

# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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AUGUST 1969

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Richard E. Geis  
P.O. Box 3116  
Santa Monica, Cal. 90403

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50¢ each

SFR's agent Over There is...  
Ethel Lindsay  
Courage House  
6 Langely Ave.  
Surbiton, Surrey,  
UNITED KINGDOM

And SFR's agent The Other Way is...  
John Bangsund  
P.O. Box 109  
Ferntree Gully  
Victoria 3156  
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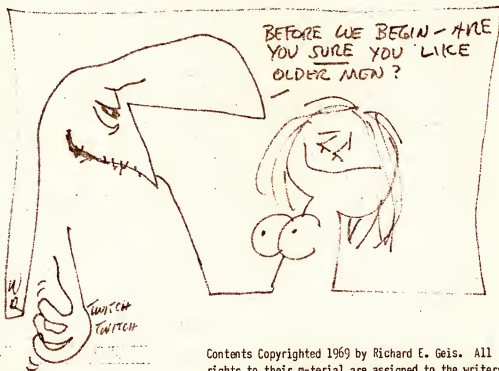
"Gads, Geis, look at all the space below us! How will we fill it up?"

"Tell the loyal readers about the goodies lined up for next issue."

"All right—a 5750 word article by Samuel R. Delany titled "About Five Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Words." Plus a column by Piers Anthony, the last installment of Arthur Jean Cox's "Fans We All Know... And Perhaps Wish We Didn't", a Steve Fabian cover, Banks Mebane's column...and maybe a surprise or two."

"And of course I will be on hand to amuse and dazzle..."

"WE will be on hand, Geis. And there'll be book reviews, letters..."



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# ● DIALOG GO TVID ●

"Well, Geis, back from vacation, hmm? How come you're not all tan and healthy-looking? The weather reports said Portland, Oregon had perfect climate up there."

"I was watching TV a lot, see, and..."

"Yah, and staying out late with the old friends, goggling the topless—"

"As a matter of fact toplessness is about dead in Portland now. The City Council apparently voted to put pasties back on the nipples. I DID spend a couple days and nights watching Apollo. That moon walk..."

"Did you shiver? Did you get that old Sense of Wonder?"

"As a matter of fact I got a crick in my neck—"

"Very funny. Will you be serious?"

"I was croggled! It really blew my mind! Everything worked! I'm writing Nixon now with the suggestion that NASA be given control of the Post Office—"

"Geis—"

"No, truly, I was really thrilled. A girl was going down on me at the time, and when that booted foot touched moonsoil..."

"GEIS! You know perfectly well you were sitting in your uncle Charlie's tv room with three aunts, your mother, your mother's friend, Gertie, uncle Charlie, and a dog named...named..."

"Ginger."

"Yes. So don't come on smart-alecky with me! You were impressed. Deeply impressed and awed. Say you were awed."

"I was awed."

"What part awed you the most?"

"The sheer arrogance, the pure, 100% American self-confidence and brashness in televising the moon walk! I am still freaked by that. Man, if anything had gone wrong... But, wow, if you've got it, flaunt it! I imagine the Russians in power were greenest green with envy."

"Makes you proud to be an American, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it does. It really does. We are something else in this world. And this is the wildest time to be alive."

"Last issue, as I recall, Geis, you sent out SFR by "book rate" in a desperate, try-anything attempt to get better service?"

"Yep. Got it, too. Got delivery into the hinterlands of wildest New York in three weeks."

"Quite a bit better than the 40 to 50 days it was taken with 3rd class bulk mailings."

"Right. And copies of #31 were even delivered to England in time for letters of comment to get back here to be published in #32—this issue."

"How do you explain it?"

"I understand they've added another ox and with two they pull the wagon a lot faster."

"But...Ted Pauls gets airmail service for his fanzine, KIPPLE for 6 cents!"

"You had to mention that, didn't you?"

"There you were geis, at a sneak preview in the balcony of a big Westwood theatre, with Brian Kirby of Essex House, his wife, his two boys, and an usher who kept saying, 'Sorry, but you're not supposed to put your feet on the velvet railing.' and what did you get?"

"A crick in my neck? No. I got—"

"You were hoping for an "X" film, an "R" film...at the very least an "M" film..."

"—heartburn."

"You got a "G" film. And not only that, it was science fiction!"

"Whole rows of drooling sex fiends got up and walked out—"

"No one left. The title was JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN."

"There were a few groans."

"It starred Roy Thinnes of 'The Invaders' fame, Ian Hendry, Lyn Loring, Patrick Wymark, Loni von Fried—"

"We all know good old Loni. Locketstar."

"—and Herbert Lom in a locket role."

"Locket role?"

"Bigger than a cameo role."

"Locket to me, Lommy, boy!"

"Be serious, Geis! A couple million dollars must have gone into this movie and you act like it wasn't any good."

"It wasn't."

"But surely, with that kind of money—"

"It wasn't!"

"But surely, since it was produced by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson from their very own screenplay—"

"It was a bad movie."

"But surely there must have been a few good scenes, something nice you can say..."

"Oh, yes. There were moments. The opening, where Herbert Lom views top secret space research documents in a zealously guarded vault after being searched and fluorescoped for metal in case he had a secret camera on him...and then he goes home and takes out his eye and it's a miniature camera (they didn't fluorescope his head) and he sets it up and views the films or slides...that was fine."

"And then?"

"The movie went downhill after that. The burden of the Continued next page—do not read below this line. You did!

This fanzine will self-destruct in forty years.

Would you believe nineteen years?

story...and it is a burden...is that an unmanned sun probe was deflected from its course by an heretofore undiscovered planet located directly opposite Earth on the far side of the sun."

"What happened to Herbert Lom?"

"He was shot as a spy for 'the other side'. Anyway, this is about thirty years in the future judging by the 'future' fashions and decor. The sets and special effects and model spaceships were pretty good. It was all in color, by the way, and—"

"Herbert Lom was from this other planet?"

"No, idiot, he was in the employ of the Commies!"

"Oh."

"Anyway, it is decided to send a manned probe to check out this counter-Earth. Thinnies and Wymark as the astronauts were incredible. In fact, all the procedures of training and preparation for the probe were so unrealistic and hambone compared to the recent Apollo, that it was pathetic. It was, alas, comic-book sf, again. And poor Roy Thinnies was/is stuck in a bomb."

"Wasn't there anything else you liked?"

"There was, yes, but... Well, after the two astronauts blast off on their trip they hook up to a nutrient hose which feeds sleep drugs and vitamins into their blood via a surgically implanted valve in their wrists."

"The trip will take months and months, huh?"

"Huh-uh. Three weeks is all. Don't ask why; it isn't explained. NOTHING IS EXPLAINED. You swallow the impossibilities and incredibilities like good little kiddies and don't ask questions!"

"But, I'm an adult."

"Then this movie is not for you. Anyway—the plot creeps on—over half the movie has been used up in getting these guys off the ground...another DESTINATION MOON! thought I...but then they wake up as programmed and see a planet below them. They check it visually and electronically for life. Nothing. They get into a kind of rocket-plane attached to the rump of their spaceship and start down to the planet."

"And...and...?"

"And they crash. Don't ask why. It isn't explained. It's a gory, blazing smashup at high speed—HAM, CRASH, LICKETY CRUNCH, BOOM, BAM, TINKLE. Wymark is badly hurt and Thinnies drags him away from the wreck as fuel tanks explode. They are, you think, marooned on an uninhabited planet!"

"This is getting good!"

"Then—a spotlight appears in the black night sky... of course they had to try to land on the night side in a jagged, mountainous area...and this spotlight plays around on the wreck, seems to be searching its beam, looking..."

"Go on!"

"It finds them. It lowers. Closer. Closer. An alien appearing man-size creature is holding the spotlight. It kicks a gun from Thinnies hand and grabs him! It is on a cable. It and Thinnies are hauled up into the sky. Thinnies is taken into a helicopter craft—"

"My God, Geis, and you say this was a bad movie?"

"—and the alien takes off an oxygen mask of some kind and he's an asiatic and he says to Thinnies, 'Hey, you guys speak English?'"

"WHAT?"

"Hah! It develops that apparently they have goofed somehow, or the automatic machinery of their ship has flipped, and they have simply crashed back on Earth. Thinnies is accused of aborting the mission and is treated like a criminal."

"Gee, it was getting real good there."

"THEN Thinnies notices little things...like switches on the wrong side of walls at his home, clock faces reversed, and all printing is backward—he has to hold it up to a mirror to read it. EVERYTHING IS REVERSED! He is on a mirror-image duplicate of EARTH! Kapowee! Stands you on your head, don't it?"

"But how...?"

"I told you, dum-dum, it is not explained! This other mirror-image planet is exactly like Earth to the smallest, reversed, detail. So that means that back on earth prime a spaceship has crashedlanded with reversed duplicates of Thinnies and Wymark in it..."

"My God—"

"You wanna know how all this is resolved, if you'll pardon the pun?"

"I'm...I'm beginning to not care."

"Thinnies is sent up in a rocket-plane to the orbiting spaceship, but the controls of the rocket-plane are reversed, of course, and so he has his troubles. And they don't know if the spaceship will 'accept' the reversed rocket-plane because of maybe reversed electron flow in the electrical system of the r-p."

"Alright...what happens?"

"For some reason...unexplained...he can't quite dock the r-p in the s. His radio goes out, also unexplained. He loses control of the r-p and is going to crash. He struggles, he calls for contact..."

"How did the damn picture end?"

"With a whimper. Thinnies, with a whole planet to crash into, somehow powderpuffs smack into a HUGE rocket standing on the pad all fueled and almost ready to go. BLOOIE! Chain reaction of explosions. Looks like the whole miniature model of the spacecraft is wiped out."

"That's not a whimper, it's a bang."

"We are not quite finished. There is one scene left. We are shown the project director of the counter-Earth spaceshot. He is in a wheelchair in a hospital. He is the only survivor of the destruction who knows the TRUE story and of the mirror-image planet beyond the sun. And no one believes him! It was years ago, see, and he is considered dotty now. He is left alone in a hallway with a big mirror at the end. He stares at the mirror. He goes crackers and starts rolling his wheelchair toward the mirror—faster, faster, faster! CRASH—head first! End of JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN."

"Geis, I'm sorry I started this."

"You're sorry!"





# THE ACE SCIENCE FICTION SPECIALS

By Terry Carr

"Dear Terry,

"It just occurred to me that there is a good article in you about the Ace Specials—how you started the series, how they are doing in sales, what your aims are, your editing techniques, perhaps some funny/sad/tragic anecdotes, and a discussion of upcoming Specials you are particularly proud of.

"Now all you have to do is write it.

"Best,  
Dick"

It's difficult to say just how the Ace Specials started. How far back do you go? I've wanted to be an editor ever since my earliest days as a fan, when my pro idols were not just Ray Bradbury and Henry Kuttner but also Sam Merwin and H.L. Gold—Merwin because he singlehandedly lifted STARTLING and THRILLING WONDER STORIES from the depths of Sarge Saturn to the heights of Against the Fall of Night, and Gold because the early GALAXY seemed to spring fullblown into life as a literate and exciting sf magazine, establishing a standard in its very first issue that it took ASTOUNDING ten years even to hint at.

In my most active days as a fan (today, of course,



"There's a good article in you."

I'm but a burnt-out husk of the fan I was) I was always as much editor as writer, and a lot of my editing ventures were in the direction of fan books rather than fan magazines: The Incomplete Burbee, The Stormy Petrel, The Ex-purgated 800b Stewart, et al. I first broke into the pro ranks as a writer, and among my first sales was a short novel commissioned by Don Hollheim at Ace. Don once told me he'd bought the book partly because he'd liked my fan writing, and I suppose he must have noticed something about my editorial enthusiasm too, because two years later he called me and asked if I wanted a job as associate editor at Ace.

(My reply wasn't too well calculated to impress Don with my canny business sense: "Hey, wow, are you serious? I'd love to have the job, I'd love it! ...Er, ah, first tell me the salary." Oh well.)

I spent my first few months at Ace learning the day-to-day mechanics of book production—copyediting, proofreading, writing blurbs. I discovered it wasn't much different from editing fanzines, except that the levels of intelligence and literacy seemed a bit lower among the writers who worked regularly for Ace then. As I worked my way into the job and gained confidence, inevitably I began petitioning Don with my own ideas of what Ace should and shouldn't do. (Any fan who doesn't believe in his innermost heart that he could do better at selecting sf stories than do the established editors in the field must be a fakefan.) Don bore with my criticisms patiently, and listened with an open mind to my suggestions; as a result, Ace was soon publishing more books in which I had a real interest: Jack Vance's The Eyes of the Overworld, Avram Davidson's Rogue Dragon, John Myers Myers' Silverlock and any number of others.

Simultaneously, I was getting familiar with the really fine work Don had been publishing all along: astonishingly good novels by Phil Dick, Chip Delany and so on. Some of our books were so much better than the others that I couldn't quite understand it; I asked Don about it, and he explained that the lesser efforts were published to make money and the better books because he liked them and they didn't do too badly on the stands. What the science fiction mass market audience audience wanted, essentially, was good juvenile books, judging from the sales reports.

I had conflicting reactions to this judgement. On one hand, my cynical fannish self, nurtured in the nihilistic

Insurgent tradition of Burbee and Laney (the Ellison and Spinrad of their day), said it must be true that sf readers had juvenile tastes — look how silly so many active fans were. But on the other hand, my idealistic fan-self, inspired by the more positive achievements of such as Willis and Boggs, felt that the readers had always been underestimated by science fiction publishers: give them quality books and they'd respond to them.

But there was no arguing the fact that Ace's better books never seemed to sell as well as the space operas. So I wondered about that off and on for awhile, and gradually I began to suspect a very simple answer: it was a matter of faulty packaging. When Ace published adult quality sf books, it was with titles like Claws of the Alphane Moon or The Escape Orbit or Clash of Star Kings, with covers as garish as their names; any reader who'd want to buy an adult sf book would be put off by these, whereas the kids who did pick them up would discover they didn't like them.

I told Don what I thought and he said, well, yes, maybe...but try to get A. A. Wyn, Ace's owner and publisher, to agree to such a radical change in packaging. Wyn had started in publishing in the 20's as a pulp editor and then a pulp publisher, and most of his ideas on how to sell to the mass market had been fully formed by 1940 at the latest. They included: garish titles, simple-minded action covers, sensationalistic blurbs, and cover prices kept below the prices of the competition. The latter was sometimes a boon to the reader, but usually not really: as a result of the lower cover price Ace couldn't pay as much for its novels as the competition, so Don seldom got first look at the top material. Don had labored under this system for over a dozen years, and was tired of hitting his head against the wall; on the other hand, I was comparatively new in the job and faunching for a chance to prove we could publish quality science fiction regularly and profitably. But I needed an opening wedge.

It came in the form of a huge novel called Dune, which had just been published in hardcover by Chilton Books, a lesser-known publisher in Philadelphia. Both Don and I knew the enthusiasm Dune's component serials in ANALOG had stirred up; I said, "We ought to buy the book — it's going to win the Hugo, you know," and Don said he thought so too. So he persuaded A. A. Wyn to pay the highest advance Ace had ever laid out for an sf book (though the price was dirt-cheap compared to more recent paperback-reprint sales) and as a result of that and the book's length we were forced to put a high cover price on our edition.

Don and I discussed plans for the book and decided that it would make absolutely no sense to try to package it for Ace's usual teenage market, which would probably shy away from the high price; instead, we figured this was the ideal time to test out the effectiveness of an adult-oriented package. So we commissioned John Schoenherr to paint the cover (his covers and interiors for the

ANALOG serials had so identified him with Dune that we never considered anyone else) and allowed him to do a non-sensationalistic, quiet and altogether beautiful painting. Rather than hard-sell blurbs, we advertised on the front cover that the book had won the Nebula and Hugo awards, as by then it had, and on the back cover printed critical praise for the book by people like Heinlein and Clarke.

The resulting package, everyone seemed to agree, was tasteful and appealing. And Dune became the fastest selling science fiction book Ace had ever had.

I immediately interpreted the book's sales as total vindication of my thoughts on quality sf packaging; Don, more experienced and conservative about these things, said it might be just a flash in the pan, that it wasn't every day that a book like Dune became available. He wasn't inclined to push for any changes in Ace's science fiction program.

But I was. The direct causes were many and varied: I'd seen Chip Delany's The Einstein Intersection, an excellent book that won the Nebula award, published with a blaring red monster dominating the cover, and our sales department reported that about five or six people had bought copies; I'd found some of the books published by Ace so inept that I was embarrassed and defensive about working for the company; and I was about to turn thirty, a time of one's life (mine, anyway) when you feel you ought to be settling down seriously to whatever job you want to make your career.

So I wrote a one-page memo to A. A. Wyn in which I proposed a new series of science fiction books to be aimed at adult tastes, with quality packaging, higher cover prices and higher payments to authors. I pointed out the large number of new writers in science fiction whose work, I believed, was lifting the field to a new level, and whose books could be long-term as well as short-term money-makers for us. (I also suggested a regular reissue program of the really good sf books on our backlist, and with Don choosing from his own previously published books we've since gone back to press with a lot of fine stuff by Phil Dick, Delany, Simak, Anderson, van Vogt and others.) I said I saw signs that the sf readership was changing from a predominantly high school age median to one around college age, and that this new program would be ideally aimed at them. Then, with more wishes than hope, I handed the memo to Mr. Wyn.





MAN WAS MEANT TO STAY  
IN THE MUD, TO SIN AND  
SUFFER AND SUCH - YESSIR,  
THAT'S THE WAY I SEE IT

He astounded me by reading it quickly, glancing up and saying, "Sounds like a good idea. Go ahead and do it."

This happened late in 1966. The next few months were spent in working out the details of editorial control, payment rates, discussions of packaging and the amount of sex allowable in the books. At first I was to recommend the books and they'd be read by three other editors at the company none of whom was Don, since Mr. Wyn felt Don and I might get into arguments. This arrangement left something to be desired from my point of view, since the other editors involved didn't really know much about science fiction; before too long the setup was changed so that Don read my recommendations. This was better but still not perfect; Don's tastes and mine do differ, and I felt that if I was to do my best work in editing the series I'd have to have complete control. (You can't really be effective as an editor if you have lunch with an author to discuss book ideas and it's all subject to possible rejection by someone else later.) Before long this was changed too, and I was given full control over the series.

The question of sex in the books was a thorny one. I personally am annoyed as hell at censorship of any kind, but Ace had for a long time as one of its strong arguments with wholesalers the fact that there was never anything at all offensive sexually in our books, so they could order any of our titles without worrying about the PTA or Women's League of Decency lodging complaints. (Apparently this really happens, and it can get your whole line of books thrown out of various chains of drugstores or school newsstands, particularly in the Midwest.) I argued that if this new line was to be aimed at adults we couldn't make sex—or anything—a taboo, and suggested that we make it clear on our order forms that the

Specials were a departure from our standard lily-white line and should be ordered accordingly. Eventually this approach was adopted, but not before I'd lost the chance to buy paperback rights to a very good novel, John Christopher's The Little People, because there was some small amount of sex in it.

Despite A. A. Wyn's background as an ex-cowboy turned pulp editor and then pulp publisher, he had respect and taste for more artful things; in curious contrast to his taste in Ace cover paintings, he was an artist himself when away from the office, concentrating on meticulously rendered op art. He showed me reproductions of some of his work during the period we were discussing the format for the Specials. (That series title, by the way, was chosen by him, apparently because of the increasing use of "specials" as a designation for more serious programs on television.) It occurred to me that op art hadn't yet been used on paperbacks, and that it was well suited to science fiction, so I wanted to incorporate op art into the Specials covers.

Early in 1967 Harlan Ellison came to New York to wrap up some of the final details on Dangerous Visions, including the jacket and interior illustrations, which were to be by Leo and Diane Dillon. He stayed several days with Carol and me, and introduced us to the Dillons, who lived nearby. Looking over the beautiful paintings they had around their house, I fell instantly in love with their work and decided I wanted them to do all the covers for the Specials. They had done a certain amount of science fiction art in the past—interiors for GALAXY in the fifties, later covers for Regency Books while Harlan was editor there, as well as miscellaneous others like the Vonnegut books published by Gold Medal—but they'd never really moved into the science fiction field with any regularity, so their bold, imaginative style ought to give a distinctive new look to the series.

One night I brought up the matter with the Dillons, waxing enthusiastic over my plans for the Specials. The series would be a breakthrough in sf publishing, I said as I got caught up in my own rhetoric, and I needed someone as talented as they were to design the covers. I mentioned my idea for incorporating op art into the covers, and Leo and Diane apparently took that as some positive sign that I was serious about a new approach for this series. They said they were up to their ears in work as it was, that their rates



were considerably higher than the price Ace normally paid, but that they'd do the series if they could have complete control over the package. I said if they'd make up samples of the format and style they wanted to use, I'd do my best to sell it at the office, and also to up our payment in their case.

I gave them The Witches of Karres and The Revolving Boy, two reprints from hardcover that were slated for the Specials, and they shortly turned in comps (comprehensive layouts including artwork) for these two covers. The layouts broke just about every rule in the book: the title wasn't on top, the artwork was in two separate boxes, one op art and one graphic art that was more symbolic than representational, and no effort was made to work in spaceships or monsters. I found them altogether stunning, took them into the office and showed them to people in the editorial and circulation departments, all of whom agreed about their quality but some of whom were dubious about how effective they'd be in selling paperback books. I said nonsense, the very differentness of the format would attract attention, which is half the newsstand battle right there.

A.A. Wyn had at this time become seriously ill with what we later learned was cancer, and he was running the office from home. The comps were sent to him there, and the next day I was told that they'd brightened his whole day, he'd liked them so much. Leo and Diane got the assignment, a free hand with the artwork, and a higher price than any of our other artists at the time.

When I called to tell this to Leo, at first he didn't believe me. "Carr, you're kidding me. We deliberately threw out everything we've ever been told about how to design 'safe' paperback covers and just did those things the way we wanted to. Are you trying to tell me something as far out as that is commercial?" I told him we thought so and wanted to try it; amazed, Leo said by god then, okay, they'd do the series.

Meanwhile, I'd already started buying novels. I had several things going for me then: I had a budget that started at \$2,000 per book and went up from there, which was top money in the field at the time (and is still good money in today's inflationary science fiction market); I was aware of some of the lesser-known hardcover publishers of science fiction like Chilton, from whom we'd bought Dune and from whom I quickly snapped up Schmitz's The Witches of Karres; and, because I'd been reading every story published in the sf magazines in my research for the World's Best SF series Don and I had launched three years before, I had a good idea of which new writers looked like they might develop into major novelists in the field.

