

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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LAST MINUTE NEWS: THE NEBULA AWARD WINNERS
BEST NOVEL OF 1969: The Left Hand of Dark-
ness by Ursula K. LeGuin

BEST NOVELLA: "A Boy and His Dog" by Harlan
Ellison

BEST NOVELETTE. "Time Considered as a Helix
of Semi-Precious Stones" by Samuel R. Delany

BEST SHORT STORY: "Passangers" by Robert
Silverberg.

CONGRATULATIONS ALL.

Thanks to Harlan Ellison for the news call.

LAST MINUTE NOTE: AL ANDREWS, a well-
known southern fan of a few years ago,
apparently has died; his last address
was Fairview Rest Home, 1028 Bessemer
Road, Birmingham, Alabama 35228 and
his copy of SFR just came back marked
"Deceased". There was no forwarding
address.

The last I heard he had trouble
typing because of arthritis, but
obviously it was more serious than
that.

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"Geis! Something is wrong! I'm—I'm cold. Our envelope is missing! And...and our "da-glo" cover paper is g-gone...and *sob* you have cut the cover drawing to a mere 9 x 4½ and you have put part of the contents page there! And...and the back cover—demolished! Ruined! Little more than a mailing page! Why? Why? WHY?"

"It was time to put this magazine on a more rational basis, expensewise. Those lovely da-glo covers were costing \$40 per issue. The envelopes were running us \$25 per issue. This way, by slimming down—"

"Forty-eight measley pages!"

"—to a 4 oz. weight limit we get in the 3rd class ten cents per copy category and save another \$20. We are in parlous times, Alter-ego. We must gird our loins—"

"Is that what you call what you do every night?"

"—for the long haul. A recession is upon us. Nixon's Depression is in the offing."

"But—"

"By using front and back covers in this way we save a page inside. And by a slight slimming to 48 pages...and incidentally, I never intended SFR to be more than 48 pages per issue; I simply couldn't resist last minute letters and such...it makes collating and final assembly easier."

"But—"

"ALSO, this means we can publish more frequently. Maybe even monthly!"

"I'll never believe monthly, Geis. You've been into

the peach brandy again. You're high on pistasch-io-nut ice cream."

"Would you believe five-weekly?"

"Only if you twist my arm..."

"Now...do...you...believe...?"

"Ooo! Yip! Youch! Yurch! Yes, YES!"

"Fine. Now that that is settled—"

"Only one thing. Now you've got to make believers of the subscribers."

"Come out of hiding, Alter-ego. We have to do this thing. We promised."

"You promised!"

"Nevertheless, the Hugo nominations are looming and we must give our choices. And we must Reveal to All what some of our reviewers' choices are."

"Why, Geis, WHY do you stick our neck out like this? All it does is make a lot of sf writers unhappy with us."

"Can't be helped. Onward!"

"You go ahead. I'm stopping for a bag of oranges."

"Do that later. Read to me Hank Davis's list of Hugo nominations!"

"I dare you to lead off with your choices, Geis."

"Later. Read!"

"Yooch! You're HURTING me! You nasty! If you insist Hank Davis's list is: Best Novel—Macroscopic by Piers Anthony, narrowly beating out Brunner's The Jagged Orbit. He says he'd feel more secure in this choice if he had read Zelazny's Creatures of Light and Darkness."

"For Best Novella Davis likes "The Cloudbuilders" by Colin Kapp, and if it should not be long enough to fit, he thinks "Dramatic Mission" by Anne McCaffrey was best."

"He likes "Your Haploid Heart" by James Tiptree, Jr. as Best Short Story."

"Go on, there is more"

"Your voice cracked on that last word, Geis. You anxious about something?"

"READ!"

"Davis's Best Drama choice is THE ILLUSTRATED MAN. His preference in the prozines is F&SF. Best Pro Artist: Kelly Freas. Best Fanz— Aha! This is what is making you twitch, eh? Well, relax. He chose SFR as Best Fanzine."

Snirk

"He goes on: Best Fan Writer—Richard Hodgens. Hey our heart flipped there for an instant—Geis, were you hoping?"

"Read! We're using too much space on this. We've got Richard Delap, Ted Pauls and Paul Walker to go."

"Right on. Hank Davis's final choice is Alicia Austin for Best Fan Artist."

"Now, quickly, quickly, on to Delap's choosings!"

"Lessee now...he put it this way: He limited his Hugo choices to Best Novel: 1. Let the Fire Fall, Kate Wilhelm; 2. Slaughterhouse-Five, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.; 3. The Left Hand

of Darkness, Ursula K. Le Guin. And he says, 'I'd also include Le Guin's A Wizard of Earthsea but I think that carried a 1968 copyright. If eligible, it would move Darkness to the 4th spot. I might put Camp Concentration in last spot, but it wasn't really my idea of the year's "best" (though not by any means was it bad).'"

"Fine, fine, now on to Ted Pauls' list!"

"Slave driver."

"Since when does the master drive the slave? But that's beside the point. Read."

"Ted Pauls limited himself to the novels, too, and his choices are: The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula Le Guin; The Palace of Eternity by Boh Shaw; Let The Fire Fall by Kate Wilhelm; Isle of the Dead by Roger Zelazny; The Jagged Orbit by John Brunner.

"Ted had this to say, too: 'God, what a year, when novels like To Live Again and Black Easter can't get into the top five! Silverberg's Nightwings doesn't qualify technically, on several grounds, though the Avon book is as much a novel as any other novel that was published last year. If Nightwings did qualify it would be on my list of five. Don't ask me what I'd remove to make room for it.'"

"Now, Alter-ego, on to—"

"Geis, slow down! Ted has other comments."

"Very well..."

"Other categories? I'd like to see the Dillons win a Hugo for those lovely Ace Special covers; and hopefully Blish's "We All Die Naked" (from Three for Tomorrow) will be considered in the novella category. Oh, best fan writer. Uh, would you believe me? Delap maybe? Harry again? (Why not?)"

"Now, Alter-ego, to Paul Walker's list!"

"Geis, I see here that he has done his duty and chosen SFR best fanzine. That must make you happy."

Snirk "Do his list and cut mit der wise-cracks. How DARE you impune his integrity like that? Paul is a perceptive and sage fan. Yes. Beyond all peradventure."

"He chose Up the Line

as best novel. His second choice was Carder's Paradise by Levene. Then he goes on:

"Best novella: "Plague Ship" by Harry Harrison

"Best novelette: "The Electric Ant" by Philip K. Dick

"(2nd choice — "J-Line to Nowhere" by Zenna Henderson)

"Best short story: "Muse" by Dean R. Koontz."

"Umm, Alter-ego, I note that Paul isn't aware that there is no Novelette category for the Hugos this year. The short story length has been pushed up to 17,000 words."

"Maybe a lot of fans don't know that."

"They do now. Read on, and on, and on..."

"For best dramatic award he chose NIGHT GALLERY by Rod Serling; a TV movie."

"His liking for best prozine?"

"F&SF."

"And for best pro artist?"

"The Dillons. Geis, this is getting boring!"

"Only a little bit more."

Grump "Well, he thought Vaughn Bode the best fan artist. He thought the best fan writer was Dean R. Koontz. Best fanzine, of course, in his abject opinion—"

"Alter-ego—"

"Well, it is suspicious, these SFR reviewers choosing SFR!"

"I did not influence them one bit!"

"I get tired of your snirking, that's all."

"You aren't finished with Paul Walker's list! Come back here!"

"Finish it yourself! I'm going back into my Oedipal cave for some taboo thoughts."

"YOU COME BACK HERE! Alter? Damn! Well, heh-heh, folks, looks like it's just me doing a single from here on out. Good thing, too, without his carping and whining all the time. To finish up Paul Walker recommends a special award to Ray Bradbury for I Sing the Body Electric. And a special tribute to John Wyndham.

"MY OWN CHOICES...I know how you've all been waiting for this...are as follows:

Best Novel: To Live Again by Bob Silverberg
Isle of the Dead by Roger Zelazny
The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula Le Guin
Slaughterhouse-five by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
Up the Line by Bob Silverberg

"For Best Novella I have to go with Jim Blish's "We All Die Naked."

"Best Short Story...even though it is borderline fantasy..."Shattered Like a Glass Goblin" by Harlan Ellison.

"Best Dramatic—no choice.

"Best magazine—ANALOG

"Best Pro Artist—The Dillons

"Best Fan Artist—Tim Kirk, Steve Fabian, Bill Rotsler.

"Best Fan Writer—Ted Pauls, Richard Delap, Richard Bergeron, Richard Geis, Ray Nelson.

"Best Fanzine—SFR, ODD, WARHOON, LOCUS, GRANFAL-LOON."



REMEMBER—

YOU ARE
AS
SANE
AS
I



SPECULATIONS ON FAN MORTALITY BY BOB SHAW

A number of fans have written about the circumstances which led them to become fans, but I am (I think) going to be the first to write about a much more general phenomenon—the way in which people don't become fans.

For the fact of the matter is that every child below the age of ten is a natural-born science fiction enthusiast. They take to it easily, immediately and instinctively; and if they grew up in the same frame of mind the world would be one big fandom.

But somewhere along the line a change takes place, usually about ten, and within a very short time the inborn love of science fiction/fantasy withers away.

I have watched it happen many times, the latest example being that of my 13-year-old daughter who will still watch sf on television but has cut it completely from her reading programme. In another year or two she will begin referring to it as "that childish stuff" and I'll realise my memory spans a true generation—because I can vividly see my childhood friends gradually turning away from the faith.

There was a time when a gang of roughly eight of us went every Saturday morning to see the latest installment of the Flash Gordon serial in a local flea palace called the Castle—a wildly inappropriate name considering that the many battles with which it was involved took place inside its walls, and it was the uniformed defenders who risked their skins by entering. At that age I knew with calm certainty that I was going to be a science fiction fan for life, but what I didn't know was that within the space of a year or two all other members of the coterie would undergo this baffling, and to me almost frightening, change into mundane beings.

We didn't even, during the golden age, refer to the serial by name—it was simply "the chapter", and everybody knew what was meant. Sitting there in the midst of an intent, toffee-chewing row I absorbed Flash Gordon through my pores, never dreaming of carping at any of its numerous technical flaws.

Common sense told me that space ships traveling at high speed should not have trickles of smoke spiralling vertically upwards from their ass ends and blobs of black ash falling in the opposite direction; and experience with a bicycle

had taught me that the ship's passengers would never survive the fantastically abrupt touchdowns on the Planet Mongo.

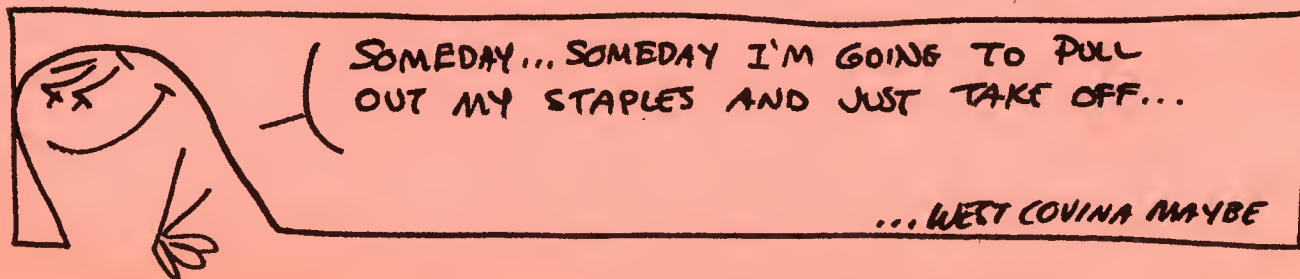
Yet I was able to accept these things because I already understood that, by virtue of the imagination, I was peering down a probability avenue that the Great Architect had decided not to build.

