special Sunday morning treat. He entered my room and I could just see him out of the corner of my beady little eye. He exclaimed under his breath: "Oh, he's asleep" and he dashed out again with the tea still in his hand. I couldn't move a muscle, in spite of my struggles. After a while, I did manage to jerk a foot out of its rigid position with a sudden upsurge of general awareness, whereupon all normal movement became possible with an almost audible click. This has happened several times since and I'm at a loss for an explanation. I haven't yet heard of anyone else having similar episodes. I would be delighted to swap notes with any PSY reader who feels he can shed some light on this trifling but inexplicable circumstance.

((Obviously there is an intermittent leak in your energy line and consciousness-force dribbles through to your ego circuits. The 'click' you 'hear' is your day's programme tape starting up.))

POUL ANDERSON
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The comparison of work days and work methods should be interesting, but I fear my own are too disorganized to be very describable. First as much thinking, planning, library research, background development, etc. as seems indicated; then a first draft; then several editings until no one but me can read all those penciled changes; then a clean copy, with further changes as they occur; then a couple editings of it, with minor corrections in ink; then off to the agency. The work day can run anywhere from zero hours to more than twelve.

Oh, well, it beats commuting.

((It beats anything.))

ARTHUR H. LANDIS
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We need material for our new quality pulp magazine, COVEN 13. The magazine is to be in the weird, horror, gothic tradition, and will feature tales of witchcraft, the supernatural, and some science-fantasy. We are at the mock-up stage now and hope to be on the stands March 15th, or thereabouts.

As to our immediate requirements, we badly need material in the diverse categories of Robert Bloch and H.P. Lovecraft. Complete horror and complete gothic, as it were. In between material, such as that of August Derleth, the early Bradbury, and Seabury Quinn, will also be most welcome...

The length of any work can vary from the short story to the complete novel... In fact, what is needed most now is the longer stories of 15,000 and up.

Our rates are those of GAXAXY, ANALOG, etc... payable on acceptance. All rights are reserved, though we are flexible enough to discuss this position should the situation warrant it...

HANS-WERNER HEINRICHS
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As the new year has started it's even more important to do some personal contacting for the proposed world sf convention in Europe.

I don't know your feelings towards HeiCon '70. I might be writing in vain, but I don't hope so. It won't be too long before St. Louiscon where the Heidelberg bid will be voted upon.

Personally, I do believe very much in the success of our bid. First, we do have a consite, do have reserved beds, the Heidelberg castle, the boat and a program. We do have a toastmaster and GoH. Furthermore, and I believe this is the most important factor, we have the whole European fandom lined up in the support of HeiCon '70. There is nothing that we all would like to see than the 28th world sf convention in Heidelberg.

Our bid is as serious as it can be and I can assure you that the most prominent, active, and prolific German fans are on the concom.

Most of us (with the exception of two) have been active for more than four years. We have

all and still publish our own fanzines, are members of APA FAN, and have seen a lot of fannish activities. Most of us speak at least English fluently. I, for example, have lived as an American Field Service foreign exchange student with an American family in 1965-6. I am still active in AFS, international understanding being a most serious concern for me.

You will not only see the beautiful countryside of Europe, but also you will be sure to meet the most friendly people being interested in each and every one of you.

HeiCon '70 promises to be the first real world sf convention ever held with attendees from more countries than ever before. Isn't that enough to support us? Think about it and vote for Heidelberg.

See you in St. Louis.

BOB TOOMEY, JR.
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SFR is great, exclamation point. I'd heard about it as PSYCHOTIC from Jerry Lapidus (one of your greater admirers) among others, and I've never come across a fanzine I enjoyed more. Or disagreed so completely with about so many things. I could take up pages just happily screaming away at the top of my lungs, but I'll just hit one point - or perhaps two.

Sex in science fiction? In life? In LOOK? Well. Sex is the single strongest motivating factor in human affairs. It really is. Or, at least, sexual fulfillment. This can take different forms depending on where you're at. But, as a valid experience, it is therefore a valid tool for the writer. QED. Attitude, of course, is everything. So is vocabulary.