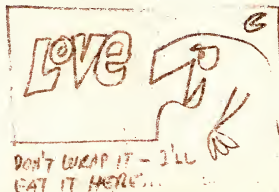
So I started writing to people, asking them if they were working on or considering any science fiction novels and if so could I see them for this new series? R. A. Lafferty was one of these; he replied that he had one novel on submission with Berkley but that if that one came back he'd send it to me, or alternatively he'd send his next novel

to me. As it turned out, Berkley did buy that book—it was The Reefs of Earth—and I got the next one, Past Master. It was the first original I'd bought, and I was tremendously excited by it.

I'd also heard, through personal contacts, that Alexei Panshin had done a good first novel that was being submitted with frustrating lack of success to hardcover publishers, and that Joanna Russ's first novel was going the same route. I called Alex's agent and asked to be the first paperback editor to see the book if the hardcover people didn't pick it up, and after a few more rejections along the lines of "Who needs another spaceship book?" and "The author's name sounds Russian, so we're afraid people would equate the book with the antiquated reprints of Russian science fiction that have been published in this country," the novel was sent to me. It was, of course, Rite of Passage, and I snapped it up. Meanwhile Joanna had showed me a carbon copy of her novel, Picnic on Paradise, and I was so impressed by it that I immediately made a high-money offer to her agent to ensure that I'd get first look in paperback if the hardcover editors passed it up. I had to wait almost a year, but eventually all the hardcover possibilities were exhausted and I got the book.

These two novels, along with Past Master, became nominees for the Nebula Award; and Rite of Passage won the balloting. Subsequently, both Rite of Passage and Past Master have also been nominated for Hugos. It's enough to make you wonder what hardcover editors get paid for, and in fact Don has occasionally kidded me that the success of the Specials has been due more to the obtuseness of editors at other houses than to any particular brilliance on my part. I have to admit there's a lot to that; people have congratulated me on my superior taste and courage in buying Rite of Passage and Picnic on Paradise after they'd been rejected so often, but really, how hard is it to tell that these books were good ones?

Actually, if there's one thing I do as an editor that's the key to getting good books, it's probably more in the area of courtesy than talent. Writers for the Specials always get a chance to go over their manuscripts after I've edited them, so that they can repair any egregiously stupid errors on my part, and then I'll send them page proofs when





the book is set in type, so they can check for typesetting errors that a proofreader less familiar with the book might easily miss. (I also have a separate copy of the proofs read in our office, of course, and collate both proofreader's and author's corrections on the copy I send back to the typesetter.) This kind of treatment of authors should be standard throughout the field, I think, and it is generally accorded to writers by the hardcover houses, but I don't know of any other paperback editor who makes a regular practice of this. You'd be surprised how many writers will pass up sending their books to larger or more "prestigious" publishers in order to ensure they'll be able to get their work into print in the form they intended. It's their bylines, after all. (And it's usually the better writers who will make this kind of choice: the workaday hacks are usually happy enough to get a book out of their typewriters and forget about it.)

While making my disclaimers, I ought to mention the help I've had from Dom Wollheim on the series. In the first place, it was he who bought Gertrude Friedberg's The Revolving Boy, not me; after the Specials line was decided upon, Don suggested that I might like to use it,

and I accepted gratefully. Don had been trying for years to buy Tucker's The Lincoln Hunters, but A. A. Wyn had always considered it too cerebral in appeal to fit into our then existing line; the launching of the Specials removed this objection, and I was able to buy it. Not to mention the fact that it was Don, not me, who bought the first novels of Roger Zelazny and Ursula K. LeGuin, so in a sense Isle of the Dead and The Left Hand of Darkness were inherited from him.

And needless to say, the backing of A. A. Wyn himself was all-important. He died late in 1967, before the first book of the series was published by the new management of Ace Books carried through with the plans.

But back to the beginnings of the series. Another idea I had for the Specials stemmed directly from our publication of Dune: the use of no blurbs on the back cover other than quotes from the reviews. The purpose was to give the idea immediately that these books were to be taken seriously, not just an hour or two's pastime to be forgotten by next morning, as most sf paperbacks are.

It's easy, of course, to quote from the reviews on books you're reprinting from hardcover, because the hardcover house will always supply you with the clippings, but what about paperback originals? What could I do for the back cover blurbs of books never before published and so never reviewed?

The thought hit me that hardcover publishers frequently send advance proofs of their books to established literary names so that they can quote their comments on their jacket copy; why shouldn't I do the same with the Specials? It would involve working several weeks ahead of the usual schedule, in order to give advance readers time to read and comment, and we'd have to pay extra money for those additional sets of proofs, but it seemed worth a try. Past Master was the first Special to be sent out this way, and it drew fine comments from Samuel R. Delany, Judith Merrill, Harlan Ellison and Roger Zelazny. I was delighted; it seemed right then that the idea was sound, and indeed since then I've never had trouble getting comments on the originals in the series. Most of the biggest names in the field have lent their support to books they liked.

It's not because I'm paying them for it, either. In fact, the thought of that never occurred to me, nor apparently to any of those people asked for comments, until just a couple of months ago when a writer to whom I'd sent advance proofs called me to say that he liked the book and would be happy to say something nice about it for publication, but since I was in effect asking him to write advertising copy he wanted to be paid. I was, quite honestly, taken aback. He was right, of course; those quotes on the back are advertising. But...

But if I were to establish a policy of paying for such comments, wouldn't I be jeopardizing the honesty of those who wrote them? Wouldn't there be a temptation to reach for something laudatory to say even if a person didn't like

the book, just in order to get a little extra money? (As things stand now, if an advance reader doesn't care for the book I ask him not to comment, rather than faking enthusiasm—and yes, this has happened in some cases, though thankfully not in many.) So I declined to pay for the man's comments, and instead got three very nice ones from others.

I try to send advance proofs to writers whose own work bears some relationship to the book in question, by the way; that way their names should attract approximately the kind of reader who'll most enjoy that book. Thus a fairly experimental book like Past Master went to more or less "new wave" people, while a more traditional novel like Bob Shaw's The Two-Limers went to Lester del Rey and Keith Laumer.

So far as I know, the whole experiment has been successful both in terms of sales and critical acceptance. Several of the Specials published just last year are already out of print and scheduled for more printings soon; all of them apparently sold well. And the reviews have been just beautiful, both in fanzines and prozines. Theodore Sturgeon devoted a whole review column in NATIONAL REVIEW to the Specials. Three out of the seven Nebula nominees for Best Novel this year were Specials, including Rite of Passage, the ultimate winner. Two of this year's five Hugo nominees are Specials, too: Rite of Passage and Past Master. The Dillons are nominated for a Hugo in the Pro Artist category. And several of the Specials published this year are already being talked up for awards next year, particularly The Left Hand of Darkness.

One of the annoyances I've had from the Specials has come in the form of left-handed compliments. I can't count the number of times people have come up to me and said, "Hey, what's the matter that you published this book? It's great, and it oughta be in hardcover." Yes, it oughta be, but I don't make those decisions, the hardcover editors do. In any case, we seem to be getting some breaks in this area too, because we've been selling quite a few of the recent Specials to the Science Fiction Book Club to be published in hardcovers by them. (In fact, as I write this four of the last five Specials are scheduled for SF Book Club editions, with the fifth being considered as a possibility.) We also have interest in the hardcover rights to several of last year's books, and I expect we'll be arranging those sales before long.

Not that all of the Specials have been priceless pearls that received unanimous acclaim, of course. A few of them drew what we like to call "mixed reviews", which is a euphemism if I ever heard one.

Late last year Sid Coleman returned from a summer spent in Europe and we saw him a few weeks later. He came in the door and said, "Ferry, as soon as I got back I bought all the science fiction Specials you've been publishing, and I liked them so much I decided you were the best editor since John W. Campbell in the early forties. But yesterday I read your latest one, and now I think

you're the best editor since John W. Campbell last month." Oog.

A word about my tastes in buying books: I've been accused by sf reactionaries of being soft on the "new wave," a phrasing that makes it sound like I must be some kind of fellow traveler. Actually, rather than being a radical in science fiction I'm really just a sort of white liberal. I've yet to publish a book that I think is out-and-out "new wave," though several have had their experimental aspects—and I have rejected any number of "new wave" novels, from some of the biggest names in the field. I've also declined a lot of books by "old wave" writers, of course. Generally speaking I'd say my tastes in science fiction are as eclectic as I can make them: I try to see the good in all kinds of writing, whenever it's there, and thus broaden my ability to be entertained. I think a lot of today's sf readers, especially the younger ones, are doing the same.

Oh, one thing I haven't got around to explaining is the change in cover format for the Specials beginning with Zelazny's Isle of the Dead this past January. The reason for the change is very simple: the previous layout was striking and original, but unfortunately it required that beautiful paintings by the Dillons be reduced to a size about two inches square. It's just impossible to come even close to capturing the subtleties of color and detail in their work when you reduce the size that much, and my soul would ache every month when I'd see the weak reflections of their paintings that would come out on the books. So, after discussing it with them, I arranged for the new format. While I was at it I took off the front cover blurb, so that now each book just tells you the title and the author and, in smaller type, the fact that it's an Ace Science Fiction Special. This is a bit unorthodox too, and it remains to be seen if the new format will be as effective as the old at selling books.

And I guess that covers everything Dick asked about, except the books I have coming up that I'd like to plug in advance. Well, there are a bunch of fine ones, but it's hard to pick out any one, or five, or whatever number, to recommend particularly. There's a new novel by R. A. Lafferty that you'll have to read, and I bought reprint rights to Keith Roberts' Pavane, and there's a new one by Bob Shaw, a new Alexei Panshin, another novel by D.G. Compton (whose SynthaJoy I consider the most under-noticed book in the series so far), others by Avram Davidson, Tom Purdom, Ursula LeGuin, Michael Moorcock and so on. Not to mention the books still being discussed with writers whose names I can't mention till contracts are signed.

If the Specials do as well in their second year as they did in their first, I'll be delighted. And I think they may.



# BEER MUTTERINGS



By now, most of you have doubtless heard of the Society for Creative Anachronism. You may have witnessed a tournament or two staged at a West Coast convention, though if you've seen no more, you've missed the real pageantry. For the benefit of those who've not heard, I'll state that we are a gang of nuts who like to fight with replicated medieval weapons, throw medieval parties with appropriate food, music, and dancing, wear garb of the period, and devise elaborate rituals. For some, medievalism has become a way of life, perhaps more than fandom ever was, which my older readers will agree is saying considerable.

At the moment a clique among us, me included, are looking toward acquiring a whaleboat or lifeboat and rigging it appropriately, complete with figurehead (which you naturally remove when approaching a friendly shore, lest you frighten the land-elves). San Francisco Bay doesn't seem complete without a small Viking ship.

Yet I fear me, my lords, that certain re-creations and recreations will always lie beyond our reach. We may storm a house which others defend, if we can get permission from the owner of one due to be torn down. We may even build siege engines. But the fire department would frown on pots of flaming oil; and where would we find enough dead horses?

The dead horse issue first came to my attention long before the Society was born, at a party at Reg Bretnor's. A guest happened to mention that he lived in the Berkeley hills above the Hotel Claremont. Yes, the very same Hotel Claremont which. He complained of noise and glare from it after dark. Reg suggested he build a mangonel or trebuchet and hurl dead horses into the parking lot. I chimed in with some technical thoughts on construction. The talk went eagerly till it foundered on the difficulty of obtaining ammunition.

There the dead horses lay for many years, except that I mentioned them in *The High Crusade*. Then recently they rose again. (Save your Confederate saddles.)

I was on my way to the last Funcon with Karen, Astrid, and Dorothy Jones. (You think you have females in tow.) We were eating in a restaurant. Karen went to the jane. She came back after an extended absence, complaining bitterly that it had just one stall and this was occupied by a pair of tennis shoes, presumably wearing a little old

lady, that seemed to have settled down to homestead the place. Various ways of forcing an evacuation, if that's the word I want, were discussed. I forget who first proposed assembling a trebuchet and lobbing a dead horse into the stall. In fact, I forget who said what of anything. However, the conversation went about like this and you may attribute as you see fit.

"That's a narrow space between the stall top and the ceiling. I'm not sure a dead horse could pass through."

"You could starve it to death."

"But how'd we make a trebuchet?"

"You mean you don't know? What kind of an Anachronist are you?"

"I refer to the practical problems of materials. Could we maybe borrow one? Ask the waitress."

"She'd probably say it's not on the menu but she'll see if the chef can cook us one special."

"Hey, I've got it! We don't need a trebuchet. We get a live horse, jump it over the door and shoot it."

"Hm. Did you say a little old lady? That's a formidable breed. She might throw a dead horse of her own right back at you."

"Yes, it'd be wise to come prepared with an anti-dead horse dead horse."

"Then she might throw a bigger dead horse. A Percheron, say."

"Accompanied by several Shetland ponies to knock down your ADH."

"In that case, we escalate to dead elephants."

Conversation veered thereafter. Astrid expressed a desire for a unicorn ranch, and Karen gurgled a reminder that Astrid will presumably get married sometime, and Dorothy

## A Column

By POUL ANDERSON



blushed at the notion of an advertisement reading SACRIFICE—  
—UNICORN RANCH—MUST SELL. Again the dead horses lay  
down.

If you ask me why this preoccupation with them, well,  
not being a horseman (even if you prefix a "w") I'm not  
fond of the beasts alive. But mainly it's the sheer majesty  
of the concept. Imagine, only imagine a dead horse, large,  
angular, preferably somewhat decayed, soaring through the  
skies and onto your opponent. Here is the squelch that  
shall rule the sevigram.

Postmaster: This column is utterly without redeeming  
social importance.

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Please understand that what follows is in no way a put-  
down of those to whom English is a foreign tongue. Chances  
are that I don't know theirs at all. I speak two languages  
reasonably well (though I was first delighted, afterwards  
disappointed, when a girl in Britain requested me to knock  
her up in the morning; and batting around Denmark on a bi-  
cycle in those same far-gone days, I had an accent such that  
in the islands they took me for a Jute and in Jutland for an  
islander, except when they assumed I was a damn Swede). I  
can stumble along in two or three more, and read several  
with fair facility, and like everyone else am quick in all  
countries to learn the absolutely essential words like  
"beer." Nevertheless, I make no claims to being a linguist.

It's merely that interlingual confusions can generate  
so much fun. Also trouble — like the somewhat apocryphal  
story about a close-to-war diplomatic crisis arising in the  
nineteenth century when the French government telegraphed  
the British to ask for details of one point in an important  
dispute, and "nous demandons" got translated as "we demand."  
Let's stay with the comedy, though.

My favorite joke along those lines concerns the chap  
trying to explain why, after years of marriage, he has  
no children: "My wife, she is unlearnable ... no, I  
mean she is impregnable ... no, she is inconceivable."  
Or maybe it's the cartoon where a waiter is telling  
a young customer who's obviously been trying to im-  
press the girl he's with: "Now that you have finish-  
ed saying, 'Do not saddle the horses, the innkeeper  
has been struck by lightning' in French, would you  
care to order in English?"

In spite of the fact that some readers can't  
abide him, Nicholas van Rijn seems to be the most  
popular character I've come up with. (This year  
his adventures were source material for a seminar  
at Stanford University's Graduate School of Busi-  
ness!) It's obvious — I hope — that his thick  
accent is a disarming put-on and he could speak  
perfectly if he wished. One difference between  
him and me is that he can think of his malaprop-  
isms on the instant while I have to sweat over  
them.

But let me share some real cases with you. For instance,  
when Karen and I were comparing marriage customs in our res-  
pective countries with a Japanese friend, talk drifted to the  
matter of how much of an acquaintance usually precedes a wed-  
ding. What he asked us was, "How long you have intercourse  
before you get married?" (That was funnier a dozen years  
ago.) On the other hand, an unidentified American, studying  
written Japanese, once made a slight error in affixes and  
turned "What an ancient temple bell you are ringing beside  
the lake" into "Dogs, keep barking until we have put our  
mother under water."

I have read about an English-language journal published  
in Moscow for the benefit of visiting foreign Communists which  
produced the deathless sentence, "The lower organs of the  
Party must continue the struggle to penetrate the backward  
parts of the proletariat." And a correspondent over there,  
with whom I exchange books — Jesus, but the Russians have  
some beautiful fantasy books! — asked me if I could obtain  
for him William Burroughs' The Feast of Haked. Yet let us  
never forget the American tourists in Moscow who, looking for  
a restaurant, consulted their dictionary and puzzled the hell  
out of a local man by inquiring for a pectopah.

My mother likes to tell how she, new in this country, was  
considering buying a cat and asked if it was a good micer;  
and, in search of a double socket, she told the hardware  
clerk she wanted a twilight.

I have a French friend, a scientist, who speaks English  
with what must be the International Standard Dordogne accent.  
Nevertheless he speaks it comprehensibly, fluently, and gram-  
matically, which is more than I can do in French. On his  
first visit to us, he nearly exploded with laughter when we  
showed him Coit Tower in San Francisco; add a "us" and you'll see  
why he exclaimed, "And it even  
looks phallic!" He was also might-  
ily amused by cereals advertised as  
being so-and-so percent bran,  
which to him is the exact equiv-  
alent of s\*\*\*. (I won't  
spell out that word. I'm  
chickenshit.)





His oldest son, whose English is just as good, learned it mostly by reading science fiction. My friend says that's the way to teach languages. To hell ("to bloody 'ell, goddamn!") with finicking details and classic literature. Start them talking any old way, start them reading stuff they enjoy, and the rest will come of itself. He's doubtless right.

Still, perfection may come in handy if you chance to have it. My grandmother used it for a real putdown. She was Danish, of aristocratic descent, a very tall impressive Edwardian lady with a mane of white hair. The stories about her are legion, among them this. One day in World War II, when the Germans were occupying her country, she was at work in the front yard of a family summer cottage on the beach between Copenhagen and Elsinore. A troop of Schalburg Corps punks came marching down the road: home-grown Nazis, even more despised than the imported variety. They were singing the German battle song Wir Fahren Gegen England (We Are Faring Against England) with a real Schweindeutsch pronunciation. Grandmother rose from her weeding, went out into the street with all the dignity of her era, tapped the leader on the shoulder, and said, in her flawless Goethe-German: "I beg your pardon, but aren't you headed in the wrong direction?"

Your anecdotes are invited. If I get enough, I'll publish a sequel.

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It is not the policy of this column — seeing as how this column hasn't got a policy — to defend itself. But occasionally a reader's remark will suggest a topic. Thus Ted Pauls' objection to what he considers a gratuitous and unjustifiable slam at the intelligence of members of Students for a Democratic Society.

Gratuitous it may be; but you'll find a lot of asides here, not necessarily hostile to their subjects. These are not formal essays, they are beer mutterings.

Unjustifiable, though, my obiter dictum was not. What follows is, for a change, deadly serious and as truthful as what data I possess can make it.

Nothing was said about the IQs of SDS people — and, by extension, other New Leftists, militants, and the horrible rest. For that matter, the word "intelligence" was not used. The phrase in question reads "no more background of elementary information or ability to reason than the average member," etc. Granted, this does pretty well reflect my idea of effective intelligence. A high IQ is no good if you don't do anything with it.

And today's radicals don't. By their own admission and boast, they are not interested in discovering what the

facts of a case are, pondering and arguing about the implications of those facts, and working out practical solutions that all men of good will can live with — Talleyrand's "equality of dissatisfaction." No, fact, logic, and action alike must serve the Moral Truth which they already possess. Marcuse states this in print, as Hitler did before him; his admirers state it in yells, forcible seizures, and violence, as the storm troopers did before them. (Who ever started the strange myth that Nazism was a front for conservatives?)

No doubt most of my present readers, being themselves reasonable people, agree that shrieking down somebody like Dean Rusk, instead of debating him, is undemocratic to put it mildly. A somewhat smaller number of you — but, I feel sure, still a majority — deplore such tactics as the occupation of college buildings, complete with destruction and defecation. But likely, too, most of you are thinking, "Violence? Ah, yes, Chicago. Berkeley. Police Riots."

Let me say right off that the bulk of demonstrators are merely naive. Their role is to provide mass and martyrs. I fail to feel sorry for them; if they won't take the trouble to learn what's really happening, on their heads be it, and "it" is quite apt to be a peace officer's club. However, I'll grant you that most of them are sort of well-meaning. They have seen the undeniable outrages in our society and let themselves be persuaded that nothing can cure these except revolutionary action.

That's where the lack of effective intelligence comes in. They don't have the most primitive knowledge — starting with knowledge of what violent social revolutions have led to, throughout history — and they don't study or think, they chant slogans. Thinking is for squares.

On their behalf, shall we examine what does bring on the nightsticks and tear gas, eventually the bayonets and buckshot?

Elsewhere I have described tactics of harassment, e.g., threatening the lives of policemen's children, phoning their wives to say they've been killed on duty, or simply making obscene calls. (It doesn't do the target much good to get an unlisted number. Now that the Post Office is supposed to Rehabilitate the Poor before delivering the mail, enough lefties are working there that the information is easily obtained.) I have also mentioned the procedure of trying different insults till you hit one that gets to the officer, as one is bound to do; next you hollar that at him, over and over, for hours without stop, and have a very fair chance of finally breaking his patience. Plenty of blacks have been heard to scream, "You're wife's in bed with a nigger," which really advances the cause of civil rights, doesn't it?

More recently, I've learned some of the methods taught at places like the Free University near Palo Alto, and ap-



plied especially in Chicago. I've examined a number of these self-defense weapons, as they're called. (Hitler was defending himself against Poland, Stalin against Finland, you dig?) Bags of human urine and excrement are commonly known about; so are bricks, bottles, lengths of steel pipe, and Molotov cocktails; I have trouble understanding why they aren't commonly thought about.

Well, though, have you, gentle reader, been taught how to give a pig a flower? You wait till a TV camera is around; then, sweetly smiling, you, a young girl, press a rose into his hand; the camera won't show that the thorns on his side have not been removed.

Take a pressure can of hairspray. Hold a cigaret lighter under the jet. You now have a real science fiction flame gun. Hairspray could not be bought in downtown Chicago, was sold out, days in advance of that Spontaneous Confrontation.

A parasol with a needle-pointed ferrule is supposed to be thrust into the leg — a hatpin into the stomach — a loop of inner tube goes (snap!) to the testicles. A cherry bomb can easily be coated with wax imbedding nails or broken glass. I don't know if any of the following was actually done, but I do know that one manual advises leaving the sharp objects for a week or so in dung, to make sure wounds will become infected.

The tin horn we toot on New Year's Eve has its secondary uses. You surround an officer and blow. And blow. And blow. Of course, your people spell each other at frequent intervals, because continuous exposure to that noise level is guaranteed to cause ear damage before long. It is also guaranteed to make him lash out, thereby creating another martyr.

Friends, this is not theory. All these gadgets, and more, were on the scene. True, only a minority had them or even saw them, but a minority is all it takes.

