SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

35

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-35-
FEBRUARY 1970

The professionals' fanzine, the place where the authors gather to hoist a few... of their fellow writers, SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW is edited and published by that incredible middle-aged man and his Gestetner machine, name of RICHARD E. GEIS

About eight times a year if we're lucky

P.O. Box 3116
Santa Monica, Cal.
90403

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 2/$1. - 4/$2. - 6/$3. etc. In U.S. and Canada; but from Canada please remit in Canadian P.O. Money Orders in U.S. dollars. Personal checks are subject to all kinds of bank charges and exchange reductions.

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Jim Shull—12, 43.
Steve Fabian—21, 37.
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Doug Lovenstein—24, 34.

"Geis, you just made a long distance phone call to Alan E. Nourse."

"True. I was checking with him on the Heicon charter flights in light of the CAB charter flight crackdown news stories in the Times this morning."

"He said there is nothing to worry about, his organization is making very sure the Heicon flights comply with all rules and regulations."

"Exactly. Everything is go."

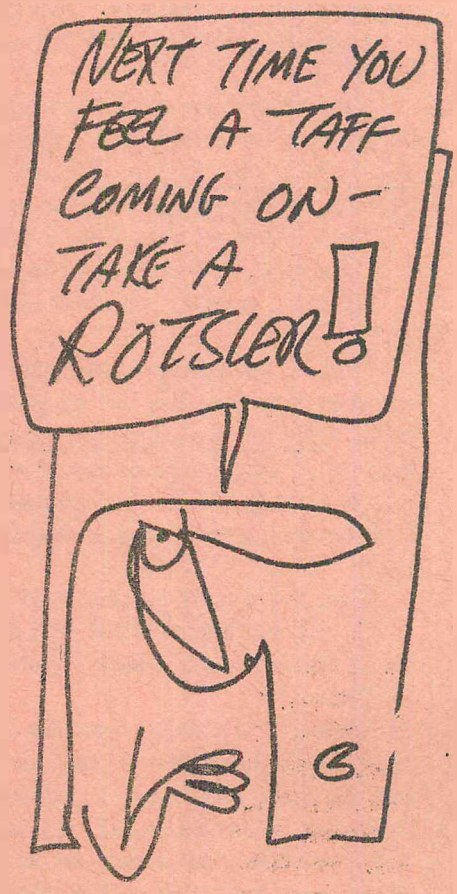
"We also got a note from Elaine Landis, editor of the Science Fiction Book Club, who writes further about the July selection, A Princess of Mars."

"What do she say?"

"She say...says...Frank Frazetta will do the members' announcement, the book jacket and several interior illustrations."

"Any other last minute stuff?"

"Nope."



"Good night, Dick." "Good night, Dick."

•DIALOG•

"What is that yellowed, crumbly sheaf of hand writ pages in your yellowed, trembly hand, Geis?"

"This, alter-ego, is something I found in an ancient, dust-covered trunk in the shattered basement of an abandoned old house in Portland, Oregon last month."

"I have a premonition, a dread, that you are going to insist on reading that writing now, out loud, for all fandom and prodom to hear."

"True."

"I know you pretty well, don't I, Geis?"

"The title of this ms is BEHOLD THE FAN. It—"

"Hold it! If you think—"

"—begins: 'I discovered the incredibly simple pricible of time-travel in 1974. It was then I—'"

"—I'm going to sit still for some of your hoked-up faaan fiction—"

"'—became obsessed with the life of Hugo Gernsback. He had been so successful, so dominant, so much a pioneer, and all I had done in life was write some paltry fiction and publish a fanzine. That was all—'"

"—you're right!"

"'—of my life till then, and I was incomplete, somehow. I gradually came to know what I wished to do...I would go back in time and meet Hugo Gernsback and learn the secret of his greatness. What had impelled him to start AMAZING STORIES? I had to know. I had to study him.'

"'I performed the difficult mental trick of reversing the action of my pituitary. I shut my eyes and intoned "Kipple to Kipple, dust to dust..." In a trice I was fading back through time in ten year segments—'"

"Geis, would you call them 'trice-cycles'?"

"Alter-ego, if you do that one more time..."

"Alright, alright. Go ahead with your precious idiocy!"

"'Soon I was fading through the mid-twenties. I corrected my pituitary flow and stopped time travel. I intoned, "tsud ot tsud ,elppiK ot elppiK." I found myself in the oven of a bakery since torn down in Portland. I hastily exited, much the the amazement of the baker, since I was covered with half-baked dough.' NOT A WORD, ALTER-EGO!"

"Yes, but this is getting a bit much!"

"I WILL CONTINUE READING! 'It took me three weeks to get to New York where I knew I would find my precious Hugo.'"

"Geis..."

"SHUT UP! 'I finally found him in a cheap little cold-water flat in Brooklyn. I could not believe my eyes' My hero was dumb, unlettered, a dishwasher in a sleazy cafe! I demanded to see his wallet, his identification! He must have thought me a policeman, for he complied. My own wallet had been stolen that very morning at the train depot. As I studied his papers, seeking some clue, some hint that he was not "my" Hugo Gernsback, a shot crashed through the window and felled him where he stood. He was dead! My sanity teetered and tottered! What of the future? What of science fiction? WHAT OF ME AND MY FANZINE?'"

"Geis, I'm going out for a pizza."

"STAY!"

"I can only take so much..."

"The ms is short. There is not much more to read. 'I wandered, dazed, for days, through New York, until a kindly gentleman took me in and gave me a job in his office. I soon found myself being called Hugo, Hugie, Gernie, and other, less affectionate terms. I realized everyone thought my name was Hugo Gernsback because I possessed his wallet. An unidentified bum had been killed in Brooklyn by a stray police bullet. Gradually, I accepted my role. I changed jobs. I used my advanced knowledge. I made money. I finally started AMAZING STORIES!'"

"Is that the end, Geis?"

"No. It goes on... 'And so I leave this true story of how science fiction began in a trunk in the city of my birth, in the sure knowledge that "I" will find it in 1969.' It is signed, 'Richard Erwin Geis.'"

"Oh, no...no no no..."

"Yes, I'm afraid it is true. Four years from now I will discover time-travel—the trick of reversing pituitary flow —and will go back in time to become Hugo Gernsback!"

"You're sick, Geis."

"I AM THE ULTIMATE SECRET MASTER OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANDOM!"

"You're paranoid!"

"Bow when you say that, alter-ego!"

"That was a disgraceful exhibition of frivolity you just perpetrated, Geis. This is supposed to be a serious journal devoted to science fiction and fantasy. What is the library of UCLA going to think?"

"Have they got a copy?"

"They just subscribed! What will they think? O the shame..."

"I will not let the weight of dignity and big buildings deter me. I shall goof – off as the mood seizes me."

"Just be sure you don't have too many seizures. Isn't there a pill you can take? What is it that Sapiro takes to keep RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY so wonderfully dull?"

"I'm not sure. Maybe he drinks Sam Moskowitz's blood..."

"Poor SaM. Everybody picks on him."

"We have a minor crisis on our hands, Geis. It is T.Af.F. time again—"

"What's TAFF?"

"You know! The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund. Time to choose up sides on who is going to get our support...and our money."

"Money?"

"You have to pay in order to vote. One dollar minimum, I understand. But that isn't—"

"Last year Eddie Jones was brought over here from England to attend the Stlouiscon. And THIS year it is an American who will go to the Heicon in Germany."

"Right, but our problem is...who do we support?"

"Why, I thought you knew! BILL ROTSLER, of course!"

"Yes, fine, but if you will kindly remember, Geis, last year soon after the con when you went to that party at the Trimbles in the company of Fritz Leiber and Mrs. Estelle Sanders, where you met Eddie Jones and other nice fans, you spoke to Bjo Trimble and when she said she and John might run for TAFF you said you'd be glad to support them."

"Gnnunngg. Yes. Well. Hmm... Tell you what: you support the Trimbles and I'll support Rotsler!"

"Does that mean they get roughly equal space in SFR for plugs and like that?"

"Yup."

"I point out to you, Geis, that Bill Rotsler has the back cover this issue."

"Then let it be known that the back cover of SFR 36 is reserved for the Trimbles. They have but to send me their full page layout and it shall be printed."

"You are a fair man, Geis."

"Both the Trimbles and Bill Rotsler are fine TAFF candidates. But..."

"But?"

"My heart of hearts belongs to Bill."

"I note, Geis, that you have added still another agent. Hans J. Alpers of West Germany."

"Yes. WELCOME THE SFR'S FAMILY, HANS!"

"Idiot, he can't hear you from here!"

"He can read, can't he? I don't want no agent what can't read."

"Next thing I know you'll have an agent in Sioux City."

"No chance. Nobody reads in Sioux City."

"Seems to me I just recall we have a subber in that wonderful little city where it is usually below zero this time of year, to say nothing of the subbers in the rest of Iowa. You've probably offended them, Geis. Apologize!"

"Yes, sorry Sioux. It's just that I have some tainted memories of the place..."

"Care to further explain?"

"No."

"You're chicken!"

"I am discreet...about tainted chicken."

"You know something, alter-ego? This is our fifteenth issue since our resumption of publishing in Oct. '67."

"A good time for a taking of stock and a mentioning of plans."

"Okay, mention a few. Take a stock, any stock. Don't let me see it. Now put it back into the deck..."

"Do realize we took in over $1600 last year in subs?"

"That much?"

"Do you further realize that expenses last year, for SFR, were over $3800?"

GASP "Say again?"

"Thirty-eight hundred."

"Dollars?"

"Dollars."

"This...ergghm...funny how our throat tightens up sometimes, isn't it?...this is an expensive hobby, isn't it, Geis, all things considered?"

"Well, over $1300 of that is tied up in the Gestetner 466, and the three photo-offset issues chewed up well over a thousand, and there is something around 180 reams of paper in the apartment..."

"Can't we use some of it soon, Geis? These narrow paths between towering cartons of paper are unnerving late at night."

"We'll be using fifty reams this issue."

"We have created a monster."

"Yes, but it's so cute...and so much fun!"

"I think we have discovered Excedrin headache #14567890."

"As for future plans: I have some ideas for graphic effects and features which I won't divulge until they come to fruition."

"They sound gay, to me."

"And I plan to continue publishing regularly. The enthusiasm has not flagged."

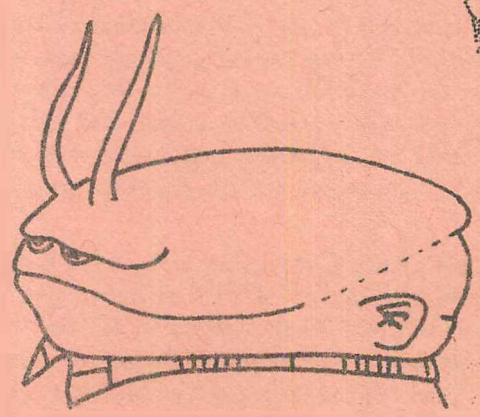
"I only wish I had more time to read these review books that come in. We've sent a lot of goodies to the reviewers that we would have liked to have read ourselves."

"I hate to tell you, but I just signed to do another book. We have to have it done by the endof February."

"Oh, God, Geis..."

"Hey, Geis, I see by the latest LOCUS (5/31 from Charlie Brown, 2078 Anthony Av., Bronx, NY 10457) that the Trimbles have withdrawn from the TAFF race."

"It simplifies things. Now with a clear conscience we can give our undivided support to loveable Bill Rotsler."



franz rottensteiner

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* Editor's Note: This review, originally subtitled "A study of HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION by Alexei Panshin" first appeared in Franz Rottensteiner's fanzine QUARBER MERKUR 17 (in German) and was translated by the author for printing in John Foyster's tiny-circulation fanzine THE JOURNAL OF OMPHALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY, #1, July 1969. Franz has subsequently made ten minor changes of word and phrase for increased clarity of meaning.
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"I have finished this critique and find that its length is out of proportion with the size of its object. Perhaps also the 'sharpness' of its tone with the importance of the subject matter. Should I have made an error?

"One would demolish this Heinlein on half a page and with indifferent words if it were necessary to remain proportional to his worth. But the man is a factor of power. As truly as his concern is of no intrinsic value, as truly it is of great popular influence. It is the fight against a wren. You fight less against him than before those people that look at him. This justifies a length that nobody will understand in a few years.

"My instinct was right; so let's begin."

Substitute "Sudermann" for "Heinlein" and you have the famous beginning of the great Alfred Kerr's destruction of the Johannis by Sudermann. The beginning is appropriate, I think, for there are certain parallels between Heinlein and Sudermann. Sudermann was then an esteemed writer for the stage, widely popular; Heinlein is equally popular in SF circles: Sudermann had the technical skill and the knowledge to make his plays effective on the stage, Heinlein shows the same technical skill in his chosen field: Sudermann lacked all the essentials required in a great dramatist - his realm was melodrama; Heinlein equally lacks all the virtues that make a great writer.

But according to Blish, in his introduction to Alexei Panshin's Heinlein in Dimension (Advent: Publishers, 1968, 198pp., $6.00), Heinlein is "so plainly the best all-around science fiction writer of the modern (post-1926) era that taking anything but an adulatory view of his work seems to some people....to be perilously close to lese majeste". In the following pages I intend to commit this lese majeste and perhaps more: but I do think that even people who'll fill my mailbox with purple letters can learn something from it.

On page 164 of his book Panshin writes: "It seems to me that there are three ways in which a character with freedom of action can operate. He can operate within the framework of society, whether or not he is in full accord with it. He can reject society and strike out on his own. Or he can arbitrarily run society to suit himself. Heinlein has written of characters who do each of these things."

What troubles me about this passage is that Panshin discusses the third possibility as if it offered a real and not just an ideal alternative. What can only be conceived is here considered to be possible in the real world. (It is also very doubtful whether the second item is an alternative in reality - even the revolutionaries are as much products of their society as are the men in power.) I would call this recurrent pattern in Heinlein's fiction the "omnipotence of thought", a term commonly used among psychologists. Robert Plank's new book, The Emotional Significance of Imaginary Beings (Charles C. Thomas Co., 1968, $8.75), contains a passage that is appropriate here: Dr. Plank is speaking of the "low tolerance for uncertainty" which he thinks is characteristic f cultists and authoritarians.

(To them) "nothing seems impossible. They are apt to consider this as a sign of intellectual prowess and emancipation from timidity and prejudice; and they can persuade themselves that this is so, because they are buoyed up by a very American tradition of swagger (the well-known saw, 'The difficult we do at once. The impossible takes a little longer.').

"The truth is that this attitude is a residual of the infantile belief in the omnipotence of thought, and thus a sign of immaturity. The refusal to recognize that certain events are impossible plays an enormous role in the belief in imagined beings, but science has made progress when impossibilities are recognized as such, after centuries wasted on the hunt for the perpetuum mobile, the squaring of the circle, the philosopher's stone, and the elixer of life." (page 140)

That's one side of the coin: and the other is a desire for a simple world and an escape from society, either to rise above society (where they can "run it arbitrarily") or away from it. Heinlein's characters are often in conflict with their societies, and they are only at ease in a socoety which is simple.

While Heinlein shows on the surface an enthusiasm for science and technology (and nobody can deny him an uncommon knowledge of technological processes), he in fact rejects the full implications of science, preferring instead a "healthy and simple life". Escape from civilisation is a trait common to

Chewing Gum For The Vulgar

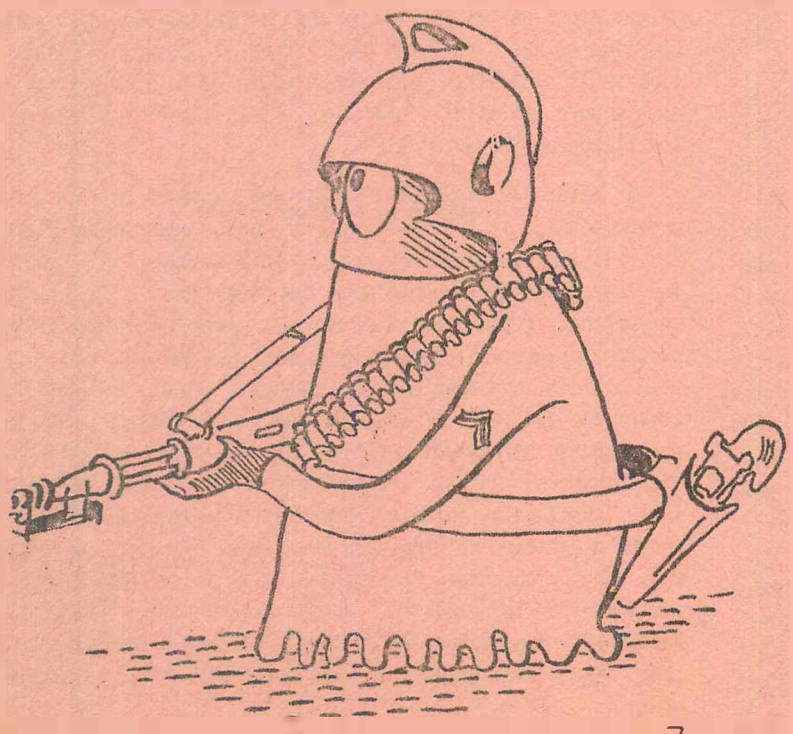
most of his stories.

In "Waldo" the hero, a brilliant scientist who suffers from myastenia gravis, flees to a space station where he cultivates his belief that he is independent of society. He has detected and described another universe. Only after a friend has convinced him that he isn't as independent as he had thought and, more important, that human society can be understood just as the universe detected by him has been understood does he return to Earth. In "Coventry" a rugged individualist rebels against society but returns to it after some unpleasant experiences and finds it possible to accept it after he has been told that there is still a place in society for people as primitive as him. In Have Space Suit--Will Travel human society becomes acceptable because it is, compared with the complex Galactic Federation, still simple. Universe is a priori a primitive society, as are some of the societies in Citizen of the Galaxy. The escapist nature of Glory Road is self-evident. In Sixth Column a few American heroes are sufficient to defeat an invader.

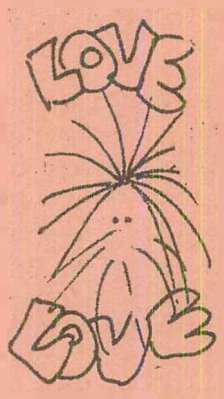
Of course, Heinlein needs complex gadgets such as space ships in his books, for they will take us to the planets. But once we are there civilisation is left behind and the happy, sane, healthy and simple life of the "American Frontier" can begin again. It is so in Tunnel in the Sky and Farmer in the Sky. People don't take complex machinery with them, but animals, for these reproduce and this is "something that the machines haven't yet learned." And even his heroines think of themselves in terms close to nature: Barbara, in Farnham's Freehold, feels like a "prize cow" (that's not my ideal; a woman may feel a prize cow in any stable, but not in mine). In Tunnel in the Sky the youths prove their ability for survival not in the big cities, where they might encounter ladies of pleasure and lose not their lives but their innocence, but on unexplored planets, where they are protected from women because they don't recognize a woman when they see one. Big cities are conspicuous by their absence: Jubbulpore is a slave market and nothing else.

Starship Troopers portrays an eternal human type, the militarist, who here is falsified into an epitome of responsibility. One might compare this work with Wilhelm von Mayern's 2500-page opus Dya-Na-Sore (1787-1791), a book that presented, long before Nietzsche and the Nazis, a super-militaristic utopia, where poets and composers are kept solely for the amusement of the soldiers. A work of considerably greater substance than Starship Troopers, it anticipated many of the features of the Storm Trooper State. In Heinlein's book women are as excluded as they are in Mayern's: there is the same society of the homo-nix-sapiens: the Army is father and mother, lover and wife, sister and brother (and especially the brother!) for the soldiers, and the ex-soldiers get all the fine positions in society. In short, the Army is an insurance for those blokes who don't like to work and yet want to feel themselves members of an elite.

The simplification of life is even more obvious in Stranger in a Strange Land, Heinlein's answer to A.E. Housman's famous line: "I, a stranger and afraid, in a world I never made", and it is surprising that no one has yet noticed this connection, for Heinlein explicitly referred to Housman in his essay in The SF Novel. Of course, Heinlein's "stranger" is not afraid, and the world is but a strange land that is only too familiar. Born in the holes of Mars as Hephaistos was in the bowels of the Earth, Valentine Michael Smith exemplifies once more the infantile fantasy of the omnipotence of thought. Since nobody seems to have understood the novel, I think it proper to offer here a quick explanation. As James Blish has already pointed out, Michael means "Who is like God", and the other names carry a similar heavy load of symbolism. Valentine, from the Latin valens, valentis, means "strong, healthy" and it was (or still is) an English custom to choose, on St. Valentine's Day, a "Valentine" who is the "beloved of many". There might also be some connection with the philosopher Valentine, a Gnostic and Theosophian who died in the second century AD in Rome. And "Smith" is, of course, the man who works with the big hammer, the big penis. All three names denote a man who is powerful, in particular sexually potent, a man who is both a great lover and and one loved by many. Stranger in a Strange Land is in fact a sexual wish-fantasy. We note that in all of Heinlein's books there appear powerful men, often with extraordinary talents, and that power is one of the recurrent themes in his fiction. We may assume that all power is in fact sublimated sexual potency; in Stranger in a Strange Land it appears in a more open form.



This Smith founds a new "religion" that requires the members of the cult to sleep around with members of the opposite sex, which is apparently an expression of "universal love". Some people have promptly expressed their admiration for this rare and daring thing: sex in SF. The surprising thing about all this is that homo-



sexuality is excluded; if this form of "grokking" were actually a form of "brotherly love", as Jack Williamson will have it, one would expect the love to be extended to our brothers. Leland Sapiro has tried to explain this by saying that the new religion is specifically Christian and that Christianity doesn't admit homosexuality. I don't think this is a sufficient reason, for while Heinlein, as with all who are unsystematic and unoriginal, has borrowed from a wide variety of sources, including Christianity, the essence of the new religion can hardly be called Christian. There have to be deeper reasons for this avoidance of homosexuality.

Sex in Stranger in a Strange Land is just as immature as in all of Heinlein's other books: over sixty years of age, he is still writing about puberty. Rather than "brotherly love" the sex in Stranger in a Strange Land symbolizes the desire to return a powerful lover to the mother, the womb, the cysta mystica and to achieve the "unio mystica" with the mother. In the womb the baby was cared and provided for, there he was god, and by returning to the womb the new cultists acquire, without any effort of their own, the marvelous super-powers of "grokking" that Smith has and that are quite unnecessary for the founder of a religion, but that would make him an attraction for any circus. Indeed, I will go so far as to say that the founders of the historical religions were such powerful personalities that people attributed miracles to them as a matter of course; and that only a weak personality would actually have to perform miracles. The girls in the book are, of course, all very young and very beautiful: it just never occurs to Heinlein that older women might want to share in the fun. James Blish has noted (apparently with some surprise) that Heinlein's treatment is far from being pornographic, indeed, that it is "confessedly, designedly, specifically reverent" (The Issue At Hand, page 63). It cannot surprise anyone who thinks that the love in Stranger in a Strange Land is the love one has for one's mother, and that men in turn are loved with the unselfish, undemanding, protective love of the mother. In fact, Stranger in a Strange Land is an attempt to eliminate normal heterosexual love from the world; a narcissist's attempt to simplify the world. I have remarked elsewhere that SF heroes are usually narcissists who love only themselves and are quite incapable of loving other human beings. Once we have seen that Heinlein's heroes are these same narcissists, the explanation of the role of sex in Stranger in a Strange Land becomes easy. As Turgenov wrote to a friend: "Love is one of those passions that destroy our ego", or as the Oriental poet Rumi put it: "Where love arises, the ego dies, the fearful tyrant." The narcissist fears that he'll suffer should he actually fall in love with another person; love threatens to destroy the ego, whereas indiscriminate promiscuity does nothing of the sort, may even be necessary for the propogation of the race. By making "love" omnipresent, it is eliminated. And indeed, after one has robbed

women of their power over men by making love a "religious duty", so that sexual intercourse has no more meaning than when we say "Glad to meet you" or some such phrase. It becomes possible to treat sex and women "specifically reverently". James Blish's remark that Smith "never wholly recognizes how much heartache can be bound up even on the peripheries of sex" is the sound of a reviewer missing the point: for the whole novel is nothing but an attempt to eliminate just this heartbreak; from what else is Heinlein running away? And can it really surprise us now that Jill Boardman sleeps around with any man but the one she loves? Pornography, one may say, treats women in the proper way: as subjects of love, but men who treat sex "specifically reverently" make you suspect that they are afraid of women: if they treat them "reverently", the women might ask nothing of them.

For the individual, of course, Theodore W. Adorno's great word applies: "First and only principle of sexual morals: the accuser is always in the wrong", but I have little sympathy for Boy Scouts who invent new "religions" that make mass orgies a religious duty, just because they are afraid to ask a girl: if you just like it, it's wrong; but if it's a duty, it's OK.

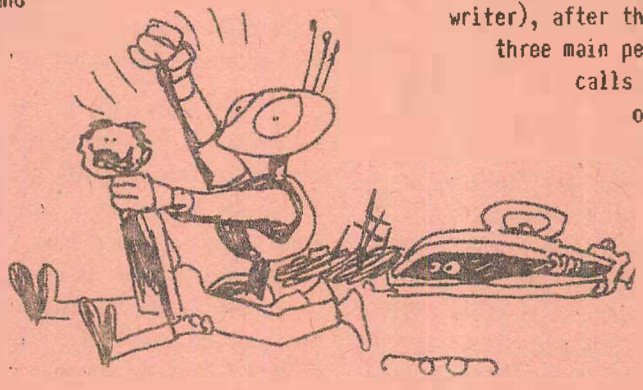
The same narcissism is apparent in Hugh Farnham who finds it impossible to love his wife, but can sleep with Barbara who is but a mirror telling him what a wonderful man he is. Mr. Panshin thinks that Farnham can sleep with Barbara only after he has rejected his wife: it seems to me to be the other way round; his wife rejected him, and for good reasons. At one place he tells his wife that in all the years of their marriage he has never lied to her (and if she won't believe him, he'll slap her). What woman would want to be married to such a pure and saintly man? Why, it is surprising that he has picked up the word "lie".

To return to Stranger in a Strange Land: it is otherwise a megalomaniac fascist fantasy. SF, yes - speculative fascism. It is typical of men who proclaim themselves "elitists" and look disdainfully down upon the purportedly stupid masses, who vehemently deny that "all men are created equal" and then proceed to make men equal by grouping them into classes separated by total and absolute differences. The Nazis had their Aryans and their non-Aryans, the one being supermen, the others subhuman beings not worthy to live: and Mr. Heinlein has his "grokkers" and his "non-grokkers". The first understand fully, absolutely, totally, they are the people who count; the second understand nothing, can do nothing and count for nothing, and may therefore be killed at will and without fear of punishment by the grokkers. When a grokker groks "wrongness" (however "wrongness may be defined) he kills without compunction. When a Nazi groks a Jew, he kills him. It's as simple

as that. Supermanhood requires no effort, costs no pain, doesn't call for long study. As the Czech SF writer Josef Nesvadba puts it in his story "The Absolute Machine": "They want to be acknowledged for their panaceas against infections, they offer infallible means against cancer, prescriptions against aging, the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone. It is as if alchemy would never die, just as spiritism never dies and the human impatience to get quicker to the truth than by long and patient thinking and scientific research."

Mr. Heinlein and his co-workers at filling the heads of the masses with nonsense, offering the benefit of a mystical "knowledge", something for nothing and the religion of the supermen satisfies once more the secret wishes of the rabble who want to become God. They will say "Thou art God" and mean: every bloke his own God (or better: his own demon). If we follow the writers, mankind has thus far developed three great world views: the scientific, the religious, and the animistic. Stranger in a Strange Land forsakes the scientific and the religious and returns to an animistic conception of the world, where every human is his own demon: the knowledge of the subjective and symbolic nature of the mental processes, won hard in long centuries of research, is given up; instead we find a return to an uncritical belief in their literal reality: the final result of the regression apparent in Heinlein's fiction.

This development is not so surprising as it may seem in view of Heinlein's apparent "scientism": we find similar developments in the history of Comte or Swedenborg and indeed, many scientists show a similar strong mystical inclination. Modern scientism is a nominalist philosophy, and nominalism had its origin in the heart of the Middle Ages; its roots are mystical-dialectical. Both nominalism and mysticism claim for reality a directness of experience: the nominalist the outer experience of the senses, the mystic his inner transcendental experience. "Where desire and skepsis meet, mysticism results" Nietzsche noted. In Heinlein's case the desire for a simple world, his inability to accept death as a reality (not surprising in a narcissist), and his doubt about the reality of the outer world all combine to form the view of the mystic who is not able to distinguish between his own wishes and ambitions and the real world, and believes that he can influence the world by thought alone. The long and difficult process of verification is eliminated, the individual retreats into himself and now understands everything "wholly". The stranger is no longer a stranger, nor need he be afraid of the world, for the world is one he created himself. Heinlein's solipsism is however, I think, not the result of an individual who begins with Descartes' "cogito, ergo sum" and cannot proceed further; it is rather the result of a regression, a retreat to the ego brought about by the terrible pressure of civilisation, by an inability to cope with the complexities of the modern world.



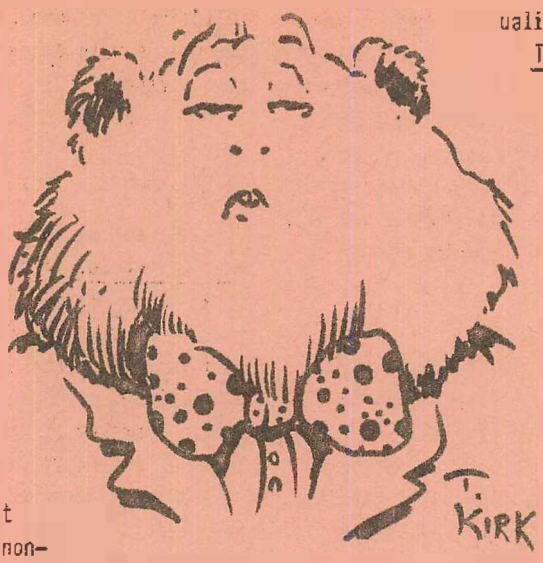
"I'm sorry, I can't accept this."