((I question if sex is 'the single strongest motivating factor in human affairs' as you claim. I suspect that self-preservation comes first in the form of defending against an enemy, and next in getting food and shelter.))

Tom Wolfe, in The Pump House Gang, brings up some interesting points about obscene words. They are coming more and more into fashion. I see this for myself on every hand. Demure young ladies are as likely to say, "Oh, fuck it," as not these days. And why not? Perhaps it indicates a healthy trend, if such a small thing may be called a trend. I don't know words like "fuck, shit, etc." which have been in fairly common useage for centuries can be considered fad-words. With any luck they might help to

erode some of the barriers between classes, or, as Wolfe calls them, "statuspheres." (In other words, if you have no class of your own, create one. Outlaw motorcycle groups were an early example of this, now we have the surfing class, drug society, dropouts (which are interesting, because they are the direct result of the cultural and technological advances they profess to spurn) and so on.)

This has a lot to do with what Philip Jose Farmer was talking about in his Baycon speech. As our environment becomes more and more radically altered by electronic means, we become more and more greatly dependent upon those means for our communications, and therefore, our knowledge. The world has shrunk to the size of a fist, squeezing out information, processing data at the speed of light, bringing us closer and closer together whether we like it or not. Isolated examples of insurrection are magnified in the process into movements. McLuhan's charming concept of the global village is frightening when you dig under the surface: instant communication, unfortunately, doesn't mean instant truth. More often than not it means instant lie. And it's difficult to perceive these trends while you're involved in them.

Now something new is happening to literature in general, and to science fiction in particular. The old, linear world of print is being left behind. Writers like William Burroughs (especially in The Ticket That Exploded, which is totally McLuhanized) are using tape recorders and scissors to create a prose that has no rational meaning and exists only as juxtaposition. The rebellion against form (and, unfortunately, content) is a self-destruct mechanism. It shows only what CAN be done, not what should. The new writers are blotters, soaking up all these new techniques without assessing them. When the understanding that is necessary emerges, THEN we'll see something. In the meantime, even the desperate gropings and failures are interesting. In the past, science fiction grew out of previous science fiction. It was isolated. Now, with new writers coming in, writers who want to see the world (or show it) the isolation is ending and a new, explosive, form taking shape. Pretty soon "science fiction" will be an obsolete term. In some quarters (books by Vonnegut, Burroughs, others) it already is.

So, if sex doesn't belong in sf, what does? A similar idea, that love has no place there, is what made sf the bloodless genre it so often was, and still is. My point, and I'll make it finally, is that sex is clean. It also has a lot to do with what makes people run. It's fine

to have plenty of chrome-plated machinery around, but it's the people who have charge of it, and people and their reactions to each other and their environment, are the main concern of literature. And sex is the main concern of people everywhere. Making believe this isn't true creates a blind spot, and the business of science fiction is the elimination of blind spots, isn't it?

((I don't know.))

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The early parts of Farmer's speech were enjoyable. And interesting. And a little more comprehensible than his delivery at Baycon. But the medium is still part of the message. And attempts to be verbally mosaic while presenting an argument leading up to a point and an emotional appeal don't turn out well.

Still, the idea of the medium and the message pushes up another idea. Why the hell hasn't anyone ever thought of making Ed Emshwiller GoH of a WorldCon with the full intention that he would present a Guest of Honor FILM? Not just Relativity (though how many fans have actually seen it) but something sparked by the notion that it is essentially for an sf convention yet able to stand on its own with his other things.