William Buckley himself agrees the authorities goofed in Berkeley. Still, when Chicago didn't bring an end to screaming and a start to thinking, a Berkeley became inevitable.

If I were a policeman — which I'm not saintly enough to be; I'd have killed someone too soon — one thing I would not mind is being called "pig." You see, I'm a farm boy who's kept pigs. Given room to move around in, rather than confinement to a narrow pen, a pig is clean. It is likewise brave, intelligent, affectionate, and loyal to its own kind. In short, a pig is everything that the hard-core activist is not.

Don't get me wrong. I don't fear revolution. I do fear the reaction to an attempt at it. Since you, my readers, are willing to think, I suggest you study in some detail what became of the Weimar and Spanish Republics, to name just those.

Yet if we can cope with the radicals before things have gone too far — and by "cope with" I don't mean "per-

secute," which is what their manipulators hope we'll do; I mean, in some sense, "contain" — I am optimistic for the long run. The upcoming generation will see that, while the squares went to space and the ocean deeps, read the hearts of the outermost star and the innermost gene, whipped another set of diseases, drove poverty and ignorance back a few more steps, cleaned up the environment, grokked the glories that five thousand years of history have given us ... while these groovy things happened, the anti-establishment establishment sat in the same dirty corners mouthing the same tired slogans. I'll give you odds on what tomorrow's youth will choose.



((Editor's Note: Ted Pauls deserves a chance to Reply in the next issue if he chooses. But I don't want this to flare into a big hairy controversy. This is a magazine devoted to science fiction and fantasy, remember? I probably shouldn't have printed Foyster's long comments in the last issue.

So why did I print Poul's original bit? I gave him carte blanche and will not cut his material.

But I have full control of the letter column.))



AND GOD SAID:

$$\frac{mv^2}{r} = \frac{Ze^2}{r^2}$$

$$mvr = n \frac{h}{2\pi}$$

$$r = \frac{r^2 h^2}{(2\pi)^2 mZe^2}$$

$$E = \frac{1}{2}mv^2 = \frac{Ze^2}{r}$$

$$E = \frac{2\pi^2 mZe^4}{h^2} = Ry$$

...AND THERE WAS LIGHT!

—George Senda



Charles  
Platt

# ----- new worlds

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\* Charles Platt has been associated with New Worlds for  
\* five years, and until recently shared editorship of  
\* the magazine with Michael Moorcock.  
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It's slightly irritating, and very lamentable, that certain American writers who are new on the scene and are interested in New Worlds are labelled New Wave (itself an American brand name) by people who do not understand what the real essence of New Wave is.

Many examples of so-called American New Wave writing are not new in any sense and have the vitality of a ripple rather than of a wave. My intention is to clarify the difference between the genuine product and imitations; but this is as difficult as showing how U.S. West Coast rock groups differ from the Beatles. The entire outlook is dissimilar.

The only way is to go back to basics. Let us then start from the beginning.

Escapist fiction is a tired old label applied too often to science fiction. In a way it is appropriate, but too vague — it can be argued that reading any kind of fiction is an escapist occupation.

It's better to avoid categories altogether, but for the sake of clarity I will try to divide fiction not into escapist and non-escapist, but into that which has strong connections with reality, and that which creates its own little world, where actions and events, as in a dream, need not follow the rules of everyday life.

Examples of the first category, the 'real' fiction, range from Dickens to Bonnie and Clyde, and are usually concerned with expressing something relevant to the business of living. The characters have a depth which results from the writer's love and understanding of people, as the background is a model of the writer's vision of a reality. The ideas and 'message' (if any) are thus often relevant to the reader's own life. The effect is of a stimulant, cathartic and enlivening. Returning from the story to the real world is like returning home from a vacation abroad. One's outlook is slightly changed.

The epitome of the second category, which I shall call 'dream' fiction, is a novel like Strombringer or The Stars My Destination which describes events so different from everyday scenery that the reader must sever all contact with reality before he can become absorbed in the story. The characters tend to speak and act in a stereotyped way, governed by their simplified, shallow, externalized motives, and the necessities of the plot. The effect is of a tran-

quillizer or depressant, numbing and calming the senses. Returning from the story to the real world is as unpleasant as waking from an enjoyable dream.

These categories are not absolute. Some fiction, particularly that of J.G. Ballard, isn't so easily classified. But the categories do represent the divergence of methods and interests between the writers of traditional sf, who are interested in providing simple entertainment, and the New Wave writers, who are interested in providing something more.

I am not making any sort of judgement as to the relative worth or importance of 'real' and 'dream' fiction. I find both forms enjoyable. But what does need to be pointed out is 1) There is a sinister tendency for writers and publishers to be satisfied with a diet of nothing but 'dream' fiction, and to be unable to distinguish between its values and the values of the 'real' kind; 2) The public demand for 'dream' fiction is abnormally high and still growing; 3) At the same time, the supply of that kind of science fiction is becoming more and more mediocre.

The much-talked-of pressures of 20th century life tend to be ignored or taken for granted the same way that we forget about the existence of atomic weapons. But the pressures, whether of overcrowding, pace of living or consumerism, do exist.

Hence the glut of comforting 'labor-saving' products, from cars to kitchen gadgets. Products to allay hidden fears (the fears often being artificially created in the first place), such as vaginal deodorants. Entertainments which are non-participative and fantasy-based, such as striptease shows, tv situation comedy and science fiction.

Sf fans may object to their literature being lumped in with such poor company. But I am convinced that the majority of its readers like it purely for its other-worldly 'dream' qualities. They seek the numbing, relaxing retreat into a fantasy situation as a brief relaxation totally disconnected from real life. Unfortunately, the real world seems that much worse when they come back to it. 'Dream' fiction never adds to the experience of living, the same way that masturbating over pictures of naked women doesn't make one a more competent lover. In fact, the non-real, 'dream' experience actually reduces one's ability to face up to and operate under the conditions of real life.

Moreover, the ability to discriminate between good and

## and after

mediocre is constantly being undermined. Advertisers deliberately confuse image with reality. Entertainments invite the acceptance of mediocrity because it is so easily digestible. Life is a blend of a thousand tv commercials, secret agent movies and westerns. The only healthy attitude of mind is habitual dissatisfaction and continual disengagement; but not only are most people unable to distinguish diamonds from plastic any more, they are actually uninterested in doing so.

This is my explanation for the abnormal demand for 'dream' fiction, which requires minimal reader participation and thought, and offers a numbing fantasy environment similar to all the other counterfeit experiences which are available as refuges from reality. This is also my explanation for the vanishing ability to distinguish between good and poor entertainment fiction. It seems that, provided the story takes the reader away from things, the imagination or vitality of the writing is immaterial. In fact it probably helps if the book is not too stimulating. We have become as accustomed to mediocre consumer-fiction as we are to tasteless food.

Luckily, the sense of taste of some writers — and, it would seem, of some readers — was not completely dulled, so that, in the early sixties, the English New Wave, driven by dissatisfaction with the low ebb to which science fiction had regressed, was able to gain momentum and find an audience. It is essential to remember that the driving force was strong, sharp, critical dissatisfaction; it was this that provided the initial sense of purpose and direction. English writers were amazed by the continuing popularity of formula-written books by Pohl, Leinster and others, which could as well have been written by a hermit deep underground lacking all communication with people on the surface. It seemed obvious that by the mid-fifties the point of diminishing returns had been reached: the harder the writers worked the infertile soil of sf ideas, the poorer was the crop of stories that resulted. Rather than cross their self-imposed boundaries, to find new, untouched land, the writers seemed content to follow the Pohl principle of conservation of, and adherence to, the 'rules' of traditional sf.

The new writers were puzzled that sf delighted in being inventive in ideas, but refused to be inventive in the forms used to express the ideas. It seemed strange, too, that after thirty years of development, the writing was still

superficial, imprecise and even ungrammatical; that writers were interested in extra-sensory perception, but had so little sensitivity toward human beings that they had never properly explored the possibility of the existing five senses. Most of the new writers were well-read outside the sf field, and were interested in 'real' fiction, which seemed more important than the 'dream' variety. They admired the vitality and imagination of earlier sf, however. Something of a cross-fertilisation took place.

One early result was the diabolically awful England Swings SF, supposedly a showcase of the New Wave but in actual fact an embarrassing rag-bag of early stories by young authors as yet too immature to write material of any importance — myself included.

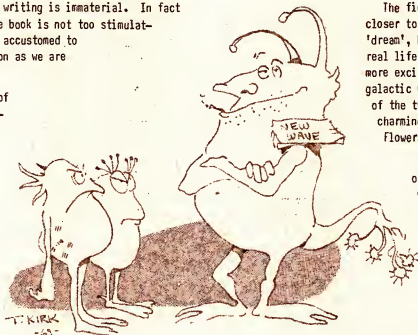
Gradually, however, the New Worlds policy emerged. It was largely intuitive.

The fiction that followed was closer to 'real' fiction than to 'dream', because its exponents found real life and real thoughts much more exciting source material than galactic warfare. (For a comparison of the two, see Brian Aldiss's charming "Girl and Robot with Flowers" in *New Worlds* 154).

The principal qualities of the writing were that it was literate, fresh, energetic, demanded intelligent reader-participation rather than passive involvement, and described experiences and outlooks directly related to those of the writers and the readers.

That is the essence of New Wave, as understood by its exponents. The remainder of this article looks at recent science fiction, some of which has been classified New Wave, and decides whether the books concerned really contain these qualities or not.

Surprisingly, one story that really is New Wave has largely been thought of as traditional sf. This is the movie version of *2001* which, though rooted in the conceptions of the book (which had been written before film-making commenced), extends far beyond the scope of Clarke's pleasant but limited pastiche. Critics have under-rated the film's subtlety, criticising preoccupation with gadgets and the banality of the characters and their dialogue. It is obvious, however (particularly when seeing the film for a second time) that its contents and form are governed by the director's two main preoccupations: to show life exactly as it was and as it will be, and to draw contrasts. The con-





trast between space hardware and the abstraction of a trip into total unknown; between the depth of space and the claustrophobic fluorescent-floored room at the end; between the young, exercising astronaut and his instant aging; between the dying man and the foetus; all these are intentional, and all of them relate to the pitifully small contrast between the apes' behavior and man's trivial speech and actions in 2001. To an outsider, our planet is as young as an unborn child. The movie conveys a vision and breadth that sf writers have groped for, but which has never been fully communicated before.

If only one could say the same of John Brunner's Stand on Zanzibar. Any 500 page book biases a reviewer, who feels its sheer weight as an insistent suggestion that there must be some worth to it. Luckily for the lazier readers among us, the narrative is episodic and can be sampled; the more one reads of it, the greater the quantity and detail of the experience, rather than the quality, which I found unimpressive. Make Room, Make Room is a similarly detailed picture of a future reality, but it is just as unsuccessful as Stand on Zanzibar in conveying a picture the reader can really see himself in. There is a lack of true sensitivity for people and their real motives and emotions; the character studies are as bare as case histories. This is a magnificently complete report on the future, but the writing and the humanity of the book fall short of success, the same way that science fiction has fallen short for decades.

Compare the contrived world of Stand on Zanzibar with the horrific visions in William Burroughs' Naked Lunch. Everything Brunner talks about, Burroughs feels in his drugged, terrified guts. He is vitally aware of the insides of men's minds and bodies, and his paranoia for the way in which we are controlled touches on fears we can never wholly disbelieve. "True genius and first mythographer of the mid-20th century," J.G. Ballard wrote of Burroughs in the first Moorcock-edited New Worlds. One

does not have to stretch the definition of New Wave to include Burroughs within it.

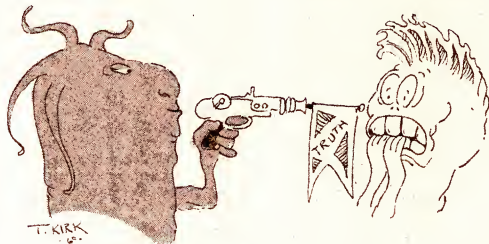
Thomas M. Disch is another American whose work is unmistakably New Wave. As a story, Camp Concentration suffered slightly from the allegorical necessity for the hero to achieve salvation at the end. But in all other respects the book is a brilliant success, particularly in blending subtlety of character and content with a perfectly paced sequence of events that anyone — surely, anyone — can enjoy simply as a well-told and well-plotted story. The situation is dreamlike but the people in it are unmistakably real. An important, overwhelming book.

Not so Delany's The Einstein Intersection, where a similar attempt to entertain and be serious simultaneously seems thwarted by the author's embarrassingly introverted concern with himself as a writer, and by the decidedly non-entertaining nature of the Greek myth subject matter.

Compare this with the unashamed brash vitality of Moorcock's The Final Programme. After an unsatisfactory first 50 pages, where the author sheds old ideas and characters like a psychiatric patient releasing neuroses in occupational therapy, the book races through a stunningly imaginative sequence of ideas and situations, firmly related to the real contemporary social scene, and yet wild, fanciful and entertaining. Moorcock's instinctive awareness of the mechanics of story-telling enable him to provide a perfect vehicle for his ideas.

Such vitality is lacking in, for instance, Damon Knight's Orbit 3 anthology, which was, apart from Philip Jose Farmer's joke story, disappointingly weary. There are hints of good ideas and possibilities, but the authors seem too tired to deal with them properly.

Zelazny seems to be an American writer who does have vitality, but both The Dream Master and Isle of the Dead are deeply rooted in the traditions of stock sf subject matter and prose. There are occasional signs of greater awareness, but they seem inserted like mannerisms or tricks Zelazny has





culled from research into the mainstream. His characters are dramatic figures, his backgrounds are imaginative, but somehow it exists all on the surface.

One longs for the more powerful obsessions of Ballard's characters in "The Terminal Beach" (surely his most important story) and "The Crystal World" (undoubtedly his best novel). In the latter work, the evocative vision of a final stasis half way between life and death has religious and philosophical implications which extend far beyond the scope of most science fiction. The crystal landscapes are surreal visions of lasting beauty.

How incredibly dull, by contrast, is a book like Panshin's *Rite of Passage*, which would have come out much the same if it had been written twenty years ago. Inconsequential, uninventive and impossible to believe in, the book is peopled by characters drawn from the television screen rather than from the real world. This, and dull but readable books like Piers Anthony's *Omnivore*, are the dregs of a great story-telling tradition which started with Hugo Gernsback, hit an all-time zenith with Alfred Bester's marvelous novels *The Stars My Destination* and *The Demolished Man*, and now drags endlessly on. Bester flung out new ideas by the handful, in a wild orgy of inventiveness. Panshin and Anthony seem myopic, deaf and partially disabled by comparison.

The most interesting and promising of American New Wave fiction in the last eighteen months has been Spinrad's *Bug Jack Barron*. The style is brash, but it is used to conscious effect. Whether this effect is successfully compelling, or merely numbing, depends on the reader; either way, it was a worthwhile experiment. There is vitality and a good deal of relevance to twentieth century life; Spinrad is preoccupied with pointing out that his world is a carefully constructed future, but to me its greatest merit is that it is close enough to today for it to have genuine relevance to our lives. The characterisation is perhaps realistic, in that I am sure such people do exist, living real-life of Hollywood dramas. But they are still a little simple and a little melodramatic for me to be totally convinced.

Above all, though, the book is vital and interesting, and shows a sincere passion — so lacking in books like *Stand on Zanzibar*. It is similar to the latter, but has enough guts and character to make it truly authentic and important.

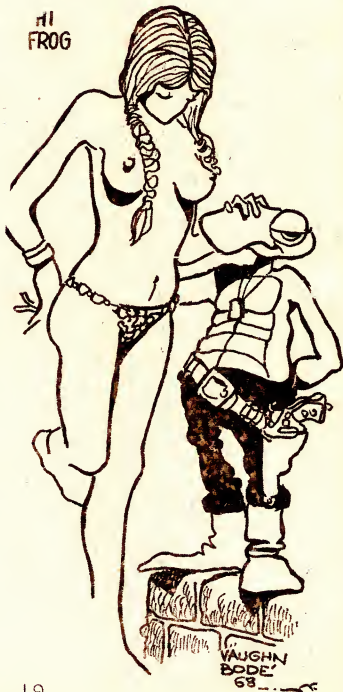
There are more writers who should be included — such as Philip K. Dick, who continues to write interestingly, even if a certain sameness is developing. And I am annoyed to have to omit Philip Jose Farmer, for lack of availability of his recent work in England.

Most of the rest of recent 'sf, however, is just as well left out; there is little that can be said about material which itself says nothing. The 'dream' fiction markets continue to grow, and, as has been mentioned earlier, the readers seem happy to settle for mediocrity. In such a

situation I am continually amazed that the real New Wave writing continues to find publishers (not without some difficulty, in many cases). God knows what the future holds. There is certainly no place for us in Brunner's, or even Spinrad's vision of what lies ahead. All one can hope to do, really, is remain a vociferous minority, exerting a small but noticeable influence on the publishers and writers in the field. If this remains possible it will be some kind of achievement for the small group of writers who persistently try to write fiction which does more than entertain.



HI  
FROG



# Paper Tiger, Burning Bright

BY ANDREW J. OFFUTT

"Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent."

—Salvor Hardin, Foundation  
(Isaac Asimov, c. 1950)

"... it is the irony of it all that is most amazing."

—First speaker, Second Foundation  
(Isaac Asimov, c. 1949)

It seems fitting to preface this examination of the "New Wave"—"Second Foundation" controversy with those brilliant words from a brilliant series. They have been in my mind for years. They have been proven, over and over, by nearly every government in the world and by members of most groups.

Presently science fiction writers and fans are engaged in a howling (mostly howling) battle that consists of violent words and violent threats. Certainly when a man seriously proposes—howbeit ineffectually and gratuitous—

ly—destroying other men's livelihoods, he is offering violence. And in the name of the Asimov trilogy from which Salvor Hardin's words come!

Patience, Fielding said in Tom Jones, is a virtue very apt to be fatigued by exercise. True enough; patience has worn to the thickness of 5-year-old dungarees, among both the participants in this year's controversy and among the amazed onlookers. "The anger of fools," Maxwell Bodenheim said, "is my favorite crown" —and members of each side—wait, place that in quotes; each "side" are equally able to apply it to the other.

For years the insularly incestuous little field of science fiction has consisted mainly of (a) scientists who speculate and know how to type, (b) typists who speculate and know or pretend to know a little science (and are unable to sell a manuscript in any other field except perhaps Mystery) —and (c) by a small cadre of steadily improving writers. A few, a very few of them are the hard-science idea men who pop up with concepts everyone else adopts (Anderson, Asimov, Clement, George Smith, van Vogt, to name about half of them). The rest of us want to write, want to write sf for whatever wild reason we do, and in general haven't the hard science background of those folks. We borrow, admittedly, things like hyperspace and parallel universes and so on.

I don't know where Clement is. van Vogt, as evidenced by those godawful Silky stories in IF, is a former genius-writer whose name can still be expected to jingle the cash register. George O. Smith improved year after year and seems to have vanished. Asimov has been one of my favorites for years, and I would willingly have given him a Nebula or an Oscar for that little eight-ball-murder(?)-case billiard story of his a year or two ago. He is just as popular with nearly everyone else—so popular he now suffers from the delusion that he is Isaac Asimov, for which there is no known cure. It is a tossup as to whether he or Ray Bradbury will be called upon when unknowing outsiders such as LIFÉ or TV GUIDE or PSYCHOLOGY TODAY want a sf spokesman. The Mass Media don't know where it's at and thus cannot always be expected to call upon those who do.

Now paragraph for Poul Anderson; he fits both categories (a) and (c) above. It's been fun to watch him develop from the days of Captive of the Centaurianess and worse—almost as much fun as it is to read him. He is a craftsman; one of the field's few extraordinarily prolific and ubiquitous good writers—and, apparently a heavily-biased authoritarian, judging from his attitude toward my being allowed to read a copy of the guest of honor speech at the 1968 World Sf Con-



GF69

vention (in an SFWA publication). This does not prejudice me against reading his fiction.

Every now and then someone with a new talent, a real writing talent, has shown up in sf, usually with a novel-like burst of glory. Obviously those of us reading PLANET and THRILLING WONDER could have got mighty excited about a dangerous nouveau vague a few years back—had it occurred to us. (Everyone was more passive then. College students were content to raid pantries, rather than panties...and ad. buildings.) We could have looked at a couple of newish people named Farmer and Bradbury and cried "Havoc! It's a whole New Thing! What're they trying to do?"

They both wrote well, and they wrote about people, and they seemed intent upon Saying Something (which frequently gets said better if one writes a tragedy). That's what set them apart. They wrote well, carefully, literately, as if they were out there in the big waves of the main stream. And they wrote about people, not about machines and jincrackery and things.

Shocked and startled (and vastly pleased and flattered) we loaded too much praise on them, so impressed were we to have them with us, in our insular little field. We expected to lose them, as we've lost others to better-paying markets, or as we lost Siodmak who stopped writing in favor of being the Critics' Tame SF Writer. And we did; one of them was so swollen by the accolades that he moved to Dreamland and has been playing SF Stylist Authority ever since, impressing mainly those outside the field, such as the very impressionable Hugh Hefner. (The same fate overtook Scott Fitzgerald, and at least affected Faulkner and Hemingway.) The other one kept on writing and still is, in all directions (try Farmer's Image of the Beast or A Feast Unknown from Essex House for some sf-fantasy for the Big Kids).

Now it's happened again. All of a sudden we have several people around, simultaneously, who can write, and write well. Naturally, they attract sore-thumb attention. "One is truly accepted or understood," Henry Miller wrote, "only by one's peers." Yes, but it sometimes works the other way, too; if one appears peerless one receives much attention, perhaps even more than one deserves. For years Delany and Zelazny didn't write sf; they wrote stories about a great white whale and deepsea divers, and about people, and they won prizes for writing un-sf.

Why? Because they write, for the most part, well, and they are concerned with the people in their stories more than with the technologia and gadgetry.

Man in the Jungle is only incidentally sf; it could easily have been located in the Africa or India of a few years ago. It is also a damned good book written in a thoroughly delightful and competent style, and some of us don't care how much the writer screams and sobs in public, so long as he writes more good fiction. (Many people boycott the works of say, Harlan Ellison and Frank Sinatra and Elizabeth Taylor and Maurice Girodias because of their personal lives and utterances. They mask their pain well, they and their bankers!) Did Jungle have a happy ending, the writer asks. Lord no! Protagonist Fraden should have been pulled apart molecule by molecule, verry slowly. But—I can't advocate that, or even hate him; I live there, which makes me one of those molecules. It had a realistic ending, painful or not: if a bastard is smart enough, he can indeed find love and happiness by being a bastard! (Did my country have a father?)

The novel said something, several somethings. Rather with toying with ancient ones, its allegories are hideously modern. It provides more than the standard escape to which we're accustomed. It even admitted, very tamely, that men and women exist, and the twain meet physically with no thought of procreation—almost a new concept in sf, which appears to have been profoundly influenced by the Roman Church and whose oldest editor will admit to a writer that his story is being turned down because "some of the parents of my younger readers

might object."