This escape from civilisation is most apparent in Farnham's Freehold, where it no longer suffices to explain the world as so simple that it can be wholly understood by the Heinlein hero: grokking is something that nobody can do - so what remains? Only the atomic bomb. It alone can make the world simple once again. That which fills us with dread is gladly embraced by the neurotic Hugh Farnham (although he pretends to fear it). The bomb falls, but Farnham doesn't find himself in the desired paradise: to his intense displeasure he has been thrown into a future where a fairly complex civilisation of man-eating negroes exists. But a characteristically unrealistic device, a time machine invented by command in a society without science, brings him back into his present, just before the bombs fall. And after the nightmare intermezzo that is the novel, the "most glorious time of mankind" (as Heinlein once put it in a speech) begins, where a savage can again be a savage, without responsibility or guilt. And although Farnham has vowed to do his best in order that the slave-holding society of the future will never come into existence, he retreats into his womb-hole, doing nothing, which is only logical: for if he did anything, it would only complicate his personal life and might some day lead to the same complex society that the bomb has helped him to escape. In some ways this is nevertheless Heinlein's most realistic book: it shows that "competence" comes easiest if you don't expect much from life.

When one considers Heinlein's fiction one must almost admire the man for the number of ways he has found to escape from civilisation.

But to finally say a few words about the book of which this is supposed to be a review... After some short introductory remarks including, amongst others, some about Heinlein's life and career - which tell you, for instance, that Mr. Heinlein can be very kind with intelligent and understanding people (such as those who think him a great writer or agree with his opinions) but has no patience with stupid people (those differing in their opinions or thinking him a lousy writer), after these remarks Panshin discusses the three main periods of Heinlein's career, which he calls the Period of Influence, the Period of Success and the Period of Alienation. These segments contain plot synopses, including also a criticism of individual stories which can frequently save one the reading of the stories themselves. As synopses they are of some worth, although they most often make make dull reading. Panshin has a tendency to slight some quite good stories and to be too lenient with others. "Goldfish Bowl"

and "Year of the Jackpot" certainly won't find a place in the history of the human mind, but the ideas developed in them are perhaps the proper realm of SF. They are the kind which a writer who is quite impotent when it comes to the description of real human beings and their relationships, and can treat well. These stories will not inflame you to enthusiasm, but neither will they annoy you as do those stories in which you see a writer trying to do something for which he lacks the intellectual and moral muscles. The last part of the book, covering Heinlein's non-fiction, is similar to the first three: much synopsis, little analysis. Considering that Mr. Panshin is a librarian, if I'm not mistaken, it is surprising to discover that he apparently doesn't know there is such a thing as the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, or else doesn't believe in its use: there exists at least one article by Heinlein not covered in Panshin's book: "Ray Guns and Rocket Ships," Library Journal for July 1953.



The analytical part, consisting of chapters headed CONSTRUCTION, EXECUTION and CONTENT, contains a number of notes, some obvious ones, some sound ones, some superfluous ones, a number of naive ones, but there is little effort evident to tie them together into a whole picture. Most valuable of all of Panshin's observations are his remarks on Heinlein's solipsism, but here, as everywhere else, he begins to develop an idea, and where he should continue, he pulls a stop and is unable to go further. Now and again he will say something but will not provide a reason for it.

As for Heinlein's solipsism, the remarks most relevant for our writer appear in Mault's Pre-Animistic Religion (FOLKLORE XI, quoted in S. Freud's Totem and Taboo): "It is almost an axiom with writers on this subject that a sort of Solipsism or Berkleianism (as Professor Sulby terms it as he finds it in the Chila) operates in the savage to make him refuse to recognise death as a fact." Although Mr. Panshin appears to have some acquaintance with philosophy, it might have been of use had he also had some knowledge of psychology. Heinlein is but a modern savage, and his solipsism can best be explained by his narcissism, I believe. The ultimate in narcissism is provided by "All You Zombies," perhaps Heinlein's most meaningful short story. A man impregnates himself, the wonderful result of sexual surgery and time-travel. What could be more satisfying for a narcissist than to be able to love himself bodily, and in another sex at that? He's his own father and mother, daughter and son, sister and brother, created by himself. No need to have intercourse with people who might have inferior genes! And although the tale is basically a homosexual story, overt homosexuality is avoided as it is in Starship Troopers and Stranger in a Strange Land - something that would appear to be very important for many narcissists.

Perhaps I should stress here that I'm discussing objective patterns in Heinlein's fiction, not the character or traits of character of the man himself. Heinlein as an individual doesn't interest me at all. I don't wish to draw any conclusions about him as a human being, both because it would be unfair to a writer still living and because this is an extremely tricky business. I don't have the biographical information needed to verify or falsify any conclusions gained from his work. But one fact of his life seems to be important here: that he is (as far as I know) a childless man. The narcissist normally can love himself again in a son, a being very similar to his father: in a son he can achieve his own personal immortality. It is so understandably and humanly so sympathetic that a childless man should express his belief in immortality and even construct heavens for mankind. But again, as we know at least since Freud, our subconscious is totally unable to recognise death as a fact (that is, its own death: for others, it is always thumbs down), but also intellectually it is a sign of immaturity to deny death. And it is this fear of death that makes Heinlein so much concerned with survival, and concerned in such a trivial way. The savage may care for nothing but survival, but the civilised man has also other interests. art, knowledge for its own sake, politics, economics, his fellow humans, religion. The Heinlein individual cares for little else besides survival and power.

Mr. Panshin writes about Heinlein's survival philosophy (page 168): "Does Man have the right to breed his way across the universe, filling it to the brim? The answer is that we will find out. If we get slapped down, then we didn't have the right." And "the female lead in Glory Road is head of the Twenty Universes just as long as her competence keeps her alive; until then her decisions are right." Further. "He has a set piece - Man is the most ravenous, intolerant, deadly, and successful of the animals in the explored universe."

It is interesting to think these statements through: something Mr. Panshin should have done. From the second sentence it follows that all beings who are alive are also right, and those who are dead, are also wrong. If you want to prove a man wrong, you just have to kill him. From this also follows a moral sophism allowing, indeed asking for, a multiplicity of truth, for there are many men alive, and not all of them use the same methods to keep themselves alive. In view of this I find it somewhat surprising that Mr. Panshin should object to Mr. Tiedman's saying he called Heinlein "an emotional sophist": he didn't say it, of course, but it is implied

in the sentence quoted. It further follows that rightness and wrongness are functions of time, and that young people are longer right than old ones: for they will live longer, even if they do nothing to hasten the deaths of their elders. Finally there will come a time when we will all be wrong, for our very bodies will betray us, kill us and thereby deliver us into the realm of "wrongness", vulgo death. Could it be possible to think up a more trivial moral system? (I shall make nothing of what would happen if we applied Mr. Heinlein's principles to literary criticism - I for one am quite content to throw ink, and not bullets.)

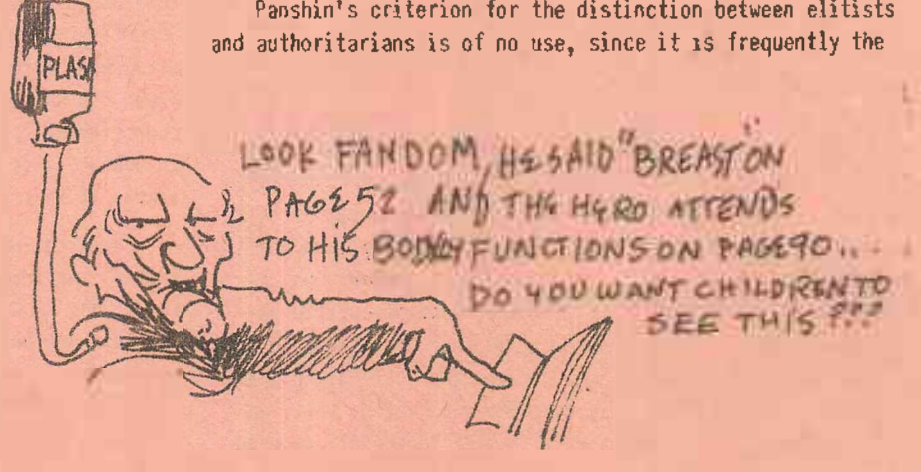
The system is also very convenient in that it leaves the decision about "wrong" and "right" to the future. We will find out, if we have the right.... That's a very popular device among authoritarians, for it puts their measures beyond the control of the individual, since nobody can know what the future will bring. Those moral systems that allow us now to assess rightness and wrongness are indeed more inconvenient for some people. With such a belief you have complete freedom of action - time will "prove" you right or wrong.

Quotation number three, apparently an historical belief (or statement of fact, as Heinlein would have us believe) is actually of a quite different nature, as the American critic Edward M. Maisel has shown in his book An Anatomy of Literature. Sentences such as, for instance, "The Hottentots are best fitted to rule the other races of the Earth" are not statements of fact (although they appear to be): they mean, translated into analytical language: "Hottentots of the world unite to rule the other races!" Such sentences are hortatory. What Heinlein means is that man should be a ravenous, intolerant, etc. animal. What he wishes his readers to believe is that man should go out among the stars and knock all the others down. In this context it is interesting to note that for Heinlein and others like him it is a favorite sport to knock down the sentence that "all men are created equal", a trivial pleasure since they start by misinterpreting this sentence as a statement of fact, which facilitates their task. But I do not know a serious thinker who would claim that men are created equal as to intelligence, talents, property or even such trivial matters as size. And the egalitarians would be pressed if they had to explain precisely why all men should be treated equally: that's a task that can only be solved approximately, and not in the space of an ANALOG editorial. In History, egalitarians have not so much sought to find reasons why all men should be treated equally as they have opposed the different arbitrary criteria by which a basic difference between men was claimed. And that is, I think, wholly sufficient; just look at the grokkers and you know what makes them tick. The same linguistic naivete that causes them to "demolish" the sentence that annoys them thus leads them to present their own wishes (which we know only too well) as literal truth.

"Does Man have the right to breed his way across the universe, filling it to the brim? ... If we get slapped down, then we didn't have the right." If we want to preserve our "right", we must slap the others down. How can a race or species prove that it is more fit to survive than another? Only by killing off the others. That ends all argument. How can the Nazis prove that they are more fit to survive than the Jews? By killing the Jews. The kind of question you ask determines the answer: and your view of the world influences the action. We know that Hitler wanted to kill the German people when he died: not because they were murderers, but on the contrary because they were not murderous enough, because they allowed themselves to be defeated by the "inferior" races. Hitler was much the same crude social Darwinist as Heinlein is, the vulgar Darwinism preached by Heinlein was also a vital ingredient of Nazism, "the survival of the fittest" its gospel. I do not wish to suggest by this that Mr. Heinlein is a Nazi: that he surely is not, but his thought follows the same patterns and those patterns are fascist ones. Much of what we find in Heinlein's book could have been lifted out of Mussolini's Fascist Manifesto.

Panshin wishes us to believe that Heinlein is not an "authoriatarian" but an "elitist." I must confess that I didn't quite find out what he thinks is the difference between them. On page 167 he says only that "elitists" are something "special," and that Heinlein is no "authoritarian"because "His characters ask no one to follow and obey them except from choice." That is a very poor and insuffient distinction First, I think that all authoritarians are also elitists: for how else could they justify their hate for and their secret fear of those people they consider their inferiors? That's what the brown scum are always thinking: that they are something special. And when Mr. Panshin writes "that even the subordinates in Heinlein's military stories are always volunteers" that is more naivete than should be allowed in a critic. Can we really expect a writer who wishes to make propaganda for military life to write that the soldiers had to be dragged to the front line to be slaughtered there? He naturally will write that the boys were eager, that they knew what was good for them and that they volunteered in masses.

Panshin's criterion for the distinction between elitists and authoritarians is of no use, since it is frequently the



case that the authoritarians will claim that their opinions are based not on someone's will, but upon recognization of some higher standard: the will of God, the inevitable forces of history, the "laws of the universe" or reason. But that a man claims rationality for himself doesn't mean that he is really rational. The difference between German Nazis, Russian Stalinists or American cranks, whether or not they edit SF magazines, is one of degree, not of principle. C. S. Lewis's understanding of science may be doubted, but he is absolutely right in asserting that, since science has become the leading force of our time, anybody now will have to claim for his opinions "scientificality": today the cranks march "In the Name of Science."

I must strongly take exception to Panshin's remarks on page 101 (on Stranger in a Strange Land): "If you grant the story's premise, the religion cannot be argued with, just as, if I were to write a story in which Heaven was only open to string savers and mud eaters and actually made things come out that way, my religion would be beyond argument. You can't argue with facts, and Heinlein has made the rightness of his religion a fact."

I'll concede that it would indeed be possible to write a story based on the assumption that, say, the moral worth of a human being is determined by the amount of dirt he carries under his fingernails and that the most dirty reside in Heaven after their deaths, and I do not doubt that if Heinlein were to write such a story he would win yet another Hugo for yet another worthless book, and that some critic would proclaim him a profound moral philosopher. If you just want to write a stupid and trivial story, then surely "anything goes" (and where would the bad writers be without such a belief?). I think, however, that a writer who would seriously advance such ideas is badly in need of psychiatric treatment; and were he just to "play with an idea," he would be wasting my time. I don't want to spend my time reading about "ideas" so trivial, or ideas that even belong to the category of "wooden iron" (but if we grant that murder is a good deed, then it is only reasonable to ask that it be rewarded).

When an author makes a trivial error, such as writing of a Mars with a breathable air, almost all SF critics will jump at him (for that is something that any schoolboy knows), but blunders in more complex fields such as history, psychology, morals or politics will most likely remain unpunished. Perhaps because the critics believe the Campbellian nonsense that "not even the psychologists and psychiatrists know what they are talking about." To define my own position: it is not my wish to prescribe to any author what he should believe or what he should have done: my criticism operates purely in the negative, and if I were asked to find a philosophical basis for it, I would think of Karl Popper who was of the opinion that statements cannot be verified but that they can be shown to be false. Obviously we need more knowledge to say what a thing really is than to say what it is not. Nobody has really said satisfactorily what history is, but we do not need to be able to say what history exactly is to see that it is not a piece of stone. That's trivial, of course, but we can also show false a statement in cases where the answer is not so obvious.

Applied to science fiction, this means that we often cannot be sure that what seems sound in SF is really sound; but we can debunk a good many cases as nonsense. The critic has not only the right, but also the damn duty to examine whether that which is presented by an author as a fact could really possibly be a "fact". Now that facts have become the last irrefutable argument, anybody will claim for his opinion factual existence.

Stalin: "We must accept facts."

The Nazi Secretary Martin Bormann: "The more accurately we observe the laws of nature and life ... so much the more do we conform to the will of the Almighty. The more insight we have into the will of the Almighty, the greater will be our success.

Robert A. Heinlein: (in Farmer in the Sky) "We must love facts for their own sake."

There can be no "facts"of the future: that's the difficulty in Sf. But as I've said, I think that we can safely exclude certain relations from the realm of possible facts.

But to return to Robert Heinlein. I think it of little profit to examine the explicit statements made in his works, in order to try to find out his actual beliefs by a statistical exercise, as James Blish suggests. A writer who thinks so much in terms of cliches as Heinlein does is likely to exchange one cliche for another from story to story. It is a much surer method to examine the very structure of his works. The work of any writer contains patterns underlying his very thinking, patterns that are beyond his conscious control.

van Vogt's The World of Null-A, for instance, clearly shows the authoritarian nature of van Vogt and that van Vogt retains that which he so loudly condemns with his mouth as "identifying and classifying thinking" and "Aristotlean" (a straw man: most of the critics of Aristotle are not fit to brush his shoes). We find it everywhere in his work: in his characterisation, in the background, in the plot. van Vogt is nowhere able to get rid of the cliche he professes to dislike. It is the same with Heinlein.

Formally, Heinlein is a rationalist, one of the breed of shallow American Cartesians. Mr. Panshin tells us that there is but one kind of character in Heinlein (rightly, I think), but this one character appears in three stages. All three stages are strong, healthy and "competent" (de Gaulle said "dumb" instead of "competent" when he characterised the Americans). The most advanced stage knows not only how things

work, but also why; the second know the How but not the Why; the third has to learn the two but learn he will because he has the talent. But since they are all of equal competence, their tabula rasa is finally filled, and filled with the same things: what the most advanced Heinlein individuals think, though often after some error. They are being told by them about the ways of the world - and being rational they cannot help but accept those views for they recognize them as "rational": it is quite clear that in Heinlein's view they have no choice but to embrace those opinions, to obey and to follow them. That's the real reason why Heinlein's heroes don't find it necessary to force anyone to accept their views: the "competent" ones will follow of their own free will and the others, by not following, thereby prove their incompetence: they belong to the non-grokkers, the stupid, the villainous, the "Aunt Nellies"; they do not count and they are already marked down for the slaughterhouse. Their only function is to be done away with so that "competence", "intelligence" and "virtue" may triumph: knock-down fiction. Really, why should the "elitists" ask those groups that are already marked as inferior to follow them? They cannot recognize "facts", and who but the incompetent or the insane would do such a thing? In simple matters such as the law of gravity we don't have any choice: here we cannot choose whether to believe or not. But in more complex matters there are often many interpretations possible. The falsification of Heinlein's books lies less in what his characters say (although I think most of it is of the kind that makes you rub your eyes to make sure that you're not dreaming) but in the lack of adequate opponents and in the way that those opinions are accepted by others - as gospel. Partly this may be due to Heinlein's fascist inclinations, partly it is also a common American tendency. Alexis de Tocqueville has called the American nation the "most Cartesian" of all nations, and indeed one could provide examples enough from SF. The curious notion is rampant that, given equal competence and equal intelligence, people will necessarily have the same goals and will act in the same way, and that therefore all people who don't have the same beliefs as the Americans must be villains or fools or both. That's fatal in writers who so much stress change and yet are so totally understand any set of values different from their own. A German literary critic, who has read a hundred SF novels, remarked that the next-best Mexican is more different from an average American of today than all those SF heroes, some of whom are supposed to live millions of years in the future. He is only too right.

Mr. Heinlein's heroes are unable to differ in their opinions from what filters down to them from the superior father-figures. Rebel they do against a lot of things (and being "competent" men - or having the "omnipotence of thought" as I have called it - they never fail), but they never rebel against the father-figures. This makes, aside from all other consequences, for stories which are not very interesting dramatically: the good writer will present different sets of values, represented by different characters, and have it acted out between them: the bad writers will assume that one is in possession of absolute truth, can never fail (in short, the "competent" man), and that all others are bad, stupid and incompetent. Serious antagonists they cannot be, since they are inferior; they are only there to be knocked down, for that is what delights the children who don't want to be informed: they only want to see "good" triumph over "evil". To know what "evil" is might give them headaches. That's the real reason for the popularity of bad writers like Heinlein.

This blind acceptance of authority, passed off as "rational" acceptance of basically v luntaristic contents, is what makes Heinlein an authoritarian.

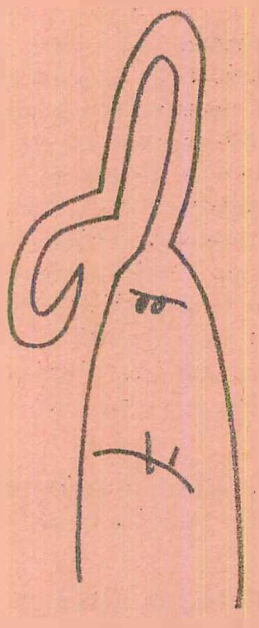
I like them not, those literary Manichees who interpret everything in terms of white and black, of Ormuzd versus Ahriman, good versus evil or intelligence versus stupidity. Most of us are in a life-long position between those extremes: life isn't as simple as "les terribles simplificateurs" (Jacob Burckhardt) make it to be. Such simplifications in a writer are a sign either of intellectual inability or intellectual laziness.

Heinlein's xenophobia, his hysterical anti-communism, the group-thinking in hisstories are all further symptoms.

To say something good about Heinlein, his main asset should be noted here: his ability to draw carefully detailed worlds of everyday realism, no mean achievement, something in which he is still unsurpassed in SF. But logically considered we see that that is necessary to ensure the success of his falcification of life. It really takes no effort to see that Mack Reynolds is a bad writer - or, let's be careful, that he doesn't find it necessary to write well in order to sell his stories - for his characters are just as unbelievable as his milieus. Heinlein, h wever, portrays fairly complex worlds, in order that the explanations given about how these societies function are accepted just as readily as the colorful details. In fact, these are two entirely different things, but most readers don't see it so and accept the opinions Heinlein wishes to sell. When Mr. Panshin writes that the Heinlein hero is "the single, solitary real thing in an essentially unreal world" he should have added that that may appear so to Heinlein himself, but the reader has quite a different impression: that the worlds are real but that the blokes moving in them are four times removed from reality: they are shadows of ghosts of corpses that never lived.

If we want to sum up Heinlein we can say that the most marked pattern in him is one of regression, narcissism, solipsism, escapism and a naive enthusiasm for technology.

What Mr. Panshin discusses as "competence" I



would have discussed under the heading of the "omnipotence of thought": revolutions develop exactly as planned (although no real revolution ever happened that way), indeed they closely resemble putsches: six men fight back an invasion of the USA; an actor can become the ruler of the Earth, and so on. In addition, the characters often have all sorts of wonderful talents; those are of course the tricks of the bad writer who cannot individualise, but they also further stress the "omnipotence of thought".

"My dear, what this ridiculous reality plans with you, that is forced to do without a producer and director – this reality in which the fifth act doesn't happen because a brick happens to fall on the head of the hero – this reality doesn't interest me at all. I open the stage when things are beginning to get interesting, and close it again at the moment I'm proven right."

This passage from the speech of a dramatist in Arthur Schnitzler's DER WEG INS FREIE is a good description of Heinlein's method. Rather than competence, Heinlein presents potency,even omnipotence (sublimated potentia sexualis): nothing can happen to his hero, competence "always proves itself", a grokking baby can survive even in the midst of hell: the universe is there only to "prove" the hero right. The caprices of fortune, injustice, big connections are all excluded, exceptions are confounded with rules, and accidents are turned into essential properties.

One thing should be made clear: it would be stupid to blame any writer for tendencies such as narcissism or the omnipotence of thought. I find the narcissism of a modern aesthete such as Oscar Wilde utterly charming, although the crude narcissism of the engineers repels me: and Arthur Schnitzler, in whose work the omnipotence of thought is marked, is surely one of the greatest modern writers in the German language. No writer can be made responsible for the impulses and tendencies in himself: but he is responsible for the recognition of the consequences of those impulses. The good writer is aware of them and reflects upon them as did Schnitzler in the passage quoted. But whatever Heinlein may know of technology, he has no tendency for introspection and he surely doesn't know himself. If he had been aware of the impulses in himself he would have been a better writer, and intellectually acceptable: but it would have made him without doubt less popular, and he would have won fewer Hugos. For it is precisely his naivete, the wish-nature of his fantasies that ensures their wide popular success.

But even so, Heinlein could still be a writer of some importance, but how is his relationship with language?

Mr. Panshin gives us a few examples:

"The poor degenerate starveling descendants of the once-mighty Builders of Mars can hardly be described as intelligent – except in charity. A half-witted dog could cheat them at cards." (page 144)

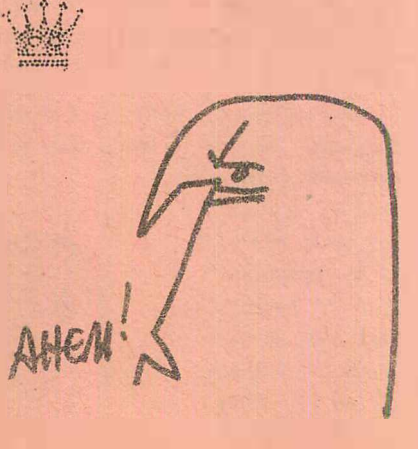
"I want the egg to be just barely dead. If it is cooked solid, I'll nail it to the wall as a warning to others." (page 145)

What banality! What vulgarity! If there existed a Nobel Prize for banality surely Heinlein would be a winner. But I suppose that is what passes for wit among the perpetual adolescents. If that's the best prose Panshin can quote from Heinlein, I fail to see how one can read more than a few pages of it.

Heinlein is a naive author, and Panshin a naive critic: if one were to note all that's naive or false in his book, one would have to write a work nearly as long.

It begins with the new insights science fiction offers. "What if a spaceship full of men with not a woman aboard were to return from the first human trip to the stars and find the Earth destroyed?" Terribly original, isn't it? It tells us as much "about the basic elements of the human spirit" as a story about "Them damn Injuns have murdered our village!"

To say that Heinlein's work contains no comedy is to state the obvious: but why is this so? Can it be surprising that a man for whom mere physical survival is all-important will not show humor? Nevertheless the Schweiks will survive all Troopers, be they Starship or Storm Troopers. And what shall one say to a statement such as: "Heinlein's case for his soldier-citizens would be seriously weakened if he were forced to show them without the benefit of war." (Alexei Panshin, in SPECULATION 20, page 26). What could be easier for any regime than to give the poor soldiers some little exercise? Such as killing yellow devils, black ones, or nasty aliens? A system that is dominated by military thinking will produce its Ludendorffs and Hindenburgs, and it will have war. The poor militarists really need not fear that they'll lose the "benefit of war", that they'll have to work for "lack of anything more constructive"to do. There'll always be a Coventry or a Dresden to bomb, or a Tokyo or some Vietnamese jungle to burn – and people, of course. Is this not enough room for constructive action?



ALEXEI PANSHIN

COMMENT

"When an author makes a trivial error, such as writing of a Mars with a breathable air, almost all SF critics will jump at him (for that is something that any schoolboy knows), but blunders in more complex fields such as history, psychology, morals or politics will most likely remain unpunished."

——Franz Rottensteiner

"Since nobody seems to have understood the novel, I think it proper to offer here a quick explanation."

——Franz Rottensteiner

"In Heinlein's case the desire for a simple world, his inability to accept death as a reality (not surprising in a narcissist), and his doubt about the reality of the outer world all combine to form the view of the mystic who is not able to distinguish between his own wishes and ambitions and the real world, and believes that he can influence the world by thought alone."

——Franz Rottensteiner

"Hitler was much the same crude social Darwinist as Heinlein is... Much of what we find in Heinlein's book could have been lifted out of Mussolini's Fascist Manifesto."

——Franz Rottensteiner

As a critic, Franz Rottensteiner is a monomaniacal idiot——of which sf surely already has a sufficiency. His one big subject is morality, on which he is a self-confident expert, though I gather he also feels himself to be a master of history, psychology and politics. He judges what he reads by how well it agrees with what he Knows to Be True——if it fails his test (or escapes his understanding, if we admit that possibility), he feels free to let fly with whatever name comes first to mind, "fascist" being his evident favorite. He is so self-confident that he is not only free with his allegations, his contempt and his epithets, but allows himself to be careless in his quotations and facts. And as he so rightly says, "Such simplifications in a writer are a sign either of intellectual inability or intellectual laziness." He is so stupified by his mania that hecannot tell the difference between literature and life——one of his favorite allegations ——and can only erratically perceive when someone agrees with him. And the sad result is that, sure as Heaven and John Jeremy Pierce, his sharp observations——which he does occasionally make——get lost in the disorganization, the carelessness, the confusion and the name-calling.

Rottensteiner's main quarrel with me as a critic seems to be that I am so naive that I have not come out and called Heinlein a fascist——or, at the inadequate least, a savage. My disagreement with Heinlein is clearly enough stated for all but the most obtuse in Heinlein in Dimension. But it seems that it isn't enough for a Rottensteiner that I should call the morality of a Starship Troopers "the justification of a sheep-shearer", and summarize one of Heinlein's pet arguments as "what can be gotten away with is 'right'." For a Rottensteiner apparently I must state that I think these are Wrong.

As it happens, I think that morality can only be a peripheral issue in literary criticism——which is one reason I couched my strongest objections to Heinlein in terms of another fiction, Rite of Passage, about the ending of which Rottensteiner says, in contempt, "But in some American circles there seems to be a growing tendnecy to 'solve' a problem by exterminating it," just as though that had not been the point of the book. But again, I had no one paint the message on the side of a barn, so Rottensteiner managed to misunderstand.

But literature is not life. To reason, as Rottensteiner does, that if Heinlein's characters had to function in our world rather than in their own they would have to be beasts to get things their own way, and that Heinlein tailors his worlds for the confort of his characters and puts them in the hands of infallible father figures against whom there is no need to rebel——all of which is largely true——and then to conclude from this that Heinlein is necessarily an authoritarian and a fascist, not to mention a narcissist, is specious. Heinlein is a propagandist, putting the best case he can for what he believes. His cases may not be ferfectly sound. His fictional worlds may be imperfectly imagined. But in the real world Heinlein in not a fascist and it is irresponsible, at best, for Rottensteiner to suggest that he is. Heinlein is an elitist——so I believe; regardless of what Rottensteiner says, Heinlein has not declared himself to be one in so many words——but while all authoritarians may be elitist, not all elitists are authoritarians. In the real world, Heinlein has stated that he believes conscription of troops is slavery, and that he would not jail anyone, enslave anyone, or suppress information——and this is reported in Heinlein in Dimension, though Rottensteiner has not cared to take it into account. It is hardly the faith of an authoritarian.

However, even if Heinlein were the most blatant sort of authoritarian and fascist, it still would be no grounds for criticizing his fiction as literature. If it were, we would throw the Odyssey on the dungheap tomorrow, and with it every other literary work at odds with our present perfected morality. Or Mr. Rottensteiner's present perfected morality.

But Mr. Rottensteiner's inability to distinguish between literature and life goes deeper. He quotes me as saying, "It seems to me that there are three ways in which a character with freedom of action can operate. He can operate within the framework of society, whether or not he is in full accord

Continued on page 17

aRChive

The Robert A. Heinlein Collection of the University of California at Santa Cruz Library

The first encounter came almost completely by chance. My wife and I were passing through Santa Cruz on our way from San Luis Obispo to San Francisco via Highway One when I recalled reading in a fanzine that Heinlein had donated his manuscripts and papers to the University of California library. Additionally, the campus itself was of interest to me architecturally, so we decided to make a quick stop, spend a few minutes inquiring about the Heinlein collection, (university libraries are often inaccessable to non-students, and having no previous experience with UCSC I had little hope of even seeing any of the papers), and then an hour or so touring the campus before resuming the drive to the City. Hopefully, I'll have another chance to see the campus on my next trip to Santa Cruz As it was, passing through from the main entrance to the library, we were impressed.

The girl at the main desk directed us to the Special Collections section of the library, "On the second floor, across the bridge." The young librarian there was enthused, friendly, helpful and all sorts of unexpected things. The Heinlein papers, as it turned out, were accessable beyond my wildest dreams. She told us that we could look at anything in the collection, but had to do it in the reading room immediately in front of us. I asked my wife to make haste for the bookstore to buy a notebook and pencil, (they don't allow the use of any sort of pens there) and settled down for a long stay.