You're still running review book reviews. "Well, ya 'member all those good old stories Johnny Freeb used to have in TENTACLED STORIES. Well, he just wrote something of the same only better. Rimrock Crushhand is a drifter kind of spacehand and he is kidnapped by the Voooroops for some reason he can't understand. On the drug planet Lassadore (or LaSaDore, for those who know) he meets this girl, Peggy Jo Raunch, and the two of them are forced to retrieve the thousand-faceted Eye of God. He screws her a little, but it's well-written. Oh, yes, he's a musician — plays a steam-powered jews harp, which is cleverly worked into the surprise ending. Crushhand dies at the end, but the Voooroops realize what simple shifts they've been and save mankind from the HellSpawn anyway. To sum up: Freeb's old narrative drive is back in this one and will keep you going in spite of all the new wave craps he smuts the book up with. Give this one to your English teacher, the next time she sneers at you for reading comic books."

Or else:

"The latest Ace Special, HellSpawn Horror

Against the Pawn of Voooroops on the Drug Planet at the Edge of Eternity by John Freeb, is a great disappointment. Freeb, who holds simultaneous chairs in Philosophy and Physics at Cambridge, is here trying to lift himself from the dried pulp prose of the thirties; but succeeds in only showing us why you can just find pulps and Sam Moskowitz in dark bookstores. Freeb shows some ability to mimic the free style of today's writers; but cannot instill any real feeling into his depiction of an adult male-female relationship. This book reads like well-made custard — it's competent, mildly good-tasting, and slides down slick. Harlan Ellison liked this book. I, on the other hand, didn't. I don't know what has happened to Harlan's taste lately."

Otherwords: either—all plot synopsis, or all reaction.

And even when you can get an intelligent melding of the two, like Evers' review of October the First is Too Late, there is still little conveyed of the real feel and flow of a book. Now your review of Garbage World is a bit like what I mean. It shows an amount of involvement with the subject and the sense of the book. Or Dewlap's (oh, most definitely sic, but leave it in) recitation of The Endless Orgy.

In my mind, the best review is one which talks about the book, about your reaction/involvement with the book, and is written in such a way as to reflect the book in such a way that a person disliking the tone of the review would be just as put off by the book, and vice versa.

((Yeah...provided the reviewer's personal reaction/involvement and feel-flow is fair and accurate...a sometimes thing.))

First place kudos in the 28 issue should go to: Jack Gaughan for his letter, his doodles and his centerspread (in that order), to Doug Lovenstein for the "two masks" cartoon on page 25, and the Arthur Jean Cox column. Contrariwise, ex-lax cups should be passed out to Leo P. Kelley for his movie synopsis of Barbarella, and to Johnny Berry who tires his best to be like Ted White, but still can't be entertaining while being stupid.

RICHARD DELAP
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Regarding Philip Jose Farmer's Reap, his entire speech is interesting, even good, except that it makes no place for discussion of the corrupt. Instead he dismisses such an angle with "The chief goal of education in the begin-

ing will be to keep those now wearing diapers from being permanently twisted, psychically twisted, by the assumptions of our present society." This statement, though assuredly sincere and strongly felt, ends up nearly as "pollyanna" as the system he decries. Where, oh where, is greed? Is this a mental illness to be cut off at the roots? Can a society be fashioned to fill any greed which may be exposed? Farmer apparently perceives a far greater change in the human psyche than has been manifest so far throughout human history.

One question inspired by Berry's Fanac: how is the reader to distinguish between the novella and novelette category when voting for the Hugos this year? Nearly all of the sf prozines label anything over short story length as a 'novelette' and anything over that is serialized. How do we tell which is what?

And now...I come to Leo Kelley's review of Barbarella, or should I say paean to Barbarella? It seems that Mr. Kelley had the right attitude to viewing the film — "Zonk! Bam! Zowie!" — and equally plain is the fact that he saw what he expected (or wanted) to see. If the film "created in this reviewer a true and valid sense of wonder," then Mr. Kelley's review does the same for me. Through the first page, I suspected the author was creating an enormous put-on which, by the end, would be laughingly revealed. At the end, I would have suspected the author had slept through the entire thing had he not written a succinct plot synopsis. In the final analysis, I add him (along with Lester del Rey) to my list of the worst movie reviewers of the decade. If the witless dialogue Kelley quotes from the film was not enough to show he took a wrong track somewhere, the statement that Barbarella "succeeds in doing exactly what good satire should do" clinches it. Had it held up to ridicule the tasteless violence and sexual sadism that form the parts and the sum of its nature, the film might have been an hilarious spoof. As it is, the final shape is obscured by the mire and muck it has shamelessly wallowed in for 90 minutes. A sad fate, too, for director Vadim has shown he has talent to do tremendously fine pictures — for example, his striking updating of the old le Fanu Gothic tale "Carmilla" in Blood and Roses (1961-Paramount).