Come to think, for true realism, that novel should have shown the secondary protagonist at his nightly masturbation—while gazing, presumably, at a nude swastika.

"But, gee, son," the old guard says, reaching across the generation gap it has created and seeks to maintain, "where is the Sense of Wonder in Jungle or those evil new books and things all about nasty people and icky ole sex (they describe the ladies' LIMBS, and everything!)? Why did Spinrad waste all that time spilling people's physical insides and examining their mental insides? He could have written a novel around the biochemistry of those creatures—and the fascinating weaponry he mentioned. And he could have left out the sex; we know that happens. We know all about people; how'd that gun work?"

The Sense of Wonder, members of the Order of Loyal Die-



hards (O.L.D.) and Permanent Wave; the senseless wonder is that we've been accepting all this male bovine defecation all these years, from typists, just because we love sf and accept it by anyone, just as we've always accepted that if you want good literary writing you go outside the field, and seldom the two have met. The Sense of Wonder is that for years we've said "male bovine defecation" instead of shit.

My books don't contain icky old sex, one member of the Preserve and Protect delegation says, and they're feeling better than ever, so there so there, you disgustingly potent snipperwhappers!

Yes, it's always tough to see a new generation, meaning one is getting old, and feels somehow out of touch. And it's particularly tough when they're having more fun! I can remember when students were pumished for saying "where it's at" and when a glimpse of knee was something shokin' and lovescenes in novels looked like this: \*\*\*

Change occurs, despite resistance. Some is "good" and some is "bad", but that genius among scholars Sir J.G. Frazer prefaced his Golden Bough with "I have changed my views repeatedly, and I am resolved to change them again with every change of the evidence, for like the chameleon the inquirer should shift his colours with the shifting colours of the ground he treads."

Wide neckties and turtle-necks and broad belts and buckled shoes aren't new; they're just change. Fight them and you get branded. Go address a University class wearing a turtle-neck and say "where it's at" once and they may forget not to trust you because you're over thirty. (I just proved this, graphically.)

Drag out your old issues of SS and TWS and PLANET and look at all those wildly sexy covers over totally sexless (and 85% poorly written) interiors. You were a dishonest bunch of sniveling, sneaking but pious pornographers, weren't you? I used to tear the covers off those magazines so my Puritan father wouldn't ban them on the basis of the covers: designed to hook sex-hungry buyers into a sexless, truthless field. God, what blackness that was! And I was in my teens; now too young to join O.L.D. and too old to be trusted!

I'm prejudiced neither against nor for the works of Isaac Asimov or Philip Farmer, because it's a great big world with lots of room—for a few more years. "New Wave?" Only some different writers with different ideas. There's no L.A. Mafia. (Is there?) No Boston Mafia. (Is there?)

The New Wave should be stomped out, cries a man who has never outgrown Elks and KC's and college fraternities, with titles and presumably regalia and all. (Neofen have for years been portrayed as wearing beanies; do Second Foundation personnel wear mitres?) It's all about nasty old sex and drug addicts and people's bodies and minds instead of the productions thereof, and by Coolidge we won't tolerate it!

We are supposed to accept this neanderthal paranoia that a few writers have formed a dark cabal and are plotting to take over the world (a plot Pohl and Kornbluth missed—somebody do it quick, before the Other Side does). And without doubt said cabal consists of Sevens, and meets naked while sitting within a pentagram.)

Aside from fantastic public paranoia, we are led very quickly to see that a great part of this high Crusade is based on the "New Wave" as being "obscene"—rather than the more valid reason that much of it just isn't science fiction (and not too speculative, either). And we are reminded of psychotherapists, particularly Dr. Karpman of St. Elizabeths in Washington, who said that such "... has an unconscious interest at its base" and that "crusading is often an unconscious cover-up for interest; crusading thus becomes the result of a negatively-displaced obsession..."

Hearing that the goal of the "Second Foundation" is to estop and destroy, we wonder if the spiritual founder of the group was Cardinal Billot, who said in 1922, "He must say that material force is rightly employed... to coerce those who disturb (us), and generally speaking to remove those things that impede our spiritual aim; nay that force can have no more noble use than this."

Second Foundation? Let them break out their jugs of Xeno and rewrite Burroughs and Venus Equilateral and Skylark (and find out why Edmond Hamilton now admits he writes juveniles); prove to Ace and Belmont and Ballantine that they will out-sell Thorns and Bug Jack Barron and Image of the Beast and Dangerous Visions.

Must change be so violently opposed in a field devoted to change, to the new, to tomorrow?

But—this is so silly. There isn't any "New Wave," any organized cabal of plotters. (Nothing had to be true, Salvor Hardin said, but everything had to sound true.) There are just, suddenly, a bunch of guys who write mighty well, who care, who think sf is a pretty good vehicle for Saying Something, and who make huge seminal splashes in the tiny vaginal pool that is sf. If there were an organization its motto would probably be O.W. Holmes: "A man should share the action and passion of his times at peril of being said not to have lived," which translates as: "Get involved or get buried. If you aren't a part of what's happening, you may as well be dead; the space is needed."

But there is no such organization. And there isn't a Second Foundation, either. Remember the third book in that living series? There was the Answer that Appeared to be True, the Answer that Satisfied, and finally the Answer that was True. The real Second Foundation was hidden under our stupid snouts, and I don't recall that it was devoted strictly to perpetuating unchange. It was devoted to freedom, not stamping out. In the present case the Second Foundation appears to be the Second Generation—of writers. Those who are concerned more with the future of Man as Man rather than as Men, or Machine-maker; the individual in the future.

And that's where science fiction is At.





# ROTSLER !!

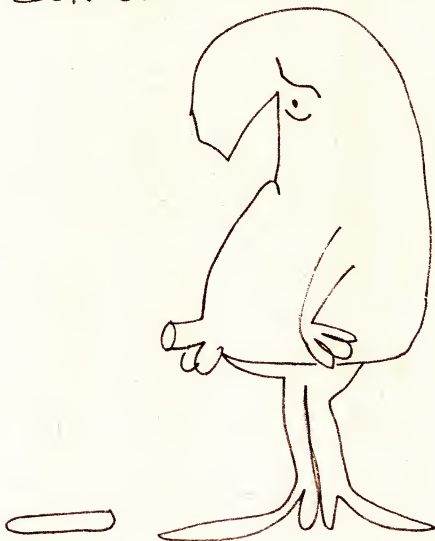
On Saturday, July 5th at the Westercon in Santa Monica, there was a panel: "The Sexually Explicit Novel in SF" (Or, "Do Sex and Science Fiction Finally Mix?") On the panel, initially, were Theodore Sturgeon, Jerry Sohl, Philip Jose Farmer, Bill Rotsler and Hank Stine. Soon Harlan Ellison joined and then Bob Silverberg.

As the others volleyed and thundered, Bill Rotsler quietly sat at the end of the table cartooning as the words and phrases inspired him. His drawings were passed among the panelists and Harlan suggested they be given to me for publication in SFR.

I managed to salvage all of them, I think, from eager fans at the podium when the discussion ended.

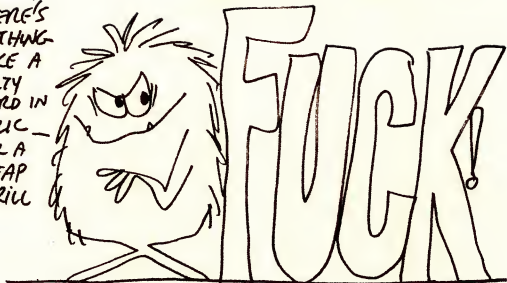
Here are some of those cartoons; another spurt of Rotsler's talent.

## CENSORSHIP





THERE'S  
NOTHING  
LIKE A  
DIRTY  
WORD IN  
PUBLIC —  
FOR A  
CHEAP  
THRILL



DOES "SEX IN SCIENCE-FICTION"  
MEAN THAT THE COVER GIRLS  
HAVE STOPPED WEARING BRONZE  
BRASSIERES?

NO - IT MEANS THAT  
SOMEONE FOUND  
OUT THEY HAD  
BREASTS...



CLEAN AIR  
CLEAN WATER

AND A  
DIRTY  
MIND



# MONOLOG

Lessee now...all kinds of items in the folder...

- + GREGG CALKINS just sent a card. New Address: 509 Plato Court, Bakersfield, Cal. 93309.
- + Robert E. Toomey, Jr., has also moved: 32 Warriner Av., Springfield, Mass. 01108.
- + Alexei Panshin has moved: Open Gate Farm, Star Route, Perkasia, Pa. 18944.
- + Mrs. Estelle Sanders from Long Island, New York, where she was active in a fan club, now lives at 15522 Moorpark, Encino, Cal. 91316. Phone—788-3575. She would like to contact fans in the valley.
- + Greg Benford has moved: 1458 Entrada Verde, Alamo, Cal. 94507.

I see I forgot to capitalize the names after CALKINS. Consider them all such, please. Just an affectation....

- + AN SFR EXCLUSIVE...also EXCLUSIVE: PLAYBOY will feature an interview with Robert E. Heinlein in an upcoming issue, probably sometime next year. Interviewer: Frank Robinson.
- + Anthony Ward and M.G. Zaharakis will co-edit a new genre, TIME & SPACE, from Portland, Oregon.
- + EXCLUSIVE NEWS from our spy in New York: sales for the first issue of VENTURE were not good and not bad. The zine may not be continued after final sales reports are in on issue #2.
- + Lancer is coming out with INFINITY ONE soon, a magazine in book form. Pb-form, I presume. Robert Hoskins is the editor. Pay is 2¢-4¢ per word. Needs lengths to 20,000 w. short novels. "...must be good science fiction, in the broad sense of s-f as speculative fiction. The unusual, the oddball, the story not-quite-right for the other magazines may find a welcome home..." Address to Hoskins, c/o Lancer Books, Inc., 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.
- + CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ART AND TECHNOLOGY features articles on Lord of the Rings, Language of Space, Buck Rogers, "2001: A Space Odyssey", science fiction opera, space poetry...and more. \$2.00 from Arts In Society, Univ. Extension, The University of Wisconsin, 432 No. Lake St., Madison, Wisc. 53706.
- + FRANZ ROTTENSTEINER publishes a fanzine: OM. #19 will be out soon and features: "The Individual and Society in the World of the Future" by Dr. Vitali Stolarzyk; "Androids and Homunculi" by Albert Ludwig; "Notes on Interplanetary Fiction" by H.P. Lovecraft (reprint: 1918); "Some Thoughts on H.P. Lovecraft" by A.J. Cox; "POLAND: Science Fiction in the Linguistic Trap" by Stanislaw

Lem; "The Vampyre Theory of a Myth" and "My World in Reverse" by Peter O. Chotjewitz; and some 30 pages of reviews of current sf books. There also letters from Lem, David I. Masson and others. 50¢ per issue. There is only one problem: it is written in German.

- + Elaine Landis, Editor of the Science Fiction Book Club writes that the book club selections for Jan. '70 are To Live Again by Bob Silverberg at \$1.49, and Philip K. Dick's The Preserving Machine at \$1.69.
- + First prize in the ROCHESTER WORLD (AND NATIONAL) POETRY DAY CONTEST is \$25. (The Lilith Lorraine/Clark Ashton Smith Memorial Award) No entry fee. Deadline: Oct. 1, 1969. Theme this year: Poems, Stars and Jewels. Address: Poetry Day Committee, P.O. Box 1101, Rochester, NY 14603.
- + SECONDARY UNIVERSE and the 2nd Tolkien Society of America Conference will be held at the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay, Green Bay, Wisc. Oct. 30-31, Nov. 1.
- + THE DOUBLE: BILL SYMPOSIUM at \$3.00 looks to be a worthwhile book to have judging from the advance flyer. Available from Bill Bowers, 2345 Newton St., Akron, Ohio 44305. It has contributions from 94 well-known sf writers and editors. 120 pages, photo-offset.
- + BEFORE I FORGET: back issues of SFR available—#28, 29, 30, 31. 50¢ each.
- + What prominent Canadian fan is writing some weird, inexecutable letters lately?
- + Pros and fans should be aware that unless they have changed their policies, Greenleaf Classics, Inc., which has had mention in the SFPA Bulletin as a market for sf and off-beat material with neither verbal or thematic taboos, is (a) paying approx. \$500 for a book-length ms; (b) buying ALL RIGHTS; (c) not willing to send authors ANY complimentary copies of their books when published; (d) not willing to tell an author if his book will be retitled or what the new title will be or when the author's book will appear; (e) not paying royalties or any kind of bonus if the book sells well or is reprinted.  
Be Warned.
- + I've run out of items for the Monolog; what do I do now? Punt. Move a pawn? Mention my latest book sale? Okay.  
I just sold an sf-sex book (actually a first few chapters and an outline) to Essex House, titled The Lust Gods. It is based on my 1959 ADAM story "The Fight Game."
- + At last phone conversation, Harlan Ellison was having a bit of trouble with the powers that be at NBC or Paramount; they didn't like his initial story ideas for his TV series, MAN WITHOUT TIME.
- + SHAGGY is probably dead for another few years. Editor and main workhorse Ken Rudolph is forced to drop it and it is doubtful if anyone else wishes to pick it up.  
"By Ghu, Geis, SFR may end up the only major fanzine around in another year or two!"



# delusions

## delusions

BY

ROBERT E. TOOMEY, JR.  
EARL EVERS  
RICK HORWOOD  
RICHARD GLASS  
RICHARD DELAP  
RICHARD E. GEIS  
CREATH THORNE  
JOHN FOYSTER  
MEADE FRIERSON III  
TED PAULS  
PIERS ANTHONY

HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION by Alexei Panshin—Advent, \$6.00  
Appendix, but no index. Introduction by James Blish.

Alexei Panshin opens this remarkably good, perceptive, lively, and scholarly study with a statement that I find myself at immediate odds with: "Science fiction is not a widely influential field, and it shows no real sign of becoming widely influential in the future." He goes on to say, "If science fiction is minor, and I think it probably is, it is not because it is essentially trivial..."

This is Panshin's blind spot, and it is, I firmly believe, the blind spot of the vast majority of science fiction writers and readers — and critics. It's nice solid paranoid ingroup thinking of the sort that most social microcosms tend to develop. It's commonest effect is to cloud judgement by placing it behind a barely translucent shield of defensiveness. The only ones who can criticize the Irish are the Irish; the only ones who can criticize sf are sf fans. The moment a non-fan tries his hand at criticism the sf community arises with swords and banners and the holy war is on. As we all know, the first casualty in a holy war is reason.

Science fiction, for the most part, IS minor because it IS trivial. It is trivial for a number of reasons and Pan-

shin names one of them; because most of the people who write it aren't fit to scrawl dirty words on the outhouse wall. I have nothing against good inventive graffiti, but dirty words by themselves are nothing but dirty words. And anything that means nothing IS nothing. It is my considered opinion that the greatest percentage of sf writing falls into this category. Science fiction as a whole is in a hole.

The mark of a good writer is the ability to extract meaning from everything, whatever other talents he may possess. The mark of a poor writer, conversely is his INABILITY to extract meaning from ANYTHING. And by meaning I refer to human meaning. For all you can tell from their work, most of the writers practicing in the sf field wouldn't recognize a true honest emotion if it kneed them in the balls. If they don't know emotion they surely cannot convey it. I don't mean sentiment, but compassion. Or empathy. By feeling I mean love or hate or fear or anger or lust or despair or any one of a thousand other precious painful abstracts that make a man different from a neatly solved mathematical equation. I don't think it's possible to have much meaning without feeling or much power without people. This has always been the biggest problem with science fiction. Again; if it means nothing, it IS nothing. Dust. The wind carries it off.

Panshin says that "most people are not prepared intellectually or emotionally to accept" science fiction. I would say it is just the opposite: Most science fiction is not prepared intellectually or emotionally to accept people. Panshin feels that people are afraid of the future; they fear it and they don't want to hear about it and this is why they don't want to read sf. "Facts," he writes, "and a concern with change are the stuff that science fiction is made of; science fiction that ignores facts and change can be made less frightening and more popular, but inasmuch as it is superficial, stupid, false-to-fact, timid, foolish or dull, it is minor. In another and more important way, and it is certainly bad as science fiction."

Yet Panshin seems to be ignoring the fact that the most popular science fiction from the viewpoint of the general public are books like 1984, Brave New World and Fail-Safe, and movies such as Dr. Strangelove, none of which appear to me to be particularly superficial, stupid, false-to-fact, timid, foolish or dull. Nor do they appear to me to be pandering to peoples' fears by reassuring them that everything is just fine the way it is.

No, I think it's the other way around. Most sf is too distant from the things that move people or shake them up to be of much interest to anyone but an aficionado. And it won't be, either, until it starts looking at adult problems in an adult way. Who really gives a shit about what's happening with the Tentacled Hordes from the Spiral Nebula when REAL people are being put down in a REAL way right here on the planet Earth, right now, right in our own cities, in our own backyards? The Tentacled Hordes are great fun, but they are dust. The wind carries them off.

And finally, to take Panshin's opening statement last, this seems to me to be a poor extrapolation. In the last

year or so, I have come to the conclusion that, if sf isn't widely influential now, it shows every sign of becoming so in the near future. This, in spite of science fiction's admittedly limited appeal.

What is happening is a merging, or a remerging actually, of science fiction, fantasy and the mainstream; but don't ask me to define these terms, because I'd have to beg off. It is their very lack of definition that is creating this merger, a merger that makes labels not only inappropriate, but impossible. Science fiction as a category (i.e. with a label on it that sells it because of the label, because the people who buy science fiction, as a general rule, buy it more or less promiscuously due to a packrat collector's instinct that is an essential part of most fans' makeup) is going great guns. Books that are not labeled science fiction, but which obviously are anyway, are selling pretty well among the cognoscente who read TIME and NEWSWEEK reviews as though they were the Given Word. Instant example: right there on the official bestseller list is Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse Five, which is science fiction by any test you care to make. The influence of science fiction may not be completely obvious; it may, in fact, be quite insidious, but it's blindness to deny that it's there.

And now, with my axe finally ground, I can recommend Heinlein in Dimension unreservedly to anyone interested in either Heinlein or science fiction, or both. My disagreement with Panshin covers less than a thousand words of this beautifully justified and closely reasoned book, which is just about the best study of a living writer I've ever seen, as well as being the longest.

Panshin's most obvious qualities as a critic are terrific patience, energy, intelligence and sympathy, coupled with an interesting, quotable style.

A story like this ("Lost Legacy" in which parapsychology is everything — meat, dressing, salad, and desert — is an artificial business artificially resolved, like a snipe hunt in which the hunter comes back with a snipe in his bag.

He might be speaking of the majority of science fiction stories in which unreal problems are solved in unreal ways. Or this:

The sword-and-sorcery fantasy (in Glory Road) merely comes as an interlude in the conversation, as though clowns were to pummel each other with bladders as an entr'acte on MEET THE PRESS.

Which is devastating. Or this lovely definition, more meaningful in context, but still very nice by itself:

As it stands now, a juvenile book is a book that the publishing industry packages

and sells as a juvenile.

And, since things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other, I see no reason why sf can't be defined the same way: as it stands now, a science fiction book is a book that the publishing industry packages and sells as science fiction.

Panshin opens Dimension with a chapter on Preliminaries, some of which is quoted at the beginning of this review and rebutted, in which he discusses his own bias, gives a brief (and therefore fairly unsatisfactory) biography of Heinlein, touches lightly on Heinlein's career as a whole and, finally, gives his (Panshin's) line of attack for the rest of the study. He then divides Heinlein's career-up-to-now into three sections: the Period of Influence (1939-1942); the Period of Success (1947-1958); and the Period of Alienation (1959-1967). Following this is one chapter each on Heinlein's Construction, Execution and Content, which reinforce the earlier sections and go more deeply into Heinlein's strengths and weaknesses. Finally there are two more chapters, one on Heinlein's non-fiction and one on his future.

In the chapters on Heinlein's periods, Panshin, as far as I was able to tell, managed to track down EVERY SINGLE sf story and novel Heinlein has written. He then arranged

them in chronological order and examined each individually as an entity and as a part of the total body of Heinlein's work. Dimension thus builds up momentum; the more Panshin says about his subject, the more he is ABLE to say. And he does it with consummate skill and sympathy. I could go into this in more detail, but I don't see any purpose to be served by it. Panshin has already gone into just about all the detail possible, and he has done it beautifully and well. I found that the few points on which I disagreed with him were minor quibbles; and I learned a great deal from reading the book. It's all there. Heinlein's growth, his obsessions and recurring themes, his repetitions, his treatments and style, his inconsistencies and his regrettable recent decline.

But, and perhaps this is most important, in telling so very much about the writer's work, in building his argument so coherently, by doing it in such an orderly way and with such passion and insight, Panshin has made me want to reread a number of Heinlein's books in light of this new information — and see for myself how all of these things hang together.

I don't see how a critic could do more. And most do a great deal less.

—Robert E. Toomey, Jr.



EMPHYRIO by Jack Vance—Doubleday, \$4.95

This is an SF folk-myth, and an excellent one. Ghyl, a woodcarver, sets out to discover the meaning behind the leg-





end of Emphyrio, a folk hero of the remote past of his world of Malua, and ends up freeing his people from feudal exploitation by a race of Nasty Aliens. Or so it might say on a bookjacket. Anyway, it's a pretty good story with well-drawn characters and a world-background that's just colorless enough to be utterly realistic while still retaining almost as much of the wildly imaginative as any real world does. The plot revolves around one of Vance's usual bio-manipulation gimmicks, but the real appeal of the story lies in the action of its human hero. Emphyrio is a heroic myth in the sense of a man conquering the popular enemy against great odds, but the story is not told larger-than-life — the hero seems like an extremely unlikely young man for his role, and the action is all so low key it seems almost humdrum. Somehow this adds to the power of the book rather than detracting from it, and Emphyrio is definitely worth reading. It may even be worth considering for a Hugo or something, depending on what else comes out this year.

—Earl Evers



TITUS GROAN by Mervyn Peake—Ballantine 73009, 95¢  
GORMENGHAST by Mervyn Peake—Ballantine 73008, 95¢  
TITUS ALONE by Mervyn Peake—Ballantine 73007, 95¢

What sort of thing is the story of Titus Groan? It is not a novel: too uneven; not an epic: too original; not fantasy: no magic, no monsters; certainly not science fiction.



I need a new word—Lifework. A lifework is that rare fiction set in a private universe to which the author devotes a major part of his life. For obvious reasons, lifeworks tend to be long. They also tend to be incomplete. And they must be superlatively written. Unless the author makes his private universe real to the reader, the book is of no interest. But a lifework, which must be something of an obsession to the author, can become an obsession to the reader as well. There is a fascination in such works unequalled by casual fiction.