The library doesn't yet have all of Heinlein's work. The collection contains about 95 of his "works"——manuscripts of novels, short stories, non-fiction articles and movie scripts, dating clear back to "Life-Line," as well as letters, reviews of his work, copies of all foreign and American editions of his books, and other memorabilia. He continues to provide the library with a "big box of material about twice a year," to add to the collection. They will also eventually have, "His notebooks, 'idea-box', the rest of his manuscripts and all of his letters." Of equal interest are the inventory sheets Heinlein compiled to accompany each shipment of material.

Paul C. Crawford

The first thing we were told was that the library had the original manuscript of Stranger In a Strange Land. "That's cool," I enthused, "but there are probaby a few other things I'd rather see first." Noting the length of my hair, the librarian probably assumed my only purpose was paying homage to the sacred hippie document. Slightly disappointed, the second thing she told us was that Heinlein had written a list of the items donated to the library, that I should first look at it, then tell her which manuscripts I wanted to see, giving her the number which had been assigned by Heinlein to each.

That inventory sheet has got to be as interesting to any serious Heinlein fan as anything he's written. Besides listing the manuscripts donated, it contains comments on many of the works, relating circumstances and anecdotes surrounding their writing, as well as bibliographic information concerning dates of writing and sale, working titles, and the like. Heinlein designated each manuscript an "opus," and assigned numbers indicating the chronological order in which they were written or compiled——his collections of stories were included in addition to the individual works. (The story, "The Green Hills of Earth," is opus 48; the collection of the same title is opus 87.) The three lists, corresponding to the three shipments made to the library thus far, make very interesting reading, and obviously contain much valuable information.

Realizing that I couldn't possibly copy down all I wanted in the time I had, I inquired about the possibility of Xeroxing the lists. Unfortunately, the librarian couldn't dig it, since the lists were for the library, and Heinlein had apparently not intended them for general publication or use. So I decided to copy the titles and opus numbers of the collection, intending t later organize them into a list arranged by opus, or date written, since the lists themselves were in no particular order and were somewhat of a hassle to use. That research and subsequent reorganization provided some rather interesting results.

Thumbing through the lists many times, the highest number encountered was 156, for The Past Through Tomorrow. Once the works in the library's collection had been arranged by opus number I compared that list to one previously compiled, of Heinlein's known published work, (including the work in the bibliography of Heinlein in Dimension as well as several items Panshin omitted). I discovered that while there were 75 blank spaces in the list by opus number, there were only 35 works in the bibliography for which I had not found opus numbers. That would seem to indicate that Heinlein has written around 40 other works, some probably published under pseudonyms not generally known, others possibly remaining unpublished.

In themselves, the opus numbers assigned provide interesting information. "Life-Line" is opus 2, indicating that it might not be Heinlein's first story, as is widely supposed; opus 1 was not in the library collection. "Free Men," first published in 1966 is opus 153; The Worlds of Robert A. Heinlein, is opus 44, written slightly after Rocket Ship Galileo. Stranger is opus 121 (published in 1961); opus 122 is Double Star, 123 is Time for the Stars (1956).

Included in the inventory were two rather obscure items: "Poor Daddy," (op. 59), and "Cliff and the Calories (op. 82). They are two non-sf short stories written in the first-person female form which were published in SENIOR PROM magazine (no dates given); Heinlein commented that he had written several such stories and hoped to

collect them into a book to be published under a female pseudonym.

One part of the collection which was not accessible was the file on the Puppet Masters. The actual course of events is not clear from Heinlein's comments, but it seems that sometime during negotiations for the sale of the film rights on the book it was rather blatantly plagiarized. Apparently a chain of increasingly vitriolic letters ensued, as well as a lawsuit which eventually resulted in an out-of-court settlement. The inventory sheet instructed the library to keep the file from the public, the student body, and virtually everyone without written permission as long as Heinlein, any members of his immediate family, or any of the people mentioned in the letters lived. Needless to say, the entire affair must have been a rather painful experience.

Though the majority of my time at the library was spent studying the inventory sheets, I did also examine a few items of the collection: Heinlein's original chart for the Future History; the Stranger file, containing among other things five buttons relating to the book ("Thou art God," "Let's Grok," etc.), and an engraved card stating, "Mr. Jubal Harshaw is Proud to Announce the Discorporation of Valentine Michael Smith to be Followed by a Community Grok ---Admission by Invitation Only." Also saw the manuscript of Stranger---the first draft contained some sex scenes which were somewhat softened for the book, even though they are quite tame by today's standards. The manuscript for Podkayne of Mars included an alternate ending where Poddy was killed.

I could go on about the collection for quite awhile, but I've been relating most of this from memory because of an unfortunate lack of notes, and the longer I do that, the greater the chance of inaccuracy.

The main purpose of this article is to turn on as many fans as possible to the fact that the significant work of a long-time favorite author is available for study as it has never been before, without the probability of endangering Heinlein's highly valued privacy. Go and see it for yourself. The students at UCSC were fortunate enough to have Heinlein speak at the school in the Spring, 1969 quarter. The librarian said he would probably appear again this fall.

So my first visit to the UCSC library was a kid-in-the-candy-store scene. Not knowing what to expect I came away with more questions than answers. The next encounter will doubtless be by plan and with great preparation.

WANTED---a copy of SFR #32 in good condition. Will pay $1 and send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Phyrne Bacon, 3101 NW 2nd Av., Gainesville, Fla. 32601

COMMENT continued from page 15

with it. He can reject society and strike out on his own. Or he can arbitrarily run society to suit himself. Heinlein has written of characters who do each of these things." (My italics added.) And then he says that he is troubled because I (supposedly) "discuss the third possibility as if it offered a real and not just an ideal alternative. What can only be conceived is here considered to be possible in the real world." Must Rottensteiner impose his fantasies on everything he reads? It seems he must. Why else would he juxtapose quotations from Martin Bormann, Josef Stalin, and a character in a Heinlein novel, their deadly similarity being that all three love facts?

Now for Mr. Rottensteiner's cruelest cut: He says, "Considering that Mr. Panshin is a librarian, if I'm not mistaken, it is surprising to discover that he apparently doesn't know that there is such a thing as the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, or else doesn't believe in its use. there exists at least one article by Heinlein not covered in Panshin's book: 'Ray Guns and Rocket Ships', Library Journal for July 1953." Frankly, I am at a loss to explain this particular sneer, except that it is Rottensteiner's habit when he thinks he has a coup. It is one thing to call Heinlein a fascist. Minor---I forgive him. It is almost nothing that he calls me naive. I swallow hard, but I forgive him that, too. I even forgive him calling me a librarian. But goodness gracious golly me, to imply that I don't know about Reader's Guide. Oh---that does hurt. The answer is that the article is mentioned---mentioned? discussed---on page 181 of Heinlein in Dimension, and is listed in the biblography on page 186, both times credited to its original appearance in the November 1952 issue of the School Library Association of California Bulletin---which is, I'm afraid, not indexed in Reader's Guide. I'm led to the suspicion that Mr. Rottensteiner is a careless reader as well as an idiot.

What the full import of Rottensteiner's polemic is intended to be, I confess I am not sure. It is ill-organized to the point of incoherence. What I take from it is that Rottensteiner believes Heinlein to be naive, a fascist, a narcissist, a suppressed homosexual, an authoritarian, a militarist and a savage. Rottensteiner concludes with the exhortation---"Is this not enough room for constructive action?" Again, I am not positive what he means. Perhaps it is to punish the blunders he detects in history, psychology, morals and politics.

Oh, hell. Somebody send him the addresses of Pierce and Pickering.

"Blockbuster" did you say, Geis, or was the word "blockhead"?

WANTED---about five extra hours per day Will pay reasonable price. Deal with Devil considered. Contact R.E. Geis, P.O. Box 3116, Santa Monica, Cal. 90403.

MONOLOG

by the editor

+ BALLANTINE BOOKS Spring list of fantasy and sf includes: The High Place by Cabell, At the Edge of the World by Lord Dunsany (Feb. and March, respectively), Lud-in-the-Mist by Hope Mirlees (March), Phantastes by George MacDonald (April), The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath by H.P. Lovecraft (May), Zothique by Clark Ashton Smith (June), The Island of the Mighty by Evangeline Walters (July), The Shaving of Shagpat by George Meredith (July); the sf is Starbreed by Martha deMey Clow (Feb.), Phoenix by Richard Cowper (Feb.), The Ship Who Sang by Anne McCaffrey (March), Timepiece by Brian N. Ball (April), A Thunder of Stars by Dan Morgan & John Kippax (May), Day Million by Frederik Pohl (June), Tiltangle by R.W. Mackelworth (June), Great Short Novels of Science Fiction edited by Robert Silverberg.

John Brunner, Poul Anderson, Frederik Pohl and Hal Clement are getting multibook promotions in special Ballantine display racks.

+ Betty Ballantine personally looked into Mrs. Florence Jenkins' strayed book order and set it to rights; Florence has reordered and is content.

+ Charles Platt writes. "I have taken over editorship of NEW WORLDS and hope to incline it a bit more toward sf than it has been in the last six months."

Charles also mentioned, in another letter , that NEW WORLDS is breaking even now. Fans who are interested should take advantage of the NEW WORLDS special subscription offer on page 27 of this issue of SFR.

+ Larry W. Propp writes: "There is a newly formed Science Fiction Society at the University of Illinois." Anyone interested write Larry W. Propp, 1010 West Green, Apt. 335, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

+ Theodore Sturgeon's new book, Godbody, originally to have been an Essex House release, will now be issued by Brandon House. Larry Shaw is now editing Brandon House. No exact release date is available yet on Godbody.

Brandon will be publishing a Philip Jose Farmer book in March. Title: Love Song; a serious psychological novel...not sf or fantasy.

Larry Shaw is interested in seeing new manuscripts.

+ Alexei Panshin is starting a new column in FANTASTIC called "Science Fiction in Dimension."

+ Harlan Ellison is scripting a movie for 20th Century Fox titled HARLAN ELLISON'S MOVIE. It is not likely that the title will remain unchanged.

+ Franz Rottensteiner is looking for a copy of a 1962 paperback (or the earlier Little, Brown edition), Polish Mind (and this is not a "Polish" joke). His address: Felsenstrasse 20, A-2762 Ortmann, AUSTRIA.

+ SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB selections for June are The Black Corridor by Michael Moorcock ($1.49) and One Step From Earth a collection of 8 stories by Harry Harrison ($1.49).

SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB selections for July are Beyond The Beyond, a collection of six novellas by Poul Anderson ($1.69) and A Princess of Mars by Edgar Rice Burroughs, the first of the Mars series ($1.49).

+ Robert Whitaker reports that Richard Bergeron has announced that the special issue of WARHOON, so long in preparation, has reached 224 pages!

+ It is my understanding that all contracted-for books for Essex House have been paid for. Not all of the completed mss, however, have been judged appropriate for Brandon House and some may never be published.

My own recent book, tentatively titled The Lust Gods, was one of the favored few. That means it will be published.

+ Terry Carr memos from Ace: "The next real standout I'll be publishing will be Bob Tucker's first new sf novel in, uh, how many years? Anyway, it's titled The Year of the Quiet Sun and it'll be the SF Special for May, and it's one of the most powerful novels he's written."

I'll try to get Piers Anthony to review it.

+ Lee Hoffman news notes: "The Mysterious Robert E. Toomey, Jr. and I have just sold a collaboration to Damon Knight for ORBIT."

+ Bill Rotsler writes: "Watch for my 6pp comic strip THE ADVENTURES OF ACIDMAN in a forthcoming ADAM STAG HUMOR. One of the best/funniest strips I've done. In the same issue (I think it'll be the same , anyway) will be THE KONG PAPERS that Harlan Ellison & I collaborated on at the St. Louiscon ..."

+ Speaking of Bill Rotsler...he keeps sending me artwork, more than I can possibly use, with instructions to pass it around. So the previous offer still stands—anyone wanting Rotsler artwork and cartoons should send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope...to me, Richard E. Geis. I deal. I'm a pusher.

+ Bruce R. Gillespie, editor and publisher of SF COMMENTARY, now lives at: P.O. Box 245, Ararat, Victoria 3377, AUSTRALIA.

+ Darrell Schweitzer wants NEW WORLDS #s 153, 157, 158, 161, 165, 166, 169, 171. He will pay 75¢ each. His address: 113 Deepdale Road, Strafford, Pa. 19087.

Next time I bill you at classified ad rates.

+ Charles Platt needs material for NEW WORLDS. He buys only first British rights, pays on publication, does not mind if material has previously appeared in U.S. or abroad. No taboos. Fiction: up to 10,000 words. Articles: up to 3,000 words. Short material especially needed. Report in one week.

MONOLOG CONTINUED ON PAGE 22


SEASON OF THE
R.I.P.
ESSEX HOUSE
RENT
RES
IN
HELL
RENAL SCIENCE
T. KIRK
(AFTER ANOTHER IDEA BY D. GEIS)

OFF THE DEEP END.....

In the course of checking up to see what Ted White was doing at Ultimate (one has to watch the problem cases, you know), I discovered the second half of a serial by Jack Vance in FANTASTIC: Emphyrio. Shortly thereafter a book arrived from Doubleday (a problem publisher: i.e., one who has bounced the four novels I showed it)—and lo! Emphyrio. Since I had to pass the hardcover edition along in a week (SFWA is a hard master) and am a slow reader, I finagled somewhat: I read the first half of Doubleday and the last half of Ultimate.

Jack Vance came to my attention late in 1950. A new magazine was starting up and I happened to obtain a copy. This was sheer fortune, since my pecuniary resources at the time were chronically dubious. This issue was all right; nothing remarkable, but satisfactory. Can't expect every editor to have top taste, after all. The cover said something-or-other Science-Fantasy Fiction or some such.

The last story was an excerpt from a novel—and that story lighted my bulb with double voltage. It was a fantasy by a writer I hadn't been aware of before, but the type of fantasy I reveled in. It seemed that a man of far future, waning Earth wanted to win the favor of a lovely witch, so agreed to perform for her one small mission. To recover the stolen half of a mervelous tapestry from evil Chun the Unavoidable. He went, protected by various magics—but Chun proved, indeed, to be unavoidable, and in due course our hero's eyeballs graced Chun's ocular robe. And the witch was granted the return of two threads of her golden tapestry. At such time as she might succeed in buying the remainder, one tread at a time, with eyeballs, she would be able to return home.

That episode was from The Dying Earth.

When, years later, I had the money to search out back issues, I began my pursuit of The Dying Earth. I could not remember the name of the author and did not know the publisher. The magazine with the excerpt had been lost—one of the hazards faced by juvenile readers whose families don't quite understand trashy literature—so I had nothing but memory to go on. And what a memory—it was a dream, a yearning, a seeking after the Grail. The Dying Earth, the dying earth—what fabulous mysteries lay therein! If only I could capture it.

The excerpt had been in the first issue of something. Was it THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FANTASY FICTION? And there had been a full page ad for the book on the back. I collared the proprietor of a back issue shop, after ransacking his visible files. The Dying Earth? No, he hadn't heard of it, but if I could tell whom it was by...? And I couldn't. But I described the magazine, and we went into the back room.

He had the issues. Piles and piles of THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION! Back we coursed, through 1952, 1951, 1950... and to the first issue. And the geniw who watches over fans and changes reality at the crucial moment so that they must needs be disappointed was alert that time, for the back of that issue was blank. Thus, for tedious and merciless years was my quest stifled. My only link to that wondrous novel had been erased, and no one in the world knew of the significance of The Dying Earth except me. Shed a tear for me, for I was young then and did not deserve the punishment I now deserve.

Now it can be told: the evil genie was named damon knight, and he transported that ad and that excerpt to a magazine he conjured for that malevolent purpose: WORLDS BEYOND —Science Fantasy Fiction. After about three issues he abandoned it, for the damage was done and he had other fans to frustrate. By the time my later completism as a collector unearthed those ensorceled issues, I had already found independently the Hillman Periodical 1950 paperback edition of Jack Vance's The Dying Earth. I was a private in the US Army at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, then, pulling the weeds that my college B.A. in Creative Writing qualified me for by Army reckoning. Damon Knight had resurfaced at the helm of IF magazine, covering his traces nicely. (These genies are clever.) Had I But Known...

Anyway, I finally had that novel. (Not every story has such a happy ending.) I have enjoyed Vance's subsequent fiction, but never again has the wonder approached that of The Dying Earth. To Live Forever was a nice straight SF novel, Son of the Tree was good routine adventure, The Languages of Pao had a fascinating theme but could have been so much more, The Dragon Masters—ah, there he scored again, as he did with a couple of fantasies in ASTOUNDING SF. But recently—well, he seems to have succumbed to the conventional sort of thing Doubleday prefers in

a column

By PIERS ANTHONY

its heart, and it is too bad.

In 1963, in the course of correspondence with a fan, Dick Tiedman, I ran abruptly into fanaticism. He was a Vance man. Had I, he inquired all a-quiver, read Big Planet? Well no, I—and there it was in the mail, courtesy him. What did I think of it? Wasn't it the finest novel ever? Had I ever seen such—and I was revealed by my so-so enthusuasm as something of a boor. Well, he would educate me. Arrived a 5,000 word essay in pen on Vance: his greatness. After some discussion, I edited this, typed it, and solicited YANDRO, who agreed to publish it.

In the course of that labor I wrote to Vance, since Dick was shaking so strenuously at the very thought of contacting the great man that the paper was disintegrating. But alas, I lacked Vance's address, and, being merely middle-aged then, did not know how to obtain it. But a visiting femmefan gave me the address of Sam Moskowitz, to whom I wrote to ask for advice. SaM did not know the address either, but suggested that I try the publisher of some of Vance's stories, who might forward a letter. I did, and they did, and soon I was explaining to him about the unquenchable avidity of fans toward a favored author. (These days, ironically, neofans feel it their duty to inform me of the facts of such avidity—though "favor" is not necessarily the term they apply. And I try to explain... well, never mind.) Vance's reply came promptly from, as I recall, Tahiti. He answered our questions courteously, tracing the influences on his own writing, etc., and Tiedman modified his essay accordingly. I believe Dick and Jack exchanged letters thereafter, and I am pleased to think that at least once in my evil life I accomplished such a fragment of good.

Eventually Tiedman's essay, expanded to about 15,000 words and with a bibliography compiled by Robert Briney, was published as a separate entity by Robert & Juanita Coulson. The print run was 225 copies. Since it is now out of print, a few selections may be in order:

"In surveying the best writers of science fiction, comparitively few critics would place Jack Vance on a level with Robert Heinlein, Arthur Clarke or Isaac Asimov. This is astonishing, for Vance is one of the field's most accomplished stylists...His stories are attended by a very personal and unmistakeble sentence construction, rhythmic variety, and extravagant imagery—all controlled with great technical dexterity.....Vance wants everything—plot, social structure, characterization—to spring into form by its own interior life.....The reader sees and senses, and is shown rather than told.....The stories are bedecked with rare words, giving them their sometimes exotic idiom and rich texture... Probably Vance's greatest weakness is plot improbabilities... sometimes the threads of the design are pulled into a pattern by incidents of a too happy fortuitousness...

"It is this baroque verve and effusion in the conjuring up of imaginative detail work that gives the novels their interior resonance and continuity of expression."

Clear now?

In 1966 I spent a day visiting Keith Laumer, whose physical locale is not so far removed from mine. Now you might imagine that Keith and I would not get along well, for Reteif is not my style and morbid sexuality is not his. But I enjoyed the event very much , and picked up much helpful advice from him. (He never returned the visit, however, so maybe he felt otherwise.) In the course of that discussion he expressed admiration for the work of Vance. This surprised me—not that there should be two Vance fans in the world, but that he should be the other one, for I saw precious little similarity between their styles of writing. But of course I was nearing my senior years then, and was not very smart. I remarked that I found Vance's dialogue wooden. "Not wooden; carved," Keith said. And you know, he had something. Vance is carved, and beautifully; no other writer has quite that touch. The Blue World was the then-current novel, and it was carved. And I know Vance doesn't have to write that way, for his novel Parapsyche in AMAZING in 1958 was quite unlike his others. There was no woodwork in it, and I would never have recognized it as Vance had his name not been attached. (Even so, I have my doubts.)

When it comes down to it, I think Dick Tiedman's enthusiasm is not so far off the mark. Jack Vance is a fine crafts-

man, perhaps one of the top dozen writers in the field, in basic capability and finesse.

What, then, of Emphyrio?

I have to confess to disappointment. All the Vance assets are there, yes—but they are the same assets, handled in much the same way as ever, and that grows tiresome. And the same weaknesses remain. Vance has not improved over the years, he has merely intensified, magnifying the good and the bad.

The novel opens with a flashforward: a man is being interrogated, his brain laid open literally, and jelly on it. He tells his story—and the novel proper begins. It is all nicely done, and if you like Vance you have to like this one, for there is nothing cheap about the detail writing. But—I waited in vain for the story to catch up to the flashforward. At the conclusion of the novel I still hadn't found it. Obviously the narrative had passed it somewhere. Now it might seem hard to overlook a scene in which a man's skull is cut open to reveal the living brain, he being conscious at the time...but evidently I had done it.

I searched, and finally found the place. Page 58, August FANTASTIC, 1969. (Remember, the hardcover was on its rounds already.)

Dugald said, "Now we shall proceed."
The inquiry was over.

That was it. Two sentences embracing a damned ellipsis minus the dots. You mousetrapped me, Jack Vance, and I am a vindictive mouse. There was no need for that scene to be excerpted and placed at the beginning. No artistic need, I mean; naturally it was the sort of begin-with-the-tiger-in-mid-air-above-the-screaming-girl narrative hook that editors think is great literature. But you, Vance—you know better. You are an experienced writer, not a craphappy editor. You bowed to expediency and indulged in hack technique.

Three stripes on the typing finger with an oily ribbon, and don't do it again, Jack.

And now that I'm in a bad mood, let me point out that you used a name—Jacinth—from an earlier novel—To Live Forever—, changing only the spelling marginally. Sloppy.

And you repeat yourself; pp. 43-44, Aug. FANTASTIC, has the girl tell our hero that her father will denounce him to the authorities soon, though he had promised not to. Page 47 we run that touching scene through again. Careless.

These are quibbles, but they do suggest that your mind was not completely on your work. And the novel itself is basically a cheap adventure: disadvantaged boy grows up to overthrow the repressive system. What an original notion!

Okay, Vance—cards on the counter. Is Emphyrio hackwork, done because Doubleday will now buy the name of Vance without peering into the mouth? Or has Dick Tiedman overrated your general ability and craftsmanship, and this is the best you can do?

For all that, Emphyrio is a perfectly readable entertainment with, as I said, all those nice Vancean touches that I can appreciate in my dotage. Too bad.

MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

+ Print run for this issue of SFR: 875.
BACK ISSUES OF SFR AVAILABLE. #28, 29, 30, 31, 34.
#31 is down to twenty eight copies.
#32 and 33 are sold out!

+ NEXT ISSUE SFR WILL FEATURE:
"Speculations On Fan Mortality" by Bob Shaw.
"Beer Mutterings" by Poul Anderson
"Noise Level"by John Brunner
"IIIYOU" by Wiley Nance Jackson
"Who's Afraid of Phil K. Dick?" by Paul Walker
AND the first 7 pages of a cartoon "war" between Tim Kirk and Mike Gilbert.
Plus the usual (koff-koff) fine artwork and cartoons, reviews, letters and editorials and such. ALSO BANKS MEBANE!

+ Now for a couple interesting late-late letters.

From Robert E. Toomey, Jr.: "Recently an elderly and probably well-meaning woman asked me if I was a student.

"'No,' I said, 'I'm a writer.'

"She looked incredulous, but finally said,'What do you write?'

"'Wrongs,' I told her. 'I wear a white hat.'

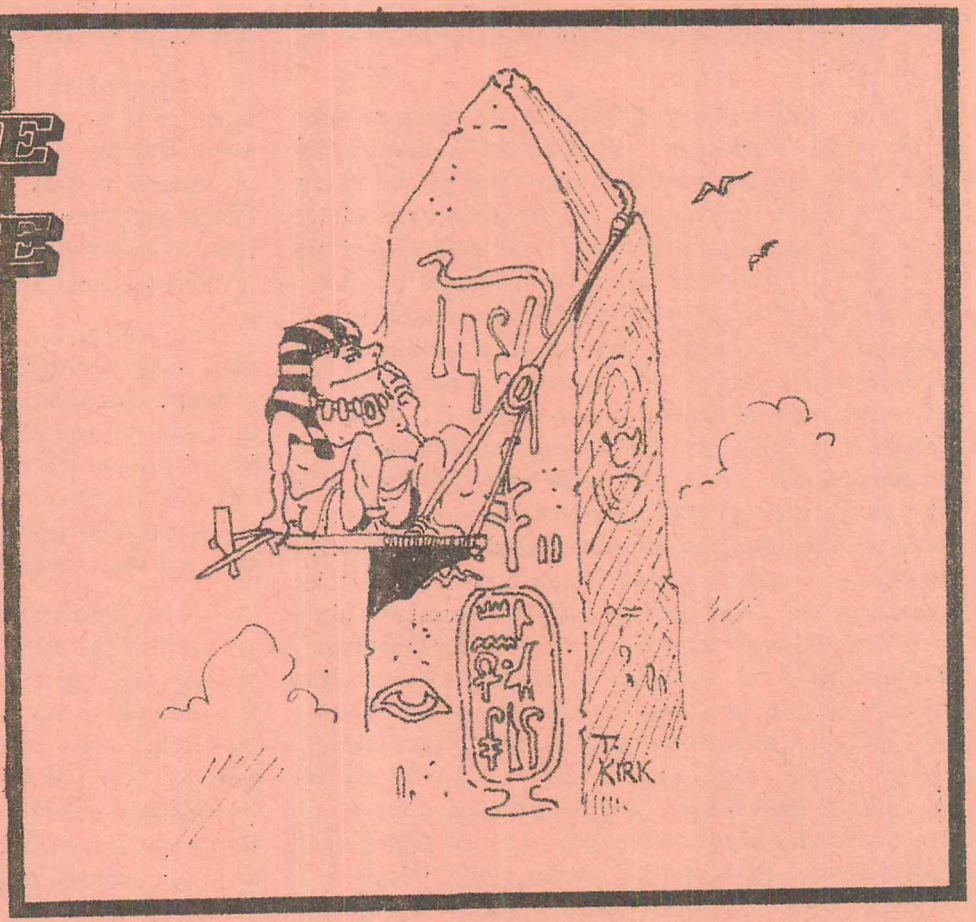
"I believe Alex Panshin has wronged Piers Anthony in challenging his right to refer to himself as one of the "youngest and turkiest of the young turks." In fact, Alex and I have very nearly come to blows about it several times.

"You are only as young as you feel, and I think it is to any qualified Anthony observer that Piers really IS among the youngest and turkiest of our young turks, in indeed he is not actually leading the whole pack.

"I have recently reread Frederic Brown's Rogue in Space. Far from being one of the trashiest science fiction novels ever written, as someone has said, it is undoubtedly one of the best, as someone else has said. The book is a charmingly brutal love story between a cold-bloodedly murderous criminal and a sentient planetoid who happens to be God. The planetoid loves the criminal Crag, who has taught it by his presence that being alone is not a necessity. And it is perfect love, as Max Shulman has defined it: all desire and no fulfillment. After resurrecting Crag from the dead (he dies, along with his girl friend and the story's heavy, on page 81) the planetoid plights its troth and is rejected. Crag goes away to resume his criminal activities again, aided by his heavy metal left hand, which

MONOLOG CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

THE SQUARE NEEDLE



DEAN A. GRENNELL

The helmsman of this august periodical has indicated that he would direct a favorable gaze upon a column, could I but be prevailed upon. I muttered yah-sure, and continued munching pretzels The automatic demurrers in such instances are that (1) I hardly ever can think of anything to say in a fanzine column in these latter days and (2) I have sweet Fanny Adams worth of time in which to smack them onto paper if anything perchanced to occur to me. Moreover, until fairly recent times, I couldn't think of a title for a column which would fit into the Geistalt of the 'zine. Having surfaced from an attack of eudaemonia with the above title in my teeth, together with a sardine answering to the name of Albert, half the fight was won.

The readership may's well be (if you'll excuse the expression) privy to at least one detail of the pact between publisher and columnist. It is less than probable that this will constitute a regular column. However, with luck it may strive to become an irregular column.

At the keel-laying of a new column, being an old faan, and tired, the memory harks back to other days, other columns, other 'zines. There was one called "The Murky Way," which had its inception in Joel Nydahl's VEGA and, with the dissolution of that medium, went on to have more titles shot from under it than almost any given Civil War General had horses. By the middle 'fifties, TMW had become a sort of plague-carrier to its hoard of suspended hostes, few of whom survived more than an installment or two. I have the conviction that it is bad luck to be superstitious, but when I inflicted it upon yet one more kindly fan editor, only to have him commit suicide after publishing the first installment, I bowed to the fickletude of fate and retired that particular title for all of the time that is yet to come.

Any more, I would not even risk sending an installment of TMW to those Ziggurats of publishing perseverance and punctuality, Buck and Juanita Coulson. After all, if YANDRO stopped materializing in Box 4007 of Covina-By-The-Freeway, I'd not be able to loan my copy of each new issue to Dave Locke so that he could read his column and reap his ego-boo.

Happily, there were other columns that lasted for a while: "Grenadean Etchings" in Gregg Calkins' OOPSLA! and "The Skeptic Tank" in Bill Danner's STEFANTASY.

As noted, I consider it bad luck to be superstitious but, being a practical sort of bloke, I must confess to honoring a couple of no-nos for no better reason than that the demonstrated consequences of flouting the three sisters across their withered dewlaps is more expensive than the scant solace of taking pride in being free-minded. E.g., I no longer send get-well cards to friends who are sickened or laid low by injury. I think it's a nice, warm-hearted practice, but some time toward the latter 'fifties, there were about four or five consecutive instances, in fairly close succession, when I sent a cheery card to someone who was, supposedly, enbedded with something safe and minor—only to have them shuffle off within a day or so of receiving the card. Having never had any friends to spare, I'm inordinately solicitous of the few on hand. Coincidence? —could be, but it's not a bet I'm prepared to make. On a few rare occasions, I've toyed with the thought of sending get-well cards to people (I think the last time was in

early '63) but was not sure if it would work on anti-friends, especially since they weren't sick at the time and, if it wasn't going to work, I didn't care to waste the two-bits for the card.