The others seemed to have the same outlook. We were quite happy to walk, vicariously, across narrow "light bridges" which spanned high buildings on Mongo without wondering why—in view of all the technical ingenuity expended—no light handrails were provided to prevent, as was frequently the case, people falling or jumping off. We merged into the cave wall with the Clay Men, and fought joyously on the side of a breast-plated chieftain whose filmic name I have forgotten but who was universally referred to as Big Chief Iron Diddies.

The Change came gradually, roughly coinciding with the onset of puberty. I began to notice that when Flash's girl friend was on the screen in her mini-skirt there would be wild talk about what it would be like in bed with her and much suggestive brandishing of fists just in front of the flies of short grey flannel pants. One of the earliest to quit the group was a raw-boned girl called Marty who abruptly sprouted up to about a head taller than the rest and acquired what to us was adult sophistication. The most striking evidence of this newfound savoir faire was her discovery that when she farted into a handful of cotton then clenched it in her fist the smell could be conserved for quite long periods.

Getting to the Castle, which was not located in a high class district, had always been a rather hazardous affair as the journey took one through the strongholds of several incipient Capones. But when Marty took to waylaying us, leaping out on a laggard member and forcibly holding poul-smelling cotton over his nose like a chloroform pad, the size of the coterie shrank drastically. I was appalled by her behavior, putting it down as a natural result of giving up science fiction.

Within a space of weeks I was the only one of the original group still attending the chapter and, to be quite frank, it was beginning to pall on me. A large part of the enjoy-



ment had been in going with the familiar gang and discussing the show afterwards, with group reenactments of the more dramatic moments. Besides, the considerable nervous strain of not knowing when one was going to round a corner and be confronted with a frozen-smiled, vengeful Marty in full charge, with a fist stuck down her knickers, was enough to take the fine edge from one's appreciation of Ming the Merciless. (I use the adjective vengeful in connection with Marty because I really do think she was punishing us for still bothering with "that kid stuff" and not having matured like her.)

Luckily, I encountered my first ASTOUNDING just then, had my mind blown by van Vogt and gave up Flash Gordon for ever. Yet, for years afterwards, every time I met one of my friends and was seen with a science fiction magazine his reaction was the same—one of amused tolerance for somebody who has failed to grow up.

The question is: What is the precise nature of the psychological change which prevents the child who loves science fiction becoming a man who loves science fiction?

I've already commented on the fact that the change roughly coincides with puberty, and I wouldn't be surprised if there really was a direct connection between it and the first stirrings of sexuality. Life has always been full of hazards and uncertainties, and I imagine that back in the dangerous days of the dinosaur the first humans learned to reduce the variables by choosing a mate who gave every evidence of being a hard, practical individual. The cave man who went around staring at the points of light in the sky instead of keeping a sharp eye on the sabre-teeth would be a bad security risk for any Neanderthal girl.

This attitude has been transmitted right down to the present, particularly on the feminine side—nobody regards a dreamy, impractical man with as much suspicion and acid contempt as the average girl who is weighing up prospective husbands. (Possibly one of the most significant things about the hippie community is that its females may actually have reversed these criteria and, if the phenomenon is viable, may eventually produce a new kind of human.)

There is a strong feedback of attitudes between the sexes, each trying to present an image which the other will find attractive, and nobody is more vulnerable to these pressures than an adolescent boy. Small wonder then that on entering the procreational stakes the first thing he does is to discard all signs of the dreamy impracticality which will handicap him in the eyes of speculative damsels.

If the above hypothesis is correct it means that non-fans are 'normal' and suggests that fans have (a) such a firm belief in their own attractiveness that they refuse to conform to the age-old dictates of the opposite sex or (b) that they are 'normal' at heart but their scales of values are such that they require a bigger inducement before surrendering their ability to live in the imagination.

Possibility (a) can be dismissed at once, but in the British Isles it is possible to find some evidence for (b).

The social-economic complex here is such that it is common for a man to spend the first twenty-five years or more of his working life in comparatively junior, comparatively badly paid positions. Then, quite suddenly, he makes the transition to another status in which he receives more responsibility and a higher salary, and is projected into the company of upper management. In these new circumstances he sees bigger opportunities ahead and at the same time is once more under appraisal by important individuals who—like a girl on the marriage market—place a high value on hard-headed practicality.

At this stage even the most dedicated fan can lose interest, abruptly and finally. In all probability he won't make a conscious decision to quit fandom and give up reading sf, but he may experience a growing conviction that it is all rather childish and that he will get on better without it. This situation is an exact parallel in the social-financial context to the one I outlined earlier, and if the general hypothesis is still valid one might expect to find a higher percentage of mature, long-time fans in the U.S.—where promotion patterns may be different—than in Britain.

The final question, for me, is: If I someday reach the second hurdle will I clear it all right and earn my place in the fannish Valhalla—or am I merrily galloping down the wrong racetrack?



"I just dropped 20 tabs of acid in the First Fandom punchbowl!"

BEER MUTTERINGS



Dick Geis gives this column absolute freedom, with the result that much of what it mutters has nothing to do with science fiction. However, once in a while it ought to show its appreciation by sitting down under that rubric.

Therefore, to Chip Delany's essay in SFR #33 on the inseparability of content and style. Bravo! Cherish his utterances. They are pure gold. The growth of respect for language among our writers has had damn near everything to do with ending the doldrums in which we wallowed for years. I can't resist translating a bit by the Danish master Johannes V. Jensen. A poem of his apostrophizes two long-dead skalds in their kind of alliterative verse. From their graves they ask him how life is today. He tells them:

The world is yet
no otherwise.
Hate whores with dullness,
begetting hunger.

Green is the earth,
and greedy the vultures.
Young, ye athelings,
is yet the word.

— Still, the grubby problems of attaining an ideal in reality are always with us. I'd like to discuss one as a footnote to Chip's observations. Pros are already familiar with the matter, and I ask their indulgence if I repeat certain things due to appear in the SFWA Bulletin. Readers should also know about them.

Look, you've got this here now manuscript. You've given it your best. You send it in. It's bought. You see it in print. Your subsequent remarks could not be printed, no, not by Grove Press or Essex House.

Let's make a few points clear at the outset. Editors are stuck with whatever their publishers' policies happen to be. If they don't execute these, they'll be fired and more obedient successors will be installed. For example, frequent line breaks may be demanded, widows (incomplete lines of type at the top of a page) forbidden, any number of physical constraints imposed. To fit the text into such a Procrustean bed, some small cuts may well prove necessary; and it isn't generally practicable to consult the author about them, because the need never shows up till

A Column

the last minute. Furthermore, every science fiction editor is badly overworked. An occasional goof is inevitable.

But when whole sections are plugged in or ripped out, whole new endings tacked on, phrases thrown in for no reason whatsoever, destroying the balance or the very meaning: where then is your style or your content?

I'll give you three specific illustrations. In one novel I had a man thinking about the atmosphere of the oddball planet he was on, while talking to a neolithic native. A sentence was cut, and suddenly the man was lecturing this yokel on oxygen, neon, and gravitational potentials in the yokel's own prescientific lingo.

In another book, a naive idealist, back on Earth after a long absence, visited a glorified bawdyhouse. All at once he started taking the joint apart. There was no reason for his violence — seeing as how some paragraphs had been chopped wherein he learned that the girls were, to every intent and purpose, slaves.

In a recent novelet, my hero had occasion to seize the heroine by the shoulder. An adjective got written in, and he seized her by her soft shoulder. Now: Imprimis, the girl had been described as petite, and of the female shoulders on which my head has rested, I'd only call "soft" those which belonged on rather plump bodies. Secundus, both characters were in spacesuits, making the consistency of shoulders irrelevant at best. Tertius, the characters were in peril of death, so that even had they been unclothed, I doubt the gentleman would have noticed details about any part of the lady's anatomy which he chanced to grab.

(Since the last of these examples appeared, I've been informed that it was not the editor's fault. He did his valiant best, while tobogganing down on a deadline, to repair the wreckage given him by a careless printer. But I let the example stand, because the effect on the reader is the same, and because it demonstrates the need for everyone concerned with words to exercise responsibility.)

By POUL ANDERSON

I could detail worse horrors yet, but you get the idea. The next time you read something idiotic, please ask yourself if the bylined author is necessarily responsible.

To repeat, I am not denouncing the class of editors. On the contrary, I'm deeply grateful to most of those I've dealt with. They have been incredibly patient. Often they've given me suggestions I'd never have thought of by myself, or called for changes that resulted in genuine improvement. The point is that writers should, to the absolute maximum extent possible, be allowed to make alterations themselves, and invariably to make the significant ones. (It'd help if typographical straitjacketing were ended. Maybe you, the readers, can exercise some influence toward that goal.)

Sometimes correction is actually fun. Doubleday, among others, hands manuscripts over to copy editors, professional nitpickers. Before type is set, the script is returned to the author with queries attached beside any seeming errors or inconsistencies. This is extremely helpful. Besides, I get to scribble back. Thus, I'd written "spung," in a context indicating it was slang for flipping or kicking an object off into space. The note asked: "Is there any such word?" I answered: "There is now." Elsewhere, a character of Mexican extraction mentioned "cojones." Plaintive remark: "I can't find this in my Spanish dictionary. A Spanish-speaking friend says it means 'balls.' Are you sure you want it?" Reply: "Why not? If it's good enough for Hemingway, it's good enough for me." Both stayed.

Magazines, and to a degree paperback books, are produced in less leisurely fashion. For them, such detail work isn't as a rule feasible. But reverence for the word most certainly is.

(Note: The following was written to see if I could handle the rhetorical and logical style of today's most prominent sociopolitical thinkers. After trying it, I'm afraid my preferences remain with men like Jefferson or Burke, hopelessly outmoded though these be.)

Amidst the current furore over persecuted minorities and how society has got to make up to them for the troubles their ancestors endured, nobody seems to remember the one which took the worst beating of the lot. So cruelly has it been discriminated against that there isn't even a proper name for it.

Oh, its members are often called WASPS. But that isn't simply dehumanizing, it's inaccurate, doubtless deliberately so in implementation of a calculated policy of dividing them against each other. The fact is, only a part of them are Anglo-Saxons, they were not always Protestants, and many of them still aren't. They have sometimes been called Nordics, but this again is correct for a mere fraction. I'm convinced that that term is misapplied in order to saddle them all with the racial stereotype. You know: a funny-looking person, tall, lanky, long-skulled, with a big nose and straight yellow hair and deepset washed-out eyes and

easily sunburned skin and would you want your daughter to marry one? In actuality, more of them are black-haired, brown-eyed, and stocky than are not. They consist of those who inhabit a certain part of the world, or whose forebears did.

That homeland covers the British Isles, the Low Countries, the Scandinavian peninsula including most of Finland, Denmark, the Baltic and North Sea littorals, and a large piece of central Europe. It's not very good country — apt to be wet and cold, with boggy or stony or heath-grown soil, gloomy forests, interminable winter nights, few mineral resources except a bit of iron and coal. That is the reason why the inhabitants long remained underdeveloped and thus became easy victims of exploitation by southerners whose own good fortune ought to have made them kind and loving but didn't. In order to give this minority a name free of pejorative associations, let us form a neologism from the core area and call them People Inhabiting Germanic Settlements, or PIGS for short. I want to emphasize that this is also a loose phrase, since many Celts, Slavs, Balts, Finns, Jews, etc. are included. However, the principal languages belong to the Germanic family.

The original PIGS were peaceful reindeer hunters, drifting north when the glaciers receded if they were not refugees from warlike invaders. Once settled down, some of them took to the sea while others farmed their poor little plots of cleared land as best they might. When the Iron Age reached them the Celts were dominant throughout their territory. But the vicious aggression of Mediterranean armies, especially the Roman, reduced this brilliant culture to a set of starveling enclaves. Perforce the Teutons took over the burden of defending northern Europe.