For a classic example of the lifework, we can go back to Spencer's The Faerie Queen. There are, however, only three modern examples that I am sure of: Tolkien's Ring, Eddison's Worm and Peake's Gormenghast. (I am tempted to count Joyce's Finnigan's Wake as a fourth.)

"Gormenghast, that is, the main massing of the original stone, taken by itself would have displayed a certain ponderous architectural quality were it possible to have ignored the circumfusion of those mean dwellings that swarmed like an epidemic around its outer walls."

Thus do we first see the castle Gormenghast. The main massing of the tale, Gormenghast, consists of the two

volumes, Titus Groan and Gormenghast. The circumfusion, while not exactly mean, consists of a novelette, "Boy in Darkness", (published in Sometime, Never by Ballantine) and a long, rambling narrative, Titus Alone.

The three books, like the castle Gormenghast, show signs of progressive decay. Titus Groan is a proper novel, with a beginning and an end and a procession of some sixty-nine chapters that lead from the former to the latter in a reasonably orderly manner. Gormenghast moves by jerks and starts. At times the author seems totally unable to advance the action by so much as an inch, trapped by his all-encompassing eye for detail. Then suddenly he loses years in a single paragraph. Still, by drastic measures, he does bring the plot to its unforgettable climax. Titus Alone is almost utterly undisciplined. The author seems to be pretending that a character study of sullen Titus was his goal, character study being the only acceptable aim of "serious" fiction, while we know perfectly well that Gormenghast, not Titus, is the central figure. Titus outside Gormenghast is aimless and pointless. The last book is full of extraneous characters and rambling description. The whole is something less than the sum of the often interesting parts.

I am told that Titus Alone is incomplete as published. I am sure that even if the missing chapters were reinserted, it would remain incomplete. Still, the missing fragments are bound to arouse interest. What we have shows signs of an old man's lack of inhibitions. Excrement, discretely disguised by the metaphor of dripping candle wax in the first volume, is here called by its four letter name. Are the missing sections victims of censorship? Or did someone simply go through the manuscript snipping off loose

ends?

"Boy in Darkness" could fit neatly between chapters 51 and 52 in Gormenghast. There are two reasons for omitting it. First, it takes place outside of Gormenghast. Second, it is fantasy (or science fiction if you choose to regard it so), an element completely absent from the first two volumes. (There is a very minor touch of science fiction in Titus Alone.) "Boy in Darkness" is carefully purged of all references to the other books, though the author slips once and calls the boy "Titus", and the "trilogy" is probably better off without it.

In mood, the story of Titus is hysteric, in subject matter bizarre in the extreme. The setting is surrealistic: Each part is of our world, but the parts are put together differently. It is set in a private universe, with no proper nouns common to our world, but it shares with our universe such things as marbles and camels and other paraphernalia. The plot is contrived and rife with coincidence. The characters start as cruel satires and take on life only because the author feels sorry for them. The arch-villain Steerpike I find a much more sympathetic character than the hero Titus, though certainly some of the things that Steerpike does are inexcusable.



Peake's universe is less orderly than Middle Earth or even *Limbo*. To try to map Gormenghast as Flay tried is a sure sign of madness.

If the story is such a dark pool, why do I recommend it? I do so because it is as real to me as "reality", more real than yesterday's class or last week's card game which are two-dimensional cardboard by comparison with Steerpike's journey across the rooftops or the days spent in the flooded castle. A mastery of prose so fine as to make even mundane critics take notice makes Gormenghast as visually clear as a color transparency held up to bright light. Gormenghast is an experience and experiences are meant to be shared.

So do not put *Titus Groan* off on a shelf with *The Mez-entian Gate* and other books to be read sometime (never). And do not dip in only a toe and decide that the water is too cold. Take the plunge. You will come to a point where it is either absolutely impossible to go on or else absolutely impossible to stop.

Once Gormenghast becomes not a word but real stone, you can enter the castle at your leisure, reading a chapter now, a chapter then, but always coming back.

—Rick Horwood



UBIK by Philip K. Dick—Doubleday, \$4.50

This novel is one of THOSE...engrossing, unputdownable, fascinating, baffling. I haven't enjoyed a book so much

in years.

Here is Philip K. Dick manipulating reality again; this time in the world of half-life in the minds of people frozen soon after death. It is not a placid inner world, and not not placid for the reasons you may think.

There are psi elements, time regression elements, a psychotic entity which...

No, I won't give it away. The novel is a literary dance of the seven veils; as each puzzling veil falls more is understood, and then more; there are reversals, hints, and there is a brief sight of the golden truth, and deliberate teasing, and finally...finally...understanding is there, naked—

—and it goes poof in the last six paragraphs as Dick strikes again!

Ubik stands for ubiquitous, but that's no clue at all... or is it? The book defies plot encapsulation. Read it. Read it!

—Richard E. Geis



THE PRISONER by Thomas M. Disch—Ace 67900, 60¢

Number 6 is alive, and, well....

I first became acquainted with Number 6 during the summer of 1968. It only took two encounters with him to hook me on his company and impell me to seek him out each Saturday night.

THE PRISONER was visually exciting, conceptually intriguing, and a Chinese Puzzle on reality. I learned to trust nothing I saw or heard. I learned to pick out hints here and there as clues to what was really going on. I learned to consider everything as significant until proven otherwise. I learned that John Drake once saved London from the Mad Scientist. I learned, as Pirandello, Ionesco, and Albee have already learned, that the denouement where all the questions are answered can really be nothing more than a new set of questions.

I learned that Ace was going to start a series of books based on THE PRISONER... My heart sank thinking of the travesty of media murder Michael Avalone could do with it as he had with U.N.C.L.E. (Man and Girl From) and THE AVENGERS. I couldn't place Thomas Disch so I couldn't conceive of what sort of presentation he would make. However, word had it that Patrick McGoonan had approved, so I was satisfied.

Word was right in that the book follows the feeling and the intellectual level of the TV series (or 17 chapter movie if you will). More than the feeling, it captures the dramatic structure of the 17 episodes. The shifting reality is all there. The allusions and illusions go hand in hand. The prisons of Shakespeare, Kafka, and others are brought in and compared subtly to the Village. The Village is there in all its surreal splendor and horror. Some questions are "answered" about "Rover"—the only element of the Village to be explained, thank you Tom Disch.

Number One is in the book...Number 2 has the same traits and problems. THE PRISONER is there but only "The Schizoid Man," "Many Happy Returns," and "Finale" remain when Number 6 is through with them. He found them as unsettling and confusing as the rest of us—a comfort.

I tend toward the theory of those who believe the question of the Village is not so much a problem of their side or our side, but their planet or ours. On TV it was the rocket take-off; in the book it's the confrontation with Number 1 and Number 1's defense mechanisms against Number 2 (6).

Those of you who saw the show know it started off with 6 fighting the apparatus of the Village, moved through a phase where 6 was on terms with the Village, and ended with 6 being able to manipulate his jailors' methods against them to the destruction of the Village and the liberation of Number 2. However, does he win? Does he ever leave the Village? What about the butler? And the door sissing open pneumatically as the butler enters Drake's London flat? What now? If you think the book is an answer, you're wrong. If you think the book will fascinate you and hold you as the TV show did, you're right.

—Richard Glass



DOUBLE, DOUBLE by John Brunner—Ballantine 72019, 75¢

Norman Spinrad mentioned (in his review of Brunner's Stand on Zanzibar) that the author had "applied a film technique to Prose fiction," a remark which is far more applicable to the present novel than to the former. I may miss my guess but I'd say that this one was originally conceived as a screenplay and then (because it didn't sell or Brunner had second thoughts?) written out in novel form.

Double, Double smacks of movie, movie on every page—for example: chapters are divided (read: edited) into counterpoint scenes, careful build-ups to high points of suspense cut off and followed abruptly with bridge-gap moments of quiet; descriptions are heavy on color and placement of characters and props; and, there is an abundance of brisk, crisp dialogue that would need little, if any, rewriting to fit easily into a scenario (but that also would demand a cast of expert farceurs with the ability to play off its self-spoofing mediocrity).

With relief, we can all be thankful it wasn't filmed—heavens! but it would be a dreadful film if handled (as seems likely) as a straight horror-things—for the book is an amusingly ragtag tour de force that is just bad enough to be good "camp."

There is the expected grab-bag of Brunner characters: seven members of a mildly successful group of pop singers called "Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition" who travel about the English countryside in a psychedelically-painted Ford Transit; Drs. Ion and Metta Reedwall, that absolutely marvellous man-and-wife team of competent scientists who are fortunate-

ly on the scene to rattle off informed conclusions; Sergeant Branksome and Constable Sellers, local police who just cannot possibly believe the circulating rumors (although Sellers, to prove he is a young-man-on-the-way-up, keeps lining up the puzzle-pieces and looking at them a lot); Mr. Leigh-Jarden, a seedy, unsuccessful reporter who keeps a sharp eye out for juicy scandals but always misses the real news which is right under his nose; Rory Dunstable, disc jockey on the ocean-based, piratical radio station, whose love of fishing hooks him into the middle of a strange mystery; Felicia Beeding, a drunken down-and-out female living alone in a run-down house near the beach, and a minor but pivotal character of the kind that movies usually bill as "Guest Star" or "Special Appearance By" roles; and a supporting myriad of scientists, doctors, nurses, policemen, dogs, and just "plain folks."

Then, there are the Monsters — so appalling that even scavenger houseflies shun the exposed, bloody pieces being examined in the laboratory — who rise from the ocean depths to take over the world by digesting their victims and turning slowly into an endless stream of deadly doppelgangers. The novel makes it fairly easy for them to start their takeover, despite their inability to deceive real humans upon close inspection, by littering the plot with preposterous coincidences that keep working in the monsters' favor. (These coincidences begin to wear a little thin during the book's middle but, like a movie, we're accustomed to this as it makes the expectedly grisly climactic confrontation all that



much better.)

Many of the book's best moments come with the canny dialogue which ranges from the appropriately, outrageously banal —

"But this means the creature is even more dangerous than we thought!"...says Dr. Reedwall after the monster has just escaped through a ventilation pipe (p. 193-94)

to the screamingly funny —

At the Organic Acids plant, the assistant managing director arrives just in time to hear that Miss Beeding has div-  
ed into a tank of phenol...

"Which one?" he demanded.

"It'll contaminate the con-  
tents—I'll have to shut the  
valves off!" (p. 125)

Brunner has taken the oldest of old hats and beribboned it so gaudily that, though recognisable, it just doesn't look at all like it once did. Nothing great, nothing revolutionary, it's simply an easy way to pass an hour or two, and a lot of fun besides.

—Richard Delap



THE BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION  
Eighteenth Series, Edited by Edward L.  
Ferman—Doubleday, \$4.95

I was wondering if F&SF had sunk into a slough of third-rate fiction as I read through this collection. But Ferman saved the best for the last with "I Have My Vigil" by Harry Harrison, and "The Egg of the Glak" by Harvey Jacobs. Fine stories, both, with "Vigil" hitting like a delayed-action bomb, and "Glak" a delight all through, with delicious turns of phrase and plot. If "Glak" is somewhat of a run-on shaggy egg story, so what? Vastly enjoyable.

From back to front the stories become gradually bad, with Ballard's "The Cloud Sculptors of Coral D", the book's lead story, reminding me of a piece of rotten fruit trying to pass itself off as a wax replica of a perfect item. "Coral D" is arty junk, cast in a stereotyped mainstream platform of "poetic" and "delicate" texture. It's a shame, because the feeling persists that the basic sf idea—sculpting clouds with gliders and iodide crystals—is intriguing, but on further reflection harsh realities reduce it to bad fantasy, at least as described by Ballard.

"Final War" by K.M. O'Donnell (third from the last)

was good, a sort of Vietnam Catch-22, macabre and insane.

There are five cartoons by Gahan Wilson scattered through the book, and three are fine.

Let's hope the Nineteenth Series is better.

—Richard E. Geis



BEHOLD THE MAN by Michael Moorcock—Allison  
& Busby, (London) 21/-

The fashion these days seems to be the critic as moral arbiter. That is to say, the critic as censor. It's not a new fashion, but it's a continuing one, and what a goddam shame it is, too.

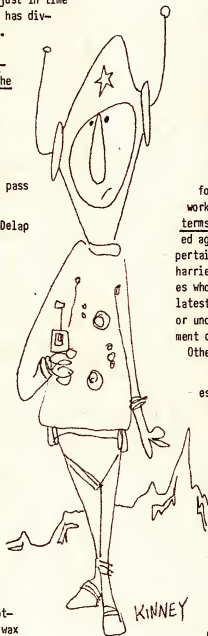
The basic critical premise is not objectivity (because objectivity is impossible) but decision. The job of the critic is two-fold: to determine whether or not a particular work of art has succeeded or failed on its own terms, and then whether it has succeeded or failed against the background of its own genre. As pertains to science fiction, this eliminates those harried little men in newspaper and magazine offices who grind out reviews six-to-the-penny of the latest sf paperbacks without the slightest liking or understanding of the stuff. The first requirement of a critic is love; the second knowledge. Otherwise it simply won't wash.

Mike Moorcock's latest (or is it his latest? there's a Moorcock festival going on here in England, with nearly a dozen of his titles old and new having hit the stands all at once and making it appear that there's no sf writer in this country but him; complicated by the fact that Moorcock doesn't even consider himself to be an sf writer to begin with — and is that too much parenthesis all in one go?) novel, Behold the Man, is a gold-plated, not-to-be-missed, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the critics to reiterate their stand, foursquare in favor of God and motherhood and the rest of the triumphant clichés that come so trippingly to the tongue.

I don't think they're going to pass up this chance to blast the disbeliever, a process known as antidisestablishmenticonoclasm. And in so doing they're going to miss what's good in the book, as well as what's bad.

What's good is terrific and, as is so often the case, what's bad is absolutely terrible.

The book. Forget the Nebula-winning novelet, it wasn't





a novelet anyway except in the pulp world where the category of a work is judged by the word. It was a long short story then. The full-length, wide-screen treatment is also a short story, even longer (but not a hell of a lot longer) and hairier, but that doesn't matter, either.

What matters is what Moorcock has done, and the means he has chosen to do it.

The search for identity; the search for Christ. Two themes that have become obsessive with modern writers, both in and out of the expanding sf community. Dramatists are writing plays in which subway stops become the Stations of the Cross. Priests are throwing their frocks away (telling the Church, in effect, to go frock itself) and getting married - then writing books about it. Cardinals are coming out in public and disagreeing with Papal Encyclicals. There's a confusion, a realignment, a holy war (internecine, which is the most violent kind of holy war, and therefore the only kind that ever actually leads to anything) a - well, a search for identity, if you will.

The images of Christianity are everywhere, they engulf us. Even certified, registered, card-carrying atheists presently take the stand that, while Christ might not have been, you know, God, He was still a hell of a guy anyway, and at least deserves to have all of our calendar dates pivot on His birth.

Moorcock doesn't believe this. I do, but we're not concerned with what I believe or disbelieve. We're concerned with a book.

The plot is second or third hand. A man, trying to find himself, goes back in time to witness the crucifixion and gain his faith. Fred Pohl (of all people) used it years ago in a story called "Happy Birthday, Dear Jesus" (of all things). But Moorcock develops the idea ruthlessly and relentlessly, and I don't think I'm hurting the ending by telling you that the psychotic hero (or anti-hero, or super anti-hero) ends up by actually becoming Christ, and getting crucified in His place.

It's not a suspense story. The denouement is inevitable. It's this very inevitability that's so appalling. It's the inevitability that keeps you reading, not to find out, but because you know. As with all tragedy, the conclusion is never in doubt. Knowing the ending changes nothing; it's one of the things that gives the book its force. How many times have you seen HAMLET? How many times will you see it again?

Briefly, Karl Glogauer, a madman retreating farther and farther into a depressive and paranoid world of fantasy and symbolism, seizes his chance to return to the past and learn some sort of eternal, stabilizing truth.

When he gets there, he finds that John the Baptist is a revolutionary anarchist who wishes to use Glogauer as a pawn in his power struggle to overthrow Roman domination; he finds that Joseph is an uncaring cockold, Mary a leering, round-heeled slut who's literally willing to spread her legs for anyone who happens by (and Glogauer screws her), and that Christ Himself is a drooling congenital idiot capable only of repeating His own name over and over again - "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." (There's a classically blasphemous line here, when Joseph says of his son when Christ tries to enter a room, "He can't go in there! I won't have him wetting the floor again.")

This is more than just denial of a myth. It's a single-minded, almost maniacal demolition of it. And therein lies one of the two major weaknesses of Behold the Man. (The other is that too much of the plot turns on unbelievable coincidence, but I suppose this can be said of all time travel stories.)

While Moorcock prudently chose to use a restrained, almost colorless prose in the telling ("A simple prose for a simple story," Moorcock said once) there's still too much of the Fury there. When you're writing this sort of thing, once you've got the basic idea down (witness Spinnrad's The Men in the Jungle), it's difficult to know when to stop. At some point the carefully nurtured credibility begins to disintegrate; you begin to feel that the author is putting you on, heaping one blasphemy atop another until the whole structure totters and finally falls to pieces. Once it becomes blasphemy for its own sake, it becomes meaningless, and perhaps this is one of the points Moorcock was trying to make. That if it can go one way with mindless, unflinching faith, it can also go the other just as easily.

But it ruins the impact. What began as a simple story loses itself in the translation, and loses the reader as well.

In addition to this, Karl Glogauer isn't a man, he's a cipher with huge staring eyes, and the people that surround him are uniformly evil. They have no sympathy for his plight; and if he is truly mad - and he is - then he deserves sympathy, he deserves help. Again, this may be another of Moorcock's points, and it's a valid one whether intentional or not. The pressures of our society are driving everyone crazy; it's no longer possible or practical to separate the mad from the sane, and so we accept madness and paranoia as the normal state of affairs. How can we sympathize? We're in the same predicament ourselves.

Whatever it all means, it's a fascinating, infuriating, virtually unputdownable book, and it's going to prompt con-



troversy, though perhaps not for the right reasons. When I finished it, all I could think of was Leonard Cohen's line: "We are so small between the stars, so lost against the sky."

Because we are.  
It's the times.

—Robert E. Toomey, Jr.



THE TIN MEN by Michael Frayn—Ace 81290, 60¢

"Brilliant! Hilarious! Continuously Funny!" read the blurb quotes on the front of this book. "The Catch-22 of the Computer Age!" wrote some anonymous blurbist hidden in the depths of Ace's PR department. Since I regard Joseph Heller's Catch-22 as one of the major literary achievements of this century, I came to Frayn's book with high expectations. Perhaps too high, because I found the book quite disappointing.

Actually, the title and the descriptive material on the back cover of the book are misleading. The emphasis is not on computers, but on the people who work at the William Morris Institute of Automation Research. (I believe this is intended to make the reader laugh, since the poet and artisan William Morris was violently opposed to the creeping influence of machinery and industry on English life in the Nineteenth century. This is one of the subtler pieces of humor in the book.)

Frayn has taken all the stereotypes of people associated with universities and research centers and put them into a situation where the Queen will dedicate a new wing. The situation allows Frayn to show all the in-fighting that commonly goes on in such institutions. What he says is true enough, but he says it in such a blatant way that it's not very funny; and nothing he has to say is really new.

For example: One of the characters, Rowe, is writing a novel in his spare time. Frayn describes the process:

"H," he wrote.

He looked at it. He was overcome with despair. He could scarcely have chosen a colder or less tactful letter to begin on. He ripped the paper out of the typewriter...

"H," he wrote suddenly.

What an appalling letter it was! It was a letter from which no sentence had ever set out on a successful journey in the whole history of literature.

By this time my point should be obvious. The writing in this book is the equivalent of average fanzine material. It is not brilliant, hilarious, and continuously funny. By ye vamped.

—Creath Thorne



THE UNDERPEOPLE by Cordwainer Smith—Pyramid X-1910, 60¢

By my count there are ten short stories of Cordwainer Smith's which have not yet been collected: instead of getting that collection, which would include such important pieces as "Think Blue," "Count Two," "Under Old Earth" and "The Crime and Glory of Commander Suzdal" we have "The Underpeople," an expansion/variation of "The Store of Heart's Desires" (IF, May, 1964).

"The Planet Buyer," the first half of this story, published in October 1964 was an expansion of "The Boy Who Bought Old Earth" (GALAXY, April 1964).

The second volume, though first planned at the same time as the first, thus appeared in book form over 4 years later, despite having been announced as imminent several times in that interval. This is only the first of the problems we face in looking at The Underpeople.



Linebarger tended to work and rework his fiction, and this is certainly apparent in the revised version of "The Boy Who Bought Old Earth." "The Underpeople" is also very different from its first version: but who changed it?

I understand that at the time of his death Linebarger was working on a new segment of his Futur History ("The Lords of the Afternoon"), so that it would seem, at first sight, as though he must have finished off his earlier work

— in particular the novel version of "The Store of Heart's

Desire." Were this so, it is difficult to see why it should have taken so long to reach publication. But I believe that in fact Linebarger never wrote his final draft of "The Underpeople," and that what we have here is, at best, a semi-final effort which only reached the handwritten stage.

Linebarger himself believed, after completing The Planet Buyer, that the second half was of secondary importance. On page 155 he wrote:

"The details of how it all worked out are doubtless fascinating (and will doubtless be told later), but the reason for this chronicle ends now that the players have made the moves that will determine the outcome."

This being the case, surely Linebarger would move on to other fields he felt to be more fruitful, after making some notes on how "The Store of Heart's Desire" should be expanded? At any rate, he did move off to fresher fields and he did produce several other stories unconnected with Rod McBan.

What evidence is there for this belief? It is difficult to point to specific instances, but the overall picture is fairly convincing. For example, Linebarger was very careful with the names he chose, particularly when they were distorted from presentday names. Thus, while Miami, Fla. can and does become Meeya Meefla, it can only become Meeva Meefla (as it does several times in The Underpeople) if the person typing up the fair copy cannot exactly make out the handwriting at that point.

Stylistically, there are several questionable things about this novel. It is not like Linebarger to break up a story into headed sections, as happens with the first two chapters of The Underpeople (not originally in IF) and in the fifth chapter (not originally in IF) and in the last chapter (not... but you've guessed it already). This is not adequate evidence, however, for Linebarger did finish The Planet Buyer in this way, though not in the magazine version, I think.

It is also unlike Linebarger to use a device such as Hansgeorg Wagner's "musical play" in introducing the novel and in the early sections and then to ignore it completely for the remainder of the novel. The device itself is by no means strange for Linebarger, though it is reminiscent of Blish's "A Work of Art."