((You become rather emotional, there, Richard, with "shameless wallowing" in "mire and muck". The movie, which I saw and liked and think is a simple Entertainment—a film version of the comic strip, is obviously being taken very seriously in certain quarters. It has the elements of a sort of cultural litmus paper.))

What a nice letter from Jack Gaughan ((in the #28 letter section)). I've not read anywhere of anyone's mentioning Gaughan's illos for Leiber's A Spectre is Haunting Texas. I think these (tying with Finlay's illos for "Sunbeam Caress") are the best of the year. (By the way, I might mention also here that I believe David Redd's "Sunbeam Caress" to be the unequalled best short sf this year, yet I've heard no one so much as mention it yet...am I alone?

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Leo P. Kelley has an excellent review of Barbarella. Unlike the newspaper and magazine critics he does not take the film seriously, and thereby can see through Vadim's contrived sadism and rather vacant sexual interludes. Barbarella is a satire in every form: dialog, setting, plot, etc. Viewed by this standard it's a pleasant bit of fun that accomplishes exactly what Vadim hoped it would do.

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Yes, SFR is quite legible in its present reduction. I bet it'd even come out OK on microfilm. (I forget whether I told you

I'm putting stacks and stacks of my papers, clippings, and fanzines on microfilm. What, I didn't? Well, I am.)

Kelley's review of Barbarella reminds me of an odd sort of parasitical error-effect I've noticed in write-ups of this movie: about half of them — offhand I can think of TIME, the Washington Post, and apparently Kelley — imply or say outright that Barbarella and Dildano, the fribble-witted leader of the Lytheon Resistance, made love in the "old fashioned" way. Wonder why? This was the one occasion when Barbarella did not practice primitive archaic emotional activities, Dildano having heard all about Exaltation Transference pills & wanting to try them out with her. It can hardly be that they didn't notice: this caper is a Ploy Element. (Exaltation pills are unknown on Lytheon; Barbarella, wondering how Dildano got them, finds that Durand Durand gave them to him — her first confirmation that DD was in the city.)

Maybe reviewers get nervous when they have to face sex and science fiction for the first time. Perhaps that explains the mixed reviews 2001 got...

((!?! Where did you see sex in 2001?!))

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You're right, you're right, Larry Niven is a Good Writer. I met him briefly at the Baycon and he is even a Nice Person. But, darn it, as a biologist (learning), I wish he'd get over his hangup on organ transplants. It's almost certain that transplants are only a stopgap until we either discover how to make the body itself regrow a faulty organ, or learn to grow them in vitro straight from the DNA directions of the body they're going into. With either of these ways you eliminate the rejection problem that lays so many transplant patients open to infections like pneumonia. (In A Gift From Earth the rejection problem is even worse, because you can't even partially match tissue types — like blood types — although he might've built up the heartbeats, etc., with original human DNA; I can't remember and a former friend swiped my copy.)

But as an sf reader I can overcome my objections as a biologist because he gets such darn good stories out of the premise.

GEORGE FERGUS

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Comparing your denigration of Rite of Passage to the unfettered praise of Bug Jack Barron in PSY #25,

I was at first tempted to the thought that pro-New Wave reviewers seem to ignore most of the GLARING glaring faults of various New Wave writers but they come down hard on minor details of technique in so-called "traditional" sf. On reflection I realize this is untrue, but I do feel that we often like or dislike books on the basis of certain of their inherent assumptions (as with our opinions on political philosophy or religion) rather than for the reasons we give in our book reviews.