From time immemorial, PIGS have been subject to the most callous racism. Aristotle described their children as having hair "like old men," as if its flaxen hue were a deformity. Pliny counselled against buying German slaves, declaring that they were innately too stupid to learn anything useful. While Tacitus did call them noble savages, his patronizing fantasies never touched the slave raiders or the greedy and unscrupulous merchants who dealt with these innocent tribesmen.

The first major clash occurred about 100 B.C., when Cim-





brian and Teutonic immigrants, seeking a haven from famine, were brutally attacked by the Romans. Those who survived were sold into slavery. Given this kind of provocation, it is not to be wondered at that the PIGS retaliated with border raids. Finally, at Teutoburger Wald, the heroic people's leader Arminius secured their frontiers against further imperialism. The utter corruption of fascist Roman society was demonstrated when the western Empire collapsed a bare 400 years later.

At that time, with their usual charity, several organizations of PIGS did their best to help those who had so grossly abused them. Vandals went down to North Africa, Visigoths to Iberia, Ostrogoths to Italy itself, bringing honest government and folk culture. But the Mediterranean Ethnic Neighbors (MEN) would have none of it. Instead, they forced the Latin language on the newcomers; they persecuted the Arian religion; at last Byzantines from the east and Moslems from the south came in armed hordes to crush the liberation movement.

Events developed a little more happily in the north, where the reborn imperialism was weaker. At the request of the Romano-British king Vortigern, the Jutes Hengist and Horsa brought gallant soldiers to assist him in restoring order. When he treacherously turned on them, killing Horsa, Hengist had no choice but to send for reinforcements and give peace to the country. Later English arrivals were welcomed with such joyous admiration — except by a handful of reactionaries in Wales and the Scottish highlands — that no trace of Romano-British culture remains. Similarly, the Gauls renamed their land for the Franks who had set them free.

However, the fascist MEN never stopped their plots to seize back power from the people. They began by sending glib missionaries who converted the Franks and other tribes, not to a pure Arian Christianity, but to a Catholicism directed by Rome. Next — after the Franks had saved them from the Moors — the MEN installed a puppet ruler, Charlemagne, who swept through Saxony with fire and sword, enslaving the dwellers and demolishing their sacred groves. With that example before them, what could the remaining free PIGS do except try to save their oppressed brethren? Tragically, this selfless effort of the Vikings failed, both because of missionary subversion and because a Papal stalking horse

named William (a real bastard) usurped the crown of pivotal England.

The next several centuries were an age of unrelieved misery: of paupers groaning beneath the heel of Rome, their Emperor himself having to walk barefoot through the snow; of fighting wars for the benefit of Italian shipping interests, the so-called Crusades; of struggle to keep native languages alive in the face of the Latin which had already extinguished Frankish and Gothic. In this last connection, the prejudice against PIGS is vividly illustrated by the fact that, when a new style of church architecture evolved, its de-

tractors sneeringly labeled it "Gothic." (And we might note that in later times the same adjective was applied to forms of literature that were locked down upon.)

When the Renaissance blessed the MEN with unprecedented opulence, did they send aid to the impoverished PIGS? No. They did nothing of the sort. The Flemings, Prussians, and other wretched of the earth were left gnawing their stockfish and coughing over their peat fires. Not content with hoarding the immense profits of capitalism, the MEN brazenly tried to sell them indulgences.

But then the spirit of Freedom Now broke forth. The Protestant Reformation cast off rusty medieval shackles. This did not happen easily or at once. Think only how the Spaniards ravaged the Netherlands and sent an armada against England, consider the atrocities of Wallenstein and the martyrdom of the Huguenots, the latter not even being PIGS although expressing solidarity with them. Nevertheless, the indomitable resistance movement prevailed.

With a degree of national liberation achieved, the PIGS naturally looked for their rightful share in the affluence that the rest of Europe was enjoying. Again they found themselves barred from opportunity. The Spanish, the Portuguese, the French denied them real estate in America and the Orient. A pitiful few PIGS managed to obtain footholds in such slum areas as New England and Virginia. They were promptly set on by ravening, murdering, torturing scalping lynch mobs of a different race, on the transparent excuse that the latter were there first — which is to say that property rights were considered above human rights. Incredible though it seems, when the PIGS attempted penal reform in Georgia and Botany Bay, this likewise met with violence.

Of course, we must be realistic. PIGS are mortal too, and therefore prone to error. When African chiefs offered slaves for sale, PIGS were occasionally known to buy. And they fell for numerous other capitalist tricks, e.g., they purchased Manhattan Island for \$24 and a case of whiskey from some Indians who, it later turned out, had no title to it.

Meanwhile the influence of the MEN was as persistent as it was pernicious. For centuries French literature, Italian art and manners, were emulated in the north to the detriment of a true expression. Spanish courage and Arabic lovemaking (the notorious Sheikh image) are still held up to women as em-

blems of masculinity, regardless of the castrating effect this may have on male PIGS. When, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, northern poets sought to re-create a northern culture, they were compelled to use half-Latinized tongues and, indeed, to call their efforts by the name Romanticism!

Not having been enlightened about the true meaning of their situation, the PIGS were repeatedly duped into fighting wars that could benefit none but the MEN. In Asia, Africa, Oceania, America they put down one non-Catholic nation after another; as viceroys and garrison troops they endured patiently the humiliation of being excluded from local fraternal groups; and what have they left now for all their toil and bloodshed? Scarcely an acre. In Europe itself, PIGS served as MEN's cat's-paws: for instance, remember Napoleon's German grenadiers, or the Gaulish Bernadotte family which to this day tyrannizes over Sweden. Sometimes they were maneuvered into battling each other to keep them weak, notably in the World Wars. (Nazism is obviously a Mediterranean invention. I have already described the ravings of those mad dogs Aristotle and Pliny; now I remind you of the Graeco-Syrian anti-Semitism commemorated in Maccabees and of the destruction of the Temple by Romans.)

Throughout history, PIGS have been the butt of scorn. Think of the Chinese phrase "foreign devil," the Japanese "Yankee monkey," the Mexican "gringo," and imagine how you would feel if you were similarly labelled. Does anyone ever say, "Blonde is beautiful"? No, blondes are automatically assumed to be intellectually deficient and, except for the animal sexuality, emotionally shallow.

I could go on, but this sketch is enough. And enough is enough. I say to you, we have had it up to here. The time has come for action.

Let those of us who were born with light complexions, who speak English with a special accent, who have distinctive patterns of thought, religion, politics, professions, family structure, and taste — let us no longer cringe, let us no longer sycophantically attempt to be what we are not — no, let us stand up and be ourselves, proudly assert that we are just as human and have just as many rights as anybody else, and demand proper compensation for the countless wrongs we have suffered.

PIGS OF THE WORLD, UNITE! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR BRAINS!



MONOLOG continued from page 28

+ Andy J. Offutt recently sold an sf novel, Ardor On Aros, to Dell.

+ BACK ISSUES OF SFR AVAILABLE: #s 28-29-30-31-34-35.
#s 32-33 are sold out. #31 is down to 14 copies.

+ NEXT ISSUE will have the final lovely portion of the Tim Kirk — Mike Gilbert confrontation, either Piers Anthony's column or a review by Piers of Bob Tucker's May Ace Special The Year of the Quiet Sun (or both in one), "Story At Bay" by Perry Chapdelaine which details the rigors of criticisms from the pros at the Milford Conference, possibly an article on "Perry Rhodan, Inheritor of the Universe" by Eddy C. Bertin, which is likely all you will ever want to know on the subject, and Banks Mebane with his Deposit, an item by Tom disch which I will surprise you with, and the reviews, the editorials, the letters...

"Sounds like sixty pages, Geis."

"Get out of the Monolog, alter-ego!"

"Pah! You don't have as much control over this zine as you like to think, Geis. I'll break in when I damn well please. Now. Have you noticed something about the number of stencils in the folder this issue?"

"No, I—"

"Aha! All that big talk about a limit of 48 pages!"

"Let me count..."

"Now it's my turn to snirk."

Blench "Fifty-two!"

"And you'll even have to hold back your own book review column, "And Then I Read .." to keep it from going still higher!"

"B—but, I tried...I tried so hard .. I was going to be so s-strict and..."

"Oh, God, don't snivel like that! What will the readers think? A grown man!"

"N-next issue, I promise...48 pages!"

"Huh! I've heard that every issue since our PSYCHOTIC days."

"Nevertheless—"

"Say goodnight, Dick."

"Goodnight Dick."

+ PUTNAM SCIENCE FICTION for 1970 is as follows:

Time Trap by Keith Laumer, \$4.50, February

The Daleth Effect by Harry Harrison, \$4.50, March

ORBIT 6, ed. by Damon Knight, \$4.95, April (delayed from December by production problems)

Out of Their Minds by Clifford D. Simak, \$4.50, April

Whipping Star by Frank Herbert, \$4.95, April

The World Shuffler by Keith Laumer, \$4.50, April

Twenty Years of the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, ed. by Edward L. Ferman and Robert P. Mills, intro by Isaac Asimov, \$4.95, June

ORBIT 7, ed by Damon Knight, \$4.95, June

(following publication dates and prices are tentative)

Best SF 1969, ed. by Harry Harrison, \$4.95, July

Sea-Horse in the Sky by Edmund Cooper, \$4.50, August

Warlocks and Warriors, ed. by L. Sprague de Camp, \$4.95, September

The House in November by Keith Laumer, \$4.50, October

Untitled novel by Clifford D. Simak, \$4.50, November

ORBIT 8, ed. by Damon Knight, \$4.95, December.



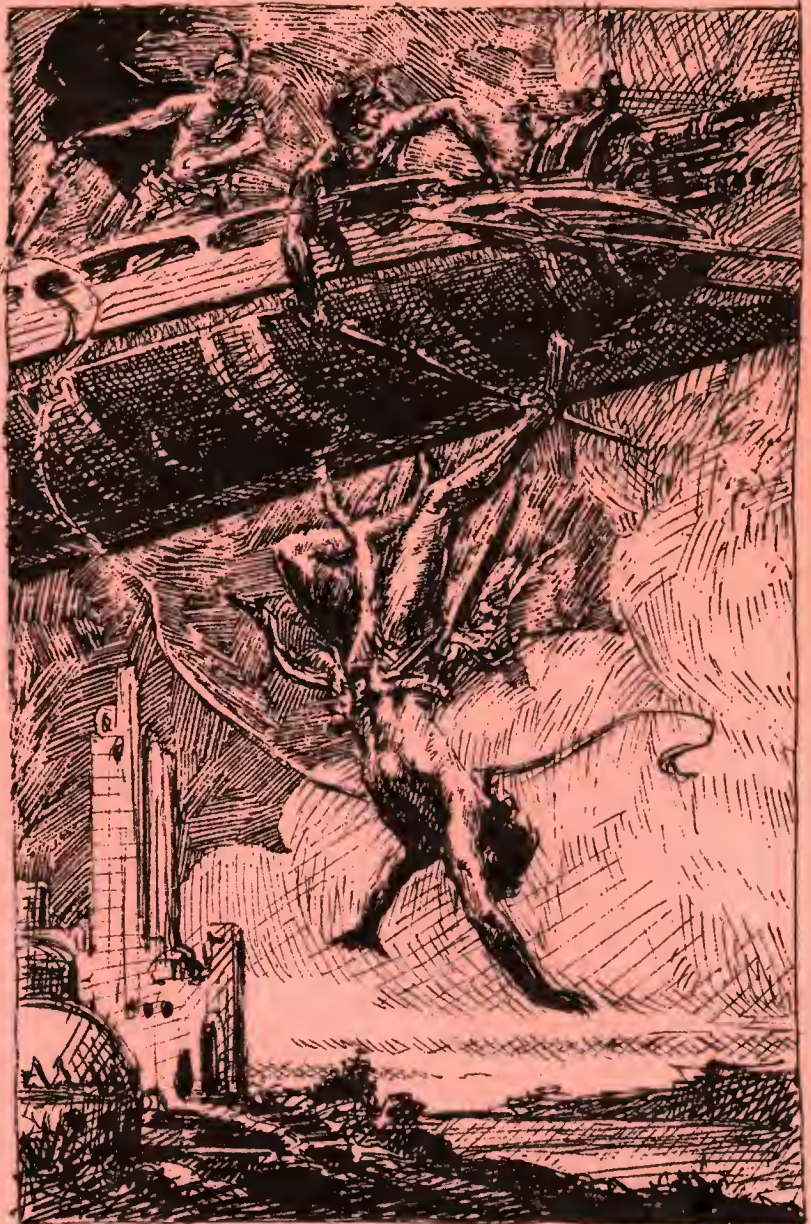
Amra

Amra began as a magazine for people specifically interested in reading about Robert E Howard's heroic character, Conan. Along the way, it has twice been awarded the Annual Science Fiction Achievement Award -- the HUGO -- for the best fanzine in those years. Not the least of its features is the uncommonly good artists Amra has managed to pick up, like Gray Morrow, Jim Cawthorn, Dan Adkins, Tim Kirk, George Barr, and Roy Krenkel (whose work appears to the right and below).