Then there is the situation in which C'mell tries to seduce Rod (or C'rod, as he then is). This is without precedent in Linebarger's science fiction (unless it has one in "The Nancy Routine," which I have not read). Again, this is unconvincing alone, for Linebarger was always capable of springing surprises, but it is out of the standard pattern.

One aspect of the insertions is certainly uncharacteristic: Linebarger hardly ever, if at all, forced down our throats the interconnections between his stories. In the insertions two characters volubly assert their independence from this novel: on page 33 the Lord Crudelta reminds

Jestocost that he was involved in wiping out Raumsog (though there was no mention of this in "Golden the Ship Was - Oh! Oh! Oh!") and on pages 77-81 Paul, from "Alpha Ralpa Boulevard" (which coincidentally is collected slap up against "Golden...") not only appears but deliberately (77 and 78) recalls the events of that story to himself. This reads very much like someone trying to force us into the notion that this is really consistent with Linebarger's other fiction but failing precisely because this is an error into which Linebarger himself never fell.

Well, pages 44-145, excepting 77-90 are genuine Linebarger, and as for the rest, it is at best an early draft. In some respects it looks decidedly like someone trying to imitate Linebarger. We might add that the reference to Viola Sidera (pp 152-154) seems entirely gratuitous.

For itself "The Underpeople" is a superior product, as are all of Linebarger's stories. In conjunction with "The Planet Buyer" it would form an excellent novel, suitably edited. It is resplendent with the richness which readers came so early to associate with the name of Cordwainer Smith. It also reveals much about Australia and Linebarger's feelings towards that country: one wonders how he would feel about the present plan to allow the export of small numbers of merino rams.

And, on pages 62-64 it is rather revealing in another way. Here Linebarger quotes two poems and then continues: "There was a slight sound. ... 'Do you like my poems?'" In IF the poems are omitted, but the reference to them remains. Because there is some slight re-writing on page 64 it seems as though my first suspicion (Pohl lost a sheet of manuscript) is not tenable, leaving a question as to why Linebarger should have omitted the poems. This question is fairly easily answered. On page 206 of "Space Lords" Linebarger wrote: "I am one of the most minor of the minor poets of America." On page 63-64 he prints a poem by 'Anthony Bearden' (1913-1949). Linebarger's full name was Paul Myron Anthony Linebarger and his mother's maiden name was Lillian Bearden Kirk. He was born in 1913 and Chiang Kai-shek, with whom he was much involved, was defeated in 1949. It may be that 'Anthony Bearden' was a cousin of Linebarger, but it seems far more likely that this is yet another Linebarger pseudonym.

Although it is pleasing to have this volume out, it seems to me that Cordwainer Smith fans should strike for

- (a) completion of the reprinting and
- (b) some attempt to issue an ordered edition. Meanwhile, I'll just read this again.

—John Foyster



THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN by Michael Crichton—Alfred A. Knopf and Book-of-the-Month-Club.

"At the time of Andromeda there had never been a crisis of biological science, and the first Americans faced with the facts were not disposed to think

in terms of one." (p.19)

Elaborate description and discussion of its plot or concepts can only do a disservice to this fast-paced suspenseful novel of a crisis in the near future, authoritatively yet unobjectionably documented with a wealth of intriguing detail (notably of medicine and the use of computers in medical science). It is like the best Conan Doyle mystery moving at warp factor ten. It is definitely science fiction, although the author has very probably not read any of the hundreds of titles which should be common knowledge by this time.

Unless the book was more skillfully edited than is the usual case, Dr. Crichton at 27 should be a welcome addition to the pro writers' guild and prozines would do well to begin at once to woo his imagination into novella-length pulpcation.

—Meade Frierson III



THE ALIENS AMONG US by  
James White—Ballantine  
01545, 75¢

Contact between humans and alien life-forms, sometimes peaceful, more often not, is one of the basic themes of science fiction, and one of its most productive. It is a theme which has always been a favorite of mine—a surprising number of my favorite sf tales deal with meetings between humans and various furry, crawly, oozing, tentacled, amoebic or any combination of the above life-forms—and no doubt of many other readers, not to mention writers.

In *The Aliens Among Us*, James White has brought together seven of his stories ostensibly written on this theme. I say "ostensibly" because one of them isn't really about extra-terrestrials. The book is a mixed bag, containing two excellent stories, three average ones and two flops.

By far the finest story is "Red Alert," which first appeared in *NEW WORLDS* in 1956. The publication date surprised me. After reading it, I assumed that the story was new, because I hadn't read it and, even more, because I don't recall ever hearing it discussed by fans. It ought to be discussed, because it is a classic of its type. What the story appears to be about for more than nine-tenths of its length is a monstrous, genocidal assault on the Earth by a super-advanced galactic civilization. The only things distinguishing this story from others of the

genre up until the end were better than usual writing and the fact that White was managing to make the commander of the alien expedition a sympathetic character, which I thought a considerable coup—in fact, I paused to make a note of that for the purpose of this review. When the switch came, I was completely taken by surprise and commenced to grin like a fool, thumbing back through the pages and confirming that, no, he never actually said...I just assumed... If Mr. White had been in the room, and I had been wearing a hat, I would have been delighted to take it off to him.

The other really excellent story is "Tableau," which deals with a war between Terrans and Orligians, and how it ended. It contains enough ideas for a short novel, it is well-written and the story is quite moving in places as it relates the fumbling, embarrassed communication between a dying human and a mauled Orligian, both soldiers in a war that neither really wants. What mairs "Tableau" is White's proneness to cuteness, which surfaces in several of these stories. The line "If only he had not tried to kiss babies"

is a jarring note right in the middle of the story, the kind of line that serves as the "kicker" in the worst of Fredric Brown's farcical vignettes, and it is as out of place in "Tableau" as a washboard player in the London Philharmonic.

Buy *The Aliens Among Us* if you haven't read "Red Alert" and "Tableau," for either is worth the six bits.

—Ted Pauls



"THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN, DEAR!"



LIGHT A LAST CANDLE by Vincent King—Ballantine 01654, 75¢

Theme: War is Hell, but Man will War. The thing is informally told, fraught with run-on sentences, and gives the impression of cheap adventure. But this is pretty good cheap adventure, much tighter than it looks. It has four-armed men, four-breasted women (sorry, no sex scenes!), primitive emotions, super science, crystal mountain with monster, buried spaceship, hidden identities and lots of killing. If one sets out to read critically, the plot must shatter into nonsense—but as with Joanna Russ's *Picnic on Paradise*, one is too intrigued to care.

Vincent King will be a power when he starts writing.

—Piers Anthony





# **LITTLE NOTED** **And/Nor** **LONG REMEMBERED** **by the editor**

I'm still having an ache in the back of my obligation organ; reviews are piling up in the folder and at the rate I'm publishing them—with some reviews left that should have been in SFR #31—I expect, at a bi-monthly schedule, to have a backlog of a hundred by—

"You exaggerate, Geis!"

"Get out of the Little Noted, alter ego!"

So where was I? Well...maybe not a hundred, but some policy change is in order.

"Shorter reviews? Geis, you can't ask—"

"Out! Out!"

So the publishing schedule has been abandoned and a determination has been made: more reading and reviewing by myself for this department, issues not to exceed fifty pages, an average of one and a half stencils typed per day, and hopefully publication of an issue approximately every six weeks.

"This is an obscure corner to make such a monumental announcement in, Geis. You—"

"I warned you! Take that!"

"OW! OW! ARRRHHH!"

"And STAY OUT!"



OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON by Mark S. Geston—Ace 64460, 60¢

Lords of the Starship, Geston's first book, was flawed by a 200 plus year saga which had to be told in a short novel's length; there was no room for his characters to come alive in. It was like a parade as the decades and generations zipped past.

In this book, a sequel (though a confusing one) to Starship, Geston follows one man through his life on Earth in a time far in the future when the life-force of the universe seems to be running down and mankind blindly, perhaps instinctually, seeks self-destruction in a series of holy final wars on the ancient warring grounds—the Meadows.

This is perhaps the most nihilistic sf novel ever written. I found it fascinating.



IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD GALAXY by Keith Laumer—Berkley X1641, 60¢

Five fast-paced light-headed stories that pass through

your mental stomach like chinese food; an hour after you've finished the book you're hungry again. The first story, "The Body Builders" had moments of power and suspense of a skilled pulp type, and the artificial body society was interesting and arresting. The other stories... Gee, I don't remember them; I've digested them already.



PICNIC ON PARADISE by Joanna Russ—Ace H-72, 60¢

It must be me: other reviewers have said there is fine characterization here, a good adventure story... But all I found was a tough little heroine from the far past herding a mixed bag of future tourists on a desperate trek for survival across a bleak planet during a trade war which is never fully explained.

Machine, the boy who could literally tune out the world when it got too bothersome, was a fine creation. The others, including Alyx, the heroine, never really came alive for me with the solidity and depth that results from good, effective characterization.

For me the book had a stagey, artificial quality. There is emotional depth in Alyx, but she and the others are out of focus and shallow in other respects.



TOYMAN by E. C. Tubb —Ace 23140, 60¢  
FEAR THAT MAN by Dean R. Koontz

Hank Stine has a review of Koontz's half of this double in a future issue of SFR (probably next issue) in which he calls Dean... No, suffer, Dean, suffer...

I want to say a few nice things about Toyman. E. C. Tubb is one of the unsung highly competent sf craftsmen who turn out good book after good book and too often are ignored.

Toyman leans heavily on the Rome of the Gladiators for its social superstructure, with alien secret masters, a giant computer library and a power struggle as dynamic plot elements. Through it all Earl Dumarest...a wanderer...pursues his quest for the location of the "lost" planet Earth.

This is unpretentious adventure, and well done, with gripping fight scenes and very good pacing and handling of the background which is easily, convincingly detailed. If Tubb's people aren't deeply characterized, there is a strong element of surface vividness to them which makes them real enough for the story.

A good, solid job by an old pro. Satisfying and worth reading.



Walker and Co. have just issued Ursula K. LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness in hardcovers, for collectors and libraries, mostly, I presume. It's a damned well-written book. It sneaks up on you with its quality. It will surely be a Nebula and Hugo contender next year. A must-read. —REG

# The Banks Deposit

## Prozine Commentary



Let me tell you about a story.

International Patrol agent Felix Mandarin and his trusty sidekick Theseus, a mutated bear, are assigned to investigate a powerful nut-cult that dominates the post-nuclear-war world and has recently stolen an A-bomb from a museum. The cultists worship the flaming Mushroom and hope to bring about a Second Coming and the destruction of civilization.

Mandarin gets an interview with the Bishop of Misery in Philadelphia, which accomplishes nothing but does show us the prelate, with his diamond-studded forehead, seated on his golden throne beneath the icon of the Holy Mushroom. He's attended by one of his Naked Angels, or harem beauties.

On his way out, Mandarin gets slugged and subsequently brainwashed. The Bishop takes him on as combination court jester, dogsbody, and bath-house attendant at skinny-dipping sessions with the Angels.

Theseus meanwhile goes berserk and wanders around in the woods out of his head.

Mandarin falls in love with Jacinda Jada, a houri with a heart of gold (honest to pete, I'm not making this up). He has a bad case:

"I looked up at her face then, and as sounds of summer were in her voice, I could see the scenes of summer in her countenance. Willows bending gracefully above a shimmering, cool, green brook.

Butterflies dancing lightly on mellow breezes. Soft clouds in a blue sky. Her skin was smooth and tanned, her eyes so empty blue that I felt as if I were falling into them. Indeed, I was gripped by a moment of vertigo."

The Bishop tires of Jacinda and prepares to have her surgically mutilated and deformed, as is his playful habit. "The tiny instruments with fine edges and sharp, delicate points were going to slice her like so much meat and violate the perfectness of her."

In the nick of time our hero snaps his conditioning, rescues the fair damsel, and does in the Bishop. Then the two start sneaking out of the Temple.

Who should they meet coming in but Theseus, who has recovered his mind, clobbered a wandering priest, donned his robe, and charged to the rescue.

All is now confusion because the Second Coming is at hand. The priests and girls are fleeing to a luxury bomb-shelter in the Canadian wilds through an extradimensional pit at the center of the Temple. Later the A-bomb will be exploded in this pit, causing simultaneous mushrooms in the temples of every city in the world, in case you were wondering how one bomb could wipe out civilization.

After the evacuation, Mandarin, Theseus, and Jacinda hop into the pit too, dodge an enormous spider-monster, and disarm the bomb.

This touching scene follows:

"We sighed as a trio.

"And she looked up into my brown and said, 'I think I am going to faint.'

"'Before you do,' I said, holding her steady, 'say you'll marry me.'

"Her blue eyes widened, and she was no longer whoozy."

Theseus agrees to be best man.

That's this story.

Sounds like something out of AMAZING in Ray Palmer's day, doesn't it? Well, it isn't. "Temple of Sorrow" by Dean R. Koontz is new in the January '69 issue of AMAZING.

I'm really not able to account for this story. The hokeyness of the plot is intentional, for sure, but the motive behind the intention eludes me. Maybe Koontz means it as a satire of the old pulps, but he doesn't carry it through all of a piece.

The story isn't so uniformly atrocious as my summary and quotes imply. Koontz can write, after all, as he's proved elsewhere, and whatever he means to be doing here, there are times when he can't resist the temptation to write.

A Column By

**Banks Mebane**

Here is how Mandarin sees Theseus: "In the grays and browns and blacks of the shadows, I could see his face illuminated irregularly by the moonlight that filtered in through the lone, barred window set high in the opposite wall. His nose was still that of a bear, square and black, cold and blunt. The fur was missing from his face, but it still covered his head, appearing as someone's joking idea of artificial hair. His mouth appeared human, except for the black lips, but when he opened it, a neat row of calcium razors showed, gleaming like the blades of penknives."

This is good, straightforward description without the abstract literariness and diffuse images of Mandarin's view of his girlfriend quoted earlier. Barring the awkwardness of "appearing-appeared", the prose is sound and moves well. It's hard to imagine anyone who can write like this deliberately choosing to write like some of the other quotes without satirical intention.

Koontz's narrative technique in this story is somewhat experimental. Sections are told from Mandarin's viewpoint, and others from that of Theseus. I think Koontz makes a serious attempt in those latter to put across just how a mutated bear would think. I'm not sure that he was totally successful, but the Theseus-sections rely more on direct sense impressions and come through with more reality than most of Mandarin's highjinks in the Hollywood-set temple.

In the Mandarin-sections (pun accidental and objectionable), Koontz has an identity problem in that the brainwashed agent is not supposed to remember his previous life, but this is sidestepped by telling the story from the viewpoint of the recovered Mandarin, interjecting remarks showing broader comprehension of the situation. Of course, this removes any suspense from the story, if the reader thinks about it, but in this story that doesn't really matter.

All the serious work put into "Temple of Sorrow" makes me think that Koontz's main purpose wasn't satirical — the work blunts the satire. Similarly, it doesn't seem likely that he was writing only with contempt for his medium. You can even read an allegorical picture of our own time into the story, if you are so inclined, but I don't think that was its main purpose either.

I'm only sure of one thing: Dean R. Koontz had a hell of a lot of fun writing "Temple of Sorrow".

Maybe that's the whole answer. Maybe he just sat down and wrote it because he felt like it. And after all, it did sell, didn't it?

I have to admit that, infuriating as I found the story, I did enjoy reading it. That's why I'm writing so much about it, and that's why I'm so sure that Koontz enjoyed writing it. He transmitted some of that joy to the reader.

He's had another recent story that gave me some of the same feelings: "Where the Beast Runs" (July '69) If.

This one has a simple action-adventure plot. Three hunters go after a gorilla-like monster on an exotic planet. They nearly get done in by a giant spider (Koontz has a thing about spiders?), make an abortive attempt on the monster, dispose of another spider, and then bump off the gorilla.

What could be simpler? What could be pulpier?

Yet "Where the Beast Runs" transcends its plot much more than "Temple of Sorrow". The characters and background are thoughtfully developed, and they actually give some meaning to the otherwise conventional twists of the plot.

In a society where no man can kill another one, the principal hunter is an Earthman with a hang-up based on old violence, and this note is sounded in the first sentence of the story:

"Long ago, shortly after my mother's blood was sluiced from the streets of Changeover and her body burned upon a pyre outside of town, I suffered what the psychologists call a trauma. That seems a very inadequate word to me."

The story continues as a mixture of whimsy and violence. The narrator's companions are a sort of Disney centaur and a bird girl. The monster they are after has already wiped out four earlier hunting teams.

The two spiders, which in standard pulp fare would be there merely to prolong the story with a series of cliffhangers, do serve more of a purpose here. Although objectively more dangerous than the gorilla, they are more easily disposed of because they lack a psychological advantage it has: it can parrot human speech, and this makes it almost unkillable by people conditioned against murder. The hero manages to destroy it, curing his hang-up at the same time.

The prose is consistently good in this story, with none of the stomach-churning passages of "Temple of Sorrow". The characters are believable, odd as they are, and their intimate relationships are portrayed well. I like everything about this story, in fact, except its pulp-action framework.

Again I think Koontz had a ball writing it. Again he echoes contemporary concerns, but I don't think that's the prime purpose of the story. If you look at it one way, you can say it's an argument in favor of having murderous feelings, and I doubt he meant that. Again, I think he just wrote it.

Koontz wrote these stories and editors bought them, so there's a source and a market.

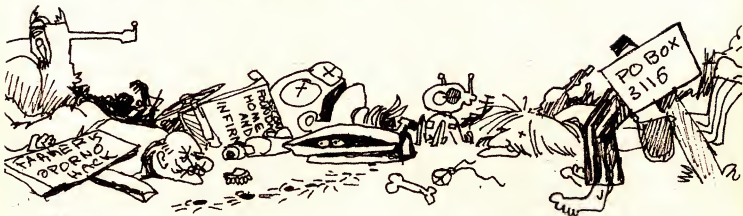
Do you suppose this is the beginning of a trend? Science fiction magazines full of pulpback plots festooned with New Wave trappings?

Surely not ...?

—Banks Mebane  
July 1969



# P.O. BOX 3116



PIERS ANTHONY  
Florida

It has been called to my attention that I have been profoundly honored. An entire fanzine issue has been devoted to me, and Mr. Geis was kind enough to forward me a copy. I discover therein compliments by Bob Vardeman, Bob Tucker and Roy Tackett, though in their fanish enthusiasm they sometimes overstate the case. And illustrated by Bill Rotsler, whose cartoons I continue to admire but never thought would grace articles about me.

Fellas, you really shouldn't have. Such applause embarrasses me, much as I like it. What marvelous publicity! (Eat your heart out, Norm Spinrad!)

But wait! There is one unfortunate note. In reply to my urging that he publish a good new sf story in Again, Dangerous Visions (so as not to let the volume go entirely to pot by being filled with the crud of neo writers like me), Bob Tucker says he would not have a fair chance with Harlan Ellison, and could not survive on the low word rates. Since it is important to me that Tucker be in that volume, I am forced to rear back on my hind limbs and tackle the bull by the balls:

Harlan Ellison—are you there? I challenge you, by the authority vested in me as one of the youngest and turkiest of the young turks, to publish the excellent sf story Bob Tucker offers you for Again, Dangerous Visions, to pay him at least 3¢ per word against hard and paper royalties, and not to tamper with one single word in it. (You may say what you please in your forward, however.) Kindly signify your abject acceptance of these rigorous terms by so stating publicly in this fanzine.

OK, Bob, you're on your own now. Submit your story. (I always like to give the tired old timers a helping hand in coping with today's more demanding market.)

SFR 31, despite its descent into Communist-colored paper, is interesting. I enjoyed the Delany piece, though

I goggled at his statement that he doubted that of 40 writers attending one of the Milford SF writer's conferences there was an IQ under 150 present. Maybe you, Chip, are above 150—but I doubt that very many of your contemporaries are. In any event, it is a good thing I wasn't there, because I undershoot the mark by about twenty points. Yet, statistically, only one per cent of the population of the world surpasses my level. I may be in the bottom one per cent of the sf writers...but somehow (and here we start again with my superinflated ego!) I doubt it. (I also have low respect for the IQ testing mechanisms, and for the IQ oriented systems, such as public schools and MENSA. So don't put me down as any IQ worshipper.)

Ted White's effort was also interesting. I have to agree with him about J. J. Pierce—the guy is taking the easy way to make his name a household word (though you and I, Ted, are often accused of the same), but there is truth in what he says. There has been arrogance in the presentation of the so-called new wave, and J.J. is one form of the inevitable reaction to this. As is often the case, the backlash is ugly—but not entirely off-base. (Yes, I know J.J. considers me to be part of that new wave, and not a pretty part; I still say he is half-wrong, not wholly wrong.)

No reply, Ted, to castigation of my attitude toward the two Panshin/Villiers novels. You represent my position accurately, except that I did try to understand them—but failed.

And of course I agree with you on the cloddishness of editors. But I must admit that I have observed a sharp dichotomy in attitudes here. Take any given editor: he will have a devout following of writers who believe he is eminently intelligent and fair. There will also be a similar number who call him an abomination to the field. You can distinguish these groups readily: the former consists of those who have sold to him, the latter of those who have tried but been rejected. Thus I term Larry Ashmead an abomination, and Ejler



Jakobsson a genius...but deep down inside where I won't admit it, I know that their capabilities are probably similar and that I am being subjective. I feel most editors are bad because most bounce my work. Do you?

(Oh-oh—I anticipate a challenge here. How do I feel about Ted White himself? OK, I'll answer it: he is mixed. He has bounced some of my work, but bought some other of it. Essentially I'd say that he errs in giving preferential treatment to "Name" writers or personal friends, while ignoring—sometimes not even returning the manuscripts of—little name writers. I feel he is trying particularly hard at Ultimate, though he does have a stinking publisher, and may indeed make those magazines worth reading again.)

And Dean R. Koontz: oh, my, I hate this, but I just can't help myself. Rave! Rave! "Diligently Corrupting Young Minds" is beautiful. It may sound like far-fetched fiction to the uninitiate, but it is not. For I went through something similar myself. I argued about Catcher in the Rye and lost, but did teach Animal Farm in the classroom. And I was not invited back to teach for the following year, which neatly forestalled my resignation. So let's not get sickeningly sentimental, for Koontz is a bastard who had the nerve to complain when I told him to go take a flying fuck at the moon, when everyone knows the act would have given him real and lasting satisfaction. But I know every halfway intelligent and sensitive teacher will appreciate this expose of the realities of high school English teaching; I certainly do.

Reviews—yes. When Warner's All Our Yesterdays comes out in paperback. I'll read it, though I fear that will be a long wait. This isn't a comment on the merits of the book, but on the merits of editors, again. And who is doing the definitive summary of fandom of the fifties and sixties?

((Good question. Harry Warner, Jr., of course, should do it...if he lives long enough and has the will and the energy. I would suggest Ted White if Harry decides to hand the flaming torch of Historian to someone else...but Ted will likely be too busy proing.))