Another albatrossic contrataboo that I choose to honor is the monthly purchase of a thing currently known as ANALOG. Having been buying every bloody issue off the stands since the latter 'thirties and, having reached the point at which I kept reminding myself that I had not read a single thing in it for many a patient month, I decided that the time had come to desist from buying it any more, thereby releasing a few odd coins each month which could be better spent in riotous living. So the then-new issue appeared and, with mild misgivings, I coolly ignored it. I felt some sense of unease when the following issue appeared and considerably more unease a bit later when my personal world began coming spectacularly unrivetted in all directions. Somewhere along the line, amid the ominous roar of collapsing walls and plummeting bricks, I wandered into a Red Owl supermarket and, after clearing past the checkstand, glanced at their newsrack and spotted a copy of the very issue of ANALOG that I had snooted in so cavalier a manner when it was fresh. In fact, they had that one and the following——still current——issue as well. So I bought both of them and, within a few days, the sun broke through the overmurk and I began a fairly lengthy and arduous recovery from the slings, arrows, et cetera. I've not missed a copy since. I still don't read the tedious bloody thing—— thanks be to The Powers, that doesn't seem to be required ——but buy it, I do, with a snarly on my lips and black rebellion in my heart, deeming it a reasonable bargain to lay out sixty cents a month to keep tar in the caulking and rats from the hold.

Being a cash customer, I feel entitled to a few small carps and perhaps a bluegill or two. To me, ANALOG represents a classic instance of the evils of inbreeding. Somewhere back there, writers must have stopped writing the sort of stories they wanted to write and commenced writing the sort of stories they thought Campbell wanted to buy, judging as best they could from the examples of the stories he had bought and published. As a result, Campbell selected the contents for each new issue from these preslanted offerings, creating a vicious vortex spiraling ever inward and downward. Starting around the time that Dianetics was announced, there seemed to be a prediliction for slathering the emphasis onto the theme of the moment with a power shovel. The harbinger would appear in an editorial, or perhaps in one of the non-fiction pieces and, as soon as the publication lag permitted, there would be stories predicated upon whatever theme or premise that had been promulgated a few months earlier.

Take, for example, esp: Personally, I'm inclined to concede that there may be such a thing on the basis of occasional, erratic, unpredictable, unrepeatable experience. But I can't see it as the prerequisitional theme for an entire magazine, unless for one of the titles that Ray Palmer puts out these days. I can't pinpoint the incident in time——early 'sixties, at a guess——but I recall a mention in a letter from an occasional contributor to ASF that the most recent offering had been rejected with the note that "...it betrays a subliminal fear of psi."

I suggest that it's a fairly sound operating principle for an editor to buy and print an occasional piece for which he, personally, does not care greatly. To insist that all stories be screened in terms of his persoanl prejudices, passions, foibles and idiosyncrasies is to tighten the focus of the publication down to those whose tastes are congruent to his within the traditional sixteen decimals.

Most months, I still skren through the mag after I buy my copy, always hoping to salvage a little reading out of the investment. And usually, I read the editorial. I may find it agreeable, disagreeable, or adiaphorous but it generally holds my attention to the end. And I did read one serial a few months back——"Wolfling" was the title, I think; can't recall the author and the files aren't available. I thought it a fair sort of thing but unmarred by any crumbs of greatness that I noticed.

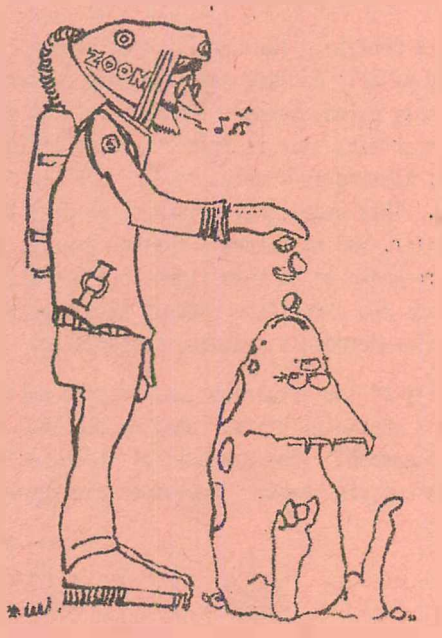
I'd not grotch so bitterly were it not that I used to enjoy a lot of the stories in ASF so keenly. Subjective?——quite possibly, although I still can go browsing among the issues from a decade or two ago and re-read stories with every bit of the oldtime relish and delight. Sometimes, I wonder if Campbell, his stable of authors and his readership continued to develop while I paused and commensed to stagnate somewhere back there. But I try not to worry about it if I have anything better to do; and usually, I have.

A propos that, I'm coming to appreciate that an efficient forgetting circuit is one of the more useful accessories for one's personal computer. It may be a knack that can be developed through training, proper diet and a system of yoga-like disciplines. Perforce, I have had to acquire the ability to re-grok the printed word as a pure survival method. Foraging for palatable provender among the newsstands of anno domini 1969 is a fearful lean go. Unless, of course, you hanker to learn "Why Jackie and Ari Shouldn't Have Any Babies" or read about "The Night Liz Caught Burton" or be regaled with the details of "The Curse That Dogs The Kennedys." Me, I'd sooner sit and cut seed potatoes.

So I'm finally finding some justification in having packratted all those devoured books and paperbacks down through the years. On those ever-more-frequent occasions when the haggard-eyed hunt among the biographies of Joe Namath, the searching examinations of the racial problem today, the parodies of Tolkein by the editorial staff of the Harvard LAMPOON and similar goodies have failed to turn up a single damned thing that I can stand trying to read, I go snouting among the old books, some of which have now sustained and re-nourished for the third or fourth time. Just at this moment, the work on the bedstand is Doyle's "The White Company," and, save for a recalled phrase here and there, it's all new and enjoyable. This has got to be at least the third or fourth go-round for that one, after three-five years of lying fallow between encounters and it saved me from falling back upon the fine print of breakfast cereal cartons. Sheeg, but I'd hate to have an eidetic memory.

The Banks Deposit

Prozine Commentary



The British "school of Ballard" aside, most of what is called New Wave writing in science fiction just uses more sophisticated narrative devices than the field is used to. For years the writers stuck close to the pulp basic of a plain tale simply told, with flashbacks and alternating story lines about as complicated as they ever got. Recently they've felt freer to try other things——experiments, if you insist, but only as any piece of non-hack writing is an experiment for the writer.

Robert Silverberg's "Sundance" in the June F&SF is an example of what can be done, mostly by technique, with a straightforward idea. This 6500 word short story falls into ten sections with a shift of grammatical person between each, all told in the present tense (except one flashback). This seems rather extreme, and Silverberg may have meant it partly as a put-down of critics like Atheling who insist on the thumb-rule of unified viewpoint. Whatever his intention, Silverberg keeps his viewpoint unified enough and makes his story stronger and deeper by his manipulation of tense and person.

"Sundance" starts with a 700-word section in the second person. The opening sentence: "Today you liquidated about 50,000 Eaters in Sector A, and now you are spending an uneasy night." This quickly gets you, the reader, involved with the principal character, Tom. The section gets over a lot of background material: Tom is part of a mission sent to another planet to exterminate the Eaters, herbivorous animal pests, before colonization. The necessary data on biology and kill-method are rehearsed. All this is after a flashback in which Tom remembers that during the day his companion Herndon wondered if possibly the Eaters were intelligent. This sets up the basic conflict in Tom's mind, and it resonates with his racial history.

The first section closes with Tom considering having his memory of Herndon's suggestion edited out, which provides a transition to the second section's beginning: "In the morning he does not dare. Memory-editing frightens him; he will try to shake free of his new-found guilt without it."

This opens 1500 words in the third person, but with the emphasis still on Tom and his thoughts. More background emerges: Tom is descended from American Plains Indians; he is a biologist who has failed twice in life and had a mental breakdown; he comes from a line of self-destructive ancestors. Other people are introduced to round out the central character and put him in a social context. At the close of this section, Tom goes out to study a captive herd of Eaters kept near the camp for scientific observation.

The third section is 600 words in Tom's first person. He finds that the Eaters have what he believes to be a ritualized behavior pattern, the product of a culture and hence of intelligence. This and the latter first-person sections carry most of the emotional force of the story, take the reader into Tom's feelings. Yet there's one difficulty in Silverberg's first-person writing here. it isn't stream-of-consciousness——it's too organized and expository for that——but it isn't quite as a man would talk about an experience either, both because it's in present tense and because much of it is Tom's interior argument. It's most like what a man might speak into a tape recorder at the time, getting down his observations and thoughts, but that isn't happening in the story. This is only a difficulty of analysis, however, and doesn't bother the reader; perhaps it should just be considered a convention.

The fourth section is 500 words in the third person, detached from Tom's viewpoint. It advances the action. Herndon, reminded by Tom of his suggestions, reacts strongly and states that if he believed it he'd have his memory edited. Later, in Tom's absence, several of the characters speculate on his mental state and his research into the Eaters' behavior.

Next comes 300 words of second person in which Tom's "you" realizes that he must be careful because the others are concerned about his condition. He decides to make an anthropological study of the Eaters.

The sixth section is a brief 80 words in detached third person. Tom asks and gets permission to go out and observe the Eaters in their natural habitat.

1400 words in the first person follow. Tom joins in the Eaters' actions, identifying them with the Indian dances of

A Column By

Banks Mebane

his ancestors. He is hallucinated by a native plant, food for the Eaters in what he imagines is a ritual meal. Eventually the exterminator copters drop their poison pellets, the Eaters die, and Tom is picked up.

The eighth section is 750 words in the third person, in which the other expedition members try to convince Tom that everything he has experienced is part of the therapy designed to cure him from his past breakdown. They say that the mission is not to destroy the Eaters but to study them and Tom's belief in their extermination is a therapeutic delusion. He refuses to believe them, escapes, and takes a copter.

350 words in the first person follow. Tom finds more Eaters and joins their dance. Now in complete delusion, he believes that all his Indian ancestors are with him.

The concluding 300 words are in the second person. Tom has been found and brought back again, but he is completely disorganized. He considers every possible permutation of the reality of his situation, but his mind rejects them all.

I've recapped "Sundance" in this detail so I can point out how Silverberg has used each grammatical person in the narrative.

The "you" is the least necessary for the story. I think it's there partly from sheer virtuosity and partly as a good hook at the beginning, giving the character of Tom immediacy for the reader. From symmetry, the ending is also in second person, and the other short passage in the middle, sandwiched between two brief third-person sections, heightens the interest without plunging into the complete subjectivity of "I".

The "he" sections provide anchors to objectivity in the action, so that we know <u>something</u> is really going on. Conversations, other characters, and much of the background can be handled more convincingly in the third person.

The first person holds the meat of the story. Tom's "I" is what keeps the reader immersed in the action, and the reality of what is going on is made ambiguous by being filtered through a mind whose sanity we distrust.

Despite the sudden grammatical shifts, the story flows freely because the transitions are skillful——I've indicated some of them in my summary.

Yet I think part of the reason for the smooth flow may be because we modern readers are conditioned by the movies and television. The visual media certainly influence fiction, and a Victorian audience, familiar with stage plays that necessarily have a fixed objective viewpoint, may have wanted the same thing in their fiction. But the camera can shift swiftly, looking at a scene now from a detached point, now through the eyes of one of the characters, now even through a character's mind. It can zoom in for a close-up, pan back and forth, fade in and out, and we are used to going with it.

The camera can also distort reality and make it ambiguous. It hides the wires and cranes, turns out mystic fogs and magic flames far more convincingly than any stage illusion. Above all, the camera's sights are not <u>really</u> there like actors on a stage. It may be no coincidence that twentieth-century fiction is so concerned with subjective truth.

Certainly "Sundance" is not an attempt to show objective reality. Silverberg never tells us what really happened; he only gives us several degrees of ambiguity.

Nothing is certain. The intelligence of the Eaters is least certain of all: do they have the deep culture Tom finds or are they only animal pests? The very fact of their extermination is uncertain. Tom is told at one point that his belief in their killing is a delusion, and that no such thing is happening. This seems only a thin cloak over the reality of the slaughter, and it raises a further ambiguity. Perhaps the Eaters are known to be intelligent but are being wiped out anyway; perhaps the expedition members have been conditioned to ignore this——Herndon's reaction suggests it.

The reality of the situation just doesn't matter in the story of Tom's emotional state. What does matter is that such things <u>have</u> happened. They are part of the human experience and the human consciousness. "Sundance" expresses a genocidal myth.

——Banks Mebane
November 1969

MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

he can detach at will by relaxing a muscle; he throws the hand and kills people with it, or sometimes he simply clubs them to death.

"The planetoid forms itself into a full-sized planet, using material it finds lying about in the asteroid belt. Then it names itself Cragon to entice its absent love to return, and throws up a forcefield around itself so nobody else can land. Meanwhile, on its surface geological millenia are passing in days. The new planet cools, turns green and generally gets itself looking hospitable.

"Shortly, Crag, fleeing with some criminal friends in a spaceship from the fleets of the fuzz, lands on Cragon, knowing full well that the forcefield will deactivate for him and no other. The crooks with Crag opt for skying out of this nowhere place, and do. Crag stays. He has the sterner stuff required to make a go of it on this brave new world.

"The planet puts it to him again. No dice; Crag isn't having any. In a final and genuinely moving act of self-sacrifice, Cragon, still God, resurrects Crag's dead girlfriend from where we left her on page 81. Clinch. Fade-out.

"For pity's sake, what <u>more</u> can one ask of a book?

"Piers Anthony, please take note."

AND NOW A LETTER THAT CAME IN THE SAME ENVELOPE, from Alex Panshin: "This morning I opened my door to find there waiting in the snow an intense young man, as thin and nervous as a greyhound. I asked him his name and his business, and

MONOLOG CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

UNICORN is in captivity

In the Current Issue:

I.F. Stone's Harvard speech; John Boardman on Dorothy Sayers and her Lord Peter Wimsey mysteries; Ted Pauls on the Knights Templar; art by Tim Kirk and others; reviews, poetry, satire.

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A Prydain folio by Tim Kirk; Alpajpuri on Tolkien; Karen Rockow on the Hardy Boys, Dorothy Sayers, the Prydain books and assorted topics; a complete Sayers bibliography; and much more.

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Editor's Note:
With this issue SFR accepts advertising on a more than rare and casual scale. In my view, advertising's function in this magazine is to offset the cost of the magazine: one page of advertising will pay for itself and one page of text and art. Theoretically, with 50 pages of advertising, all expenses would be paid.
"That'll be the day, Geis!"

Display ads: full-page—$9.00; half-page—$5.00; quarter-page—$3.00. All display ad copy will be electronically stenciled.

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ESTIMATED PRINT RUN NEXT ISSUE—950

••BOOK REVIEWS••

CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS by Roger Zelazny——Doubleday, $4.50.

Norman Mailer once said about John Updike: When he runs out of truth, he writes. I have the same feeling about Z. He reminds me of Updike. His tolerably egotistical orgies of prose, his keen sense of structure, his subtle narrative style that is inexplicably compelling, his occasional spectacular episodes that approach, though never quite touch, genius.

Like Updike, Z creates a work that is impressive, that intimidates with its intellect and aesthetics, and, like Updike, there is that curious hollowness about his work.

Z escapes because he is making an entertainment, not pretending to Literature, and the escape permits greater reader sympathy. What Updike and Z most wish to say is something about how much fun it is to be a writer alone in their respective rooms with their typewriters, knowing there is an editor out there somewhere who will buy whatever they wish to write. Z escapes this, also, because that is his purpose——to publish for a living, not to leave gifts for posterity. Of the two, I prefer Z.

I mention all this because it has always bothered me, about Updike, about Z, that they seem to be two goliaths working out with straw dumbbells. Their prosaic muscles bulge, their skill and experience radiate through every word, but when their performance is done, I find myself applauding their technique wildly, and leaving the literary theater wondering what all the hollerin' was about.

(Forgive the pretentiousness of such a statement but) I don't think this place, this time, is a good one for great themes. It is a place for rebels and a time for put-downs, and that's what Truth is right now——the bigger the put-down, the bigger the Truth. The universality, the nobility, the heroism for great themes is not in us, us everyday, scratchin'-round card punchers, so what can we expect of our writers?

We are getting more from Z than we deserve and this book, Creatures of Light and Darkness, is evidence of it.

True, its theme is consistent with the literature of put-down, if I understand it correctly. In his last three books Z has put religion in his own singular perspective. I have not read Isle of the Dead, but in Lord of Light and Creatures, he seems to be expounding a view on religion that is humorously cynical.

The cliche "God did not create Man; Man created God" seems to be the whole idea. And Man created god(s) to milk his fellowman. But fellowman is not the hapless victim, but a willing, eager servant of his own enslavement. It is not the gods but the men who make them who make them vicious and ludicrous.

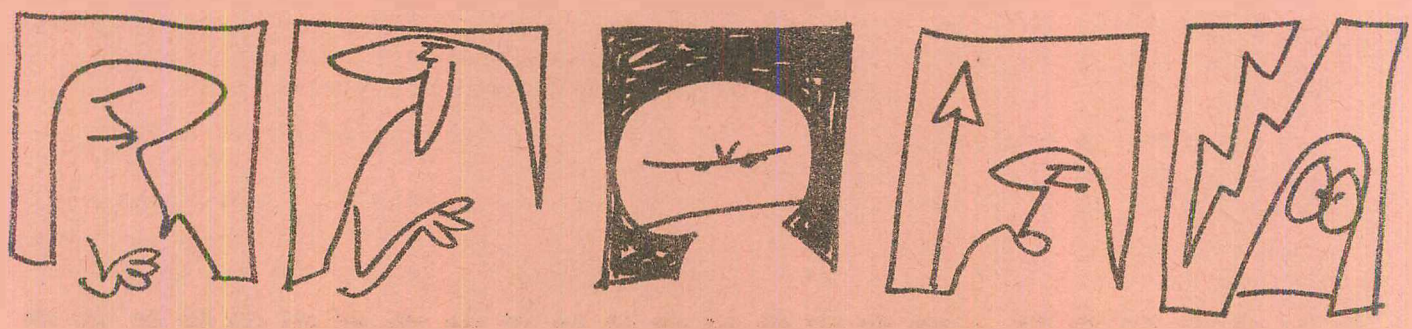
To Z, there is no supernatural, no gods, no myths. It is all done with transistors. Man is the best god there ever was He is more decent, more rational, more humane than any god there ever was. And his universe is more intriguing, more incredible, more spectacular than any heaven there ever was. To live is the point. To attempt to be human and make "human" mean something in itself——this strikes me as Z's philosophy, though philosophy is not the point of Z's fiction.

The story concerns Wakim, who is sent by Angel of the House of Death, Anubis, the dog-headed Egyptian diety, to the Middle Worlds to seek out and destroy the Prince Who Was A Thousand, an unknown power, the enemy of Anubis, Osiris, Angel of the House of Life, who also sends his son, Horus. Wakim has been trained in the House of Death for a thousand years and he possesses unbeatable strength as well as the ability to manipulate time.

Wakim's confrontation with the allies of the Prince involves: Madrak the Magician, whose ambition is even greater than his powers; Vramin, the mad poet, who wants no part in what he is inevitably involved; the Red Witch of Loggia, Isis, who intrigues on the sidelines; and the Steel General.

Wakim's war on the Prince does not go as Anubis expects, for Wakim is drafted in the Prince's own war on the Thing That Cries in the Night.

It is impossible to discuss all this calmly, and to give any more away would be sacrilege. It has to be read to be

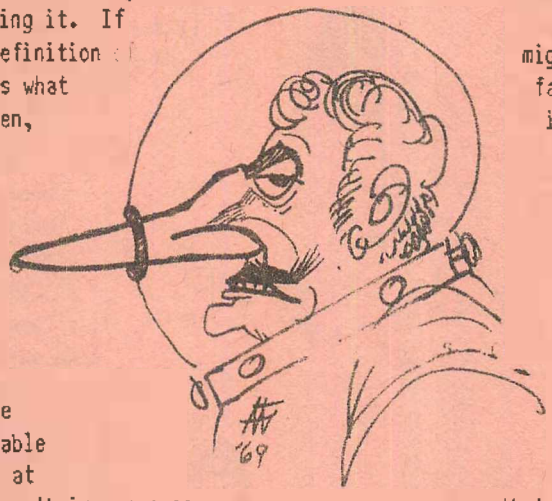


believed (trust the wisdom of cliches just this once).

The point, I repeat, is not the philosophy. Nor is it simply the fast-moving story. The point is Z, himself.

Ellison's cry for a "Speculative Fiction" definition of SF is already passe in Z, as in Delany (and even, for moments, in Ellison, himself). There are SF works which would profit from the label——Clarke's stuff, for instance, or Silverberg's. But the fight is not worth it. And retaining the "Science-Fiction" label would probably be more beneficial to publishers, anxious to recruit readers, who might balk at the "depth" implied in "speculative". Applied to Z, however, neither label is accurate. "Science" is the farthest thing from his literary mind. "Fiction" is a poor second He is a poet, using a better-selling form. Nor is he "speculative". No more so than any other poet. He is not writing another novel future worlds; he is <u>being</u> Z——in words, in many different styles ranging from the conventional to the exotic——and in vision, creating something the point of which is its own existence.

In its own existence, it implies Z writing it. To read it is to experience Z writing it. If you prefer a purely intellectual definition of the purpose of fiction, which is what most fiction, especially SF has been, then you will reject this as nonsense, but if you prefer to think of foction as an empathetic experience, an education in sensitivity, then you will see what I mean. The best of writers write not to communicate ideas alone, but to isolate and define portions of their experience and to make them real and controllable on the printed page. The readers, at least the empathetic ones, surrender their own egos to the writer to share in a mutual experience.



In <u>Creatures</u>, it is Z——choreographer of violence, social critic, satirist, myth-maker and destroyer, skilled novelist, flamboyant poet, and playful intellectual. It would be miserably pretentious if it had any pretentions to profundity, but it is for the hell of it, because Z can do it and do it better than anyone else, and this makes it compelling in and for itself. When you put it down, you have a feeling for words, for structure, for the power of imagination that was not there before. Even more you have a greater sense of the possibilities of fiction, especially SF, than you had before reading it.

Yes, it is all technique. But it is honest and exceptionally skillful.

Alexei Panshin, in the November F&SF, said, "I've come to the conclusion that science-fiction does not have to be a juvenile literature, that——set the pea patch of technology aside——science-fiction is an undiscovered universe." He goes on to say that we are on the verge of a new era in SF. I believe we are in that era.

I believe SF will never merge with the mainstream not attain its Nobels from imitations of the mainstream. There will always be the juvenile/the science/the speculative fiction, and SF will always be an entertainment literature. SF is a literature of ideas, be they BEMs or the existence of God. But SF's greatest limitation has been the fact that it is a literature <u>containing</u> ideas and not embodying them. The works of Z, Delany, Wilhelm, Kit Reed, Carol Emshwiller, Dean Koontz, Ballard, and Dick are evidence that this is being remedied rapidly. SF is not writing itself into nonexistence, but to much higher levels of its own genre, which have less and less in common with the mainstream, which is beginning to imitate <u>it</u>.

<u>Creatures</u> is not a masterpiece, but it is a fine book. It is not revolutionary, but ameliorating for Z and for the whole of SF.

——Paul Walker

BLACK ALICE by Thom Demijohn——Doubleday,$4.95

Although not science-fiction (yet it might possibly be classed as allegorical fantasy of a sort), this novel may be of interest to sf fans for either of two reasons: first, it was pseudonymously written by Thomas M. Disch and John T. Sladek, and, second, it's a pretty damn good book.

This is the story of 11-year-old Alice Raleigh, a modern-day version of the Lewis Carroll heroine, who doesn't fall but rather is dragged down the rabbithole. Poor Alice; you see, is heir to millions and millions of dollars, so it's no wonder that she is the object of an involved kidnaping plot. But no ordinary take-the-money-and-run plot is this. Alice is turned over to a Negro madam, Bessy, who dyes and curls Alice's pretty blonde hair, gives her a pill to change her skin's color, and carts her away from Baltimore to Norfolk as her little black niece, Dinah.

Living with Bessy in a Norfolk cathouse, Alice is forced to cope with life's realities much too quickly, thereupon drifting deeper and deeper into her own fantasies. But her evasion of oppression only catches her more tightly in the kidnappers' plans——an insane little Alice could never be heir to millions of dollars, could she? As an FBI agent begins to pick up her trail, Alice makes a last desperate attempt at freedom, but is soon trapped in a local demonstration of racial unrest where one tiny little black girl, who swears she's really White!, is endangered by both large-scale violence and the personal threat of a stalking killer.

The authors have worked hard to build a suspense story around a basic idea that covers a lot more ground than the fate of one kidnapped little heiress, and it is to their credit that they have pulled it off admirably. The kidnap

itself, if not ingenious, is acceptable, and provides a suitable premise for introducing the book's strongest asset, a marvelous cast of characters.

Most impressive is little Alice herself, who is not only pictured as a character, but as a character who grows and changes as the novel develops. Bessy, though one of the kidnappers, registers as the kindest, most human person in the book — she has built a life on the bartered bodies of herself and others, but has never lost her belief in God or the hope that she will one day have a fine, soul-filled funeral. Bessy's two whores also come across very well — Clara, the sadistic, ugly Negro with Lesbian tendencies, whose lifelong deprivation has almost (but not quite) destroyed the proverbial heart-of-gold; and Fay, who knows-not-what-she-does because she has the mind of a child no older than Alice (Fay is an obvious, but not distressing, steal from Algren's A Walk on the Wild Side). There are also Farron Stroud, the white supremacist running for local sheriff (and hypocritically running for Clara when the "need" overcomes him); Owen Gann, the undercover FBI man whose work with the Ku Klux Klan forces him into an act of mass murder; and Alice's parents, Roderick and Delphinia, whose "meager" allowance of $10,000 a year from Alice's trust is just barely enough to survive on when living in the fashion they're accustomed to having.

In following Alice's adventures, one begins to really understand the relevance of the Carroll quote, from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, at the novel's opening: "I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, Sir," said Alice, "because I'm not myself, you see."

"I don't see," said the Caterpillar.

But the reader sees, and quite clearly, what the authors are trying to say about the importance of individuality to every person of any race or belief. A world where one must do or be something bizarre to stand out from the crowd is not a world where everything is all right. We must learn to hear, not merely listen to, the grievences of others.

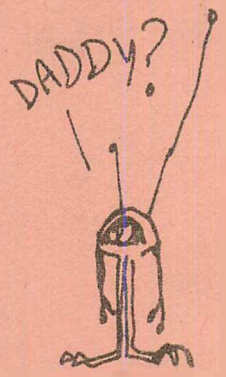
If Black Alice fails to make a stir in public response, it may already be too late. I surely hope not.

——Richard Delap

BLOWN by Philip Jose Farmer——Essex House 020139, $1.95

With the passing from the scene of Essex House, Phil Farmer and other writers have been deprived of a unique market. Essex was a pornography publishing house that was willing——and apparently eager——to purchase novels so far out in the outre borderlands that most straight porno publishers would not have touched them with a ten-foot dildo. Certainly Farmer's The Image of the Beast and Blown are not simply pornography, that is merely their starting point, and any regular purchaser of Essex House wares who blew two bucks on either book in the expectation of being titillated must have been sadly disappointed. There is plenty of sex in Farmer's "exorcism" (Image was subtitled "An Exorcism: Ritual 1"; Blown is Ritual 2), but practically no eroticism. The sex depicted by Farmer is so grotesquely strange as to be, in general, bereft of any capacity to stimulate.

Blown consists of the further adventures of Herald Childe, and ties up the ends left dangling by The Image of the Beast. It opens with Childe following the car in which Vivienne Mabcrough is riding with a man she has picked up. Vivienne, introduced in Image, is an exceptionally beautiful woman whose womb contains a snake-like organ with a miniature face framed by greasy black hair and a goatee. She is one of a weird group which, in the first book, murdered a close friend of Childe's in a bizarre manner and apparently kidnapped his wife. Entering Vivienne's house, he interupts her perverted tryst with the man and in the process becomes involved in the same kind of situation as in Image. Gradually, Herald Childe learns the truth about the creatures with whom he is dealing——and about himself.



Vivienne, Fred Pao, Standing Grass, Woolston Heepish, Baron Igescu and the other sinister and extraordinary inhabitants of these pages are, it develops, Ogs and Tocs, representatives of two hostile races of a solar system in the Andromeda galaxy. They came to Earth thousands of years ago, via a form of teleportation which requires two elements in order to function: a Captain, a specially gifted member of the race, and a Grail, a chalice made of some ultra-rare and arcane metal. Having killed off each other's Captains in the course of their hostilities, they were stranded on Earth. They possess a number of powers, including the ability to change shape, and are effectively immortal. (They can be killed, but return to life again when the conditions are proper.) The Ogs and Tocs account for a good bit of Terran legend, such as witches, vampires, werewolves, fairies, etc. Herald Childe, who, incidentally, turns out to be the son of George Gordon, Lord Byron, is a latent Captain, the only live one known, and hence of great value to both sides. His power is released in a sex ritual which culminates in an entire roomful of people forming a giant daisy chain. Eventually, Childe transports the whole lot, Ogs and Tocs alike, to a far world and returns to Earth with Dolores del Osorojo (whom we met in Image) to live happily ever after.

The novel is marred by one piece of inane cuteness: the Tuckerization of Forrest J. Ackerman. Farmer uses Ackerman as one of his major characters. He does not merely use the name which would not be objectionable (Dick Geis has used my

name, among others, in an Essex House book ((Raw Meat)); he uses Ackerman himself--name, personality, hobbies, occupation, house, etc., described down to the smallest detail--as a character. This is a bit of irrelevant frivolity which, for me, considerable weakened the book. The character is not even necessary, except in one small respect which could equally well have used a greengrocer named Phil Schlabotnik, and the reviewer found the references and Ackermanesque puns an irritation with which he could quite nicely have dispensed.

Other than that, however, Blown is a worthy sequel to The Image of the Beast, with the same use of sex as an entirely different element than it is in most novels (indicated by the somewhat ironic fact that, despite the sheer amount of sex in Blown, there is not a single sex scene that is extraneous, i.e., that does not bear on the advancement of the plot), the same excellent portrayal of the central character, and the same effective use of a ubiquitous background fact (in Image it was the smog, here it is rain).

--Ted Pauls

BREAKTHROUGH by Richard Cowper--Ballantine 01653, 75¢

BREAKTHROUGH is a fine book. It succeeds primarily on two levels. First, it portrays accurately and interestingly the life of a young college teacher in a modern British university. The main character, Jimmy Haverill, is an "assistant lecturer in English literature," Blake and assorted romantics being his period. Cowper must have had intimate knowledge of this particular professional. I speak from experience, for I've had the occasion to mingle with a number of "assistant lecturers in English literature" during the past two years, and I can say that I've met several Jimmy Haverills. Purely apart from this, I think the many literary allusions unobtrusively scattered throughout the book enrich it.