Over the years, Amra found it necessary to touch every field which had the least connection with Conan. Directly, Amra has had articles dealing with what we call sword-&-sorcery fiction: that kind of story in which the hero or the villain may cast a spell or wield a blade with equal propriety, according to the terrain and the tactical situation; in a general sense, stories with pre-gunpowder technology in which magic works. Thus, in addition to its first interest, Amra has covered other heroes invented by Howard, some other Conan-like heroic heroes written of by others, and people in swordplay-&-sorcery who are principal characters without being exactly heroic about it. Thus, we have gradually brought to our pages all the collateral areas of interest from archaeology, bronzeworking, and cozenage through xenanthropology, yachting, and zymurgics. In the past, our topics have ranged from technology to Theosophy, from the wily East to the Wild West, and from before the sinking of Atlantis to after the cooling of the sun. And always, we've been thoroughly illustrated by our crew of artists.

Amra v2 #51, just out, has articles by Sprague de Camp and Lin Carter, and a map of Lankhmar by Fritz Leiber; send us 50c for a copy. Or better, send us 4\$ for the available back issues, ##44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, and 51, and decide for yourself if Amra really deserved the awards given it by two World Science Fiction Conventions.

Checks and money orders should be made payable to "Amra"; remember, it is risky to send coins or currency through the mails.



AMRA, Box 8243, Philadelphia PA 19101

Good cleaning woman. With bucket and mop. Pushed stick in big swirling designs across floor

"Hello pretty babies!" her would say to rabbit litter.

They couldn't answer her; they just animals.

"Aren't you the cutest?" her would chuckle to bird. Poor dumb bird can't talk either.

Swirling and squirting her mop, her talked and cuddled her way around guinea pig, rat, bird, rabbit and dog, making you-are-so-nice noise. Not you-are-so-nice at salamander, lizard and snake. Quiet and staring.

Her stayed several weeks before her noticed us. We watched. I watched; you watched; it watched too. We stayed quiet because we liked this her.

Her stand in front of cage and speak. "What are you? A lump of dead flesh?"

What could you do but answer her? You said, "Haw, haw! I am you."

You spoke clearly that time because I could understand you, though it was making sukphur trickles and even I couldn't stand those so how could you who is so much lower down? Who could blame you for answering her by haw, haws?

Her was good one. I liked her. Her finished whole floor before her quit.

I am not you. Nor am I it. I can tell you what I am easy; though sometimes for it is not easy, nor for you.

You feels that way too since bottom and top me were formed by gametogenesis, fusing together small fertile mammal-egg cells prior to their differentiation and held together by lumpy who-knows-what-flesh so foreign to both you and I that only term it fits!

One time father — or was it mother? — well, whatever, it, or her — held tall amber beaker over me almost as tall as you. I laughed when the acrid liquid poured forth — "Hee, hee, hee," I said with squeaky voice, knowing full well that it would not be hurt. Besides, who would care? Certainly not you or I!

IT you

Wiley Nance Jackson

Soapy liquid cleansed it good. Yellow goo bubbled into foam and even sulphurous stench from it poured down you. Oh how my voice squeaked with a kind of staccato laughter as

I watched it pour over you, like scratchy rasps from violin's E string — or is it G string?

You knows I can't remember well. You thinks he(?) does better, but actually he(?) doesn't and it's memory isn't worth talking about so you make your haw, haws, too, if you wants. It will talk to you later — or is it her? — her(?) always does — no, no, it isn't her or he(?) but it — and — Lordy, how confusing can I get? It's only a simple evening conversation with you!

Box taught me. Box taught you, too, but did it ever teach it?

I'm clear that box wasn't a her, a he, an I, an it, or a you; it was something, though, and it plugged into electricity and punched me and you everywhere in search of learning-sensitive spots. I suppose that's when I and you first became aware — but of what? Certainly not just I because there is also you and it — isn't there?

How surprised the box must have become to learn that it learned as well as me. It moved its cancer-red pucker-mouths all around out body, splurting forth squirrgly phonemes. Maybe you would call them something else since you hear differently. You said, "haw, haw" and I said "hee, hee" and it squirrgled!

I'm tired now. You talk.

I is the ass, not you! Haw, haw. You may have big floppy ears and buck teeth but watch manners. Even it, slobbering holes and all, doesn't hee, hee like I.

You woke first, not I. You picked out syllables and sense from noise. You broke cypher man! Or is it man cypher? Jesus! How can you speak to I or it? You pushes sound out with spastic flatulence, using anal-mouth muscles in great whooping hoo-haws, while I squeeks like modulating tweeter.

It? It isn't with us, as usual.

You'RE SO CUTE
when you smile!



You learned words before I, putting them together in sentences, longer phrases, then paragraphs; soon you could dialog — talk with, communicate to, dig, dig — with the mother-father(?).

Haw, haw! Does that sound like you was born an ass?

You remembers well, too. They let public see us at first. Later a person/thing(?) from Society for Cruelty to Animals visited. Haw! Haw!

What scene that little old her made — or was it he thing? Whatever, he or her, it pulled one neuro-plug from it and it screamed. Without completion of cycling-currents, naturally it would scream. So would you or I.

Loudest scream came from person/thing(?), though. You whooped with laughter when mother-father(?) explained how donkey's and human's single-celled eggs had been accidentally fused during mammal gametogenesis experiments.

"Serendipity," father-mother(?) said.

Person/thing(?) slashed at our father-mother(?), defecating high-pitched noises just like I's — or was it really I's voice you heard?

Nevermind. You will rest

Finally you and I have shut up!

Talk about egotists! Talk! Talk! Talk! Every night it's same old thing. First I squeeks, then you blathers and it can't rest.

They are both pair of jackasses. Neither one seems to realize that real portion is with it. I, with nose and human eye located immediately over anal-mouth, must rest above us; that's how fusion grew. Still ass-end of jack-ass is still jack-ass even though it's I!

You, on the other end, sits at bottom of us, waving your carefully manicured ears and grinning at us with buck-teeth — donkey-teeth they are — and spews forth drivel through rearly sluice-gates, both human words and anal fluids.

Whether ass-end is down or up, isn't it still jackass? Which leaves it in middle.

Oh, you and I learned well and it was quiet most of time during sessions. What matters how sulphurous my holes, or filled with ooze and stench? A human is a human no matter how he smells or where it be.

"It is an anomaly," visiting father-mothers(?) have said.

"Never happen in million more trys. Save it! Take care of it! It

is invaluable! It is most valuable addition to molecular biology in century! It will advance our knowledge hundred-million fold!"

You and I, with jackass ears, never hear those words. Let them hee and haw like any ordinary asses and babble with simulated human words. It is buried like strong, silent volcano and it knows truth. Father-mothers(?) and person/things(?) come to visit it, not you or I!

Only thing — is it I-YOU, too?

God let it rest!

IITYOU explanation
by the author

Introduction

Any reader who actually enjoys IITYOU is the kind of slob described by John W. Campbell — the kind who lacks decent fundamental empathy not only to God, country and motherhood, but also to self! Any story which is capable of breaking real human taboos ought to expose emotional buttons and ought to leave the reader with a sense of distaste and revulsion, no matter how successfully the reader explains his feelings away thereafter.

The Real Story

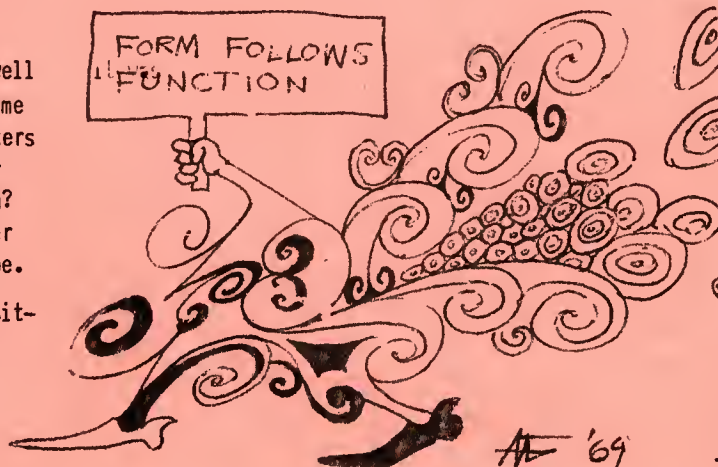
IITYOU is a report on a genuine laboratory experiment which, if not already accomplished, is probably right now in the making somewhere in the world. The rat and man have already been joined together within a single cell. The next step, causing the cell to fission and grow, is not half as brave or courageous as the first step already taken. There is no moral force to slow design of such experiments nor to stop them. The Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals cannot represent the donkey any better than the United Nations can represent man; it is probable, were they given advance warning, neither would have the requisite spiritual courage or physical force to so intercede.

Joining together two normally non-viable gene structures and watching its growth is no longer the real miracle. Educating the monstrosity and forming a communication bond between separate parts and the outside world is.

Well, that's the story — the superficial one, where everyone can read and revulse, assuming the reader is not the slob type.

The Freudian Story

I, which sits on top of it



all, or at least usually imagines itself to do so, is the ego. The super-ego is that guy just a ways outside our skin who tells us what to do and how to behave. It doesn't matter that you really don't say what you think or that you didn't really what I just heard you say, you're the one responsible for making the laws, forming my conscience and needling me at most inappropriate time with a voice-from-within. Hopefully you'll talk only when I'm asleep, then I won't be exposed to the agony of matching my behavior and action against an external standard.

From my point of view, you have a smaller ego than mine, therefore you rightfully should be on the bottom of the totem pole. Even your laughter, your haw, haws, sound strange and amusing when compared to my sober hee, hees, thus you are placed on the bottom of the pile of flesh called IITYOU.

You is most critical. How could a super-ego be otherwise? You always claim the most knowledge, the most right to criticize, the most right to poke fun and you exercise your rights the most. I enjoy it when sulphurous trickles burbble over you. I notice, though, that whenever you or I are asleep, id is still quite active.

It, the id, is between you and I. How can I get close to you and know the true worth of your soul or you get close to me and know what a wonderful fellow I am, unless we both go through the id. Some say that id is everything. They believe that ego and super-ego merely represent the cultural and rationalizing portions of mind. Whatever the case, we are both sure ^{the} stench of life — sickness, irrational behavior, man's inhumanity to man, the small and large quirks and foibles of our nature — are located in the id. Certainly it is not located in you or I!

The Freudian three must have a little sex even in, of all places, a biologist's test tube. Well, if you and I had our excretory tracks and our mouths joined together to function as one, wouldn't we also be a little confused as to sex?

Whether he, she, it, mother, father, thing — what difference to you or I if our whole life is to grow like a big glob of flesh, furnishing entertainment to the curious, some including the great minds of the outside world?

The Jungian Story

At best but ten percent of the European culture can find their difficulties imaged in the imaginings of Freud; though for poorly understood reasons, nearly one hundred percent of the literary personalities project their

critical reviews therein. Why, then, do the literary hoity-toities insist on Freudian sub-strata?