On The Jagged Orbit I agree more with Ted Pauls than with Richard Delap, since it is one of three I have nominated so far this year for Nebula. (The other two are LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness and Spinrad's Bug Jack Barron.)

Geis, you schmuck! You failed to correct my typo in my own review. It is credulity that is strained, not credibility. Vech.

((Give me strength...))

On Bug Jack Barron I side with Boardman over Delap. I have argued in these pages about the pointlessness of over-using fourletterisms, but in Bug the language seemed to be in harmony with the intent and it didn't bother me. But after the first few pages it didn't impress me, either; the novel would have had much the same impact had the words

been omitted. The sex scenes, after all the advance hulla-balloo, seemed tame; and the truth is, my own penis does not burst its bonds in eagerness at the notion of being sucked off by a girl. Mainly, however, I got so sick of deja vu, that was used over and over, sometimes more than once on a page, that I wondered what was wrong with the author's deja vu typer. And black circles of death...once, twice, OK; but not over and over, please. And the big immortality secret was comicbook stuff. But for all that, it was a tight, moving, impressive novel, and I deem it, as I said, one of the three best of the first half of the year, and probably one of the top five or six for the whole year, barring a surfeit of brilliance in the next few months by other novelists. It is an excellent novel with faults, not the Ludicrous Delap seems to feel.

I don't agree with the first sentence of the Geis comment on Odessey to Earth Death. Specifically, I don't think Kelley borrowed heavily from Orwell's 1984. It would have been a far better novel if he had.

Letters: Teddy Pauls: A Torment of Feces—isn't that the SX novel by James Blush and Normal Night? You can't fool me: that's a feces-shuss missive, probably pseudod by Wm Assel-ing.

Robert Margroff: Dolt! I didn't say Macroscopic averaged 100 words per day, I said it was the type that occasionally left me grudgingly satisfied with that amount. My average, as you imply, was at least triple that. And it is true that I wrote other material during that year: the 500 word vignette "Xanthé's Heart," that never sold. (But please don't take this remark personally, you blithering nut.)

John Foyster: Now I don't have that Poul Anderson column before me at the moment, but I remember it as a pleasant, low-key statement of opinion, hardly intended to ruffle anyone's feelings. I am perplexed why you should go all out to demote him so strenuously; seldom have I seen such an effort for so little reason. So he mentioned Spartan virtues; so I took it as it is used today—austerity, strength, devotion to homeland—and believe that is the way he intended it. Of course the Spartans were not angels by contemporary standards, but Spartan virtues, in our idiom, means something other than it might have meant several thousand years ago. I judge that you must have some other motive for the mount you make of this mole; did Poul make a face at you or something? Or do you habitually take off like this, and if someone wishes you Merry Christmas you must treat him to an extended dissertation on the pagan origins of the ceremony and imply that he seems to put the sacrificial knife between your ribs?

Then you make a statement you should have documented in detail, but don't: "Piers Anthony should do well in the next set of awards—he works hard enough at it in the fan-zines." OK, since you like full-blown replies to simple statements, I'll satisfy you.

First, let's take your implication on faith: that the quality of a person's writing has little bearing on his

chance of winning an award. Thus, by campaigning hard, an indifferent writer may win, say, the Hugo, while better pieces are bypassed. If this is the way you honestly see the Hugo, you should have little complaint in the hardest worker wins.

Granted this assumption, I can tell you how to go about your drive for an award. Become an officer of SFWA, or marry one. Serve as toastmaster to numerous fan and pro functions. Contribute to prestige fanzines, preferably with controversial columns. Cultivate the friendship of Harlan Ellison. Do little favors for prominent fans and pros. Never say an unkind word in print about any specific person. Mention your own work extremely sparingly and speak with becoming modesty at all times. Arrange to have your work published in the early or middle part of the year, and see that it is prominently reviewed.

On how many counts do I stand guilty? Now compare the performance of Silverberg, Zelazny, McCaffrey, Wilhelm, or whoever your favorite is. I am a beast to suggest it, I know. But think about it before you scream too much about Anthony (or Spinrad, or Ted White, or Ellison, or etc.). Are you sure you know the sheep from the goats?

Now that I have, hopefully, made you pause, let me speak plainly. I was dragged into fandom more than anything else, as my numerous rejection cards to fanzines should attest; I simply do not like to ignore a magazine someone has worked hard on, however busy I am or however little it interests me. So I try to compromise, and I only wind up deeper than before. But I am not using this to obfuscate the fact that I do want an award. I'm sure I would have found it easier to stay clear of fandom had I not been aware that a certain amount of publicity is necessary in order to get one's work considered. Old pros, however poor they may actually be, have such publicity; they are already known. New pros either have to wait, or to do something to attract attention. Otherwise even the best novel can die unknown, as far as the awards are concerned. Look at what happened to Giles Goat Boy, by John Barth—by all odds the major sf novel of 1966, but unpublished in the field.

Let's put this vaunted award, Nebula or Hugo, in perspective, however. Either is peanuts. A Hugo can add a thousand dollars to the advance received by the author on a subsequent book. Big deal! So instead of \$1500 he gets \$2500. You think that the same publisher would not pay ten or a hundred times as much for a similar-quality work by a Name mainstream author? That is, \$25,000 or \$250,000 for Graham Greene or Saul Bellow? How much did Fawcett shell out for Michener's The Source? Wasn't it well over half a million dollars? Let's concede that these writers are superior to Heinlein, Delany, Farmer or what-have-you

in sf. Are they ten or a hundred times as good? I submit that the real differential, were it measurable, would be more like ten or a hundred per cent—and so, if quality were a mathematical thing, they would warrant an increase up to double. Say to \$5,000 for a novel.

What, then, are the publishers paying for in mainstream that is so very much more precious than sf? For they are not, despite appearances, total fools. They do seek to earn back their investments.

Well, prestige is one thing. A Pulitzer or Nobel winner looks good on the roster, and even the National Book Award is a good show. But mainly they are interested in money. A book that will sell 50,000 copies hardcover or a million paperback is worth a large advance.

What guarantees such sales? Here we have the nub. Promotion helps, naturally (look at Clarke's \$150,000 opus) but is only a means to an end. Basically what sells is reputation.

You can be a poor writer, like Ian Fleming, but sell fantastically—if you have the Name. What does it matter that

Fleming got the name, after years of indifferent success, by lucking out as the low-brow writer that President John Kennedy happened to name one day as a favorite? One mention by that Kennedy (and don't get me wrong; I voted for him, and

would have again in '64) was sufficient to convert an ordinary writer into a best seller. And it could have done the same for a science fiction writer. Suppose he had named—to pick a name not entirely at random—Jack Vance? Vance would now be the leading sf author of all time, and mainstream critics would be analyzing the inherent properties of Vance's writing (and they are there) that appeal to all men, and he would be a millionaire. But that politically expedient lightning struck Fleming instead, and Vance remains merely one of a score of sf craftsmen eking out a living (and probably making more from his mystery pseudonym than in sf).

Science fiction, for all the discussion, remains something of a ghetto. The ambitious writer has to break out somehow. I am, as I have plainly stated, ambitious myself. So is Norman Spinrad. So is Harlan Ellison. So is John Brunner. So are numbers of other writers who are ashamed to admit it as boldly as these named. Ashamed? I'd be ashamed not to admit it! The writer who lacks ambition is a hack. This does not mean I think I am God's gift to readership; it means I am striving to improve myself, to do the best work I can, to be recognized—and to earn a decent living thereat.

I need a larger readership than I now possess, obviously. I can't even sell my best work without a struggle. So here



it is as bluntly as I can put it: yes, I want an award. Not because I respect the award particularly (who in his right mind respects awards as subject to manipulation as these we know in sf?) but because it would improve my league with that great mass of readers who are impressed by that sort of thing, and make my name a more valuable commodity. That would enable me to undertake better writing and more important projects with some confidence that they would eventually find publishers, a readership and some money. I would have greater freedom to practice my art, instead of turning out comparative drivel involving muscular men, adultery and fighting with clubs.

I suggest that any writer who does not feel much the same is a fool or a hypocrite or an independently supported dilettante or a saint.

Nevertheless I am choosy. I want to get my award by writing the best piece of the year in the field. If I can't have it that way, I won't take it at all. I have made myself known to fandom; I know my work will be read. That is as far as my campaigning needs to go. Beyond that quality has to be the criterion, if the award is to be meaningful at all. There is plenty of competition, so I am not assured of even making the ballot—but I am trying.

If you don't like that, fuck you.



ROBERT BLOCH  
2111 Sunset Crest Dr.  
Los Angeles, Cal.  
90046

Before I descend upon the Westcon—and, in my usual absent-minded way, fail to recognize you for the umpteenth time—I am taking the precaution of posting my reactions to SFR-31. It's what we of the Old School (Gernsback College of Embalming) call a real gosh-wow issue. I would even go so far as to say that it blows my mind, but that would only get me into trouble with the Clean Speech advocates.

Matter of fact, I had the pleasure last night of watching—and listening to—the reactions of such worthies as Philip Jose Farmer and Marlan Ellison as they quoted aloud from your lettercol, and I do mean aloud. I must say that Bob Silverberg, who was also present, had the decency to blush. (Others drop acid; I drop names).

But to me the highlight of the issue was a little parenthesis on page 37, embodied in Earl Evers' review of A Voyage To Arcturus. May I quote?

"I don't know what Truth is, I only know that very few books contain any, and this is one of the few."

Now there's a statement for you. Or for somebody. I only know it's not for me. After wrestling with this pronouncement for the better part of twelve hours, I'm still baffled. It has been some years since I've encountered so arresting an expression of conviction—and even though arrest and conviction often go hand in hand, I hesitate to pass sentence on Mr. Evers without giving him a fair trial. Do you think he can be persuaded to elucidate upon his statement? I don't care if his explanation is the Truth or not, as long as it is beautiful.

((Earl?

As for me, I don't know what Truth is, either, I only know that very few fanzines contain any, and this is one of the few.))



JAMES BLISH  
2, Fisherman's Retreat  
St. Peter Street, Marlow, Bucks,  
ENGLAND

I've commented on Chip's piece in a later EXPLODING MADONNA, but I'd be just as pleased to reach your larger

audience as he obviously was; and besides, there have been some changes, chiefly additional evidence.

It's impossible for me to quarrel with his generalities about the value of criticism and the essentiality of wide reading; it's a shame that there exists any audience of avowed readers of anything to which such points have to be made. But I disagree with many of his specifics, and not just those which put me down, either.

The three Merril articles he holds up as models, for

example, are not criticism, though the one on Ballard comes close. Consider the Sturgeon piece: it was written to go into a "Sturgeon issue" of F&SF which celebrated Ted's being the Guest of Honor at that year's convention. I was asked to write an appreciation of his writing, Judy an appreciation of the man. In such a situation, any reservations either of us might have had would have been inappropriate and went unvoiced in our articles. Judy's piece in particular is a piece of outright personal adulation, not critical and not about writing.

The Leiber essay, which I have only just read, is quite similar. Chip notes that it was written originally as an introduction to a Leiber collection; in such a situation, how many writers would take pains to define the areas in which they dislike the subject's work—and how many publishers would let such caveats by unnot? An encomium is a



form of criticism, to be sure, but under most circumstances it is likely to be the least trustworthy.

And for another reason, it's a little alarming to see Chip saying, "I agree with practically every statement in the Sturgeon and Leiber articles." I did not see the shorter British version of the Leiber article but the F&SF version contains a completely distorted summary of sf magazine history transparently loaded toward UNKNOWN (which hardly needs the help, and certainly not this kind of help); a disastrous sentence about the state of physics in 1926 containing two howlers which could have been corrected by reaching for the nearest cheap encyclopedia; and a view of recent mainstream literary history which would earn Judy an F in any freshman survey course. (I'm aware of your passion for specificity, Mr Geis, and hooray for it, but I've previously gone into the details in another article, which I've submitted to F&SF as a courtesy, though it will doubtless wind up in a fanzine.)

Sensibility as Chip uses the term is unarguably an asset to a critic, and to the reader of that critic providing he can distinguish between sensibility and gush; but it is no compensation for falsifying the history of one's own field, making confident statements about an alien field without even checking them, and attempting to do without the very body of reading which Chip himself prescribes. I submit further that no critic of real sensibility would do any of these things, simply because doing them would make him acutely uncomfortable.

If Judy holds to her Eastercon announcement that she is leaving sf, we are not going to see any more of such work after whatever she has in the pipeline is exhausted. But what she has already written is still on the page, and ought to be approached with as much caution as one would approach the critical writings of John J. Pierce—and for much the same reasons.

...There seems to be considerable wool between me and Chip's remark that the Knight-Blish criticism was directed at the General Public of SF, though the wool may be mine rather than his. I can't speak for Damon, but my Atheling stuff was directed in part to readers of sf, and in part to its authors and editors. The only alternative that I can see is not gush, but critical articles which begin, "Dear Chip," which doesn't strike me as a practicable approach. It is of course perfectly true that most of the time I was expressing the obvious, but here Chip has the benefit of hindsight. On page 50 of this issue, Mr. Geis, you say "But there are objective writing yardsticks that can be applied to fiction." Absolutely, and also obviously; I don't think you'll get much argument. But when Atheling

launched himself in 1952, very few sf readers seemed aware that any such yardsticks existed, and what was worse, neither did most writers and editors. I addressed Atheling to correct this situation as best I could; my intent was openly and avowedly didactic, whatever the degree of my equipment for it, and I don't feel the least apologetic about directing it to the Unwashed; who, after all, would bother to teach before a class that already knew the subject? If many of Atheling's and Knight's points are now obvious, it's at least conceivable that that is due at least in part to Atheling's and Knight's having made them so. It's certainly the outcome I was working toward.

Curious: When Pound does this sort of thing, Chip seems to admire it. I do too (I confess, Sam!); yet EP sneers at his readers' ignorance a great deal more than either Damon or I ever did. Oh well, I suppose nobody really feels put down by being told he doesn't know as much as he should about Elizabethan translations of Virgil, or the troubadors; being told that you're hoeing the peas instead of the weeds in your own patch is another matter.

...I'm interested to see another round of reviews of A Case of Conscience after 11 years, particularly because there is as much disagreement as ever over what the ending is supposed to convey — a question I have now seen debated in quite a few languages (and one I never answer). Piers Anthony does as good a job as most, stating his biases and then doing his best to get around them. But the one I like best came from a Jesuit scholar I met at the 2nd Joyce Symposium in Dublin this June who told me, "I was especially struck by the way you left the interpretation of the ending up to the reader." Now there's a triumph of judgement over conviction for you! Why does Father Boyle waste his talents on Faulkner, Hopkins and Joyce when he could be criticizing us?



NORMAN SPINRAD  
2 Garway Road  
London, W. 2  
ENGLAND

I finally met J. J. Pierce at the Luncheon in NY. What an anti-climax. A few advanced copies of Bug Jack Barron were on sale and Bob Silverberg informed me that Pierce was out in front of the huckster table telling people not to buy that dirty, sex-filled book. A hundred or so copies of the book sold out in about 20 minutes. Pierce wasn't entirely responsible for this, maybe, but he sure didn't hurt.

Later, good old Bob Silverberg, with a twinkle in his satanic eyes, decided to bring about The Great Confrontation, and he formally introduced Pierce to me. I will not dwell upon the physical impression Pierce made or the intellectual





level he attains in the flesh. Suffice it to say that he promptly whipped out a copy of the Avon edition of Bug Jack Barron, obviously bought at the convention, and rather belligerently asked me to autograph it. Which, smiling sweetly and modestly, I did.

Sic transit J. J.  
Pierce.

Re: the long Toomey review of Laumer's Galactic Odyssey, everything he says about that book is more or less true, and yet....

And yet Laumer, I have felt for years, has everything that it takes to be the best writer in the sf field. He has a much finer sense of irony than, say, Zelazny, far better control of the style of prose he has chosen than Delany, and writes better action sequences than anyone. I learned a great deal about how to write prose for psychological effect on the reader's mind from studying how Laumer uses prose in his action sequences. Any writer would improve his writing by studying Laumer's action sequences. Much of the prose style of Bug Jack Barron grew out of extrapolating some of the principles of Laumer's action sequences into non-action sequences. Laumer is not the perfect writer, but he does one thing at least better than anyone else. By learning how Laumer does this one thing to perfection, you can learn something about the nature of prose in general.

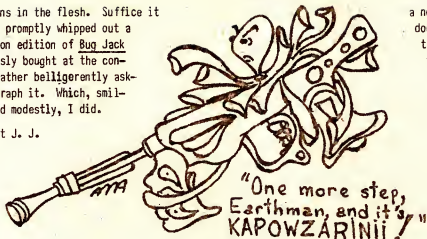
Goddamn it, Laumer should be one of the best! He's been around, in the geographic and environmental sense, more than most sf writers, he has a more mature understanding than most sf writers, and he should be able to apply his own style, (which does not fail) to more meaningful material. In fact he has done so, in a non-sf novel called Embassy (Pyramid). Keith Laumer could do it all if he wanted to. It is something of a measure of the editorial immaturity and general literary stagnation of the conventional sf literary marketplace that Laumer is still grinding out Retief stories, and space opera.



JOHN BRUNNER  
53 Washington Road  
London NW3, ENGLAND

Many thanks for SFR, and especially for saying you'll vote for Stand on Zanzibar for the Hugo.

Incidentally, Jerry Lapidus is right about the dos Passos influence on that novel and I've never made any secret of the fact that directly before setting to work on it I re-read Midcentury, not his best novel but the one where his technique of setting his fiction into a real-life context is most highly developed. Then I consciously re-styled my model to make it work in



a non-real mode, as sf instead of documentary. The man who spotted this first was Tom Disch, who saw the MS, read a chunk of it, and said, "Marvelous - why hasn't anyone adapted dos Passos to sf before?"

To which I could only reply that I didn't know. He and Bourjaily (another great favorite of mine), and sundry other mainstream writers, found themselves faced with exactly the same problem as we do in sf: how to depict a changing world. Each found a solution, and an admirable one - but, like virtually all pioneers, they didn't exhaust the potential of their own discoveries. I have no qualms at all about taking over and extending an area scouted by another writer; I don't insist on inventing a new language, do I? Wasn't it Newton who said, "I stand on the shoulders of giants"?

Of course, later on there must be a mode of expression, directed at solving exactly the same problem, which will be unique to sf. I don't know who'll hit on it: Chip Delany, perhaps? Phil Dick, perhaps? Someone we as yet barely think of as a writer of substance, cutting his teeth on off-beat exercises that only the most perceptive editors will buy? (If only the guy would tackle a major sf theme, I'd put my money on George P. Eliot, but my impression is that he doesn't write the sheer quantity of material I'd expect the pioneer of that particular breakthrough to build from.)

I would, naturally, like to be the through-breaker myself - but my problem is the opposite: I write, and always have written, too much to achieve the lapidary precision the task will clearly call for. If I ever achieve anything spectacularly personal, it will be on the level of that superlative drawing of Picasso's, dashed off in a few minutes on the wall of a landing in Desmond Bernal's house, where two continuous lines created two breathtaking portrait sketches. An instantaneous visualisation which came right, snap. 'The drawing, wall and all, has been transferred to the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Mash House.)

I don't mean I'll be a Picasso, baby. I mean it'll be a unitary thing. I'm not an original on the grand scale; I'm a synthesist and a dilettante, and I recombine borrowed elements into a new pattern, rather than inventing per se. I may, though, just possibly, come up one day with a brand new idea....

Wish me luck.

The two reviews of Jagged Orbit I found fascinating. My own opinion of the book lies halfway between the rave and the put-down; I wasn't nearly as satisfied with it as with So2, and I've been surprised to find that about one person in three prefers it, having read both. To answer Ted Pauls'



question, by the way - whether it was as difficult as he thinks - I'd say yes, it was very damned difficult, but for reasons that he probably wouldn't have guessed at. It's almost unique among my books in that it went through four or five total re-thinkings from the original conception, growing less and less recognisable all the time, and the problem basically was that I was still too close to SoZ - a genuinely new plateau of achievement in my work - to be able to tell whether if I incorporated an unconventional element this was dictated by the needs of the novel or a subconscious attempt to imitate myself. I think the diffidence I felt as a result shows in the final version; I think there are great weaknesses which mar the parts I'm proud of, like the presentation of a divided society in which barriers are erected between even husband and wife in the name of "privacy", or "individuality".

Among those flaws...? Well, I should have created a much deeper and more convincing picture of Flamen's relationship to his employers; this rings hollow. I should have shown, rather than merely talked about, the suspicion - the institutionalized paranoia - which led to contract law mushrooming into a bigger industry than advertising. I deliberately chickened out on the rest of the world, bar such sidelights as the intrusion of Morton Lenigo and the pirate TV satellite, because there simply wasn't room...yet there should have been, and if I'd had time for one more complex re-think of the of the argument, one more complete revision, I could have eased in crucial details to round out the planet-wide picture, and not added more than a few thousand words to the book.

But one has to stop work on a book at some stage, and what came out from Ace represents the situation where I felt myself going stale, and knew I must exploit my last few weeks of strong concern with the book to improve what I already had on paper, rather than attempting any extensive re-construction jobs.

I've never published a book that couldn't have been better than it was. Name me one writer who has. And at least this one has hit a handful of people square between the eyes.

How long it took? Do you know, I honestly can't remember? I know when I had the basic idea - during the Nycon. But I didn't make a record of when I actually started work.

Final point: Chip didn't mention, in his article, that the reason I did that word-by-word analysis of "Aye, and Gomorrah" for him was that even in the draft stage it was clearly on its way to being among the three best sf stor-

ies ever written. I re-read it last week, and it still makes me shiver clear to my ankles. Just thinking about it makes me shiver. Ow.

I'm proud to have had a finger in that particular pie.



BARRY H. MALZBERG  
216 West 78th St.  
New York, NY 10024

I would like to point out to men of good will who might be vulnerable to a mistake I have already made; namely and to wit that John J. Pierce is not to be confused with John R. Pierce except by filial relation; the former we already have heard from recently in the fan magazines while the latter, who writes under the pseudonym "J.J. Coupling" is a distinguished gentleman who would be incapable of the offensiveness of his relative.

I make this point because, as I say, my own confusion of the two although rectified caused me much embarrassment and the tone of Harlan Ellison's statement in the previous SFR indicates that he too may have made this error. John J. Pierce has already bought enough trouble it seems to me; it would be ungracious to allow him to buy more on behalf of a father who I have always admired.



JACK GAUGHAN  
P. O. Box 516  
Rifton, N.Y. 12471

SFR #31 is  
an excellent issue. And perhaps that's curious

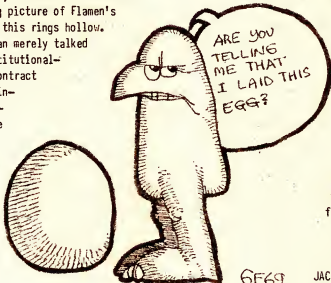
in that it is a rather quiet one. Comparatively.