The second level on which the book succeeds is that of a convincing description of an experiment in ESP and related powers. Many of Cowper's ideas per se on this subject have thought of and used before by writers, but nontheless Cowper produces a logical structure that hangs together and seems plausible. How many ESP stories evem manage that?

The two levels of the novel aren't separated, either. For instance, a bit of English literary history is essential to the meaning of the experiment. And as the characters become more and more involved in the intricacies of psionic powers, they never cease to act and react as young, intelligent academics.

The book is quietly and competently written. If Cowper will read more science fiction and get a better idea of what has been done in the field and what has not, he stands a good chance of developing into one of sf's better writers.

--Creath Thorne

THE EVIL THAT MEN DO by John Brunner/THE PURLOINED PLANET by Lin Carter--Belmont B60-1010, 60¢

One of the obligations of book reviewing is calling attention to false advertising. On the cover of this book is the statement "Two complete science fiction novels " Neither of the stories are of novel length. And John Brunner's novella is not sf.

The Brunner story is the better of the two. It concerns hypnotism, psychiatry, multiple personalities, and the problem of how two widely separated individuals come to be living in identical dream worlds. The answer is neither that the dream world is real nor that telepathy is at work, and everything is explained rationally. The thoroughgoing rationality of the story, in fact, almost becomes a serious defect as the tale proceeds with the same methodical left foot, right foot style that spoiled The Long Result. Fortunately, Godfrey Rayner of the present story is not the dunce that the protagonist of TLR was and The Evil That Men Do escapes being boring.

Certain elements of the story are reminiscent of "gothic" novels, which makes me wonder if Mr. Brunner intended it to be published in that particular paperback ghetto, rather than as sf.

Lin Carter's half of the book has the distinction of being the first piece by him that I have liked; that I could finish without forcing myself to keep going, in fact. It concerns one Hautley Quicksilver, legally licensed criminal. Hautley has appeared in half a previous Belmont double feature, The Thief of Thoth (B50-809, 50¢), which I have not read. He reminds me somewhat of Alexei Panshin's Anthony Villiers, but while Villiers' doings are reminiscent of, say, The School

for Scandal, Quicksilver owes more to the Three Stooges. Villiers is backed up by prose which is subtle, erudite, and drily witty (and sometimes so dry as to be dull). Quicksilver's support, both description and dialogue, is thick enough to spread with a trowel. It almost makes the first two chapters unbearable.

After that, fortunately, things begin to move as Quicksilver investigates a matter of a criminal on a crime-free planet and comes up against the disappearance of the entire planet in space. The story has certain points which make it resemble a mystery, but according to the rules of that genre, Carter is not playing fair with the reader when he does not reveal the properties of the drug negatropium until the conclusion. Since the revelation would blow the entire story sky-high, I say nuts to the conventions of whodunits. The story is damn good fun as it is.

Even a non-serious sf piece, however, should steer clear of scientific gobbledegook, such as when Carter mentions "paramagnetic fields." Really now!

——Hank Davis

SEED OF LIGHT by Edmund Cooper——Ballantine, 75¢

Seed of Light only lightly held my interest. The letdown was its highly predictable plot. I also found analogies in the book which were unsubtle and highly contrived.

The story begins with Earth rapidly being destroyed by high levels of carbon monoxide that have irreparably permeated the atmosphere, requiring air-conditioned, plastic-domed cities. Wildlife and vegetation have been completely annihilated by insecticide poisoning, waterways rendered inert and pulluted due to man's self-aggrandizement and lack of forethought.

Man must leave Earth and search for new worlds. Only the elite——morally, physically and intellectually——are selected to make this one-ship journey. The ship is a self-contained World designed to sustain life completely and independently for centuries, if necessary, until a new world can be discovered.

After 1,000 years of trouble and many unsuccessful touchdowns, through the supreme effort of the highly developed intellect of their latest leader who devised a technique of developing a subjective conception of time, the ship, while everyone else is in a state of subjective time-nothingness, reaches a solar system which can sustain human life——and, yup, you guessed it! Good old mother Earth! But in another time period when life was very elemental—lush and green and homo sapiens has just learned to get up and walk. Like our Hippies, who are leaving affluence to till the soil and become one with Nature, so too do the disembarked Colonists, who despite their highly developed technical, intellectual, social and cultural advancement, decide to return to nature and natural evolution, but this time profiting, they hope, from their advanced technology and socio-economic experiences.

The most interesting aspect of Cooper's book was his ability to extrapolate events that have recently come to pass, since Seed of Light was written quite a few years ago. He tells of air pollution, poisoned and disrupted waterways; he refers to manned satellites which will surely come within the next five years.

Seed of Light runs only 159 pages, yet spans 1,000 years and forty generations. It is like a compressed cake of yeast.

Cooper is a most knowledgeable man, but Seed of Light isn't very good.

——Estelle Sanders

THE TRAITOR GAME by Dougal McLeish——Houghton Mifflin, $4.95

In my review of Pete Hamill's A Killing for Christ, I speculated that few political assassinations would be as unlikely as that of a Pope. A more unlikely candidate is presented in this book. After all, over the centuries Popes have aroused bitter antagonisms that have not yet died down, but who ever gets excited about a Prime Minister of Canada? Like its physical climate, Canada's political climate is sub-Arctic. A couple of years ago, while reading Vladimir Dedijer's excellent study of the Sarajevo tyrannicide, I came across reference to a political assassination in Canada in 1868 of one D'Arcy McGee. There have been none since.

The Traitor Game takes place in a very near future - so much so that recognizable characters from the Canadian political scene appear in it. The Leader of the Opposition is a savage caricature of Diefenbaker, while the Governor General is a French-Canadian like his real-life counterpart. And the Premier of British Columbia, though not identified as a member of the Social Credit Party, is from context plainly a member of that collection of anti-semites, funny-money economists, "lawnorder" advocates, and plain nuts that has governed Canada's California since 1952.

The book begins with the assassination - which is apparently intended to take place in either 1969 or 1975, since we are informed that September 8 falls on a Monday. The assassin is taken alive, and turns out to be a hare-brained young French Canadian nationalist. However, the plot turns out to be as

devious as those hypothesized by people who feel that the self-appointed "Leftist" Lee Harvey Oswald was a tool of the right-wingers. In fact, the whole plot structure of the book owes much to the speculations that have been propagated concerning the assassination of President Kennedy.

The hero, a man of mixed Anglo-French ancestry, traces the threads of the plot to the Premier of Ontario and his principal henchman, a Minuteman-type triggerman named Misselhorn. The Premier, a wealthy politician-businessman who comes on like a right-wing Rockefeller, has an elaborate plan to drive Quebec into secession, break up Canada, and carve himself a private empire on the ruins. Misselhorn has his own plans to take over and rule said empire.

In many novels of this sort the situation is saved by one man at the head of the country, who loses neither his life nor his cool, and is able to take charge and lead the country back to sanity. Here it is the Governor General, the titular Chief of State, whom the hero rescues from an isolated Ontario villa where he is held captive, and who dissolves a Parliament decimated by a Fawkes-type attack just in time to prevent thirty hold-out Quebec Nationalist members from taking it over and peacefully voting the country's partition.

The book is compellingly written; the reader becomes actively interested in the story's development, and numerous science-fiction novels of the type Ted White characterizes as "paranoid" have accustomed us to the pervasive plot that no one will believe in. The loose ends are neatly tied up, except for Misselhorn, who escapes to South America for possible use in a sequel. And the American reader, while recognizing similarities with our race problems in the plight of the Quebecois, gets an interesting perspective on the too little known country which adjoins ours.

---John Boardman

GALACTIC POT-HEALER by Philip K. Dick---Berkley X1705, 60¢

Philip Dick has always been an author of strange tales, but this one is stranger than most. The question is, should the novel have been named Galactic Pot-Boiler instead? I'm inclined to think so and I believe many readers will. Maybe the name was even deliberately chosen with that in mind; being an avid reader of Dick, that wouldn't surprise me. Particularly since it's more of a comedy than any other novel by Dick; there are some very funny passages in it. For example:

> ...he had become friends with Nurb K'ohl Oaq, the warmhearted bivalve.
>
> 'Here's one they're telling on Deneb four,' the bivalve said. 'A freb whom we'll call A is trying to sell a glank for fifty thousand burfles.'
>
> 'What's a freb?' Joe asked.
>
> 'A kind of---' The bivalve undulated with effort. 'A sort of idiot.'
>
> 'What's a burfle?'
>
> 'A monetary unit, like a crumble or a ruble. Anyhow, someone says to the freb, "Do you really expect to get fifty thousand burfles for your glank?"'
>
> 'What's a glank?' Joe asked.
>
> Again the bivalve undulated; this time it turned bright pink with effort. 'A pet, a valueless lower life form. Anyhow, the freb says, "I got my price." "You got your price?" the interrogator interrogates. "Really?" "Sure," the freb says. "I traded it for two twenty-five-thousand-burfle pidnids."'
>
> 'What's a pidnid?'
>
> The bivalve gave up; it slammed its shell shut and withdrew into privacy and silence.

The plot itself is---at least on the surface---perhaps the least complicated to come out of Dick's seemingly complicated mind. There is only one protagonist, as opposed to the usual two or three at least.

Joe Fernright, pot-healer without anything to do, is leading an extremely dull and moneyless life. He is saved from death from boredom by a creature called Glimmung, a sometimes god-like, sometimes enormously naive being who wants him to help with the raising of the Heldscalla cathedral from the bottom of the sea of Sirus V. Together with a set of people from different worlds he is taken there. With diving equipment, Joe goes down to survey the sunken cathedral, together with a girl, Mali. This somehow forces Glimmung to act prematurely, and he is almost defeated by the Black Glimmung, who later just misses killing all the people hired by Glimmung. Then Glimmung, with the help of these people, succeeds in raising Heldscalla, employing the ingenious device of changing into a female, whereupon the cathedral changes into a foetus (no, I'm not making this up) and thus can be lifted by Glimmung. Joe and the others, who have helped by being absorbed by Glimmung, may now choose between staying absorbed or being set free. Joe and one other creature choose to leave; the others---including Mali, whom Joe loves---stay. The last paragraph of the book has practically nothing to do with the rest, and it is marvelous.

Dick's novels usually have a strange, inexplicable but somehow consistent logic. But this one hasn't. Nobody, but nobody, acts logically. There is a lot of mythical detail complicating and governing the actions of the people in strange ways. They act like neurotics most of the time. The most likeable and consistent person is not a person but a

robot, Willis, who half the time insists he be addressed Willis or he won't obey:

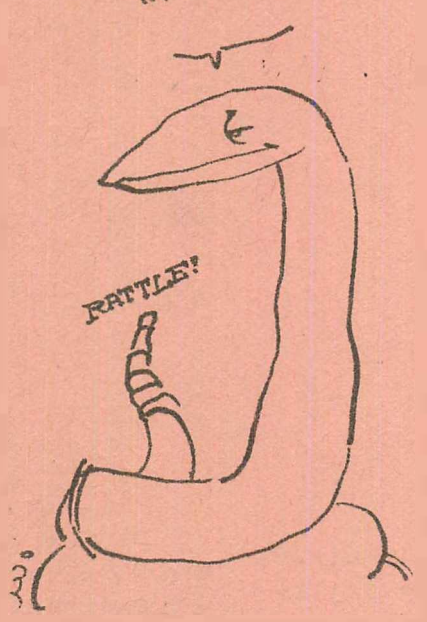
> To Willis, Mali said, "Call me a taxi."
>
> "You have to say, 'Willis, call me a taxi,' the robot said.
>
> "Willis, call me a taxi."

There are some very strange pieces of writing here. For example: "She paused, her face knotting profoundly." I'd like to see that being done. One gets the impression from many of Dick's novels, and particularly from this one, that they are first drafts, printed without anything corrected but the misspellings. This surely must be such a book. It seems to me that Dick has been getting sloppier of late. That's a great pity, because he used to be one of the most fascinating sf authors around.

Galactic Pot-Healer is recommended only to those who usually read Dick's works, because to them it ought to be of no little interest. If you don't have his previous books to compare with, this will probably strike you as a fantastic piece of rubbish and you aren't likely to finish more than a dozen pages of it.

Incidentally, when Glimmung is staying in the sea, hurt after a struggle with the Black Glimmung, he communicates with Joe by sending him notes in bottles.

—Mats Linder



EDITOR'S NOTE: This strikes me as a superficial review. I have read the book and feel that Mats has ignored or overlooked the strong elements of depth psychology and symbolism that make up the plot and action; the machines that dominate and cow the people, the yin-yang presence, the statement of individualism vs the group, the use of Glimmung as a symbol and device of irrational power to point out both the triumph and tragedy of the single, isolated mind. The book, And Dick, demand more than most readers are willing to give in thought and self-analysis...more than most readers are capable of giving for lack of education, intelligence and maturity. To accuse Dick of sloppy writing and first-draft hackwork is both insulting and ridiculous. —REG

THE WOOD BEYOND THE WORLD by William Morris—Ballantine 01652, 95¢

I suppose that anyone who has ever taken even an elementary course in English Literature has come across William Morris's poem, "The Haystack in the Floods." The poem is meaningful in a discussion of this book because in the poem Morris did most of the things he was good at: the portrayal of a medieval-like culture; the capturing of the feeling of the romantic love of the middle ages, along with an opposing sense of unspeakable evil; the ability to create high tension; and the presentation of a "water-color" world that lives in one's memory. I think Morris tried to do many of the same things in this book.

If I am correct, I don't think the book succeeds as well as the poem. For one thing, the book is too wordy. The plot reads as though Morriswere trying to construct a medieval romance. But unlike the real medieval romances (Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Tristan and Isolde, Percival, etc.) the book seems prolix — almost as though Morris were some scribe who had destroyed the native vigor of the tale. (In this vein it is instructive to note that Morris includes explanatory margin notes — much in the manner of the schoolmen who annoted and commented on books in this way.)

The book is still very good, however. Anyone who's interested in English literature at all and anyone who's interested in fantasy should read it. And anyone else who is not afraid of Morris's "lyric, limpid, singing prose... quaint and antique" (as Lin Carter puts it) should read it too.

—Creath Thorne

THE DIRDIR by Jack Vance—Ace 66901, 60¢

This is the third book in the "Planet of Adventure" series, whose first two were reviewed in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #30. The previous volumes introduced two of the species which had colonized Tschai, the various Chasch breeds and the reptilian Wankh. Here we have the third—the predatory Dirdir, a race of hunters and man-eaters. In many respects they resemble one of the alien species of Larry Niven's "future history" novels - a race of carnivores, delighting in the hunt, but lacking the flexibility and imagination of our own omniverous, simian species.

In The Dirdir this reviewer has for the first time a doubt about a major element of the "Planet of Adventure" series. In the previous novels it has been established that the monetary unit of Tschai is the "sequin", which comes in different values according to its color. It now turns out that sequins are a mineral formation, which must be sought out at great risk in a wilderness haunted by Dirdir hunting parties out to feast on the flesh of avaricious humans. Even I can point out numerous economic falacies in this manner of procedure.

Howe'er it be, Adam Reith accumulates a huge number of

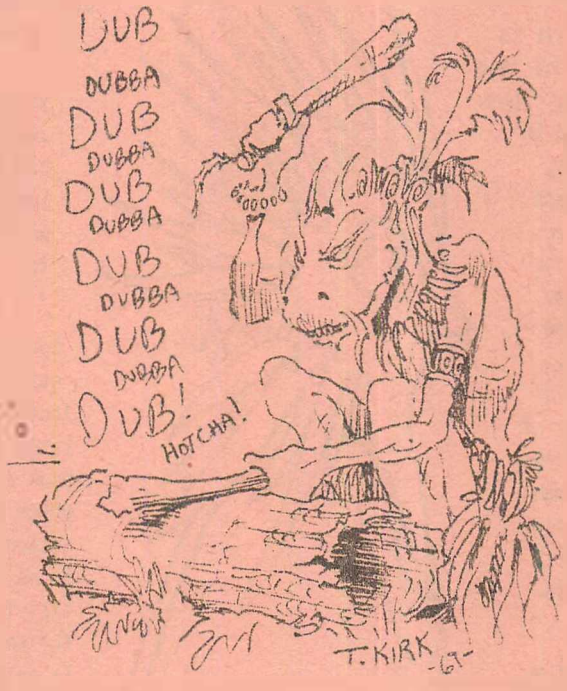
these sequins by turning the Dirdir from the hunters into the hunted – a thing which apparently never occurred to any of the natives or human of Tschai. Though he does not actually get off the planet, he and his two companions, a human Emblem-man and a human mutant evolved under Dirdir influence, come measurably nearer to their goal of getting control of a space-ship and getting the hell out of there.

Now that most of the possibilities of the off-Tschai races have been exhausted, the fourth volume of this series will presumably turn to the native Pnume, the Pnume mutants, or the human mutants under Pnume control.

——John Boardman

THE EYES OF BOLSK by Robert Lory
THE SPACE BARBARIANS by Mack Reynolds ——Ace 77710, 75¢

A short novel even by Ace Double standards (85 pages) The Eyes of Bolsk offers the opportunity for little more than negative compliments. That is, the reviewer can list all the bad things it isn't: it isn't carelessly put together or badly written or hopelessly dull or crammed with one-dimensional characters. On the other hand, it isn't outstandingly good in any respect, either. It is a fairly predictable story about an expert Terran spy selected by the secret masters of the cosmos to thwart a scheme which is going to Upset The Balance Of The Universe and all that. You know the sort of thing. Lory shows sufficient promise as a writer that we can be reasonably certain that he won't be writing Ace Doubles for very much longer. But The Eyes of Bolsk is too short, too narrowly focused and too lacking in substance to be more than a someday footnote in the Lory bibliography.



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Occasionally, Ace's line of back-to-back potboilers includes a winner, and The Space Barbarians is one such. Mack Reynolds is the acknowledged master craftsman among the stable of writers who turn out these Doubles year after year, and the novel at hand demonstrates why.

An unusually long novel for the Ace Double (162 pages), Barbarians concerns the initial contacts—and conflicts—between the space-faring, technologically advanced human civilization of the future and the primitive human society of the planet Caledonia. The inhabitants of Caledona are descended from the survivors of an early colonial expedition that crash-landed on the planet. Having been deprived at a stroke of communications with home and most of their technology and knowledge (only four books survived the crash) the colonists must carry on as best they can. Through centuries of isolation from the mainstream of human civilization, they develop a culture and life-style roughly comparable to that of the Amerinds before the coming of the white man, solidly based on an ethical/religious system derived from their four books. (The four books happen to be two books of verse, Ancient Society by Lewis Morgan, and a book on genetics by H.J. Muller...) When Caledonia is finally (re-) discovered by ships of Earth's expanding empire, and the outsiders set about their dual task of civilizing the people and exploiting the planet's fantastic platinum resources, the age-old conflict between a vigorous industrial-technological culture and a static, primitive socio-econimic order ensues, with the inevitable outcome.

There are a number of nice touches in this particular treatment of the familiar theme, not the least of which is that Reynolds tells the story from the viewpoint of a leading figure among the Caledonians, John of the Hawks, Raid Cacique of the Aberdeen Hawks and later Supreme Raid Cacique of the Loch Confederation. John of the Hawks is a brilliant natural leader——Reynolds has one of his non-Caledonian characters compare him to Robert E. Lee, in that he has the ability to keep the hopeless struggle alive and hence prolong the suffering of his people. Characterization of John of the Hawks, and of a number of lesser figures, is quite good, but where Reynolds really excells is in the portrayal of the Caledonian society, with its clan structure, its sachems, sagamores, caciques and bedels (priests), its complex web of rituals, taboos and imperitives. This is a novel that one becomes absorbed in. And the writing is excellent, considerably above the normal level of both Mack Reynolds and Ace Doubles.

Read it, by all means, for a most enjoyable evening on the planet Caledonia.

——Ted Pauls

MASQUE WORLD by Alexei Panshin——Ace 02320, 60¢

This latest Anthony Villiers novel is cut closely to the pattern of the first two. Namely, nothing happens, but that nothing contrives to happen in an entertaining manner.

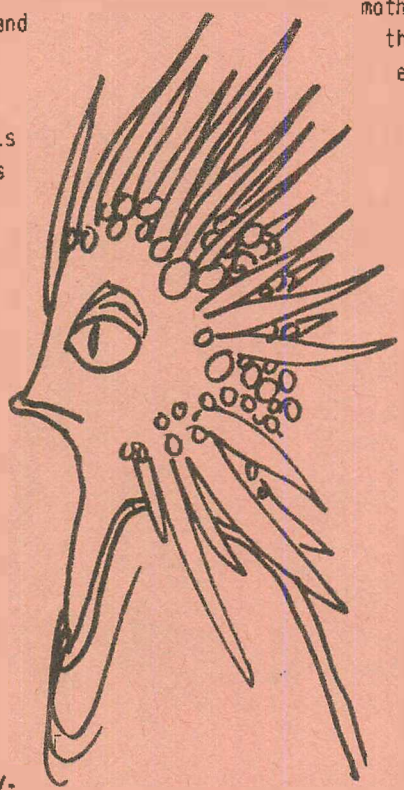
Thus Anthony Villiers and Torve the Trog do their thing ...Villiers seeking to track down his remittance, which, inevitably is delayed, held up or missent, while Torv thurbs

as the opportunity presents itself.

New information is offered to those following the series. Trogs are color-coded; warriors, white belly, white and black stripes; scholars, solid brown; peasants, olive and grey. Torve, interestingly, is brown with a white belly and faint black stripes. The matter is never pursued, but what is a fugitive from Trogholm's military-industrial complex doing traipsing around the Nashuite empire with Villiers? Also we learn that there is a name behind the assassin that pursued Villiers in The Thurb Revolution. And we learn the name.

Alexei Panshin estimates the series will run to seven. A series of still pictures of the Nashuite empire in all its "glory", plus, I guess, a good deal of its modus operandi, its bureaucrats, viceroys, con-men and admirals, its society and its philosophy. A seven novel series——even if individual novels are merely extremely detailed still pictures——should exhibit considerablo sweep and power. And motion, taken as a whole

One difficulty is that Panshin's style is not yet solidly fixed. He is growing, and this growth is evident in the series already. Thus he still steps to the front of the stage in his own persona to lecture or make jokes, but he is now a bit shorter, a little less the all-knowing author. The effect is to take a bit of the effervescence out of the foam, to increase solidity at the expense of light-hearted (and snobbish) wit. The change is slight, but it is perceptible. Continued, it should enhance the appeal of the series, while reducing the intensity of the enthusiasm it generates. In short, Panshin is moving in an anti-fannish and commercial direction. Which is good. The series holds enormous possibilities that will never be realized if it is a financial debacle.



The cover is an excellent city-scape by Kelly Freas, playing with light and luminosity. It has the weakness that Freas has had to borrow an architechture, old Vienna in this case, but so what? In the background a spaceship takes off from the Devil's Tower. Nice balance and excellent use of color.

——Alexis Gilliland

THE GLASS HARMONICA by Barbara Ninde Byfield——MacMillan, $7.95 but remaindered in New York at $1.98

Here's one for Tolkien fans, the Society for Creative Anachronism, Georgette Heyer readers, and the audience at which fairy tales are directed Apparently Mrs. Byfield (who looks from the jacket picture like a young Christine Moskowitz) went through several such stories before summarizing their principal elements in this alphabetically organized compendium of mythic lore. Let a few definitions suffice:

"Auspices are generally favorable, as opposed to Omens, which seldom are."

"Ambassadors...are...able to drink anyone under the table in any liquor (and) can also eavesdrop in any language."

"An Apprentice should be of sturdy, Yeoman stock...willing to sleep on a straw pallet in a stifling garret, run up and down stairs, fetch and carry."

"Forest birds...fly about on their own telling people where things are hidden, what lies in wait, or what road to take." Are you listening, Bilbo Baggins and Prince Jorn?

"Dragons are...surprisingly mortal, albeit terrifying. All you need to do to slay a dragon is to find one; the Quest which you are on will have provided you with the means of the dragon's death by the time you meet."

"Princesses...are subject to Evil Stepmothers, Witches who have been offended at their Christenings, and imprisonment in towers. (Dungeons are seemingly reserved for Princes.)"

"A better man than a Wizard to put your money on in a pinch can't be found ...A Wizard may have to cut and run, but he will do so judiciously, effectively, and to advantage. If you are on the same side he will very likely take you with him."

Cumulatively, these definitions tend to be rather "cute". But in small quantities The Glass Harmonica is effective, particularly when taken after large doses of Grimm or Tolkein. The book is rather unfortunately titled, which may have contributed to its relegation to the remainders' table. There is no inkling of the title's meaning, except for a rather cryptic remark under the entry "Bodyservants". However, there is an excellent drawing of a castle, which any aspiring writer may profitably use as a model for the locale of his own story, and a long list of the particulars wherein a Castle differs from a Palace.

——John Boardman

BORED OF THE RINGS by Henry N. Beard & Douglas C. Kenney (Harvard Lampoon)——Signet. $1.00

The Harvard Lampoon is justly famous for its parodies. Witness the excellent TIME and PLAYBOY they have done.

I'd heard it rumoured that the Lampoon was contemplating a satire of Lord of the Rings some time ago. It has finally come out and is well worth the wait.

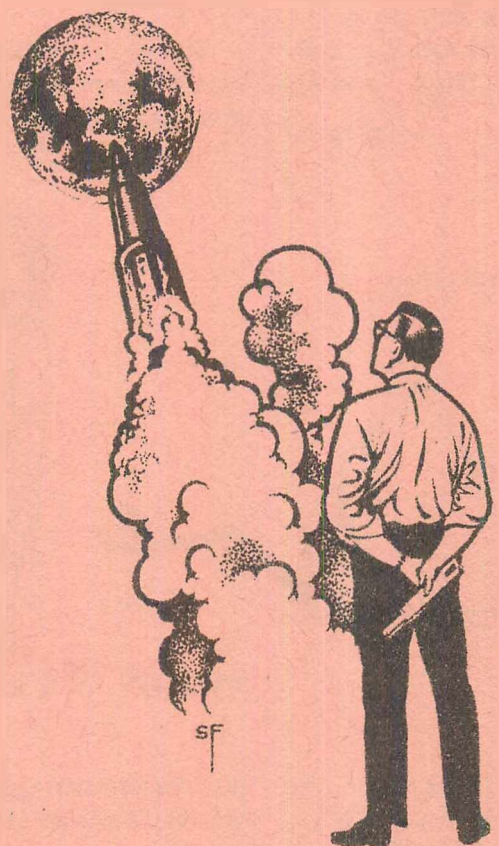
The cover, statement from the author(s), and map are all

perfect in themselves. But the Lampoon has gone a step beyond simple parody of the story. They have actually done some of the book in a style that is so Tolkien-like that it is hard to believe. Tolkien's prose is not the simplest of styles, and the authors have done an excellent job.

—Dave Burton

THE SHAPE OF SPACE by Larry Niven—Ballantine 01712, 75¢

According to the front cover blurb, a simple and unusually restrained statement, The Shape of Space is "New science fiction in a grand old tradition." That sentence very neatly manages to delineate the basic limitation of Larry Niven as a writer. He is a practitioner of sf story-telling in the tradition of a former day; or, as it has been phrased more critically and certainly more caustically, "One of the best science fiction writers of the 1950's." It may be some indication of what has lately transpired in the genre that this author, who is one of the most resolutely conventional major talents in the field, today seems somehow outside the mainstream of speculative literature.



Larry Niven is fundamentally a technician rather than, if I may use such a word, an artist. Drawing such distinctions automatically transports us into the emotionally charged arena of the Literature vs. "mere" escape fiction, Old Wave vs. New Thing argument—dangerous ground, as many who have gone before will testify. In offering the distinction between technician and artist, I am not—despite what the reader's conditioned interpretation of certain words may suggest—in any way demeaning the talent or creativity of the former. To observe that there is obviously a difference between a master carpenter and an artist who works in the medium of wood carving is not to detract from or to deny the particular genius of the master carpenter. It is the same with writing, and especially in our field. The word technician and the "poet" (broadly speaking, I think the literary artists may be refered to as poets, albeit some may never have written a line of verse) have different goals and different approaches in their writing. Both are creative, each in his own way. The technician is not necessarily a lesser talent (as a mater of fact, sf's technicians probably have a higher average standard of work than most of the artists, though of course it can and will be argued that they fail less often simply because they do not aim very high), but because of the approach he chooses the technician is generally more limited.

At any rate, Niven is a technician, in the fine sf tradition of Arthur C. Clarke, Robert Heinlein, Poul Anderson and others, and in his work one may see very precisely in what the limitation consists. Niven cannot "carry" a story on the strength of excellence of prose. The quality of the writing is of course a consideration in judging his work; his good stories are well-written, that goes without saying. What I mean is that he cannot make an intrinsically minor or otherwise unimpressive plot/idea/situation worthwhile through sheer writing. He cannot take a microscopic speck of an idea and write a story like Zelazny's "Auto Da Fe"; he cannot turn one very small concept into something like Delany's "Aye, and Gomorrah". Given a major idea, Niven can write a major story; but working with unimpressive elements, he will turn out insignificant work, well-tooled piffle. That is the necessary burden assumed by a technician. To return to a previous analogy, a word-technician working with an inadequate basic idea or plot is something like a master carpenter working with scraps of white pine (the wood out of which most liquor cases are made, for the non-do-it-yourself-ers in the audience).

In The Shape of Space there are a dozen selections; eleven short stories and a long novelette. There is not a story in which the writing is less than effective, and nowhere are there substantial technical criticisms to be made. Several of the stories are highly polished gems of a particular sort, including "The Deadlier Weapon", which in my opinion is the best single piece in the volume (and which, incidentally, has no element of sf or fantasy). Even the most minor of the stories, "Safe at Any Speed" and "Convergent Series", are at least clever, admirably so. What is lacking is depth, or more importantly any attempt at depth: what appears to be lacking is an appreciation on the part of the author that there can be something more to sf than neatly drawn surface designs. Only two of the stories in this volume have even the potential to be more than a series of prefabricated pieces assembled in a clever manner and polished by a talent without inspiration, and neither succeeds particularly well. One is "Bordered in Black", which may contain

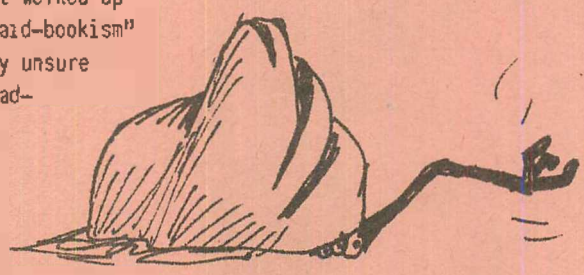
the only really major, original idea in the collection, and the other is "Death By Ecstasy", the novelette, which offers a fairly extensive view of future society but fails to explore some of the possibilities that are offered.