According to Jung, you and I, the conscious part of IITYOU, could learn to cooperate with it, the unconscious. Experiments in the training of the autonomic nervous system seem to confirm his belief. IITYOU cooperates, one with the other; biologically I, you and it are perfect partners — we exist, grow and learn, don't we? Furthermore it is biologically underdeveloped, a perfect analog to Jung's belief in the underdevelopment of the id. Manifestations of the four creative functions, thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition as well as the symbolic extrovert and introvert, perhaps even Jung's conjecture on the "common stream of unconsciousness", might be worried from the story by a sophisticated reader-analyst.

The Skinner Story

When a pigeon pecks on the right symbol, it receives positive-reinforcement in the form of a grain or grains of corn. Larry Niven, in his Organleggers, used this training program to its ultimate where, by placing an electric probe in the proper location of the brain, a human (or a rat) will choose to die rather than interrupt the cycle of pleasure derived therefrom. If there is a brain which is scattered throughout the IITYOU monstrosity, rewards-through-current could properly provide its primary teaching stimulus.

The Hubbard Story

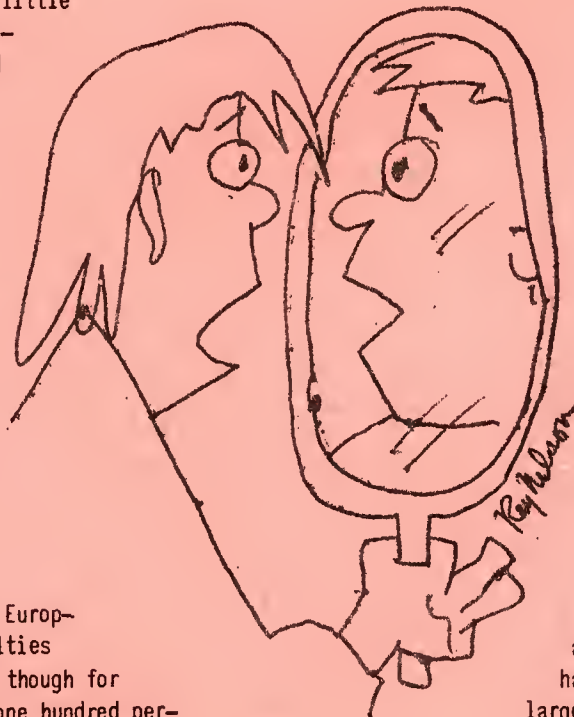
Can you imagine the terrible unconsciousness which must have been created in IITYOU when the cleaning lady — one who seemed to exhibit a high degree of empathy for all orders of life — could not tolerate the abomination? And, there must have been one glorious key-in of engrams when he/she(?) from the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals exhibited such high affinity for IITYOU that he/she(?) wished to abort it for its own sake!

Or, hear the locks being blown as the hee, hees and haw, haws trill off from either end, still leaving the heavy engrams in their cancerous and complex forms lying deep within it.

Other Stories

It is in the nature of ego to expand; so, as the cellular growth goes, so goes ego. First the crib and mother, then father and home, soon the community and state and nation, finally, the worlds, the stars and all that is. Unfortunately you also has an ego and it, too, expands ever-larger.

As I see it, if you and I both live



in our separate worlds, we could safely expand larger and larger with never fear of conflict, one against the other. As it is now, where we meet is a kind of conflict-region which leads to cancer-holes of life and sulphurous stench- es, like rotten eggs and other hypocrisies like it.

Is it what hippies really perceive and rightfully run from?

Some will see I, you and it as the three human images of the three personalities of God. How God can have three personalities and still be one, is a mystery; but it is equally mysterious how I, you and it can be one — or even alive. Maybe IITYOU is the god and those powers out there merely the servants?

Such a conjecture — that IITYOU is the god — is pleasant and ego-expanding for I, you and it, but we must act as though strange, real powers lie just beyond our skin if we are to survive for long. One of those powers cleanses us, using an amber liquid that attacks the corrupt and stinking flesh of our id at which time our anal-mouths burbble with joy and self-righteous he-haws. Another power, though filled with love for all things, great and small, has such fear of us he/she(?) flees once we are known. A third, umbrella in hand, wishes to completely abolish our spirit under the guise of Christian behavior.

Is the scientist and his amber cleaning fluid merely the Jew of the world who reasons his way into the face of adversity, forcing it to face the unpleasantness hidden beneath its corruptions? Is the cleaning woman the empathetic Negro who, after completing our menial chores, runs in panic from projected hates and fears emanating from I, you or it? Could the Prevention-of-Cruelty woman, slashing and screeching, represent the power and influence of the world's minority who seem to dictate, or at least try to dictate, their mores upon all the rest of the world?

We can be reasonably sure of one allusion. Anything which goes hee, hee on one end and haw, haw on the other, whether put together in proper hee-haws or not, can't really be taken too seriously. Even the title IITYOU is a poor Damon Knightian pun, though perfectly correct for many as is seen when the ego swallows all else to the detriment of even itself!

The Taboos

Any descriptor of life, if useful, ought to mirror the soul in some at least partial sense. The point herein is not that the story IITYOU can mean all things to all psychologies, religions and behavioral studies; rather, it is how the basic of all life — identity and its problems of confusion and loss of identity — can be, indeed, is, central to all studies. As such, it qualified as the principal class of TABOO type story.

There is a second TABOO in the writing of IITYOU. In all fairness to the reader I should tell him/her(?) that the above analyses of the story's symbolic content is a lot of hog-wash. I don't believe any of it and any one

who does is that kind of literary snob which John W. Campbell has so succinctly described elsewhere.

Like Robert Moore Williams or Daniel Galouye, who stir the hell out of their unconscious mind for the sole purpose of creating fun stories; and, like A.E. van Vogt, who adds high-level rationalizations to each fun-bit, inconsistent and conflicting as in real life, and each one guaranteed to stir every computer-like Damon Knight into frothing frenzies, I believe a story ought to be just plain fun to the writer and reader — not an intellectual mathematical puzzle where arbitrary symbols of human behavior are poured into pseudo-theorems and pseudo-postulates agreed to by the small hoity-toity elite of the literary world. In that sense, IITYOU is a TABOO breaker because it wasn't fun for me to write nor to write about and shouldn't be fun for the average reader to read — unless he, she or it is an average type slob!

The final TABOO is self-evident. Like Frederik Pohl. I believe any story ought to be self-explanatory to the reader, not resting on the need for long-winded rationalizations by the writer, plus paragraphs explaining the writer. By that standard, this story also breaks a publishing TABOO, for the explanation has turned out to be longer than the story which it pretends to explain.

The best I can say about IITYOU, then, is, if it sees the light of the publishing world and if you read it and if I collect the cash for it, it's a great big HEE-HAW from I to you!



Editor's Note. the author didn't get any cash for it. Therefore, he is cut off in mid-HEE.



MONOLOG ANNEX ++++++

- + The Summer SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB selections for 1970 are Sea-Horse in the Sky by Edmund Cooper (\$1.49), and Neanderthal Planet by Brian W. Aldiss (\$1.49). Neanderthal Planet is a collection of four novellas, none of which has ever been published in this country.
- + The August 1970 SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB selections will be Downward to the Earth, a novel by Robert Silverberg, and The Last Hurrah of the Golden Horde, a collection of 18 stories by Norman Spinrad. Both books are coming out first in SF Book Club editions. Later the Silverberg will be issued by NAL and the Spinrad by Avon. Both books will carry a \$1.49 club price.



NOISE LEVEL • john brunner

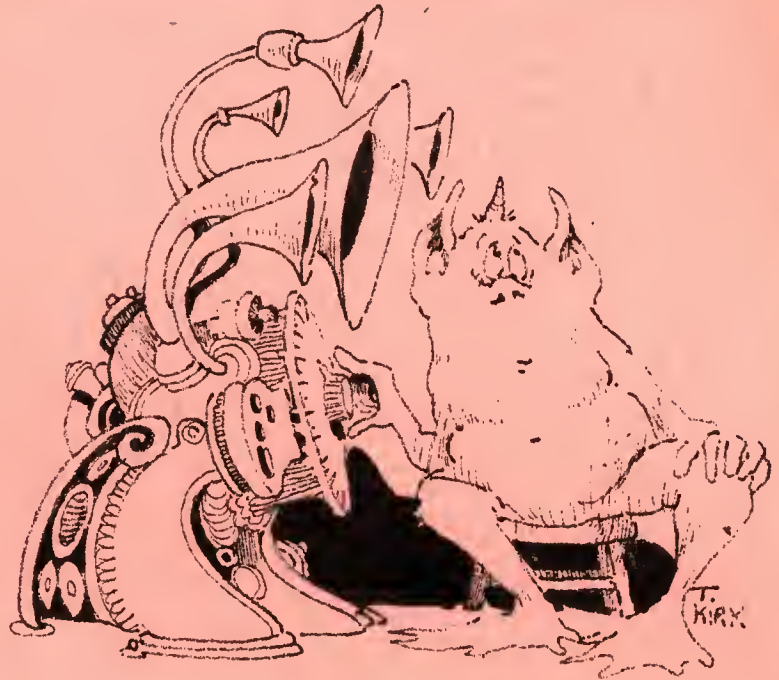
a column

A discussion of *Barefoot in the Head* by
Brian Aldiss (Doubleday, \$4.95 - Faber, 30/-)

Having read those sections of this book which have been appearing in somewhat different form in *NEW WORLDS* (although I missed the first except of all in *IMPULSE*), I believed I knew what the primary theme would prove to be - in short, "what the book was about". Brian seemed to be dramatising, with perhaps less than perfect assurance (but that in view of the complexity of the material he was grappling with was inevitable and possibly even advantageous), the crisis of situational uncertainty, the temporal culture-shock, afflicting us in this age of paradox: this age which has built a pyramid whose base consists in starving millions and whose apex is beyond the moon, the actualisation of the ambitions of the builders of Babel. (Must we then suffer a second confusion of tongues? One fears so; one so often does not understand oneself these days.)

But this is not what the book is "about", after all. That theme is certainly there; it is not however predominant. Instead, the pivot of the argument turns on the question of "reality", if any, in the mystical sense. It is much influenced by Ouspensky and Gurdjieff, teachers who - I must be candid - strike me as being as shallow as, say, Hoerbigier and Blavatsky, and infinitely less relevant to contemporary western man than the Buddha, Patanjali and the Masters of Zen, although their occasionally spectacular simplicism is incontestably appealing to those who are elsewhere obtaining dusty, rather than shiny, answers.

As a leitmotiflich metaphor, the invocation of Ouspenskyian concepts does adapt very readily to the action of the book: to (employing an old-fashioned term) its plot. The latter may be summarised by saying that a Serb who has adopted the name of Charteris after his favorite English author finds his way to Britain following a war fought with psychedelic drugs, which has "dislocated" (apt word) society in most of the advanced countries. He loses so much of his own identity that he becomes a blank plate upon which a Messiah-personality appropriate to the times can be imprinted, a Messiah who will lead not precisely a crusade but a migration back across the smash-and-grab motorways of the continent preaching a new doctrine of acceptance of polyvalent realities. During the course of the journey he is involved with various women, with aides and rivals, with a super-movie producer and a German policeman cut off from Headquarters who admits to running his local force as a



private army. (I'll make no attempt to summarise the climax; it would spoil your reading of one of the book's most effective passages.)

The presentation grows more fragmentary as the novel proceeds, developing out of the relatively plain narration of the opening towards a complex, highly associative, quasi-Joycean prose from the middle onward. Each section is followed by a group of poems which often refer specifically to characters in the story and mostly would not stand apart from it. This is therefore, to borrow a term I recently learned from Jim Blish and which seems to me very useful, a "novel of apparatus", like *The Demolished Man*, *The Einstein Intersection* or my own *Stand on Zanzibar*: a somewhat loosely defined form that appears to have generated a good number of exceptionally successful works in the field.