I should doodle around and try to tell you of my feelings of acid-head book reviews, obviously prejudiced authors reviewing obviously prejudiced authors but to tell the truth I was amused (in the complimentary sense of the word) by the whole scheme. I have no obvious prejudices against being obviously prejudiced. Not if one is either big enough or authoritative (or wordy) enough to back up his prejudice.

So let's get at this matter of art criticism. Mike Gilbert! My buddy! Mike Gilbert! Honest to ghod, Mike! Do you really believe that? A pro artist to be eligible for the pro award has to be (more or less) a science fiction fan? Or that the Dillons are not Science fiction fans? Great jumpin' Jehoshaphat, Mike... Leo Dillon was doing stuff for GALAXY (and specifically for Mr. Van Der Poel (sp?) even (gasp) before you or I. I mean it's not like Terry or Harlan dug them up from nowhere.

But art criticism.

I've held off from deep criticisms



for what may seem to be a peculiar reason. Crits in print ...to be read, that is. I have sent personal, long, windy and pontificating letters to a number of young artists but for their eyes personally and not for publication (even tho some of them got published) because I felt that they themselves personally would read and understand (accept or reject as they would) but that the reader would say, "Hey! You're knocking my favorite drawer of digussions!" All very subjectively. And that's the reality and the curse of this entire mess. Subjectivity.

Recently we were given (lucky us) a color TV. Now there was a time when you spent much effort and wrist manipulating tuning in and adjusting contrast on a BW set. Eventually you could hit a sort of acceptable median between what you (me) in your vast and superior experience and years as an art director for film producers and what your wife, kids, dog, cats and mother-in-law thought was acceptable contrast. I mean eventually you found it. A BW compromise. Because black and white is essentially just that. Black and white. But color. Or colour! Colour is very subjective. No amount of manipulation will, upon the introduction of this further complicating element, satisfy everyone. M-in-law digs magenta. Kids dig green and purple and you (pro that you are) set everything for a sort of anscochrome yellow-orange.

Black and white is. But color is SUBJECTIVE. Some years ago I made up a board of various red pigments. Some unsuspecting wanderer would come to the house and I'd ask him, "Which is the REDDEST red?" There are only so many good red pigments and after a while and a great number of people one would get duplications in his answers but over all the situation was sheer anarchy. To one a sort of orange-vermillion (itself orangey) was reddest. To another a deep magenta was reddest (this guy had some background in printing and was going for what is called "process red") to another and another and another other pigments were "reddest."

Proved nuthin. Except that color is subjective. Hellbells some people are color-blind through ignorance. They never learned to see them. They're not physically deficient or impaired. For years I was totally unaware of a range of purples in real life. I could see them in prints and paintings but not in real life. I learned to see them. But now what? Did I learn to see what was there but that I could not see...or did I impose myself upon reality and force a purple where it didn't exist?

Why cannot many people see colors in real life with the same vividness they can see them in pictures?

Rods and cones and visual purple!!! So far as I know you can count on the fingers of a snake the scientists who profess to know how it works.

Chip?

So...subjectivity inhibits all but the most egotistical showoff who would criticize art. And I mean those of us and I mean the art in the zines pro and fan.

You need language? No problem. And not (I hope) esoteric language either. Let me take a whack at it.

After all, once again, I'm an art director.

But...subjectivity. Chip says he reads the intros to books first. Chip is a learned and complicated person and I'm a dummy in his company but I think some of what he said is that...to more fully appreciate the art you should more fully know the artist and his times and circumstances. Thus, I think, Van Gogh is made all the more impressive and important by his own freaky behavior not JUST on the basis of his paintings. Many of which I suspect would be dismissed lightly were Van Gogh not a nut. How much more interesting and revealing and moving is a Rembrandt for knowing (through Van Loon, or whoever) Rembrandt's trials? There have been a few men whose lives were dull who did great things (tho I suspect to an observer no life is dull) ...oh, Bruckner in music and Chausson (I mean, when you check out because you ran your bicycle into a stone wall!). But how much more important is...say...the music of Berlioz for knowing he was a ROMANTIC nut? Not the ultimate Romantic...that, in my opinion, was E. T. A. Hoffmann.

So (perhaps I have not proved the point but let me go on) you must know about the artist to appreciate his art more fully. If at all.

NOW we come to issue thirty one. And Steve Fabian. What do I know about Fabian personally? Nuthin! I know only that I have seen many of his drawings and have remarked on the fantastically apt aping of Cartier. Including all that I thought was clumsy in Cartier. Oh, now there you go! At ease! I think Cartier was (and perhaps IS) one of the most unique draughtsmen in the field. His animals and aliens and all that crap were just great. But the thing that got to me was his ability to describe a FORM, full and round by varying the weight or texture of a LINE. Ye oriental gods! That was (is) magnificent! Then he'd go and stick comic strip faces on something like that and, if not ruin it, make it less than it could have been. Fabian had it all down. Including the errors in judgement. Now in issue 31 we see (on what looks like da-glo paper) ((I've forgotten. But it was expensive as hell...)) a really good evocation of fantasy (and perhaps Hannes Bok...God rest his soul), carefully drawn, nicely designed, (tho he missed Hannes' thing of designing the SPACES in between objects as well as the objects...that's tricky and difficult) and as far as I'm concerned, altogether pleasing. Then....we have the center-fold which I see as being incredibly clumsy. His own lines of perspective forced him to place limbs and who figures out of drawing. I mean



how can I justify the really impressive control of the cover with the helpless inadequacy of the fold-out? Unless 1. he is again aping another artist and cannot stand too firmly on his own yet or 2. I don't know enough about him personally to appreciate the fold-out or 3. he's younger than hell!

Now you see. Some of you are saying, "Where does HE get off?" or "Why doesn't he practice what he preaches?" Shux, friend...where do any of us get off criticising Samuel R. or Heinlein or Ed Earl Repp? Except we base our opinions on our likes and dislikes and our background. Me? I draw pichers.

((I should mention at this point that Jack's cover on this issue of SFR was part of a large sheet of drawings and was not intended by him specifically as a cover. I had to trim it a bit on the right side to make it fit (Sorry, Jack. Such are the exigencies and the unskilled cuts of untrained fanzine editors) and a foot of the Steel General had to come off—my fault that some of the impact and drive of the drawing is lost.))

Rotsler can do no wrong. Not by me. The clarity and cleanness of his line and the sophistication of his thinking should put him with the really important cartoonists of our time. Really. So he's in the fanzines. Rotsaruck! What is it clarity and cleanness? You can see easily and unquestionably what he has drawn and he has not resorted to dum-dum stylized tricks or over-embellished draughtsmanship. You got an idea? Put it down quick. Only put it down so everybody else can see what you're getting at. He can do it. That's clarity and cleanness. Oh, baroque, derivative and overstylized cartoonists, eatcherheartout.

Liked the dialog/dialog type layout. Neat, clever, eclectic.

Vaughn Bode? Now THAT'S what I call subjective, baby! I cannot separate his style from his content (the god knows much of his impact derives from that simple-ass children's-cartooning as contrasted with the whoop! DIS-EMBOWELL! violence of his story-line) and I rather doubt he'd have me or any of us separate the two. I think he's a good young talent but hasn't blossomed yet. I think the fact that he never did anything (again in my subjective estimation) better than "The Stick is my friend" ("THE WARM") is buggin' him too. But, you see, I don't know that much about Bode. But like you and you and you I'm going on and criticizing.

Ross's drawing I didn't dig at all. Ross (like the stick) is my friend and I know the SOB can draw. He didn't. Nor does the tin-plated obscenity grab me. I'm pretty hard to shock...unless you hit me with your fist.

Cynthia Goldstone did a nice sophisticated doodle. No amateur here but a sort of gallery-gypsy style. How do I know that? Someone told me and has colored my view

of her extremely competent works ever since. Who cares whether what I was told was right or wrong? That's what I see. It's a pleasant doodle and a professional one.

Gilbert, baby. Mike has a damn fine feeling for decoration but should not attempt certain things without a bit more experience at anatomy and real honesty to god human proportions. So who'll know? Me! And Mike.

Loventstein scares me. What a beautiful clean style... and what obscure (sometimes) humor. Geez? Is my generation gapping? Luv, like Rotsler, can do no wrong (hardly) but his line is more studied and deliberate and cerebral than Rotsler's and perhaps a bit more forced, too. But that does not detract from an exceptional talent. One whom I suspect will be bored with his early mastery someday and leave us and the field altogether and become a...what?...a missionary? ...a Mohole designer? I dunno.

Tim Kirk, as I have said elsewhere but with no less feeling, is the only artist whose work I have seen which is sympathetic to my idea of the way Tolkien should be illustrated (outside of Arthur Rakhman who I feel was the source of most

of JRRT's visualizations). As far as I'm concerned, having seen the way he handles space and design and the WC medium, he's an old pro. I hope to god that some story comes up in GALAXY or IF which will be appropriate to his style so I can badger him to do a job for me. His style (which is to say his natural way of drawing...not a damned forced imitation or stylization) is his own and swings easy and with all good humour.

Enough! Enough!

Enough?

You see? The language wasn't too Arty-Newsy and tho I didn't avoid my training altogether the terms I used could be used by anybody else.

So why aren't they?

What is this thing which in our Western society has made of the artist a garret recluse and not only is determined to KEEP him that way but is convincing HIM that that's the way it should be?

Chip?

Anybody?

((I'd call it the force of the romantic image, self-perpetuated in cliché and hack work, seeded by self-pity and masochism, born in rebellion and non-conformity....and necessity.

Congratulations on becoming Art Director for GALAXY and IF. Does this mean Bode is going to be used again?))



L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP  
278 Hothorpe Lane  
Villanova, Pa. 19085

Many thanks for SFR 31 & Board-  
man's kind remarks about my Goblin  
Tower.

Re the argument between Boardman & Anderson over Communist v. Conservative virtues: B is right about the virtues extolled and professed by Communists. But these very virtues - with variations in emphasis & detail - have also been professed by a lot of other movements, e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, & Stoicism. Christianity began as a communistic, pacifistic movement, although when it got power its leaders discovered that property wasn't such a bad thing and, if one had property, one must be prepared to fight for it. In general, the leaders of every movement will claim all the virtues in sight, but if the movement prospers the leaders usually show themselves not impervious to self-interest, or they are ousted by new & harder-boiled leaders. But without these movements, I daresay things would be in an even worse mess.



ALEXEI PANSHIN  
Open Gate Farm  
Star Reute  
Perkasie, Pa.  
18944

I like your fanzine.  
Let me say it without  
mistake. I would  
hate to miss  
an issue.

As Tom Disch said of the Forum, a not unsimilar publication, it's a continuing novel full of fantastic characters. I must have spent several hours in the latest installment. I particularly enjoyed the character "Alex Panshin" created by you and Ted White. The best part was the disagreements between you in how the character should be seen—it gave me the feeling of parameters being established, of real solid two-dimensionality. In fact, I like the character enough that with the permission of you both, I'd like to play him for a moment.

You ask if Alex Panshin, having written "a 'Heinlein' book" and "a series of 'Georgette Heyer' books" is ever going to write an Alex Panshin book. Let me answer for him. No, not in the sense I think you mean. However, to get to what I think you mean takes some elimination of things I have to doubt that you could mean.

For instance, you must be talking about novels, because I've published a book of subjective criticism on Robert Heinlein and written another book of subjective criticism on science fiction. I haven't been accused of aping anyone in them that I have heard and I felt I spoke my mind pretty clearly in the published one.

And I don't suppose that you have actually read much Georgette Heyer. The clothes consciousness in Star Well

is about all the influence there really is, plus some clues for the handling of an aristocratic milieu. If I had been reading Tolstoy at the time I began the Villiers books, it is possible the bent of the aristocracy in them would have been Russian. Because of Heyer, it is English. Not truly or necessarily English, but English-in-tone. In other words, I adopted decoration from Heyer. But there isn't much other similarity that I can see. Heyer always writes in the third person. The Villiers books are narrated by a character within the stories. That's a basic difference in point-of-view, and a difference in the relative subjectivity/objectivity of the narrative. Heyer writes loose and rambling narratives that are often spread over months. The first three Villiers books have all been written tightly, in an absolute minimum time-of-action, and almost like dances or plays. Not particularly like Heyer. Perhaps most important, Heyer is solely concerned with her aristocratic milieu, whereas it is only one thread within the Villiers books.

I also have to say that "Alex Panshin" has to resent just a bit your overready adoption of Ted's description of the Villiers books as frivolous. Remember, you are supposed to disagree at least a little for the sake of parameters. To give you a parameter, let me

say that if the target is where my shots are going, the Villiers books are a single novel in seven episodes and in intention it is about five times the worth of Rite of Passage. That's only my intention, and whether or not I can carry out my intention is four books away.

You find the Villiers books uninvolved to this point and you aren't alone. Richard Delap found Villiers uninteresting because he was an enigma. (He also objected to my overuse of French expletives, my characters being notorious for saying things like "Tu ne vaux pas un pet de lapin!" and "Morte d'Arthur!") In part, it's a problem for me—can I keep the reader's attention through the first books until he does get involved in the on-going story? If you are interested enough by the first two to read the third, Dick, I think I can get you to the fourth. But all I can do is hope.

((A problem with a series novel is that unless the first one or two really catch on, the others will die for lack of a continuing and growing audience, since sf novel readers are probably 90% (a guess) only occasional buyers, with few hardcore read-everything gluttons. The two Villiers novels published didn't strike me as books that will create in a reader an anticipation of further Villiers adventures; certainly not enough to make him seek out the next book or keep in mind a mental note to buy if another is spotted on the racks.

I'll read the third, of course, because I did like the





first two, with reservations. I'm interested in seeing what you'll do with Villiers next, but it is an intellectual interest and appreciation of your skill in this "frivolous" style of novel. My objections are more commercial considerations than criticisms of the books as novels. I suppose I'm a frustrated book editor-publisher... or a born hack. More likely the latter.))

You are making one important error, though. You assume that because you aren't yet involved, no one would be. But some people are. I have a letter from a girl named Gillian in Vancouver, self-described as a gawk, and she identified. Of course—because there is a gawk named Gillian in The Thurb Revolution. But if I interest all the Gillians, and more important, all the gawks, that's an involved audience. And I've heard from a revolutionary who found something. And somebody who thinks The Thurb Revolution is redemption from the New Wave glut. And a housewife in Toronto who is waiting to feed me if I'm ever in town. And somebody involved enough in Villiers to care about his sex life. Books are not the stable single things I once thought they were. Books are mirrors reflecting different things to different people. If, in the long run, the Villiers books turn out to be good mirrors, I'll be happy. So far they have proven to be a mirror for some, but I'm given to understand that the sales so far haven't been good. Maybe the audience for the books is limited. Maybe the audience will come in time. Maybe it ultimately really isn't there. But I'm still going to write a seven-episode Villiers novel.

If I were merely copying Heyer, I doubt I'd take the trouble. But you are right—I do need a breather and I'm taking it to write a sense-of-wonder Ace Special titled The Farthest Star.

In a limited sense, Rite of Passage is a Heinlein book. I used some basic techniques invented by Heinlein and I moved into what has been, for no good reason at all, a Heinlein preserve: the story of day-to-day living in a future society. After some more people do the sort of thing I did in Rite of Passage, it will start looking less like Heinlein's preserve and more and more like untapped unlimited possibility—as I said at the end of Heinlein in Dimension. It isn't Heinlein Territory—it's free country. Heinlein has just been standing in the door. Rite of Passage almost necessarily spoke to Heinlein. The next books to come along in that vein, by me or by anybody, are less likely to, and much less likely to seem to.

In another limited sense, Rite of Passage is a Heinlein book: there are reactions to Heinlein thinking and characterization in it—as I made the mistake of saying

without adequate explanation. It is a Heinlein book to about the same degree that it is a Harper Lee book, a Walter Kaufmann book, a John F. A. Taylor book, an Arthur Ranson book, a Vii Putnam book, a G. Harry Stine book, or an Arthur Upfield book. I find information, insights, ideas about writing problems, reactions to inadequacies, a million things in what I read. Like anybody. Like any writer. There are reactions to a lot of people in Rite of Passage, and Heinlein just happens to be particularly visible. The apparent similarity is increased by the existence of Podkayne, but as it happens I first heard of Podkayne from Avram Davidson who had it under submission at F&SF in May, 1962, following the March I had sold the "Down to the Worlds of Men" part of Rite of Passage to Fred Pohl. And I said, "Oh, damn. I hope people won't think..." because Davidson wasn't buying, and Campbell and Heinlein haven't been dealing together since Starship Troopers, and that left Fred Pohl. Podkayne ran in If and the next year "Down to the Worlds of Men" ran there, too. But on Scout's Honor, I didn't see one single thing in Podkayne that I felt the least desire to swipe.

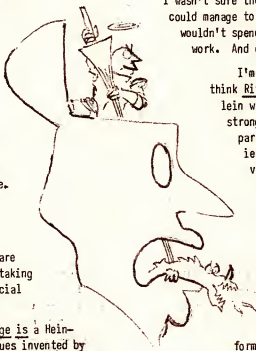
I wasn't sure the book I was trying to write was one I could manage to do, but I spent five years on it and I wouldn't spend that much time copying somebody else's work. And certainly not Podkayne.

I'm actually a little surprised that you think Rite of Passage is a Heinlein book. Heinlein writes largely in his own voice, and most strongly in his first-person books. A comparison with any of my other printed stories would show that I write in different voices, and that Mia Haverro's voice is not majorly my own personal voice, and a comparison with Heinlein's work would show that Mia Haverro's voice is not after all very like Heinlein's, either. Or like Podkayne's. (Or, to answer Richard Delap—like Louisa Parini's in Star Well. To me, at least, Star Well and the Ship are more of a piece than Louisa and Mia.) Again, Heinlein is not much of a

formalist and Rite of Passage has a strong formal structure. And finally, I thought my conclusions were my own and I have no reason to think that Heinlein would agree with them, and even a certain doubt that he would.

((I don't think anyone has accused you of copying styles. I certainly never intended that meaning in my remarks. But most reviewers did think Rite was a result of your deep study of Heinlein—either as an "answer" to Heinlein or as an unconscious reflection of that study. That is what I meant by your having done a "Heinlein" book.

I took as accurate Ted's evaluation of the Villiers series: "As I understand the series, it is inspired by the Georgette Heyer series of English historical romances—although heavily filtered through Alex's own creative mind." because I knew he knew you and I presumed was knowledgeable



of the series and you.))

Which brings us back to what I think you mean when you ask whether I—that is, our character in the continuing story of SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, "Alex Panshin"—will ever write an Alex Panshin book. I suppose you mean am I ever going to be as visible in my novels as Heinlein, or John D. MacDonald, or as you apparently suppose Georgette Heyer to be? (She isn't.)—No. "Alex Panshin gets all the exposure he deserves in the critical books. Why should I make him the hero of my novels as well? There are too many good people to write about without wasting a novel on anybody as basically earnest and unadventurous as "Alex Panshin".

I do, however, expect to keep writing my own stories in my own way for whatever audience they manage to find—as at present, as in the past.

((Then the real Alexei Panshin will be highly visible—between the lines.))



JACK WILLIAMSON  
Box 761  
Portales, N.M.  
88130

I guess you'll get a mixed reaction to the return to stencil reproduction. On the plus side the bigger pages are more readable. The Steve Fabian fold-out is beautiful. I like the book reviews—particularly when they become debates. In fact,

I find SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW generally admirable in most respects. But —

This note is stimulated by your response to Alfred Bester's letter. Like Bester, I'm repelled by the personal controversy in SFR and other fan publications, and I'm distressed by your defense of it as revealing "personality and character (that) is often more interesting than revealed knowledge."

All this brings to my mind a thing that once existed called Proceedings of the Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies. This was published for years by Ted Cohns—well as a labor of love. It consisted largely of uninhibited letters from science fiction writers. These letters tended toward personal controversy. The net effect — at least on me — was pretty appalling.

The point I want to make is that such letters do not actually reveal "personality and character." It happens that I have known a great many writers engaged in such controversy. Nearly all of them have a humanity, a warmth, a humor, a personal charm, that doesn't get into their letters. Putting human character on paper is a fine art, and one which is seldom successfully practiced by the participants in these controversies. The painful fact is that they don't do justice to themselves. I feel very strongly that these controversial letters very seldom reveal the writers in any accurate way. Nearly all of them are more likeable than the letters make them look. I want to protest that the encouragement of abusive personal

controversy is no service either to the disputants or the science fiction field.

((You're right if all that emerges from a clash is personal abuse. But often valuable information and insights are provided...and I honestly never know beforehand what is going to result. I don't encourage these things; they happen.

I would strongly disagree with you about letters not actually revealing personality and character. They do; not of course ALL the character of a writer (what single activity does that?) but flashes of character and personality rarely seen or exposed do come out when a wounded ego lashes out with intent to maim or KILL! When the precious "I" fluid flows, watch out!

Raw emotion is to humans as blood in the sea is to sharks—it draws their attention immediately.

I don't agree with the ideal that we should be rational animals. We ARE emotional animals.

I like emotional involvement, strong opinion, and I'm not afraid to show my inner self, ugly as it sometimes is.

So...as a reflection of my character and personality, SFR will continue to be wide open to informational letters and emotional tirades as well...with the hope that the tirades lead to some truth...or inspire it...or are simply croggling to read.

Let's not take it too seriously in any case.))



MORE MONOLOG

A funny thing has happened to the letter column this issue—it's all "pro." When I went to the letter file a few days ago to choose which to print, which to excerpt and which to mention in the "I-Also-Got-Letters-from" dept. I found such a glut!

Would you believe I have a fine Harry Warner, Jr. letter on hand and no room? A fine Bernie Zuber letter I had promised to publish because it has a commentary on Norman Spinrad's put-down of sf fandom in the V7, #4 issue of KNIGHT? A letter from Al Snider Replying to Ted White? And more...more? You better believe it!

So what to do?

Before I answer, would you believe I have the final instalment of Arthur Jean Cox's "Fans We All Know...And Perhaps Wish We Didn't" on stencil and no room for it? AND would you etc. that I have a fine column by Piers Anthony on stencil, too, and no room for it? So help me Bloch, it is true.

So what to do?

Before I answer, would you believe the next issue will be out in about a month? and will be all "fan" in the letter section?

"Geis, if you say 'you better believe it' one more time..."

SOMEBODY in SFR's <sup>near</sup> future is the publication of Harlan Ellison's major speech at the recent Westerncon. It is titled, "Cop-Out, Sell-Out and Self-Rape...The Exploitation of Speculative Fiction By Its Writers, Its Fans and Its Apologists."

you better believe it