I feel guilty, in a sense, writing an unfavorable review of a collection of such uniformly high quality. Larry Niven is a fine science fiction writer, and if this kind of "hardcore" sf is your bag, there are very few people doing it as well these days. But in the final analysis, one simply must make a value judgement. The amount of speculative fiction on the shelves is vast, and there are only so many hours per week that one can afford to devote to reading. If I have to choose between the latest Ace Special and a collection by Larry Niven (or Isaac Asimov or or Clarke or...), I'll choose the Ace Special every time. It may be a flop--a few have been--but it also may be a brilliantly profound work of art--as a few have also been. In either case, it will invariably be exciting. Larry Niven is not.

--Ted Pauls

OUTLAW WORLD By Edmond Hamilton--Popular Library 60-2376, 60¢

Jim Blish used to get worked up over something called "said-bookism" which is a device used by unsure writers to make their readers experience emotions, undertones and scenes which the writers don't feel up to describing. Edmond Hamilton must be one of the unsung masters of said-bookism. A random selection from this 1945 reprint will come up with things like:



"He puffed," "he asked", "he rapped", "he speculated swiftly", "he said disgustedly", "he beamed", "he shouted furiously", "he taunted", "he crooned", "he growled", "he thought grimly", "he thought ruefully", "he thought tightly" (these three manners of thought are all on page 25), "he commented", "he demanded", "he ordered", "he reported", "he warned grimly", "he boomed", "he burst out"; the people in this book further cry, howl, crron, yell, whisper, and they do it in all imaginable ways, furtively, sniggeringly, quickly, gruesomely and take your own pick.

This isn't very good writing. Neither is the rest of the book.

There seems to be this band of radium pirates, see, who raid peaceful transport ships on their ways through the solar system. Captain Future gets into the act, and is captured by the pirates; escapes; is captured again; escapes and then gets them all in the end. It's standard, dreary, formula-written space opera. Often, it's also funny.

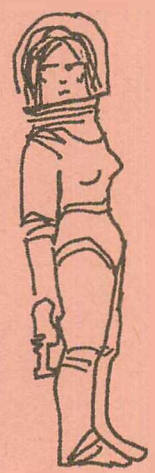
Take logic. "But Chief, all our calculations prove that Vulcan is so hot it must be molten!" objected Grag.

"Our calculations must have been wrong," Captain Future insisted. "Vulcan can't be molten, or Ru Ghur's raiders couldn't have their base their."

Or try characterization: "But Grag had more than mere strength. In his metal head was a complex mechanical brain that made him more than a robot. Intelligence shone from his two glowing photo-electric eyes."

Physics? "He knew the solar spaces as an ordinary man knows his back yard. And the bucking of the ship meant it was plowing through some of the powerful ether currents that are frequent between Jupiter and Saturn." - "A haunting doubt crept into his eyes. 'Maybe their Outlaw World is in another universe or dimension.'"

Biology is also a major science in this book: "The Uranian's followers were men of almost every planetary race--brawny green Jovians, thin Saturnians, wizened, swarthy Mercurians, vicious-looking Earthmen. Pirates, outlaws, all of them."



There must be a market for this sort of abomination. Possibly it's the same market that avidly waits for the next issue of FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND. There is not one word in this novel that manages to convince on any level; there is not even a word which is worth reading. Edmond Hamilton is a nice guy; I've met him and like him, and he has written some quite good space opera as well as a few excellent, adult short stories. But the Captain Future series is something which should never have been put on paper in the first place, much less reprinted after 25 years of science fiction progress.

--Carl J. Brandon, Jr.

THE MIND PARASITES by Colin Wilson--Bantam F3905, 50¢

According to the author, this book is a "Lovecraft novel." It is, in fact and unfortunately, nothing of the kind. The story, told in first person, proceeds in a dogged and almost stuffy fashion completely alien to HPL's method. The reactions of the characters are most un-Lovecraftian, for the hapless protagonist of one of the Master's tales would spend considerable wordage detailing his terror of the nameless bumpers in the night, but Colin Wilson's good guys gain mental equilibrium with each bout with the mind critters. "It is such a relief to be fighting these things now that we know they exist," they might say. And these plucky Britons who are determined to mud-

dle through have no place in a true Lovecraft novel.

Nor will the parasites do as a Lovecraftian menace. They are unseen and intangible A true Lovecraftian Nameless Horror must be visible, else how could its indescribably hideous appearance blast one's mind? And the discovery that the mind parasites are cancerlike outgrowths of our minds is the antithesis of a Lovecraft Thing, which is entirely external, alien to all that is familiar to us, and evil and horrible beyond human description.

Wilson lacks the fascination with his creatures that Lovecraft had. In fact, he tends to lose track of them, getting wrapped up in subsidiary details and machinations. And the piling of gee-whiz tricks one atop another makes me wish that Mr. Wilson had paid attention to H.G. Wells' rule that one miracle is a wonder, but a multitude of miracles is a bore.

I could have done without the first quarter of the novel, which mostly concerns the discovery of an underground city built two million years ago by alien creatures from a Lovecraft story (!) and which has nothing to do with the mind parasites. Nor am I happy with the scientific props of the story which demonstrate an embarrassing ignorance of elementary science. Examples: the moon, if pushed out of its orbit around the Earth, would fall into the sun; a device which allows a view underground to a depth of three miles "is no more than an X-ray, whose principle is similar to that of a mine detector..." and it is a "modification of the electronic laser" and uses "neutron feedback."

There is a certain interest in watching the book move ahead in its stubbornly dense fashion, but after so much battling of the mind beasties by positive thinking, one tires. What Colin Wilson has written is not a "Lovecraft novel," but a Colin Wilson novel. Pity that Lovecraft may get blamed for it.

I rather like the cover illustration, even if its connection with the novel is not clear.

——Hank Davis

Virginia Kidd, with R. A. Lafferty's permission, submits this review to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, in the earnest hope that he will reach that much larger audience as well as the less than fifty readers who see KINESIS (for which the review was written.)

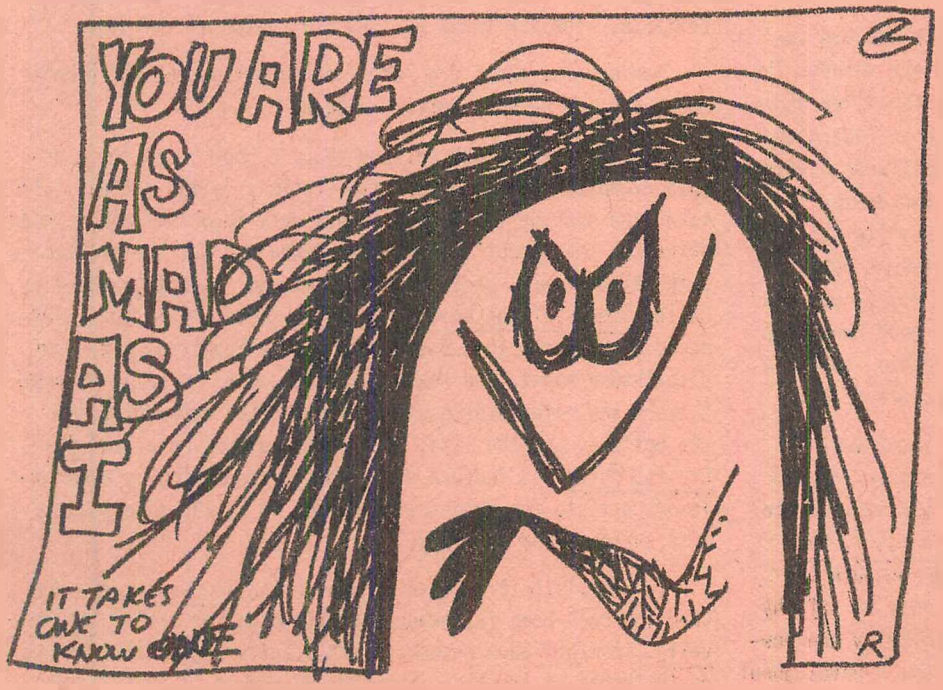
ASTERIX ET CLEOPATRE Text (French) by Goscinny, Cartoons by Uderzo; Introduction by Capretz——Harcourt, Brace & World

Why have I been kept ignorant of a main thing in the popular arts that has been going on for several years at least? Asterix the Gaul has apparently had several of these adventures before. Everybody in France has known about him. Everybody of any moment in the world has known about him. And I was left out.

This is a comic book with class. It could even cause a renaissance in the American comic books (they are not dead; they're just dopey.) The time is 50 B.C.; the style is Johnny Hart of B.C., with a little of Fred (Snuffy Smith) Lasswell, Al Capp (Obelix looks like Hairless Joe, Numerobis is a lot like Lonesome Polecat, and the potion magique of Panoramix smells a lot like Kickapoo Joy Juice with gui (mistletoe) taking the place of skunk cabbage); and with a lot of Vaughn Bode.

Cleopatra, having to have a grand palace built in jig-time to show Caesar that the Egyptians haven't lost their moxie, gives the job to the architect Numerobis: it's do it or to the crocodiles with you. Numerobis remembers the little group of irreducible Gauls from previous adventures: Abraracourcix the chief who is afraid of only one thing: that the sky should fall on his head (ah well, that's the only thing I've ever been afraid of); Panoramix the druid magician; Obelix who is built like a barrel and not an obelisk, and Asterix the runt-sized hero. With the aid of the magic potion, the Gauls scuttle pirates, move many-ton-weight stones, defeat conspiracies, and build the palace. But that is like describing MAD magazine to one who has never seen it as a thing with a gape-toothed kid on the cover and some gape-toothed jokes inside. The flavor is lost in the description.

.. This may cause eye~~-~~strain. One has to turn back to nearly every cartoon on nearly every page to pick up something in the corner that was too good to be comprehended at first glimpse. This is more than slick French Li'l Abner stuff. This is slick stone-age stuff going back beyond dates (if those big things aren't stones what



are they?), combined with tomorrow's French wit.

Asterix the name: the introduction says it is merely the word "asteriaque" (*), asterisk, and then by coincidence the name was discovered on an actual Gallic tomb. Nonsense! He is Astro-Rex, the conglomerate Star-King having adventures on a stone-age planet!

——R. A. Lafferty

The three books published by Harcourt for school use, and containing lexical indexes are:

Asterix le Gaulois
Asterix Gladiateur
Asterix et Cleopatre

Unfortunately we can sell only to schools, or to bookstores at wholesale prices. We have no control over bookstores' retail prices. Probably the simplest thing, if you want to buy any of the titles, is to send me your request. I will have our own bookstore ship and bill you at $2.93 per volume plus postage (book rate, pretty reasonable).

Bookstores specializing in French books may have some Asterix books, and your friendly neighborhood book purveyor may be willing to order for you, but ordinarily bookstores get all mixed up when ordering textbooks on special order, and they hate to do it.

John Carman
Manager, National Promotion and Service Publications, School Department,
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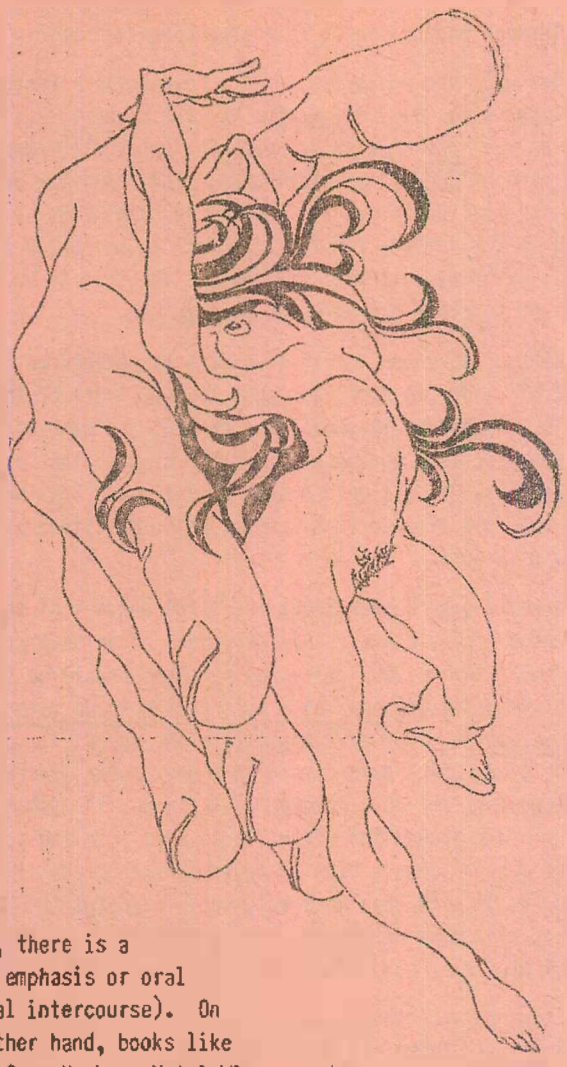

RAW MEAT by Richard E. Geis——Essex House 020136, $1.95

There are two basic attitudes with which one can approach writing a novel containing explicit sex scenes. The first is that the work will deal with aspects of the human character that can only be explored through an understanding of their sexual activities and their attitudes toward these activities. The second is that one can decide to write a sex novel. Given the same basic thematic material these different decisions will produce different novels: as different as salt and sugar. The first may or may not produce a good book, but it will attempt a good book. The second will neither produce nor display anything beyond a certain competence in arousing the average male reader.

Now while an author's motivations are irrelevant to everyone but him, his work will inevitably speak for him and say something about his intentions. Thus it is quite obvious that books such as Lady Chatterly's Lover, Bug Jack Barron, and Queen of Heat were written because the author wanted to say something that could only be said by dealing explicitly with sex (i.e. psychologically the power-seeker has an oral fixation and in Barron, a novel about power, there is a heavy emphasis or oral genital intercourse). On the other hand, books like Cycle Gang Hooker, Motel Wives, and The Love Tribe are obviously sex novels in which all other elements are subservient to the presentation of sex scenes which will arouse the reader and satisfy the publisher's editorial standards. Any redeeming social value, message, characterization, insight, etc. are of secondary importance. The sex scene is lord and master of the book.

Sex novels, then, are rarely taken seriously, while books about sex may be very serious indeed.

The first thing one notices about a book (with the possible exception of the cover illustration) is the title. This makes the package (title and cover) very important since they determine the reader's first impression and set the attitude with which he will begin reading. If, for example, a book is called Swords of the Demon Sun and the cover features a half-naked barbarian with a sword defending a beautiful girl from a loathsome beast, the reader will assume he is going to read a light and entertaining story of primitive adventure, dead sea bottoms, and the like. But should a book be called The Crystal World and feature a surrealistic painting by a world-famous artist, the reader will assume he is about to start a more serious kind of story.

It is difficult to take a book called Raw Meat seriously. (Had the book been released under its original title, The Perverts, it might have seemed a little better. In fact, in its death throes at the time, Essex House seemed to throw aside

all courtesy and change titles willy-nilly with no regard for writer or reader: moving away from such titles as A Feast Unknown and Season of the Witch to titles like Blown and Thrill City.) At best one might expect a black comedy of the Doctor Strangelove variety, and when the book features a crudely painted woman leaning backward, nipples thrust out and the first chapter begins: "Jim grabbed the young woman. She had large blue eyes and wore a braided yellow head dek. With the power of a huge erection firing his muscles, Jim tore the matching see-through yellow paper gown from around her lush body." it becomes quite likely that the book will be little more than a sex novel.

It is the little more that makes this a bad book, for if it did not have that little more, it would not be worth noticing at all. Unfortunately the book itself has, like Scientology, a built-in cop-out to which the author can retreat for protection, and the cop-out is the main weakness of the book. Also its plot.

Cop-out and plot: The usual future, Great Mother Computer, small apartments with all conveniences, reproduction (therefore real sexual matters) proscribed, animal functions eliminated (one enters johh, is hypnotized to eliminate and then forget), and to channel sexual impulses sextapes are experienced under total sensory stimulation. The sextapes are all romanticized as the average television program, and as unreal. The climaxes are more intense, male semen and female lubricating fluids all have exciting flavors (strawberry, mint, etc.), the organs are larger, the sex-play perfect. This pretty much conditions people away from raw sex which can never be as good as the tapes. The tapes are even categorized according to individual psychologies: oral genital, voyeuristic, what-have-you.

Since fifty-percent of the book is given over to the fantasies of the sextapes the result is a kind of literary cubism where the unimportant is given as much emphasis as the important. A similar effect would have occurred if, during the thirties and forties, a movie producer had made a four-hour science fiction film about the sixties in which two hours consisted of the television programs the characters were watching and the rest concerned the characters' reactions to a television world. Ending, perhaps, with the protagonist kicking in the TV set and electrocuting himself. Such a film might be interesting, but with the action stopping so often, would prove quite boring.

But here, buried under an obfuscation of adolescent s sexual fantesies and Phil Dick plot re-hash, is the skeleton of a Hugo-winning novelet. It is, of course, pointless to wish that Mr. Geis had written that instead. But the fact remains that the plot-line, hidden behind the prerequisite sex scenes, is quite interesting. Since children often misbehave to gain their mother's attention, in a society ruled by a mothercomputer, wouldn't lonely people misbehave for the same reasons? This is precisely (when one is able to find the plot behind the sex scenes) what happens. And the protagonist is finally driven to suicide. But—

"All the way down his hand clawed the space over his head...searching for the off button..."

A line worthy of Larry Niven.

Raw Meat, then, is a good sex novel, a terrible science fiction novel (as Lin Carter writes terrible fantasy, but good barbarian bullshit), and a travesty of a psychological novel. Since Dick Geis has written many, many sex novels, it quite succeeds as such, and the writing will cause the average male to have an erection while protecting his conscience with the thought that there is some social value here. But the book never attempts to match the high standards set by many of the previous Essex House writers (Meltzer, Perkins, and Stine) or to reach the limits of the author's talent.

Presumably Geis could write a very good book indeed, if he so chose. Whether or not he will, remains to be seen.

—Hank Stine

((Readers and collectors and book dealers should be aware that the Essex House print runs were never too large, and that recently were down to around 12,000 copies. It is a fair bet that the Phil Farmer and Hank Stine books will soon become collectors' items. They are still available from Regent House (a mail order firm), Box 9506, North Hollywood, Calif. 91609.))

MAIL ORDER INFORMATION

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

SIGNET—New American Library, P.O. Box 2310, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10017. 10¢ fee.

BERKLEY Publishing Corp., 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016 10¢ handling fee.

PAPERBACK LIBRARY, INC., Dept. B, 315 Park Av. South, New York, NY 10010. 10¢ handling fee.

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

ADVENT: PUBLISHERS, P.O. Box 9228, Chicago, Ill. 60690. No fee.

WALKER AND CO., 720 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10019. No fee.

And Then I Read....

by.....the.....editor

I have decided to throw out the title and format of my previous review column, "Little-Noted and/nor Long Remembered" because while the title was accurate there was also an aura of faint put-down in it for the books I reviewed.

And I want to go to a more informal discussion than the set-piece reviews of yore.

It may take me a few issues to change mental gears, however.

Terry Carr has faith in his Ace Specials. He sent me a set of galley proofs of the current release, Joanna Russ's And Chaos Died with the hope that a review of the book would appear in SFR while the book itself was on the stands where fans could buy it.

I took the galleys up to Portland to read over the holidays, along with three or four other books.

It's a fine book.

And it is a challenging book beyond the surface level of entertainment and swift pace. Joanna Russ still, to my mind, has yet to create a whole human being on paper, but there is so much content packed into each of her pages, so much understatement, so much implied, that it's a wonder she managed to make Jai Vedh, the central character of And Chaos Died, as complex and well-fleshed as she did.

She sums him up on the first page: "There was some Hindi in the family, way back--a father, for they still used fathers' names--but he did not look it, being yellow-haired with blue eyes and a dark yellow beard, a streaked beard, as if stained or dyed. Since he was a civilian, he wore turquoises, sandals, silver, leather, old charms, rings, ear-rings, floating stones, bracelets, and the industrial jewels that do not last. He was a desperate, quiet, cultured, and well-spoken man. He had been in the minor arts for some years, but was still young when his business required him to take a trip, and so for the first time he traveled up off the surface of Old Earth..."

And very little more is given about him personally that makes him an individual. The most impressive is his revealed homosexuality and his yearning to be normal.

But I nit-pick, in a way. There is much more to Jai than you get in 90% of sf, and this book is crammed with a carefully worked out psi society and culture that is revealed, shown, but not explained; the reader slowly understands what it all means as events and conversations occur. There are no lectures. There is no time for them.

Jai's ship explodes. He and the Captain reach an uncharted, Earth-like planet in an escape capsule. They find a group of humans who are at first inexplicable to them.

As the weeks pass, Jai becomes confused and disoriented as his latent psi powers are awakened. The Captain stays the same. The Captain is a stereotype--inflexible, obtuse, fearful, intolerant, hypocritical...a square image, used as a foil, a sort of villain, Joanna's tool.

Jai falls in love with Evne, a young mother, and they make love. The word is love, not sex. It is impossible to separate the sex content of the book and examine it; it is there but nothing is made of it. It happens, naturally, as do a few four-letter words...and so what? That is the best measure of Joanna's skill; she has shown sex as love (and as sex in the actions and mind of the Captain, and later on the Earth) and made it so much an integral and inevitable part of life that it is unobtrusive.

A few words about style: in this book Miss Russ has used a prose cut to the bone. There may not be a single unnecessary word in the whole book. Transitions are sometimes brutally abrupt, dialog is swift and the reader supplies most of what was said before and after.

This style, which has room for grace and sensual imagery, was used, too, to give a "different" feel to the mind of the reader, I believe, to give an impressiond of alienness, of psi-powers working. It is subtly effective.

Jai and the Captain are rescued. Jai is more and more aware of his developing powers. Evne is teleported into the ship from her planet by a group effort. She teaches him more; they play psi games in the ship. As they near Earth she jumps to the surface. Jai--like a bird first learning to fly --teleports down, too.

Jai sees Earth through new eyes. It is overcrowded, bizarre, mad, deadly. He and Evne are hunted by the authorities.

Eventually there is a meeting between the psi people and Earth people...but the Earth people attempt to kill them.

I won't tell how it ends.

It's a fine book. It is a rare book; it stands up under rereading. In fact, it demands rereading.

Here I sit with a cup of hot, strong tea, because I didn't sleep too well last night, looking at Astrology Answers Your Questions (Gold Medal R2151, 60¢) and I have looked through it--at the Cancer sections--but none of them are talking about me, and they should, really, if they want me to believe...

Ruth Montgomery's Here and Hereafter (Fawcett Crest T1298, 75¢) is yet another book for those who cannot face death. It

is about reincarnation.

John Brunner has been expanding many of his earlier, hack novels and making some extra money off them in re-issuing by various publishers. It is one of the benefits of "hitting" with a big award-winning book or two.

So The Avengers of Carrig (Dell 0356, 50¢), formerly Secret Agent of Terra by Ace, is out and is a satisfying, entertaining sf adventure of the space-patrol-working-to-protect-an-isolated-human-culture-from-profit-hungry-men variety.

The sub-plots and detail are more interesting than the basic plot. Brunner seemed to write by the yard in the past: when the wordage reached a certain point—wrap it up! Stupid villains, even when credible, are too convenient to be acceptable.

The Palace of Eternity by Bob Shaw (Ace Spacial 65050, 75¢) suffers from perhaps a too-drastic plot shift in mid-book. A real, red-blooded, convincing, involving hero is killed off and sent to limbo to await rebirth in the mind of his son.

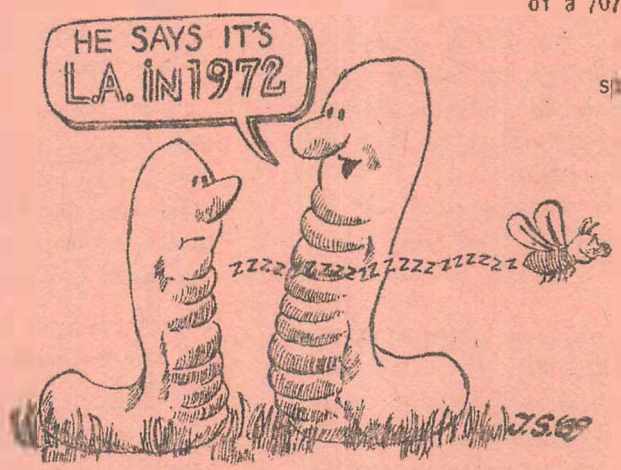
The book seems to be a damn good action sf yarn to that point: implacable aliens intent on wiping out all humans, increasingly dictatorial, desperate human government, the anguish of an ex-military man drawn into the struggle as a rebel...

I'll let the author explain more of the plot. Bob wrote a letter of comment about a review that appeared recently. I had intended to put it in "Box 3116" next issue, but this is more appropriate. Bob Shaw writes:

"One of the things which fascinates me about fannish and pro writing is the way in which I can sit here in this mist-shrouded remote isle, put some thoughts on paper, shoot them off into the big bright world across the sea, then wait to see what sort of reaction there will be. Thus it was that, to a rather higher degree than would have been the case had I lived in the states, I began to take notice when I discovered my name being mentioned here and there by J.J. Pierce. His name was familiar to me because almost everybody seems to jump on him with hob-nailed boots and I wondered why; and I got a vague uneasiness when I found he was including me in the list of authors whose work he liked. Now I have written a book which J.J. definitely doesn't like, but unfortunately this has not removed my uneasiness—thanks to the way in which he reviewed it.

"Getting reviews of one's books is all part of this response from the outer world which I enjoy so much, and now that I have had several novels published I am even getting used to reviewers' little ways. One of them is their practice of describing anything they like as "good" and anything they don't like as"bad"—regardless of the fact that other critics have made opposite pronouncements—thus debasing the words "good" and "bad" to near-meaningless signs. But I can't adapt to J.J. Pierce's critical idiosyncracies.

"The book in question is The Palace of Eternity which J. J. classifies as being about spiritualism and trounces it on that ground—even though there isn't a single spirit in the whole story, even though the background I present specifically rules out the possibility of spirits. An important part of the plot are alien creatures called egons, who are described as being composed of electrical energy and living in space. For reasons of their own, which are explained in detail, these creatures adopt a kind of symbiotic relationship with humans, in the process of which they duplicate the humans' mind/brain/personality structure. And as a by product of this relationship when a human dies, an electrical analog of his consciousness remains in the form of the egon. To further emphasise the fact that these egons are physical in their nature I included the fact that their bodies can be ingested and destroyed by interstellar ramjets in exactly the same way that birds can be swallowed by the engines of a 707.



"Now, does that sound like spiritualism to you? It does to J.J., who has based his whole review on the supposition that I was writing about Gothic-style ghosts or Biblical-style disembodied souls. And if there are many other people in sf fandom who can't see any difference between my egons and the spirits of religious belief then I really am uneasy. Admittedly, if one examines the implications of egons, certain superficial similarities will be seen, but we don't think on a superficial level, do we?

"Having decided that he didn't like this materialistic, non-mystical, non-spiritualistic book on the grounds that it was about spiritualism, J.J. then goes on to the deep literary analysis bit. Why, he demands to know, could the egons not duck out of the way of the spaceships and thus avoid being made into "minced spirit"?

"If J.J. feels it is easy to jump out of the way of something moving at the speed of a bullet (and starships move a hell of a lot faster) I think it only fair that he should offer to give us a practical demonstration of how it is done."

It should be noted that it is the alien Pythsyccans who are trying to exterminate mankind—and for an altruistic, moral reason: mankind is killing his "Heaven" and his future by unknowingly scything through the egons clustered around every world inhabited by himself. We are considered totally perverted and immoral creatures.

There is obviously a message implied in The Palace of

Eternity concerning man's destruction of his own ecology now, and the endangering of his very survival in the future. Might not a rational alien race, seeing our current behavior, conclude that we are perverted, insane creatures, and rightfully act in eliminating us?

Another Ace Special is The Black Corridor by Michael Moorcock (Ace 06530, 75¢). It is a repellently fascinating story, a case history, of progressive schizophrenic paranoia in an overcrowded, racist, maddened world.

A small group of friends and relatives escapes this world by stealing the only spaceship on Earth. The story is told in flashbacks of memory by their leader, Ryan.

He is insane. We learn why and how as he hallucinates and writes in the log and in his private journal. Has he killed everyone else on the ship? Will he? What seems to have been true in the beginning of the story becomes more and more doubtfull at the end as Moorcock envelopes the reader more and more deeply into the psychotic mind of Ryan.

The ending is ambiguous. You may feel cheated. But it is a gripping book.

Starman's Quest is a good sf juvenile re-issued by Meredith Press at $4.95. It concerns the special small society of Spacers, those who fly the starships and age only months as those on Earth age decades; and it is about the hunt by one young man for an alternative.

As I read this I felt I was wasting my time, but Bob Silverberg's writing kept me reading. That's why it's a good juvenile.

Ten Million Years To Friday by John Lymington (Doubleday, $4.50) is long on believable, every-day detail and people, and short on credibility when it tells the story of a reclusive scientist, the moors, an invention that views the past, and a birth of an inconceivably superior being in the depths of caverns below the scientists house.

A good deal of suspense is generated as we await the birth of the thing, planted, egg-like a million years before.

Lymington writes very well and almost brings it off.

I enjoyed All Judgement Fled by James White (Walker, $4.95) very much. It is an alien contact story with twists and curves that keep you guessing, and with a natural, built-in suspense concerning the spacemen sent out to investigate the huge alien spaceship that has parked in our solar system.

I must confess I didn't think I'd like The Island Under the Earth when I started it, but Avram Davidson has the "almost" sf fantasy-of-magic style down to perfection, and this one drew me in and hooked me proper. And when you get the bonus of a Harpie in a tree-nest who says she has mothered eight hundred and twenty seven eggs and complains, "Why don't any of them ever come to visit me?" can you complain? Not me. I loved it. (Ace Special 37425, 75¢)

—END—

MONOLOG ENDLESSLY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

he replied, 'Robert Toomey,' (which I have not evidence to doubt), and 'wrighting wrongs,' and continued to say that he had traveled many winter miles to find me and take me to task for ever having denied that Piers Anthony might be the youngest and turkiest of the Young Turks of science fiction. He said he thought me no judge—'no fit judge' were his words—and even attempted to strike me. I was about to have him carried to the edge of the property and offed, when I actually chanced to think about what he was saying to me. Am I in a position to judge how young and turky Piers Anthony may be? No, not really. I have met Piers Anthony twice, and on that basis I can't deny that he did seem to be both young (to all appearance) and turky. Perhaps not as young and turky as the young man before me now, but in a moment of recantation there is no time for hedges and quibbles. I lowered my head and opined I had been wrong. Mr. Toomey (as I suppose him to be) immediately then asked to borrow my typewriter and the loan of a stamp, for he said he planned to nail the point home in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. I have seen his letter (and edited it slightly for taste and style) and I still grant his point: Piers—you be as young and turky a Young Turk as you care to be. Right.