Given this; given also the structurally reinforcing metaphors derived from Ouspensky alluded to above; given the fluid nature of the borderline between past and future in this age of paradox which constitutes one of this book's key premises and which impressed me greatly when I read the excerpts in *NEW WORLDS*; given, finally, Brian's accepted stature as an author...

Why does the total impact disappoint?

There seems to me to be two contributory factors. The less significant inheres in that portion of the argument which is relevant to the action *per se* (for example, that which concerns Charteris's relationships with his women). An element of external reference appears to obtrude occasionally,



conveying the impression
of special pleading. In
other words, there is the
feeling that the event being

explained, justified or put in perspective is not the event in the book, but some other outside it: conceivably a personal experience, equally likely a situation noted from life and incompletely digested into the philosophy of the novel. (Other items "noted from life" are admirably incorporated; the personal geographical observations are sharp and clever. Nor is the fact that occasional literals blunt the effect of the early verbal tropes particularly important. The happy invention "quicksilver" on page 16 comes over well, and it builds from there.)

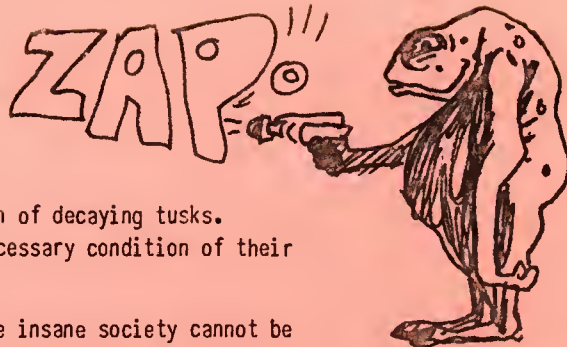
Far more important, though, is a matter which will require some initial parameters to be set before defining it. Perhaps I may take as my starting-point a comment on the front flap of the jacket:

"Brian Aldiss... has, in his latest book, gone far beyond the conventional territories of SF..."

Well - stylistically, maybe (though with what success is a question I'll take up later). Thematically, in one crucial sense, apparently no. This book is on the way to a wrong future, as non-relevant though not as infuriating as those of *ANALOG*: a future shaped by the obsolete past and conditioned by information garnered at second hand which prior to its reception at the auctorial sensorium had been selectively pre-filtered. Not possessing the vitality due to the direct impact of contemporary events, the material was not strong enough to impede the growth of those aforementioned divagations excrescent from the progress of the work.

Or perhaps one should say not so much a "wrong future" as one deriving from assumptions too shallowly rooted in the present to be convincingly viable. As well as being an age of paradox, ours is an age of fad and fashion, not merely in dress and favourite colours for cars, but in taste, in thinking, in preferred schools of philosophy... Yet these cycles in which fashion moves are not what they might appear, the stormy waves of a grand public chaos; on the contrary, they are symptomatic of a conformist urge towards a hypothetical "self-expression" which will yet meet with mass approval from one's localised subculture.

From this illusion of chaos the contemporary western intellectual has had the effrontery to assert that society is going insane. But the anarchy of insanity is incredible; it is a paradox which a later species may achieve, but not mankind. Almost all non-intellectual creatures are sane, bar such anomalies as musth elephants driven mad



by the pain of decaying tusks.
It is a necessary condition of their survival.

No, the insane society cannot be anarchical. Its aberrance rather consists in the infinitesimally systematised delusions of paranoia - indeed, we have had demonstrations of this possibility in the simplistic teachings of Hoerbiger and of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and other experts in Rassenwissenschaft beloved by the Nazis.

Here, therefore, Brian is attempting a multiplication of incommensurables, the impossibility of which is implicitly recognised in the variety of forms employed to advance the argument. (In this respect Ballard's projections of disintegrating societies are superior, in that they centre on protagonists who have never been sufficiently rewarded by what is decaying to feel it worth mounting a rescue operation.)

The outcome is not a projection of a world in which the currency of sanity and reason is debased, but rather a reflection of the puzzlement felt by a reasonable man confronted by an obviously functioning society - broken-backed, but hobbling along - whose technique of achieving viability is not apparent and seemingly cannot be communicated to those who stand detached from it. One might as well ask the pan-handler on the corner of St. Mark's Place begging from passers-by nearly as broke as he is to support an evil habit what his motive is for survival. He has one, but it's not yours.

One sees a recognition of the process which is actually at work peering through the dense text of this book in certain exceptionally effective sections: for instance, on pages 127-8 where the razing of the old to make way for the new is treated in terms that suggest the succession of geological strata, but the Joycean layering technique applied to the language of the book does not - for me at least - sustain the vitality of these isolated insights.

I would propose a possible explanation for this.

What made Joyce's prose so rewarding was his polymath's grasp of culture on uncountable simultaneous levels, unmatched even by the man who is probably the greatest living pattern-maker, Graves. If one is to attempt this layering, this multiple stratification, this condensation of scores of meanings into a shared mode of expression, then one must not above all be concerned with the transient present. Joyce deliberately set Ulysses on a past day in a past year, and Finnegans Wake takes place on every night and all... as one might say.

Moreover he was mining the riches of eleven languages that I can recall offhand to create his sense of universal contemporaneity. Here we have, approximately, one-plus-bits-of-some.

Now one must grant that our sense of the immanence of the past has diminished - we no longer look up to Caesar or King Arthur as childhood idols. Contradictorily, however, our coexistence with the past is greater than ever before, and our direct daily experience of it would have been inconceivable even to our grandfathers. (What would Master Geoffrey have thought of the TV adaptation of the Canterbury Tales?)

For this reason, the application of Joycean linguistic compaction to the material of this book seems inappropriate. It was evolved by its originator to express precisely that direct experience of the past which the twentieth century for the first time offers us. Here, on the other hand, we have a society specifically portrayed as deprived of its past apart from the distorted shadows of personal memory and a few isolated - virtually symbolic - strands of Ouspenskian teaching... which might at a stretch be subsumed under the same category, since they are recalled by Charteris. (This compression into a mere present is repeatedly stressed throughout the novel, most notably in Angeline's reaction to the murder of her husband by Charteris who then becomes her lover; instantly, the event belongs to the dead past.) The complex punning of Joyce's world is that of a world in which a man is aware, without having time to verbalize the fact, that "that reminds me of" ... anything from

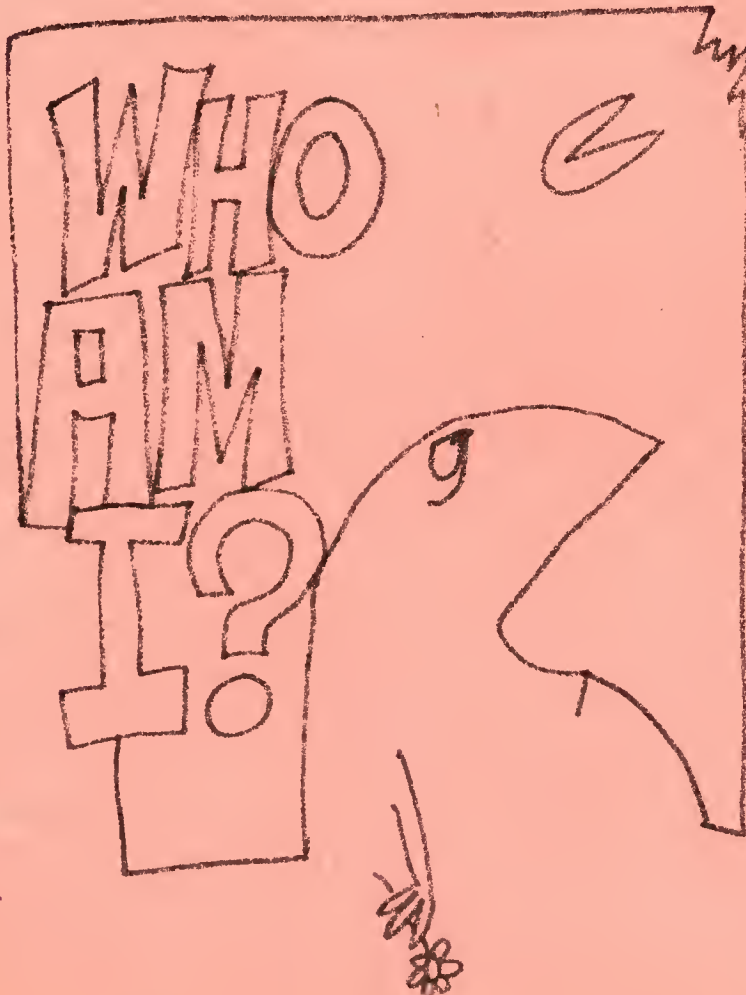
the Epic of Gilgamesh to this morning's DAILY MIRROR.

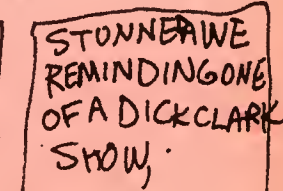
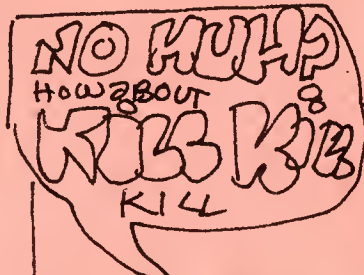
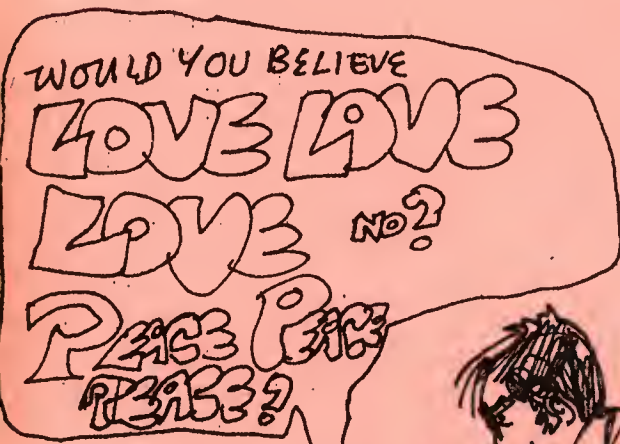
And, inasmuch as it is Joycean, the language of this book is therefore not that of the given situation, but the language of the outside observer who cannot rid himself of the conviction that "they're all mad bar thee and me" - thee: reader.