((I do not consider myself a New Wave reviewer...nor am I prejudiced against traditional sf. I don't like having labels stuck on me.))

((And, my review of BJB was not unfettered. I complained, as I recall, about the large amount of interior monolog by the characters. And, referring to your next comment, I at least read two chapters. You have read a couple short quotes and then made up your mind! Marvelous. By the way, thank you for the two long letters.))

You feel that in BJB "the thoughts are real and honest", but (at least from the quotes I've seen) I don't agree because I don't think that way. To me, Delany's characters are "real" people, but again to many fans they seem synthetic

creations. (And of course, as Ted White points out, being real and true is not necessarily being good.) There probably ought to be more admission by fans that (for example) they praise stories by Tom Disch because they would like to see more naturalism in sf, or have no tolerance for Campbell's The Incredible Planet because they're just not science-minded, or whatever.

But objectivity is neither completely possible nor always desirable. All reviewers have prejudices of this sort (recently, it seems, even Damon Knight). If only we could all recognize and state them openly at the beginning of our reviews!

Monolog

WHERE THE EDITOR SPEAKS WITH ONE VOICE.....

It's compression time again. In the matter of the argument Rick Brooks and I have been having over FILTHY WORDS: George Fergus, Piers Anthony, Gabe Esisenstein, Ted Pauls, Alex Gilliland, and Rick Brooks Himself have disputed with me and come to Rick's defense.

They feel that since the word FILTH has a meaning in common usage, it is okay to use it thus and the using doesn't mean agreeing.

My point is that if you say it without making a distinction, then you accept that meaning/attitude toward sex. At least, if you don't really mean filth=sex, put it thus: "filth".

Now, can we drop it?

There were parts of lots of letters I didn't have room for. Thanks to DICK ELLINGTON, JERRY LAPIDUS, GEORGE FERGUS (again!), TED PAULS, GABE EISENSTEIN, JEFFREY D. SMITH, LYN VERYZER, KENT MCDANIEL, ROB WILLIAMS, ALEX GILLILAND, MIKE GILBERT, ALAN E. NOURSE, STEPHEN WALLER, BILL MARSH, DONALD COWAN, GRAY BOAK, GEORGE HEAP, JOHN FOYSTER, and *gasp* anyone I missed.



"AND THEY SAY SOME OF MY STUFF IS FILTHY."

• I have an interesting letter from Justin St John, editor of THE GREEN TOWN REVIEW which I am carrying over till next issue.

• Norman Spinrad is leaving for New York and from there will go to Europe. It is an open-end trip; he has no idea when he will be back.

• Dick Ellington now lives at 6448 Irwin Court, Oakland, Calif. 94609.

• Philip Jose Farmer has moved to 824 S. Burnside Ave, Los Angeles, Calif. 90036.

NEXT ISSUE will lead off with a column by Poul Anderson entitled, "Beer Mutterings". Illos by Jack Gaughan.

• Fritz Leiber is working on a book of critical commentary titled The Fantasy Novel for the University of Southern Illinois Press. In it he will discuss the work of Sturgeon, Heinlein, Stapleton, Clement, Herbert and others.

Fritz will also be at the Clarion State College S&F Workshop again this summer.

• I have just figured out that I spend at least 60 hours typing up this magazine every two months. If I had the copy typed professionally it would cost \$7 per hour. If I used those 60 hours to write professionally I could make a "profit" of around \$400.00, net. But the cost of an individual copy of SFR would soar to 70¢ and the theoretical break-even point would go to 2000 paid subscribers. SO...if I decide to lose \$200 more on SFR I can make \$400 clear on my pro writing!

I find that croggling. And curiously appealing.

At long last—done. I will try real hard to make up the long delay between 28-29 in subsequent issues this year. Over and out to you.



"Some people have
hair. I have weeds."