"Mr. Toomey's letter also recalled to my mind Fredric Brown's Rogue in Space, and I have to agree with him there, too: it must be considered a seminal work. I cherish the final scene in which Crag, united with his planet at last, bounce, bounce, bounces his detachable metal hand against the ground in an ecstatic frenzy."

I don't believe I have any comment on these letters. Piers may have a comment, but I don't. Except that now I wish to read Rogue in Space.

+ Brian Schuck, editor of FANACTIK, needs artwork (besides Rotsler). His address: 416 Donbar Dr., Bowling Green, Ohio 43402.

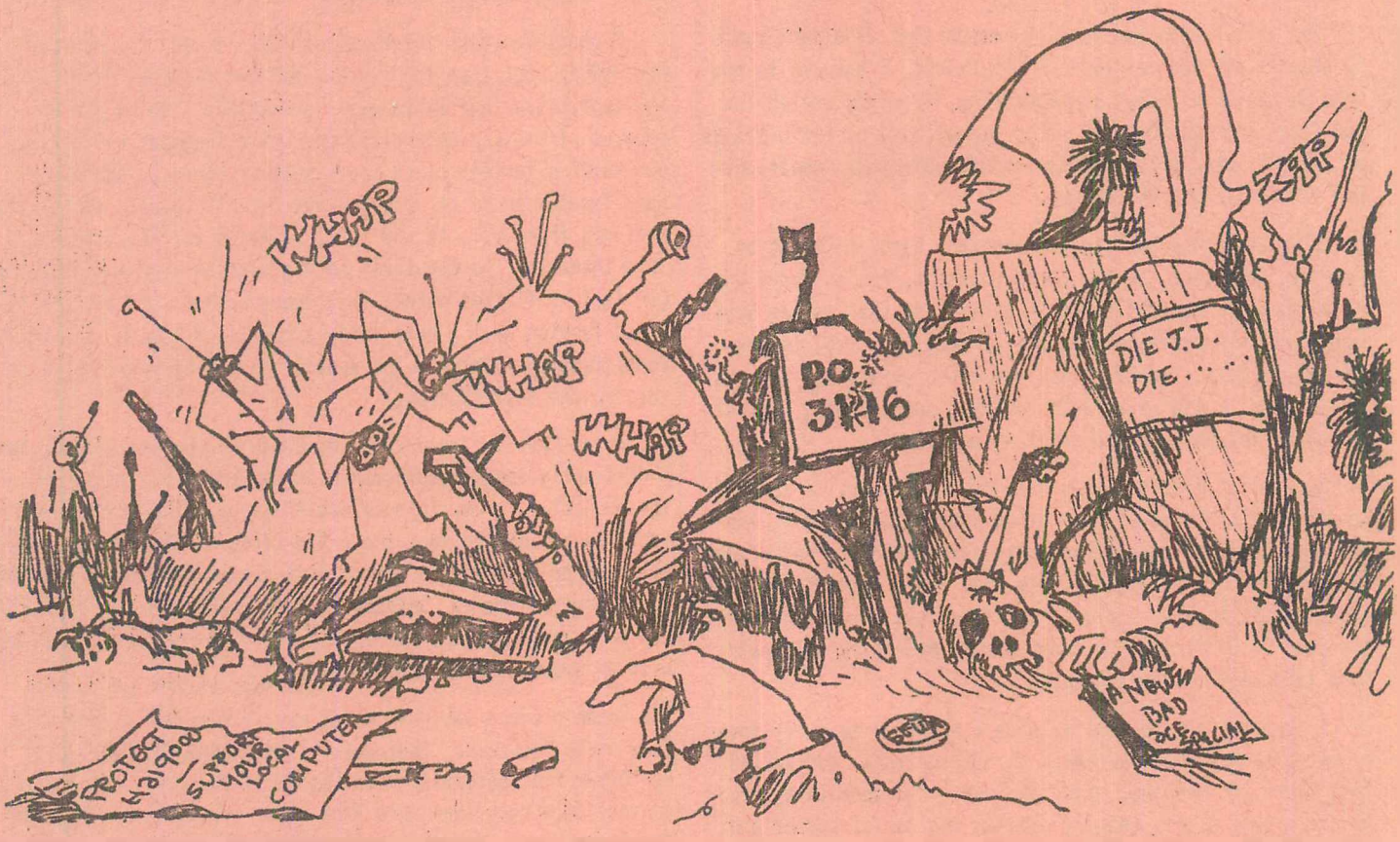
+ I ALSO GOT QUOTABLE LETTERS (BUT NO ROOM TO PRINT THEM IN IS LEFT) FROM: CHRISTOPHER PRIEST, ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS, JEFF SMITH, GRAHAM CHARNOCK, ROBERT OLSEN (still the Galactic Overlord), H. HOWARD COLEMAN, T.R. OLIVER, MIKE HOLLIGER, MIKE KLAUS, WILLIAM LINDEN, MICHAEL J. SWEDO, JR., IRV JACOBS, DAVE BURTON, W.E. CAGLE, DENNIS LIEN, JERRY LAPIDUS (twice), MIKE GILBERT, GREGG CALKINS, SCOTT BRADFIELD, RICHARD CONNOLLY, PERRY A CHAPDELAINE, DON HUTCHISON, JEROME NELSON, ROBERT J.R. WHITAKER, BARRY GILLAM, DAVID B. WILLIAMS, DAVID PIPER, AVRAM DAVIDSON, ANTHONY NAPOLI, BILL GLASS, JOE SICLARI, REX KERRICK, TOM MULLEN ...

Thanks for writing and do write again with comment and criticism. Your letters go into the EGOBOO BONUS file if not printed and are eventually cut up for forwarding to those mentioned.

Would you believe the last EGOBOO BONUS netted John J. Pierce around a dozen pages of clipped-out comments?

+ THIS IS THE END OF THE MONOLOG.

P.O. BOX 3116



STOP PRESS—Evelyn del key was killed in an auto accident yesterday. She and Lester were driving home from Florida. The 1-29-70 accident occurred in Georgia as she attempted to pass a truck. She lost control. Lester was thrown clear. (from a phone call from Harlan Ellison who was called by Harry Harrison)

SAM MOSKOWITZ
361 Roseville Av.
Newark, NJ 07107

I feel it incumbent upon me to give you the courtesy of telling you why I deliberately, with malice aforethought, sponsored J.J. Pierce, and helped provide the focus of the opposition to The New (Huh!) Wave. I enclose it in the form of a copy of the editorial of the October, 1967 issue of DIFFERENT titled "How I was Dragged, Kicking and Screaming, Into the Arena as a Reluctant Antagonist of the New Thing." It is concise, abbreviated, but precisely accurate and you may reprint it if you wish.

I think I have just about every New Wave book, magazine and story that ever was made generally available. I do not think there is a single New Wave advocate in the world that has more of the literature attributed to that group than I have, including J.G. Ballard, Brian Aldiss, Harlan Ellison, Thomas Disch, Norman Spinrad, Harry Harrison or you name it. I will write their obituary at great length. By "their" I mean the so-called movement. I will not act as their promotion man.

A recent interview published with Michael Moorcock now admits, that their attacks on the "establishment" were premeditated and part of a plan to attract attention. I not only resent, I am fed up with being attacked for some personal profit-motive, to attract attention to a literary cockroach in the hope that the publicity will help him sell more stories. Therefore, as has always been my policy, I decided to post-facto give them a reason, and unleashed J.J. Pierce, whose methods are actually a satire of their own.

As was predictable, the group is much better at dishing it out than at taking it. One of the first things they did was write to the President of The Science Fiction Writer's Association to do something about me. He was an old friend, but I told him if he wanted to be a world policeman he could go to Vietnam.

((That cockroach...was his name archy?

Reprinted below is the text of your DIFFERENT editorial, in the interest of historical accuracy and completeness and not necessarily to keep the New Wave Controversy Going.))

HOW I WAS DRAGGED, KICKING AND SCREAMING, INTO THE ARENA AS A RELUCTANT ANTAGONIST OF THE NEW THING

By Sam Moskowitz

I am no longer young. Rapidly moving into middle age,

occupied with editing three trade magazines, supervising a full-time editorial staff of six, what little time remains is devoted to science fiction research and reporting the results of same. I avoid crusades. The time involved with them can cost me money to be made in more lucrative assignments.

For that reason and for the reason that it didn't really arouse any special emotion pro or con, I have up to now made no statement about The New Thing, formerly called The New Wave; that is supposed to be exemplified by the writings of J.G. Ballard, Brian Aldiss and various others contributing to the British NEW WORLDS.

I had tolerated seemingly senseless barbs in print by various members of the New Thing movement, but as Harry Harrison began to express these in public, at the Eastern Science Fiction Association meeting of Sept. 10, 1967 in Newark, N.J., I felt moved to ask why these persistent attacks on me, since I had never said anything specifically against the group in public or in print at any time.

He replied that my views were on the record. I responded that I liked some of the things that Ballard and Aldiss had done, and had even editorially termed Aldiss "one bright new author." He said that while that was a point in my favor, it would in no way affect the fact that I was, whether I wanted to be or not, an enemy of The New Thing and would have to accept the consequences.

I implored him to tell me what I might do to curry favor with the movement and avoid an altercation. He replied that there was nothing, since the doors had shut in my mind at the age of eight, that my reading was too circumscribed to permit me to begin to understand what The New Thing was about. Besides, I had once implied that The Dark Light Years by Brian Aldiss, which had been dedicated to Harry Harrison, might be less than a masterpiece; therefore, there was no succor.

I have always believed that if a man or group acts against you without reason, you should give him (or it) one. In the future, I will apply this philosophy to The New Thing. In the meantime, I am very worried about Harry Harrison. Does he actually believe it is a compliment to have a book that is about and full of shit dedicated to him?

JACK WILLIAMSON
P.O. Box 761
Portales, New Mex.
88130

Moorcock's comments on Hammett and Chandler remind me that I used to read Hammett's Maltese Falcon every six months or so, to study his use of the dramatic scene. So far as I know, the dramatic scene as an 800-word functional unit was first described and taught by John Gallishaw, late in the 'twenties. A group of mystery writers seem to have perfected it at BLACK MASK magazine. Nobody wrote better scenes than Hammett —not even van Vogt.

PIERS ANTHONY
Florida

Brother! The only novel your three best-of-decade lists had in common was Dune? I stalled on that after the first ANALOG serial segment, and could never finish it. Sigh. Whatever happened to your review-ranking of the best of 1969, promised some time back? ((Next issue, I hope.))

Michael Moorcock interview: I haven't seen the Moorcock NEW WORLDS, but from the reviews and descriptions of it I have the impression that it is quite compatible with my own philosopgies of writing enterprise and quite incompatible with my own reading tastes. That is, I believe every person should have freedom to do his thing—but I don't have to appreciate what his thing is. At any rate, he makes terrific sense in this interview, particularly in his assessment of the SF awards. (In fact, I flatter myself that Moorcock has said in sophisticated fashion what I have said, a couple of issues ago, in unsophisticated fashion. The awards can not be relied upon to turn up the best fiction.)

Avram Davidson remarks on my Hasan Column and says "I have a distinctly vague rememberance of sending him a letter on the subject..." Um, this is embarrassing. The Beard is correct, in his gentle way, and I had intended to give him the warmover he deserved in the column, along with the others similarly treated there. Somehow in the complexities of cogitation and organization I overlooked him. My apologies, and herewith an emendation to that column: "Some months later, when the Hasan project was well under way, I received a kind note from Avram Davidson. That note is now hopelessly buried in my 'Other Professionals' file (scoff if you must, but I started that file back when word from other writers was rare; now the thing is so packed I can't make anything of it. In due course it will go to Syracuse U., where they're paid to untangle such messes) and I can't locate it, but as I recall it was holographic and encouraging. I suspect that this was less in response to my SFWA solicitation than to my Arabian Nights essay in NIEKAS (reprinted recently in FANTASTIC), but that hardly mattered. Avram is well qualified to remark on such a context.

"Yet the letter left me with mixed feelings. As a writer of fantasy, Avram Davidson is a superlative craftsman, a master to stand with any you can name. My standards in this regard are cynical: I check to see how much I can fault structure, grammar, research or anything else. The writer who stands up under this cynosure earns my jealous respect. Avram survives well; he must surely be among the top prose artists of the day. Yet his work usually does not interest me strongly, and s so I rank him as one of the finest uninteresting writers I know of. My failing, really, not his; my reading tastes are less sophisticated than I might like.

"But as an editor—well, I cherish my experience with Avram when I submitted the novelette version of my Omnivore (the 'Nacre' sequences—said by some to be the best of that novel) to him at F&SF and received a note curtly rejecting it as inadequate, informing me that I showed some signs of promise as a writer if I followed better models, and telling me to get a larger paperclip for the manuscript. I felt—and still

feel—that the manuscript was more adequate than the editing, and the novelette was patterned after no one else's writing, and I had used no clip. It had been applied by the F&SF editorial office! (Note to publishers: you can ruin a fresh ms by jamming on those clips. They dent the paper and force retyping. Or is that your purpose?) In short, Avram treated me contemptuously, and that can be hazardous to the health.

"Yet again, it was Avram as reviewer who had put the Arabian Nights into perspective as towering fantastic literature, and I applaud his vision there.

"So I had mixed feelings. I answered courteously, however; it was obvious that Avram did not at that time recognize me as the F&SF ms submitter. And I made a mental note never to become an editor myself; it can lead to later embarrassments.

"If anyone is fated to suffer from this classification hobgoblin, I can see now it is Avram Davidson. Researched fantasy, be it based on Mexican (Clash of Star Kings) or medieval (Phoenix & the Mirror) legend or what-have-you is not the shallow S&S that lesser writers can grind out. Even the one picked up for an Ace Special (Island Under the Earth) is apt to be underappreciated. So if Avram remains more faithful to the essence of the originals than does, say, Roger Zelazny, he accomplishes something that should be more important but in fact sacrifices contemporary appeal. It is too bad; he does deserve better."

OK—end of emendation. I am unreasonably gratified to read Avram's endorsement of my statement of the problem of categorization. How many others have been suffering similarly?

Strange—Avram refers elsewhere to publishers' reluctance to have the author read the galleys. I don't know whether I am blessed or unblessed, but I have always proofed my own galleys (and seen evidence that no one else does! That is, any errors I miss, are missed); this has been true for four paperback publishers so far. Say—do you think they're all afraid what I'll do if I don't get those galleys? (Dreams of grandeur dept.)

So A.E. van Vogt was able to judge on the basis of one chapter that my Hasan was merely an attempt to cash in on the sword and sorcery fad. Fair enough; let's judge Slan similarly as a cash-in on the juvenile fad.

There has been some chat about in-groups of one stripe or another. I am by avocation a confirmed out-grouper, but I learn to my surprise that I am now the leading exponent of a particularly nefarious assemblage. This consists of chatty, egocentric, boring, dull and dim-witted contemporary writers and artists who are in business to expand their egos and who go on for the umpteenth time about their own dreadful novels. Not all the members have been exposed yet, I'm sure, but the nucleus is as follows: Poul Anderson, Alexei Panshin, John Brunner, Piers Anthony, Jack Gaughan, and a writer of paraphrases so shallow as to be meaningless, Andrew Offutt, plus a fan noted for turgid ramblings and and pretentious nonsense, Bob Toomey.

Now please don't think I'm bragging (though I discover that I do rather like the company I'm in); I am not the source of this revelation. That credit must go to two of the fairest-minded and softest-spoken talents to remain uncorrupted by such publications as SF REVIEW: Brian Aldiss and Charles Platt. (SFR #34, pp. 46-47) The superb courtesy with which they present the facts is, I'm sure, entirely in character.

Yet for those who failed to get the message the first time (whether or not they care to pay attention to such clarifications), let me provide a reminder: I was one of those who argeed the case against the use (rather, the overuse) of the four-letter explitive in normal fiction and writing, right here in these pages. I believe I was even called "uptight" in that connection. Thereafter I explained in part serious, in part facetious fashion the problems of marketing serious fiction, and finished, approximately, "But I am trying. If you don't like it, fuck you."

I'm sorry if there were those who did not find that juxtaposition humorous, or who refuse to believe that there is a quite serious undercurrent to my provocative mode of expression. Perhaps it is simpler to believe that Piers Anthony is hopelessly narrow-minded or vulgar, or that there are no problems in the publishing/selection/awards systems. Certainly it is simpler to lash out at sundry writers without giving them any fair chance to reply, as Mr. Aldiss has done by making his outcry his last contact with SFR. But of course he already knows my reply, since he admits that he doesn't like it....

Well, I wish these chosen elite every success in their insular habitat. I'll continue trying, however, in the larger scheme, since I have not yet acheived their heights.

Hm—I note Geis objects to Robert Moore Williams' anal terminology. Is this whole world cockeyed? Well, this is not strictly my business (so naturally I'm poking my nose in); I'd just like to observe that when one handles the odorous end of the stick as long as Mr. Williams has, such perminology comes more readily. I'm not conversant with the particular power-play he inquires about, but if such a thing is developing I can see how naturally it would be for the ingroupers to consider themselves the genius element, while the outgroupers would consider them the refuse.

James Blish accuses me of misusing a common technical term. Well, maybe; I'm the first to admit that English teachers don't know everything about the language, or even enough. But the distinction between a novel written in omniscient viewpoint (the way I put it) and one "Written from a single point of view...except for the two brief (omniscient) pieces" and "multiple viewpoint"—well, I believe my case can be made that the work as a whole is omniscient. After all, you could break up almost any omniscient viewpoint writing so that it becomes a collection of tiny individual viewpoints.

Alexei Panshin appears to understand me pretty well. Of course he is another of that dreadful-novelist group, so that hardly counts. And he provides a classic example of how such ingroups function: he invites me into the officership of SFWA.

He feels that a twitchy, cross-grained, narrow-minded, arrogant fugghead would make a good secretary-treasurer. Well, I guess he's in a position to know.

Despite this forceful recommendation, I am obliged to decline. I have had mundane experience of this type, and that warns me off. Also, there has been suspicion that some officers, fan or pro, SF or mundane, are not above feathering their own nests. Given my growing reputation for self-promotion...well, it behooves me to stand clear.

Last and least, a note on A. Bertram Chandler's note on my review of Encounters With Aliens: once again I am gratified to discover someone agreeing with me (this happens less often than you might fear). But it minds me of another little mystery: A. Bertram Chandler has no story in this anthology. Oh, he is listed on the back of the jacket with "The Tie That Binds"—a cute entry about a necktie that leads into saucerism. But the author of that story in the volume itself is one "George Whitely". And the copyright credit is for Whitely. And the original publication, in a decade-old FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, is under the Whitely byline (I'm a collector; I checked it directly). Yet here Chandler says he is the author. I don't believe it. I suspect that poor Mr. Whitely was carted off in a saucer and a nonentity substituted so no one would know. This is probably part of a conspiracy to conceal the truth about the Saucers, and anyone who has the audacity to tattle is suddenly

((Piers? PIERS??))

HARRY HARRISON
Box 1058
Imperial Beach
Calif. 92032

Your printing is excellent, your typing superior, layout well above average, artwork impressive. But do you really have anything to say to me? ((Thanks.))

Reluctantly, I am forced to say that you do not. Not only is Brian Aldiss not hoist by his own petard, but he makes his points with a great deal of accuracy. (Do you really know what a petard is, Mr. Geis, without peeking in the dictionary?) ((Yes; I looked it up once when I was 15 years old.)) The gray grumble of your muttering hosts may appeal to them but it does not appeal to me. Piers Anthony, a very good writer when he is writing fiction, continues to make an ass of himself in the fanzines. There is a reedy whine of self-pity and complaint in all of Panshin's correspondence that can be doing no one any good. The rest of your pros seem to carry on in like vein.

I must therefore admit that Brian is right once again. In his very words I ask you to please be kind enough not to send me SFR any more. While appreciating the kindness of your gesture, it just isn't for me.

((My 'pros'?? - Well, it appears that "Leroy Tanner" has taken his cue and has decided to punish me. Ted White, please take note.))

VIRGINIA CAREW
English Dept.
Queensborough Community College,
Bayside, N.Y. 11364

The third Secondary Universe Conference will be held at Queensborough Community College in New York City, Friday, October 16 to Sunday, October 18, 1970.

The first two Secondary Universes were designed to serve the scholars, bibliographers, librarians, teachers, and writers concerned with science fiction and fantasy. The second, led by Ivor A. Rogers in 1969 at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, also included panels and seminars on environmental problems, the literature of science, and film theory. None of these topics will be ignored at the third Secondary Universe Conference; new areas of interest to be explored in more than twenty meetings, panels, and seminars include the impact of science on the language, the teaching of science fiction, and technical writing. It is also expected that the proceedings will be taped for later publication.

Several societies will be holding official meetings in the course of the conference. Science Fiction Research Associates, already active among scholars in the field, will be holdingits first full membership meeting. Related groups, as the Tolkein Society, the Columbia Bibliographic Convention, and so forth are cordially invited; facilities for meetings, seminars, special panel groups, or luncheons will be available.

The important unstructured events of a good conference will start with an informal party for early arrivals at the hotel on Thursday evening. The conference also expects that a rarely-done play of historical and literary interest to the group will be staged, that early films will be screened, that an optional costume contest with prizes will be held, that free huxters' tables and art display space will be available, and that the places to sit and talk over coffee or drinks will be heavily frequented.

Please direct inquiries to me.

((Sounds suspiciously like a convention to me...))

URSULA K. LE GUIN
3321 NW Thurman
Portland, Oregon
97210

May I use the letter column to make a sort of public communication to Mr. John J. Pierce? I want to thank him, for, apparently, liking my books. I appreciate appreciation. However, I am embarrassed by it in this case. I wish he would not set Le Guin (usually in tandem with Zelazny) up against (usually) Delany and Disch, as examples of the Good as opposed to the Bad, or the Old New as opposed to the New New. Comparisons are odious, and this one's false. I don't belong to a New Wave, certainly not to an Old Wave, what I should like to belong to is the Permanent, or Standing Wave, but never mind that. I see little point in labelling living writers with these categorical titles, which merely blur perception, and, when believed by the writers, limit development. I admire Mr. Disch very much: Camp Concentration is an extraordinary novel, a work of art. I don't know why he withdrew it from the Nebula competition, but am delighted the Australians had the sense to call it Year's Best. It

was. I cannot without protest let my works be used as a hammer to his Mr. Disch with — not that it would hurt him, but it hurts me. Disch and Le Guin have even appeared as a Doppelganger (Ace Double G-597) a few years ago; you can't have Yin without Yang. I thank Mr. Pierce for his implied praise, but it is worthless to me when it occurs only as a condemnation of my fellow-artists.

I should like to ask Robert Moore Williams, also, what he is trying to say about the Nebulas; and if he is trying to say something, why doesn't he say it?

RICHARD LUPOFF
Merry Hill Rd.
Poughkeepsie, NY
12603

I assume that you sent me SFR 34 because it contained Earl Evers' review of Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure The review struck me as fair and I certainly have no quarrel with it or desire to add an immense diatribe; I don't think Earl said very much: "This is a book for specialists," and of course it is, so there we are, only where are we?

I was much more stimulated by Earl's review of Doc Smith's Subspace Explorers, and there are a few things I'd like to say about that.

"SubEx" was the outgrowth of a short story Doc had had in ASF called "Subspace Survivors." That story was quite successful and Doc wrote a long follow-on for Campbell, which Campbell said he liked, but wanted revisions before he'd buy it. The nature of the revisions JWC asked, however — and these are Doc's own words, as he told me at the Discon in 1963 — "Would have turned it from a Doc Smith novel into a John Campbell editorial, and I'm not that hungry!"

So Doc abandoned the magazine version of the sequel, and instead cobbled the manuscripts of the ASF story and the proposed sequel together, getting a full-length novel in the process, Subspace Explorers.

Pyramid Books, at the time edited by Don Benson, was doing Doc's Lens series, and arranged to do "SubEx" as a paperback original. At Doc's request, however, Don courteously released the manuscript to me for Canaveral Press to do as a hardbound, the paperback to go back to Don. I might mention in passing that there were a couple of rough spots in the ms., and when I asked Doc for revisions he made them beautifully. He was so nice to work with, I have to think that Campbell had really asked for horrendous things to draw the reaction from Doc that he did.

A while later Canaveral suspended the issuance of new titles (althought they still stock and sell their raft of Burroughs, the Smith book in hardcover, the deCamps' Spirits Stars and Spells and my own book on ERB). This took me out of the editing picture. And Don left Pyramid for Berkley. And with both of us removed from that scene, "SubEx" somehow wound up at Ace instead of Pyramid. Somehow at the present remove it seems not to matter a whole lot, but something else does:

When I last discussed "SubEx" with Doc Smith, he said that it was planned as one volume of an unusual sort of three-decker. "SubEx" and the second book would each appear to be a complete novel and to have no relationship to each other, but the third book in the set would reveal that such a relationship did exist, and that the three, read either in sequence 1-2-3 or 2-1-3 would make a complete and coherent whole!

Now I can't document this (unfortunately), but I believe that at the time of his death Doc had completed volume two, pending only a little polishing up. And he'd made a very thorough outline of volume three.

If those materials could be obtained from Doc's family, I'm pretty sure that volume two would be publishable. And I for one would dearly love to see it in print, to read it, to have it on my shelf!

As for volume three — that's another story. Most any competent editor should be able to get v2 in shape, if it's as close to final form as I think it is, but v3 would amount to a posthumous collaboration, and if that were to be attempted, a lot of thought would have to go into choosing the man to do it. I immediately think of Cliff Simak (of Cosmic Engineers vintage, if he could and would do that kind of thing again). Well....

It's surely intriquing, to say the least!

ROBERT BLOCH
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Los Angeles, Cal.
90046

Thought #34 a provocative issue, what with Moocock and Brunner holding forth; in effect they are saying what Davidson does in his letter — that the Categorical Imperitive in SF is bad. To which I can only add that Self-Conscious Writing is also a major bugaboo. "Stylists" bore hell out of me unless they utilize that style to tell an entertaining story—and the confusion of artifice with art is a pitfall to be avoided.

New Address

JAMES BLISH
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If there had been a New Wave back in the days when I was writing things like Common Time and Testament of Andros, I might have claimed membership — or even as late as On the Wall of the Lodge. But not at 48 (even though I do have a story in AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS which Pierce is sure to dislike).

Tastes have changed a great deal since the 1940s and 1950s, as Ted Pauls notes in his Laumer review. I think the main reason why A TORRENT OF FACES got a lukewarm reception at best is because it seems old-fashioned. Had it been published in

1948, when Norman and I began it, it would probably have been better received. We did offer it about, in the form of 25,000 words plus an outline, but nobody would touch it then.

Chip Delany's vision of the word the as a "greyish ellipsoid about four feet high that balances on the floor about a yard away" reminds me irresistably of the man in an old New Yorker piece who had the months of the year mentally laid out around him like a racetrack, so that when he thought of a specific date, he sometimes also tended to point in the proper direction. I doubt that many people will share this peculiarity of Chip's, but as it happens, I do. In all seriousness, my the is a pile of typing paper of indeterminate height, completely covered with neat MS. which I maddeningly can't quite read.

This is the result of a system I developed twenty years ago for breaking blocks. If I had no idea for a story, I would type the word The and follow it with the first noun that came into my head, followed by the next word that could grammatically follow...and so on. After about half a page of this, some sort of atmosphere or ambience emerges on which you can get an intellectual hold, and if you persist, by a page and a half or so you have broken the block, momentum has set in and an idea has emerged. I then threw away the beginning.

This word-by-word or shitting-rocks technique is painful and I don't recommend it to anyone but blocked writers. Of course poetry must be written with the kind of close attention to each word that Chip recommends, but as an attitude toward narrative prose I can testify from experience that it is useful only as a crutch. It can also be actively misleading: Note that Chip's red and blue suns not only fill his image of the, but to some extent condition it, but only to him; since his readers cannot be expected to have any image of the, let alone his, the force he feels the sentence finally to have is to some extent both private and illusory.

Many thanks for the kind words about DOCTOR MIRABILIS. Somebody reads your "Dialog" closely; I've already had five orders and a publisher's inquiry.

((Jim only has about a dozen copies left; these will be, too, collector's items.))

As John Brunner predicted, we've already had a meeting of the minds on the problem(s) discussed in his first column.

John Boardman's comment on page 21 starts a hare that should have been left unstarted. I did write a novella called Get Out of My Sky. Leo Margulies made up a paperback containing my story, one by Poul Anderson and one by Tom Scortia. Mine, the longest, gave the collection its title, but Tom was indeed in the book. Clearly a reporter's error, nothing more.

John's review of Avram's novel is impressive, though I think too sternly biassed toward 20th Century physics to do justice to what is, after all, a parallel-history fantasy. One quibble: tha author of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay is Robert Greene, and the distance-viewing gadget in it is not a mirror but a lens ("this glass prospective," vi:5). Greene got it directly from the real Bacon, a specialist in what was then called perspective and is now called optics, and it has nothing to do with the Alexandrian lighthouse. It is, however, the source of the more modern "crystal ball."

Sure I can talk of objective aesthetic standards, Chip Delany, as long as I limit my discussion (as I try always to say) to technique. As I tried to say in my letter in SFR 34, I think it impossible to make absolute or objective judgements of the value of a work, but I know bad execution when I see it.

You have a hell of a good magazine here, and I am going to pick a fight with Brian on the subject. (But in person.)

ROBERT E. TOOMEY, JR.
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After reading Charles Platt's novel Garbage World, I thought him to be an incompetent hack writer. Now, after having seen his stuff in various fanzines, I believe him also to be an incompetent critic. Platt is a prime example of extreme tunnel-vision. In a recent issue of a British fanzine, he reviewed Farmer's Image of the Beast by mounting a personal attack on Ted White. This is not my idea of the way a formal review should be written. I have heard that Platt was also instrumental in driving Walt Willis out of fandom.

((Gad, I wasn't aware that Walt had been driven from our Eden! Is he aware of it, I wonder? Is there a deep, dark, untold scandal to be opened up?))

To be frank, Platt isn't really my idea of very much at all, and I take the fact that he finds my reviews to be "... turgid ramblings and pretentious nonsense..." as a compliment. I'm glad they get him down. I will continue to write them, for that if for no other reason.