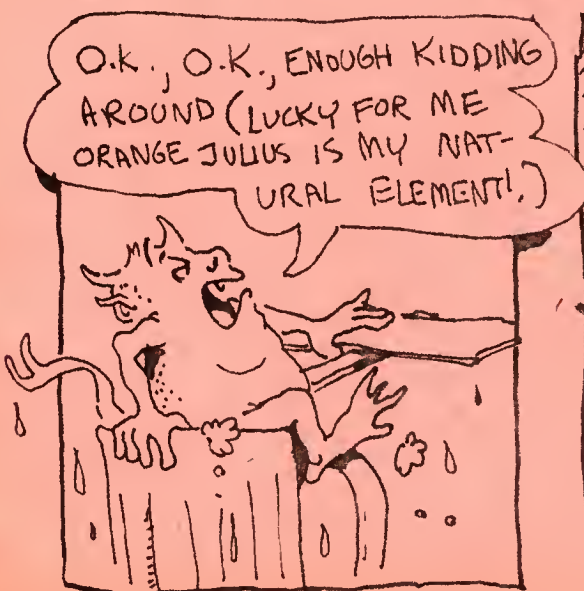
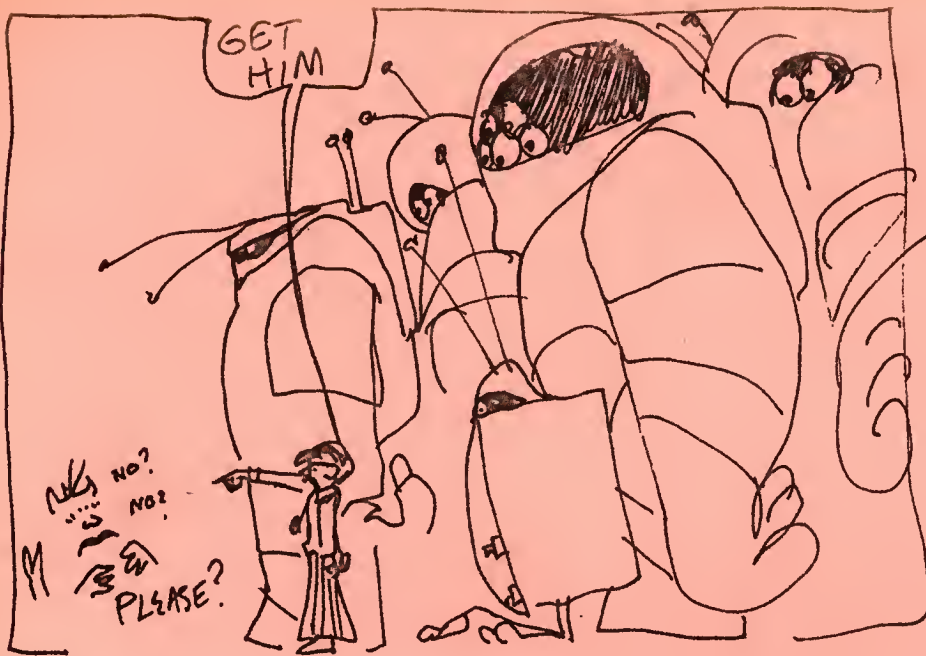
In passing, a probably unanswerable question. What language would be fitted to these premises? Perhaps the compulsively echolalic jargon of the schizophrenic? (The echolalia we have here is reasoned rather than reacted.) But the enormously efflorescent tree of verbiage that would entail would probably mean that a book this size might contain a single anti-conversation, bulked out by chapters explaining why speaker B had a wholly different reaction to the last remark from what speaker A intended. Accordingly it would almost certainly prove unpublishable even if (which is unlikely) it proved writable.

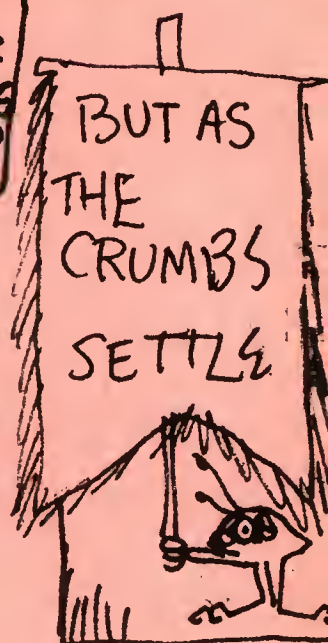
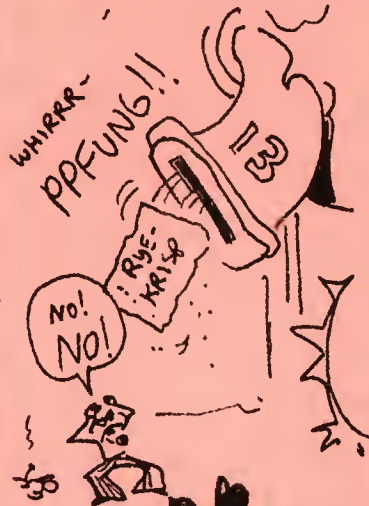
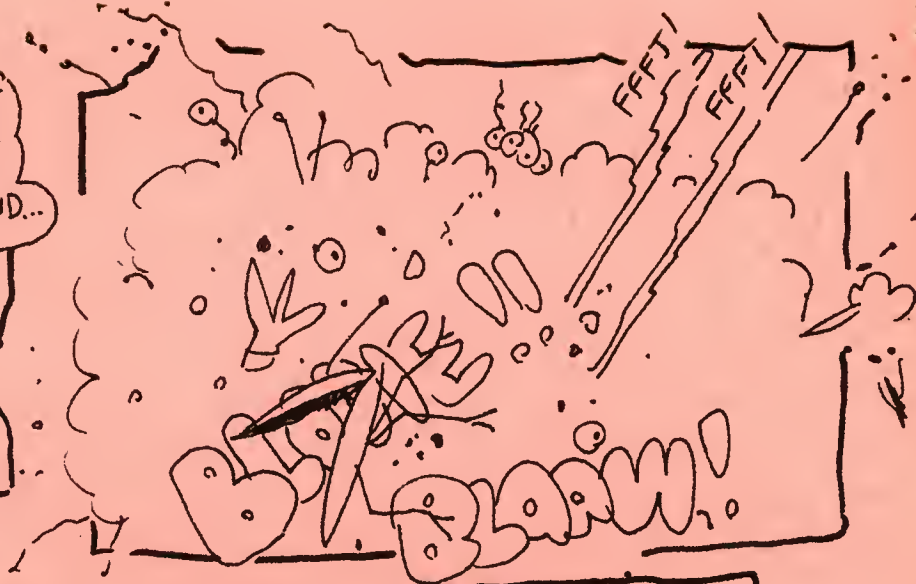
Granted that the above assertions are correct, then this book has been done an injustice by the blurb writer. It is not a case of a writer going "far beyond the conventional territories of SF". Rather, it is a case of a writer who has explored the territories of SF coming home to the present-day world (which still enjoys our thousand-generation-deep appreciation of the past) and attempting to communicate certain intensely-felt responses to the image of the contemporary environment. It is the product of a past-rooted synthesist concerned to unify, correlate and interpret, not of someone who is content to accept and himself experience the actual fragmentation, overlaid simultaneity and inexhaustible paradoxicality of modern times. On the shelves, the Mommas and the Poppas precede Mozart; Burroughs William follows Burroughs Edgar Rice.

Not that this foundation on image should be taken as a condemnation. We do admittedly live - in our heads, whether barefoot or shod - by the guidance of images more than whatever a genuine "reality" may consist in, and judged by that standard this is a book worth, possibly demanding, personal investigation. A slogan has often been shown more powerful than a reasoned line of argument, a koan more stimulating than a sermon, but this does not invalidate the task of the debater and the preacher, any more than Columbus's mistaken belief that he had reached the Indies nullified the consequences that flowed from his return with captive Indians and souvenirs. This is indeed the age of paradox, and it is not inconceivable that the application of an inappropriate literary technique to a major theme should of itself shed fresh light on the contemporary enigma, if only by virtue of what it does not do.



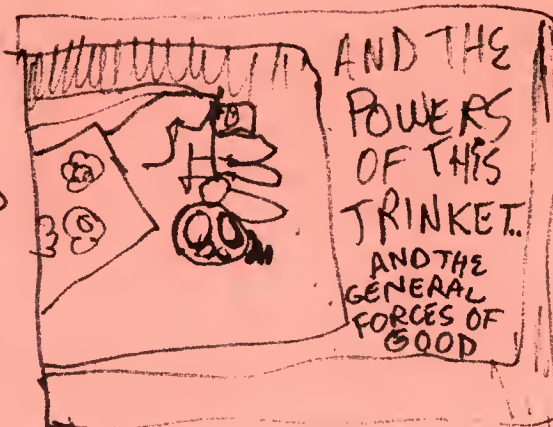
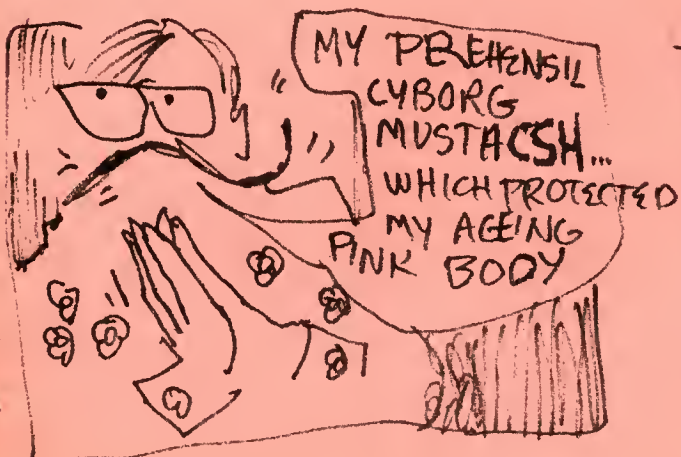








HOW?
HOW?
HOW?



BUT ENOUGH HAS BEEN
MADE OF THIS... NO MORE
FOOLING AROUND...

GEIS, THIS
WILL MAKE YOUR
LETTER COL-
LOOK TAME...



AS FOR THIS
SILLY MACHINE!
HA JUST AS I
SUSPECTED



NUTCULTS

SHUDDER

KICK

BLE



IT'S A
LOOK LIKE
POWDERED JULIUS

"GORK!"

"POOK!"



NOW FOR
YOU... (PROBABLY
HANGS AROUND DICK CLARK

GASP



LOOK

GREEN



CLICK

FEED ME, I WANT
DRAGON
I WANT
DRAGON

ASPECIAL
GENETICALLY
ALTERED

ST. LOUIS
HOTEL

COCK ROACH

WITH

A FEW ELEVATOR
OPERATOR
GENES
INCLUDED

PROGRAMMED
TO EAT ORANGE
FLAVORED
WEST COAST
DRAGONS

SIC'EM, (CRAZY
NUT CULTS
SURFER
HIPPIE WERDOOS

REALIZE I WILL
ALWAYS WIN.
MY STRENGTH IS
AS THE STRENGTH
OF 10 BECAUSE
MY HEART IS
PURE

NOT
THAT
GASP! SHUDDER

PANIC
PLEASE

IN THE NAME OF
HUMANITY

CAN THE WIERD
WEST COAST
SURVIVE?

TO BE CONTINUED

M.B.

Who's Afraid of Philip K. Dick?

I'm told Edward Albee entitled his masterpiece "Virginia Wolf" because, in her later years, Miss Wolf had difficulty distinguishing reality from illusion, and that was what the play was all about. What reality/what illusion is not Albee's thematic territory exclusively, but the growing preoccupation of many major and minor writers. Gunter Grass, in his magnificent surrealistic exercise, The Tin Drum, blended reality and illusion for a portrait of a contemporary world which defied traditional realism. Vladimir Nabokov, whose whimsical monsters are only now coming into recognition, also blends the two in a poetic stew that is a visionary statement of the illusion of being human. John Cheever, whose NEW YORKER prose and best-seller status deprives him of proper appreciation, revels in the multiple realities of middle class suburban existence. Among them is Philip K. Dick, who has cherished and nurtured this theme throughout his career and is its best practitioner in the SF field.

Dick's is the literature of anxiety. Perhaps, more the literature of modern man than the majority of his contemporaries, mainstream or SF. It is not a psychotic world for the illusions he inflicts are not fantasies; in fact, they are contesting realities. His anxiety — his conflict between two realities: the intellectual of the moral and philosophical traditions, and the emotional — is the natural and endemic condition of his fictional people, place and time. His backgrounds assume a bland existence, his mood disdains sensationalism, and an air of realism pervades his work into his most bizarre episodes.

His world exists on many planes. There are no rules, divine or human, no tangibles that are unquestionable, no anything but the fact that of its multiple existence, which is itself debatable. The only real thing in Dick's work is illusion, plus the nothingness, the meaninglessness, of reality. His characters themselves are illusions, existing superficially, thinking, feeling, but lacking any genuine substance, for there is no genuine anything. They are drifters, who believe they know where they are going, anxious, confused, lonely, perched on the edge of an abyss^{into}, which Dick plunges them in novel after novel.

Dick's enthusiasm for Taoism, the I Ching, and far eastern philosophy is not playful, but dead serious. At least in his fiction. There is being, but only in the cosmic sense. All things exist only in relation to their cosmic being. Everything else is illusion and worthy of avoidance if not rejection.