I have heard of Pavlov, Mr. van Vogt. The opening sentence of my story "Directions Into the Darkness" (written around a Jeff Jones cover for AMAZING) reads: "It was Pavlov, I believe, who first proved that men can be conditioned to ring bells at the sight of a dog preparing to salivate." See? I knew who he was all along.

CHARLES PLATT
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London W.11, ENGLAND

There are two pieces which I found distasteful in the #34 issue of SFR. First, obviously enough, was John Foyster's "review" of The Best of New Worlds 2. This is contradictory ("The most obvious feature of their stories ... is their gutlessness" followed later

by "...most of the authors were in there trying.") uninformative (Foyster mentions authors but not the titles of their stories in the anthology, in several cases) and plain unperceptive. (I can only speak with complete conviction where my own story in the collection was concerned, but in that case, Foyster does not seem to have realised it was meant to be self-satirical and generally funny). I really think that someone as inadequate as Foyster should not be given the job of reviewing any book anywhere, even in a fanzine. His value judgements, personal asides, nitpicking and curt dismissals are rather hard to take.

Secondly, the great Moorcock interview. This was spoiled by the interviewer's gullible, gosh-wow hero-worship. The incredible prologue, reminiscent of a small boy who has won a "meet a famous footballer of your choice" contest, is rivalled in its naive inanity only by the interjected interviewer comments appearing further on in the text. The text itself reads well and says a lot; but your interviewer's prose reminds me of Forrest Ackerman's pieces in FAMOUS MONSTERS magazine. Unfortunate.

One last point. In Brian Aldiss's letter he complains about "...authors like Panshin, Brunner and Anthony going on, for the umpteenth time, about their own dreadful novels." It would be pleasing to be able to see some possibility of this situation not being perpetuated, but in the very same issue we find John Brunner's new column "Noise Level" which seems, sadly but predictably, to be principally about John Brunner, with some asides.

Surely there must be better subject material for authors than themselves?

((Brunner's subject for his column in SFR #36 is Brian Aldiss' Barefoot in the Head, a heavy piece.))

One point I almost forgot — I liked the Tim Kirk full page illustration immensely. Reminiscent of the British fanzine Les Pinge, five years ago, where Jim Cawthorn produced similar gentle satire coupled with pieces by Mike Moorcock.

LEE HOFFMAN
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SFR 34 is another good issue. I enjoyed Toomey's interview with Moorcock, but am I correct in my impression that I am on occasion being put on in it?

Appreciate Cox's review of Caves of Karst. He's right, of course, that nothing more is intended than a diversion. I'm most flattered that he says it reads very much like an early fifties effort, etc., as that is how I felt about it, too. Can't for the life of me figure why he feels he might expect a lot more from me someday, though. Geez, with so many other people busy writing Important Works full of Messages, I feel like some of us need to hold the fort with simple diversions.

I especially enjoyed the letters from Brian Aldiss and from Alexei Panshin. Both very funny, though in rather different ways. Alex weilds a deft scalpel.

Charles Platt confuses me. I am very surprised to see him considering himself so firmly labelled a "New Wave writer." The book by him that I read was so positively NOT New Wave (at least not by the definition he gave in SFR #32) that I find it hard to think of him as anything but an exponent of the old-timey space opera.

I guess the most intriguing thing in the lettercol was A. E. van Vogt's mail-order psych of Toomey. I wish he'd carried it a little further as there is an aspect of it all that I fail to grasp. If as vV says, "the therapy was completely effective" why did Toomey continue reading books by van Vogt? And if vV is right that this kind of Pavlovian conditioning is, indeed, behind a rash of "wholesale sf author slaughter" why do so many other critics keep reading sf?

And if this kind of Pavlovian conditioning is an important reason for the rampant dissatisfaction with so much of the sf being published today, why is it that I, too, am dissatisfied with it? Nobody ever whomped me for reading the stuff. They actually encouraged me. Foosh...

I am confused.

GREG BENFORD
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Alamo, Cal. 94507

I wish the SFWA FORUM got letters as as interesting as SFR...which is curious indeed, considering that the same people write to both.

((I've thought of offering subs to the entire SFWA membership at a reduced rate, paid for from their dues, but I don't think it would be approved, or that the SFWA treasury could stand the strain. Nevertheless (he said egotistically) I think SFR would be of value to all the members not now receiving it.))

Barry Malzberg is certainly correct in noting that sf is now writhing to the delayed stresses of mainstream lit. 1930. There is nothing especially damning about this, since sf has different purposes in mond and can use different tacks than "ordinary" fiction. On the other hand, a lot of modern (1960s) stuff is coming in, such as black humor, some Tom Wolfean semi-journalism (at least in style), and surrealism (which still isn't dead). I think most sf readers are aware of the grand sweep of lit'rary events outside sf; they certainly seem to have responded well enough to Malzberg's own work under the K.M. O'Donnell. Too often the plaint that sf readers aren't hip arises because writers have forgotten little things like the inherent power in writing while they go whoring after the latest Profound Advance emerging from the general direction of the mainstream (wherever that is, these days). Perhaps this is why several people, in the most recent Heinlein review issue of SPECULATION, were quizzically wondering why RAH is so popular and commands wide respect; they just don't see how the combination of good plot, insight into a narrow range of character, detailed background and a sense of proportion can meld together, and produce something greater than the parts. A lot of sf authors are running a business based on piece work;

they aren't novelists, in the grand sense, though they write novel-length works. (Lest I be thought to attack others, I probably fall into this latter class myself.)

Chip's article was one of the funniest pieces you've ever run. I'm sure he laughed a lot while writing it.

((Care to detail why you think it was funny?))

Mike Moorcock has written the best work to come out of the (whisper) new wave: Behold the Man; and yet he always was an enigma to me. This interview fleshes him out a bit but I can't help but feel that he might have said more about what he's groping for, how he feels he's doing in the struggle to find new forms, and what he thinks this will mean to the media in, say, a decade. I keep remembering dadaist and surrealist manifestoes of 30 and 40 years back, in which we learned that these cliques were the literature of the future.

((Mike?))

Like the Tim Kirk stuff. He's fantastic; a real gift for character in his figures.

Moorcock: I have a friend, deeply involved in the psychotherapy business, who had a picture taken of himself on a cross, in crown of thorns and loincloth, in the desert, and used blowups for Xmas cards. He reads sf, but never heard of Behold the Man.

BARRY MALZBERG
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Avram Davidson's letter in the current ((#34)) SFR is brilliant, should be memorialized through tablets of stone and probably speaks, as well as any single essay published, for all of us in science fiction. Sooner or later you learn this: the majority however are able to so internalize the needs of the field that they become, to steal from Kris Neville, "the worst kind of slaves...those who do their master's bidding as their own and really think of themselves as free" while the rest of us, ahem, come to other conclusions.

One point however: we're all paying the price of our own easy victories. As I've said a couple of times before in and out of print, the thing about science fiction is that it is easier to break than the literary or commercial markets elsewhere and people are able to achieve a reputation (and even some selling leverage) here with relatively less proficiency and background than they might require outside. Later on you wake up and realize that four sales to Orbit just ain't ESQUIRE and an Ace double means little except in terms of the people who read or publish Ace doubles but by that time it's too late.

Poor Pierce who thinks it matters. But from his silence in the current issue, I'd suggest that he too is learning.

((Pierce wrote a letter, but I had no room for it.))

SP/4 HANK DAVIS
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I must disagree with my fellow Kentuckian, A.J. Offutt, when he characterizes Poul Anderson as "authoritarian" because Anderson protested the SFWA's publishing of Philip Jose Farmer's WorldCon speech. That speech was, after all, published on paper purchased by the SFWA with mimeograph ink purchased by the SFWA and dispatched to SFWA members via the puny express, incurring a charge for postage which was paid by the SFWA. And where does said organization get its funds but from its members? ... which category includes Mr. Anderson. I hardly consider it "authoritarian for Poul Anderson to object to the using of his money to disseminate views with which he does not agree. As Ayn Rand has observed in connection with such "rights" as the "right" to an education, "Who pays for it?"

Surely, hordes of fans have buried you under an avalanche of letters protesting that, Robert Toomey to the contrary, Fred Pohl's "Happy Birthday, Dear Jesus" (which I read in Alternating Currents several years ago) has nothing to do with a time traveler going back to the Crucifixion. Toomey must be thinking of Richard Matheson's story (the title of which has not stayed with me) on that subject in Third From The Sun. Pohl's story is about commercialization of Christmas carried into the future

John Brunner says "Aye, and Gommorrah" by Delany is "among the three best sf stories ever written". Can't help wondering what he thinks the other two are.

((John?))

NEAL GOLDFARB
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You damned mercenary bastard!' You're nothing but a money-grubber. All you're interested in is selling your fanzine. And you're a hypocrite: you're against prozines buying only stuff by names, and what do you do? Fill your whole zine with names. Even the wahf section. For Harry Warner, or Roy Tacket, or Greg Calkins you cry, but for me...nothing! You obviously don't recognize genius when you see it.

But just you wait. When I win every Hugo award, a few Nebulus, and the Nobel prize, you'll come crawling to me (all the way across the country) to ask me for a contribution, an LoC or to trade for my fanzine. And do you think I will? [illegible]. And that'll only be the beginning... I'll buy all the sex book publishers in the world, and you'll be out of work. Now you're thinking you can make SFR profitable, right? Not when I buy Gestetner company. Try to get stencils, paper, ink. And now the [illegible] climax of my revenge — I'll buy all the wheat germ companies in the world. Yup, you'll be sorry then.

Of course this can be averted by printing all my LoCs.

((Even at the risk of unleashing Goldfarb on the world, I don't think I can print all your LoCs. Try BEABOHEMA.))

GLEN COOK
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I'm here to put down the word about Harlan Ellison and the Clarion Writer's Workshop. A while back, John J Pierce wrote a letter to SFR in which he said, in passing: "But I understand we'll be seeing less of him (Harlan Ellison) after that fiasco of trying to divert funds for replacing a movie screen at St. Louiscon to subsidize his New Wave writing course."

About two days after that issue of SFR came out, who should drop by Fritz Leiber's (I was staying there at the time) but Dick Geis. We got to talking and Dick asked about the Con mess. Pounce! I talked him into taking this letter. It's about what happened at St. Louiscon, why, and to what purpose. Also, it's about the Clarion Workshop.

For those who weren't at St. Louiscon, on the evening of the Masquerade Ball, a gentleman costumed as Charlie Brown performed the incredible feat of falling through the hotel movie screen while trying to fly a kite. Because the hotel management did not own the screen (it was leased), they asked for a deposit of $250. against the cost of repairs. There was no money available for this purpose, so big-hearted Harlan (soon to be the goat) passionately asked for donations from the fans. The response was overwhelming: Over six hundred dollars, ten Raliegh coupons, and three returnable bottles.

Even the simplest matrix algebra will show some small overage there. What to do with it? That was the question before the Con Committee. It was awfully hard to give it back. Well (heads up: here it comes), some of us Clarionites — we were at the Con making Public Relations noises for the Workshop — asked Harlan to ask the fans to assign the excess to Clarion. (The Workshop has been funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the past, but this year they were making strange noises down in Harrisburg. The Workshop had to show some popular support to remain functional.)

Good Ol' Harlan did as he was asked, submitting the motion to the fans (it is important to remember that Harlan was asked to do this: it was not his idea). Sad to say, he did it rather left-handedly, and with three club feet all stuck in his mouth at once (sorry Harlan). It sounded like he was trying to put something over. Now fans like to feud anyway, so when this came up, friends, you'd better believe the old spaghetti done hit the ventilation.

Mea culpa! I was instrumental in getting Harlan to ask for the money, so the burden rests on my shoulders. He was just doing as asked, was The Ellison. However, the fans — many of whom spend hours thinking up ways to get Harlan's goat — set a new national record for the standing jump to conclusions. That dirty old man (he is over thirty) was trying to divert funds to a personal project, "his New Wave writing course." Folks, just 'taint so!

That brings me to Clarion itself. First, the thing is hardly Harlan's pet project. He's there only one week out of the six, and then only as a screaming devil who roars through tearing up manuscripts, stomping them, calling everyone hacks, no-goods, time-wasters, and other nice things good for the ego. Clarion is just a small item on a list of things he does. Besides Synanon and Clarion, there's the Open Door Workshop in Hollywood where he teaches television and movie writing to members of disadvantaged groups. There is the University of Colorado Writer's Workshop. And there are other things, but why bore you with a list? Suffice it to say that Harlan is one of those rare people who gives more than he takes.

The Workshop. During 1969 there were six professionals teaching there: Harlan, of course, Damon Knight, Fritz Leiber, Fred Pohl, Kate Wilhelm, and Robin Wilson (Robin Scott in the prozines). So. Does that make a New Wave writing course? Harlan sometimes writes it, and Kate. Maybe even Fritz, rarely. Damon? When was the last time you saw a New Wave Fred Pohl story? Or a Robin Scott? Lord ha' mercy! Robin owns and runs the thing, and a lot of his stuff appears in ANALOG. Brethren, and Sistern, that place is anything but New Wave! New Wave was there, of course, but it was poorly accepted. Sword & Sorcery made a better showing, and it is on the outs.

The thing is a Writer's Workshop before anything else. Judging by results, one of the best in the country. Basics make up the bulk of the material presented. English. Elements of Style. How to properly prepare a manuscript. Which editors prefer what types of material. How they pay and — in some cases — whether they can be trusted to pay at all. Discusssions of basic plots (is the current submission an idea already done to death?), setting, characterization. What the course tries to do is short-circuit much of the trial and error learning most beginning authors endure for years. What it does not give — because it cannot be taught — is talent. Robin's method of selecting his students effectively weeds out most applicants with no ability. The rest he pounds mercilessly with everything a writer can be taught. Robin takes it all personally, as if each student were his baby. He'd happily give talent injections if a serum could be discovered.

Does it work, this Clarion thing? Comments, facts, and statistics to follow. At the Con I heard Bob Silverberg say writing can't be taught, yet, the last I heard, the only story he has bought for the original collection New Dimensions was "Love Song of Herself" by Ed Bryant, a Clarion student who admits he might never have sold a thing had the Workshop not brought his stylistic defects to his attention Ed has sold ten stories since September. Okay, gang, listen up: Harlan says other workshops where he has taught are considered major successes if two out of fifty students ever sell a thing. Consider: over half the Clarion students have sold, and more sales are pending. The Workshop has an impressive record: incomplete returns on queries sent out show me 28 stories, one novel, sundry articles, 2 TV treatments, and miscellaneous poetry, plays, songs, and such sold. At least three former Workshoppers are now full-time writers. One young lady is negotiating a very lucrative contract for writing films and filmstrips for a major, Detroit-based firm. In two years, there have been 22 full-time students at the Clarion Workshop. 15 have sold one or more pieces in the SF field. Very impressive, I would say.

Where are these stories? Look for the name Neil Shapiro in IF or FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION; Pat Meadows in F&SF; Ed Bryant in Again, Dangerous Visions, Generation I, New Dimensions, NEW WORLDS, or GALAXY; Grant Carrington in Again, Dangerous Visions or Starship '69; Mike Fayette in Infinity I. Watch for the names Evelyn Lief, Russel Bates, James Sutherland, and Joan Bernott. If you read the men's magazines, you'll see many of these names there too. Why? Because they pay more. Why go to an SF mag for 2¢ a word when the story is professional enough to garner a dime elsewhere? Look at AVANTE-GARDE. Clarion student Dianne Hollibaugh will appear there. Stories from Clarion students are everywhere. You might even watch for my own stuff — two novels now in the dickering stage.

Conclusion: The St. Louiscon fiasco was not Harlan's fault. Clarion is a good thing.

PS: Since writing the first half of the letter, I have heard from Robin Wilson. He says there will probably be another Workshop in 1970 It will be announced in IF and SATURDAY REVIEW at a later date. Yours truly will be Robin's assistant at that session.

HARRY WARNER, JR.
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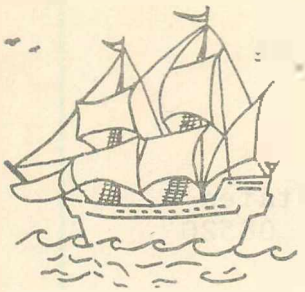
I found Samuel Delany's article in SFR 33 fascinating but not altogether convincing. As an exercise in how a story can be divided into its tiniest components, words, it's excellent. But I'm quite sure that stories are not put together one word at a time, and that only the newest conquerors of the skill of reading absorb a story that way. Haven't investigations of how the eyes behave when a person reads all shown that most persons see several words simultaneously, and can be turned into much faster readers by gaining the knack of looking at much larger groups of words? And does anyone who writes any kind of prose make an infinitesmal halt before each word, or does he usually write out at least a prepositional phrase or a noun-preceded-by-modifiers as if the several words were all one, halting only when he wants to think of a better verb or how he should begin the next sentence? I don't think that my objection to Samuel's example is quibbling over a minor part of an article, but instead a basic objection to the whole assumption that there is only one right way to write a story, only one possible word after each space following the previous word. Some poetry probably needs to be written with the utmost attention to the choice of each word. A novel needn't, and too much thought about whether an individual word is right can cause the critic to overlook much more important things that are evident only when you study huge groups of words all together. The comparison of the Tench and Gurney translations is meaningless out of context and without the original text in Russian or whatever language Merejekowsky wrote. Obviously teen-agers who were just learning to read would prefer the shorter Gurney sentence; I refuse to believe that it takes great intellectual attainment to understand the Tench version, which supplies slightly more information and much more mood. The whole point in writng is the effect of the whole, not the one-at-a-time impact of each small fragment that goes into the whole.

Good grief, don't tell me that Avram Davidson has also been repeating the old bromide about Lovecraft's sanity. Come to think of it, Davidson and Lovecraft have been quite similar in numerous ways—an uncussessful marriage apiece, a tendency to live in out-of-the-way areas where contact with fantasy people must be maintained via correspondence, common habits with respect to writing fantasy fiction and dabbling in amateur journalism, common ability to make themselves liked by almost everyone with whom they come in personal company. Back in the days when Lin Carter was just starting to write fantasy novels, everyone blasted them and nobody tried to prove that this was accompanied by personality failings on Lin's part, because he is alive and is demonstrably a very good fellow. It's sinful to see intelligent people telling lies about a gentle man with a few human idiosyncracies like Lovecraft, instead of sticking to the obvious fact that Lovecraft didn't write great literature, the only serious fault he ever demonstrated.

I hate to say anything against an honor which has befallen me, but I wonder if the Hugos could be responsible for the decline of fannish fanzines? Most fans who start fanzines must have a large or small ambition to see it become a Hugo-winner some day. Now, it's perfectly obvious that when you have huge worldcon membership lists, you're going to get a lot of people nominating and voting in the Hugo races. The fannish fanzine will never have the circulation potentialities of the fanzine which has lots of outer circle interest like SFR or AMRA. There just aren't that many people interested in reading stories about fans and anecdotes of the daily habits of bnfs and articles about fan history. There must be at least a subconscious tendency for the fanzine editor to run some literary criticism or bibliographical articles or pro-zine reviews, even if his own interests concentrate on fandom itself, in the half-conscious hope that the miracle will occur and the vast throngs of outer circle fans will rush to subscribe to his fanzine for that material and then vote it a Hugo. I'd guess that faanish fanzines would be most at home in the apas, where there's automatically no thought of big circulation or an audience only half-conscious of fandom's inmost secrets.

The Fabian cover was absolutely beautiful. So is the whole fanzine.

((That's a good point. And the Heicon voting will be even more weird, I think, for I doubt that many American fans are bothering to join; the Con Committee's requirement that memberships be paid for in deutchmarks requires a time-consuming and bothersome trip to a bank...and a big bank at that; one with a foreign exchange window.))



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ANNOUNCING: TWO HEICON CHARTER FLIGHTS now making up to carry fans and pros to and from the 28th World Science Fiction Convention (Heicon '70 International) in Heidelberg, Germany. Convention dates: August 21-24, 1970.

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Departs New York to London on Saturday, August 8th, 1970

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Returns Frankfurt to Oakland* on Tuesday, September 1st, 1970

Estimated Round Trip Fare: Under $300.00 per person if a full charter plane (183 seats) can be filled. Children and lap-held infants as above

*Note: One base departure point on the west coast will be chosen according to number of bookings. Additional major-city pick-up stops may be possible if number of bookings warrant modest additional cost.

TO JOIN EITHER CHARTER:

Reservations: Make reservations now to ensure yourselves seats. For either charter, a deposit of $50 per person is required now to hold reservation. Make checks payable to:

"TRADEWINDS - HEICON CHARTER EAST"

or

(over)

"TRADEWINDS - HEICON CHARTER WEST"

and mail to:

Alan E. Nourse
c/o Tradewinds
Fall City,
Washington 98024

or

Donald Lundry
RD 1, Old York Estates
Hightstown, N.J. 08520

Eligibility: To be eligible for either affinity-group charter, at least one member of family must have been a member of the 28th World Science Fiction Convention for at least 6 months prior to departure. Enclose your Heicon membership number with your deposit check, or provide date on which you sent your membership check to the Heicon Committee.

Final fares-per-person on either flight will be based upon the number of passengers booked---the more on the plane, the lower the fare-per-person---and will be announced prior to the time contract is signed with carrier.

Refunds: Deposits will be refundable in full until time contract with carrier is signed (early spring). Thereafter, refundable only if seat is filled by someone else. Success of these charter flights depend upon your fast action now to secure fully-booked flights. Don't delay if you're planning to go to the Heicon.

Air travel will be by supplemental or scheduled carrier (whichever offers both reliability and lowest possible per-person fares) economy class jet with meals and all customary in-flight services included.

Legality of charter flights: Great care is being taken that both HEICON CHARTER EAST and HEICON CHARTER WEST meet with all CAB and carrier requirements to qualify as valid affinity-group charters.

...Alan E. Nourse
TRADEWINDS TRAVEL BUREAU
Fall City, Washington 98024

ALAN E. NOURSE
TRADEWINDS TRAVEL BUREAU
P.O. Box 396,
Fall City, Wash.
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The story on the Heicon charter flights to date is: Heicon Charter East is shaping up extremely well; we are already up into the bulk traffic numbers there so that even if we didn't fill a full plane, we could get very nearly prime charter rates with the numbers we have, and I think odds are good that we can fill a plane if people will get off their cans and send deposit money very soon. Don Lundry deserves the credit out there, he's really been dogging the Eastern flight.

So far response to Heicon Charter West has been very sluggish; what seems to be happening is that west coast people have been sitting on their hands waiting to see what would happen...which is the best possible guarantee that nothing will happen except that they get stuck with peak season individual fares to Europe and back if they want to go to the Heicon We need response now, like within the next 30 days, in terms of $50 per person deposits, to make Heicon West go, as such. And the sooner in those 30 days, the better.

There are recurrent queries turning up here regarding what happens if Heicon West doesn't fill. The answer is that there are several viable alternatives. If we have as few as 80 from the west coast we can get a West Coast-New York-West Coast charter to tie into Heicon East for about $105 per person round trip to New York, which would put west coast fares in the $310 to $320 range, not as good as a full plane from the west, but not really too bad. Alternatively, we can opt for a 40, 50 or 80 pax affinity group fare from the coast over the pole; fares for these are wandering all over the map, there's a price war on, but sooner or later we expect fares on such a basis to settle down to the $350 to $370 range via SAS or Air Canada. Round trip, that is. At the worst, Discover America round trip fares to New York will be some $210 to tie into Heicon East, which should come in at $200 to $205 per person round trip from JFK. Finally, and this should be emphasized for those who are hesitant or undecided, or have to wait for a firm fare figure before they know whether they can go or not, the $50 per person deposit is fully refundable if anyone decides it's no-go, until we tell people a cut-off date. In other words, nobody can lose making a deposit at this point, because a post card to me at any time will bring a refund by return mail...my guarantee. The important thing is: if they think it remotely likely that they can go to the Heicon at all, now is the time to move; waiting to see what happens can only cost them more money, and they can't lose moving now.

Other details: deposit moneys paid in are being held in interest-bearing savings account, with interest to be applied to reduce the per-person fare in any group passage the depositer participates in. Firm fares-per-person will be published in March or April, full payment required before May 1st, the date we must go or no-go with the charter airline. Smaller groups on scheduled lines may have slightly later pay-up deadlines, but I wouldn't count on it, because any passage to Europe during the dates of the Heicon is going to have to be firmed up by May or there isn't going to be space left except at premium rates...this summer is shaping up into the wildest European travel year ever. For the convenience of those who will not have any particular place to stay in London on evening of arrival, or in Frankfurt on evening of departure, TRADEWINDS is now arranging to block rooms at modest fare for arrival night in London, departure night in Frankfurt, we'll announce hotel and tarriff later for those interested. (Needless to say, this isn't tied into the charter fares, and is something I'm interested in offering to those who want it, in fond memory of the evening de Camp and I arrived in Bombay with an overnight wait for a plane and no hotel room during the height of India's touring season. And too dog tired to want to sleep in the (yech!) Bombay airport. Nize lady at the BOAC desk finally found us a room with green slime running down the walls and a lovely view...and downwind ...of a garbage pile in the alley behind with cows eating from one side and several small children eating from the other) (Parn me for carrying on, but London too has its cultural shocks to offer).

P.S.: One thing that might be worth noting. regarding either Heicon East or Heicon West, support has been extremely (and to me incomprehensibly) poor from two groups who really ought to be right up front: the pros, and the Big Name fans who never miss a convention abroad or otherwise. A few of the writers have been right there...Les & Evelyn Del Rey, the Williamsons, the T.L. Sherreds (who have been beating the bushes back in Michigan to a splendid degree), the Nivens...but otherwise, little response. And a lot of familiar fans that I know damned well are going to be there when the Con begins haven't checked in. We need these people for the leadership they can provide now. Regarding the pros, even the very new pros, there's the further inducement of tex deductability; it may be that many of the younger pros just don't realize that their passage to the Heicon and their expenses there are fully and legitimately tex-deductible business expenses, if they are reporting any income from their writing. They can't cover their wives with that umbrella, but they can cover themselves.

STEPHEN COMPTON
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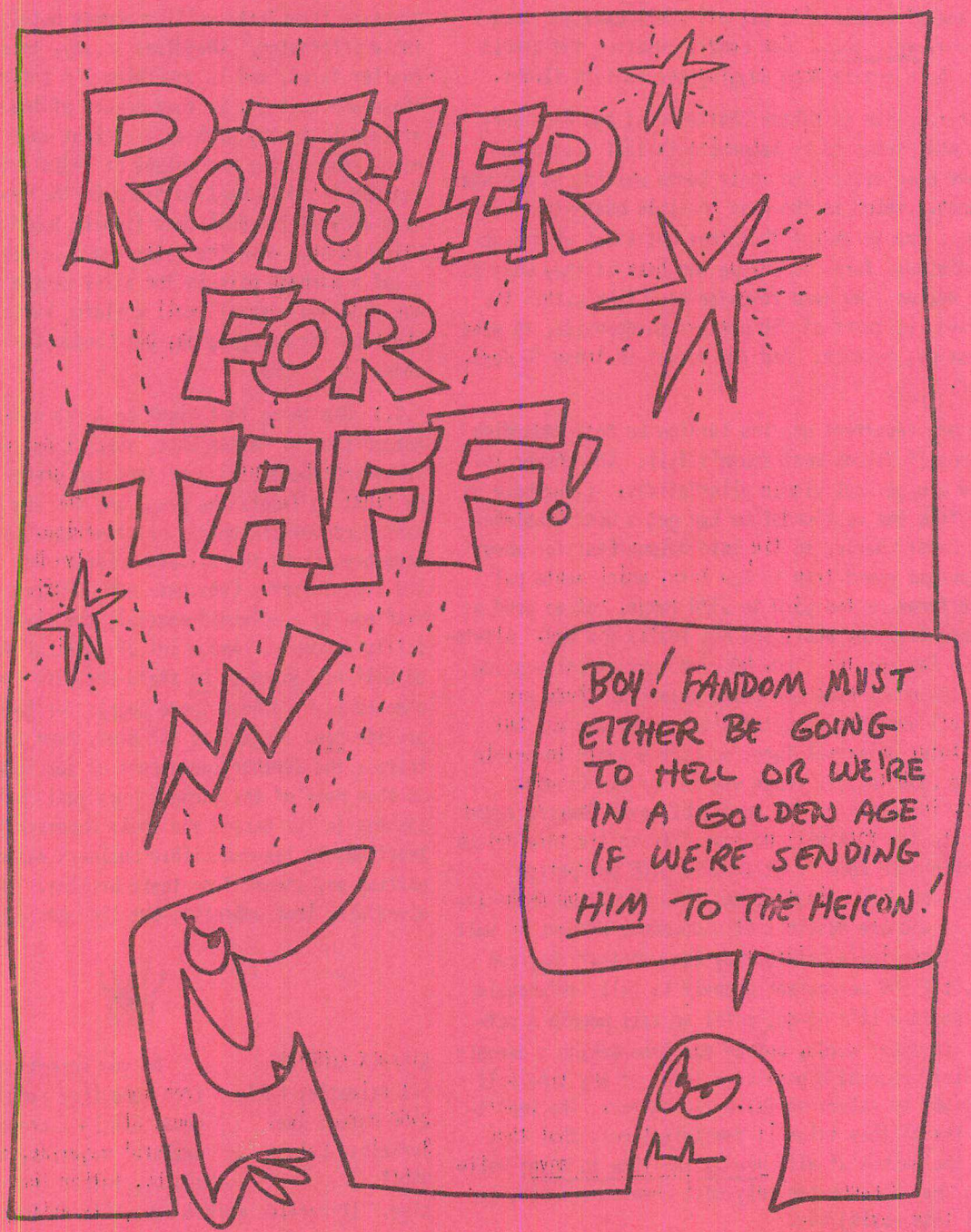
Do you accept unsolicited material from fans (not pros)? I ask this because SFR is increasingly becoming a writers' magazine, however informal and clubby, rather than a fan--amateur--zine. It carries market news, its articles and reviews are often directed as much toward writers and editors as toward readers, and the letters in SFR 34 were all from pros. This doesn't make SFR less interesting to fans--quite the opposite! But I wonder, as perhaps other fans do, whether it is becoming a fanzine fans cannot write for. How about it, Mr Geis?

((The space open in SFR for unsolicited material is more or less limited, but if a piece is good enough, I'll use it, if it fits in with my needs or if it is too damned fine to pass up. Book reviews are your best bet.))


ROTSLER FOR TAFF!
BOY! FANDOM MUST EITHER BE GOING TO HELL OR WE'RE IN A GOLDEN AGE IF WE'RE SENDING HIM TO THE HEICON!