This is presumptuous on my part to offer any explanation of Dick's philosophy, for so much of it lies beneath the surface of his work or in his head. It could probably fill a volume alone if he wanted to write it. He may or may not believe any of it, but it is there.

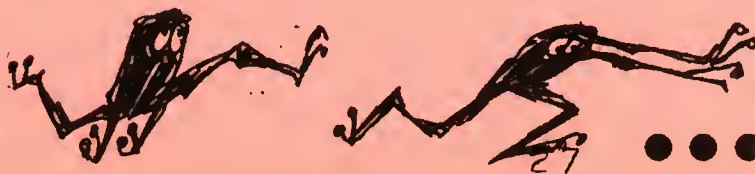
I'm told Dick is very funny. Satire, farce, jokes are contained throughout his work, but I'm not amused. His world is frightening. It is a world, without gods or human values, based on more than superstition and arrogant human presumptions, that does not exist but exists anyway. A world, parallel, psychic, social, moral, and illusionary, where not even death is real.

He seems to say, "Nothing matters, you know. The hell with it."

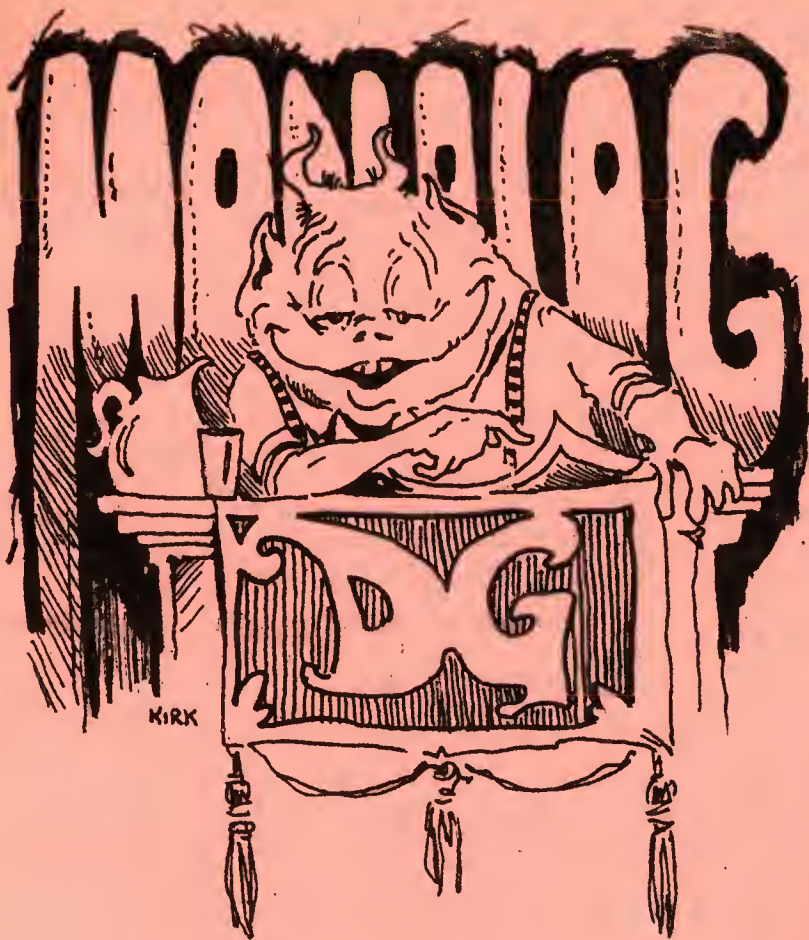
Dick resists categorizing. It is difficult to keep him in mind when discussing other SF writers, for he is unique. His style, his thrust, is commercial, which is why it is so easy to underestimate him. His characters are good, but spiritually repetitious in that they all seem hung on the same Christmas tree the day following the abdication of Christ. His backgrounds run from adequate to fascinating. He is fine at describing much by suggesting very little. His plots are among the most skillful in SF. He gets out of impossible situations with astounding agility. Unfortunately, he is often clumsy in prose, and especially in beginnings, which drop the reader unexpectedly into the midst of his characters' lives and force him to race to catch up before the plot is underway.

As much as I respect and enjoy his books, I find Dick unsatisfying. He lacks compassion. There is no fun and games in the misery and terror of his protagonists, nothing amusing about the bleak human dilemma he delineates, but Dick seems to feel nothing for them or his kind. I wonder if he is not a little contemptuous: look how silly and stupid everything is

However, Dick's work is among the most potent and significant in SF. Consistently, it is a personal statement of high quality and originality. If ever fans offer a Nobel Prize for a writer's life work, I vote Dick should be the first recipient.



●●●● Paul Walker



the Messiah"...an original screenplay by Lee Kal-chiem concerning a Jewish youth from the Bronx who believes he is "the chosen one" sent to bring peace to the world

"Dark Shadows", the afternoon TV serial about a brooding mansion on the coast of Maine and its 175 year old family will be filmed as a movie beginning in April, in New York.

Filming on A Clockwork Orange (a black comedy treatment of teenage violence in a futuristic welfare society) will start late this summer in London.

Thank you, somebody. Vas dot you, Fred??

+ LOCUS mentioned recently that the likely TAFF candidates are shaping up as Bill Rotsler, Charlie Brown and Elliot Shorter.

+ Laurence E. Dalton, 2418 Graham Av. #2, Redondo Beach, Cal. 90278, states: "I am interested in contacting unpublished writers who are "New Wave" oriented."

+ PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY for Feb. 9, 1970, yields these bits of info from an article titled "The Paperback Best Sellers of the Year 1969":

"Fantasy did well, especially among college age readers, who are still carrying Tolkien to classes. supplemented by The Little Prince and Frank Herbert's Dune, a new science-fantasy classic; and more and more under-30 readers are "grokking"

Stranger in a Strange Land."

"Ace reports that its top seller was the reprint of the aforementioned Dune, a Nebula Award winner."

"Ballantine Books sold 365,895 copies of J. R. R. Tolkien's The Two Towers in 1969. Why this middle volume of the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy should have outsold the other two (The Fellowship of the Ring, 294,364 and The Return of the King, 323,763) is a mystery, but when those figures are combined with those of the other two Ballantine Tolkien titles, The Hobbit, 321,126, and Smith of Wooten Major, Farmer Giles of Ham, 203,147, the mystery takes on very profitable overtones."

"Ballantine's other single major best seller was Appointment on the Moon: The Inside Story of America's Space Venture by Richard S. Lewis (321,582).

"Berkley's biggest seller in 1969 was Robert A. Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land, a fantasy novel that is no newcomer but one that has had a recent and sudden huge success among students of high school and college age."

Thanks to Fred Patten for the above PW material.

+ Lancer announces INFINITY TWO. Stories wanted to 10,000 words; longer please query. Rates 2-4¢ a word. Deadlines for submissions: May 1, 1970. Send mss. to Robert Hoskins, Infinity Two, Lancer Books, Inc., 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

+ I would ask all subscribers and others who receive SFR to please send me their change-of-address if and when they move. Having to pay 10¢ return postage, 10¢ for your forwarding address, and another ten cents to re-mail a copy of SFR to a thoughtless fan drives me up the wall. I see black spots and am not responsible for my actions. Last time I ran over a little old lady with my bicycle. Time before that I bellowed, CHEECH BELDONE at the top of my lungs in the center of Von's at 14th and Wilshire. Fortunately, no one knew what it meant.

If perchance any of you loyal readers should receive a copy of SFR with a page or pages blank or missing, please let me know. I usually have extras. Disloyal readers can go eat chocolate cake melted in hot tomato soup.

+ I have been sending a lot of Rotsler drawings and cartoons to eager fan editors lately, and I wonder if they have his address so as to send him a complimentary copy? He orgies it up at 2925 Hollyridge Dr., Los Angeles, Ca. 90028.

+ Donald R. Benson, Executive Editor at Berkley mentioned in a letter Feb. 5th that a new Heinlein novel was being bid for.

+ Somebody sent me a clip from a recent HOLLYWOOD REPORTER which mentioned that Stanley Kubrick will write, produce and direct A Clockwork Orange.

Also, Warner Brothers will film "Let's Get a Close-Up of

••BOOK REVIEWS••

WORLDS OF THE WALL by C.C. MacApp—Avon V2308, 75¢

I began my apprenticeship for writing when I was 12 years old. It was a novel. Thirteen pages long! The first volume of a trilogy. I was taken in by a kindly master who promptly handed me a broom and said, "Walker, sweep the goddamn floor!" Well, I turned 27 last month, the guts in the shop bought me a vacuum cleaner. Somehow, it did not make reading C.C. MacApp's novel any easier.

I realized by the first chapter that my ambition in life back when I wrote that first novel was to be C.C. MacApp. I realized further that all the writers I knew or had read of all wanted to be C.C. MacApp when they first began. None made it. Some became Tolkeins, others Bradburys, still others E.C. Tubbs. Not one of them made it to where MacApp is today.

Oh, you think I'm putting MacApp down? Not a bit! I loved Worlds of the Wall and would recommend it to every aspiring writer alive, especially those who have been at it as long as I have. Why? It's simple. I started writing because I got too big to play with my box of soldiers anymore. I mean, it just got embarrassing. But I knew I had some kind of bug. I tried to appreciate the adventure of life, travel and so forth, but I could not get the same kick from reality that I got from my own imagination. I started to write the adventures I had once played out.

I think most writers start similarly but quite soon appreciate literary and editorial requirements and wise up. They do not betray their early aspirations; they compromise for the sake of quality and recognition. Others, like me, plod along hacking out our daydreams. Few return to do what they set out to. MacApp did.

This may be my imagination, but Worlds of the Wall is every boy's dream. It is an adventure of a lone Earthman, Zeke Bolivar (what a groovy name!), who comes out of null-space to find himself near a mysterious planet split in two by an enormous black wall. He lands and is marooned on the wrong side. Wandering through sinister swamps and romantic landscapes, he is subsequently enslaved into a galley; forced to hunt the dreaded "gervel"; captured by

pirates; and thrust into combat with the wizards of Cisnaud who send him on a journey to confront the dreaded Boolznum the Mad. Obviously, it is a classic!

What makes it so personally satisfying is that MacApp is only a fair talent. He knows what makes a story sell and puts his commas in the right places, but that's about it. He lacks Tolkein's poetry and Zelazny's wit. He is not as accomplished a craftsman as Jack Vance or as wildly imaginative as van Vogt. In fact, often, especially in the first chapter or two, he is downright 30's-pulp-fiction-awful. And that is the secret of his success!

The reason I wrote that first novel was to take myself on an adventure. I had no interest in readers except myself, but if there were, then I wished to take them along; I wanted them to savor every moment of it, to see wild and beautiful lands, and swash and buckle with everything from BEMs to sorcerers, simultaneously. I did not want to enlighten or educate or even move them. I just wanted to have fun. The writers of sword-and-sorcery and its kin almost always forget the fun part. No matter how good they are they cannot resist a "moment of truth," or a "scientific justification for it all." And right there they mentalize it. Their skill and sensitivity removes the reader to a vantage point where he watches (however impressed) somebody else have adventures. MacApp, as I said, is not that good.

To enjoy MacApp, you have to tolerate him, edit a bit here and there, and adjust to the realization that he means no more than what he says. The simplicity of the story is enviable considering its quality. MacApp has nothing on his mind except the adventure (not even the plot, really). He is in no hurry. The result is a breakdown of the barrier between reader and writer, to give the reader a feeling of full participation in the adventure. I have not had this happen to me since I was twelve or younger.

I am not implying that MacApp is a lousy writer or a great one; he is a lot better than the average S&S scribbler (who is about as bad as a writer can be), but he does need to learn more about his craft, to polish his prose, and to add a greater depth to his characters. When he finally masters these elements I assure you I will not read a goddamn word the trait-



or writes!

—Paul Walker

THE SILENT MULTITUDE by D.G. Compton —Ace 76385, 75¢
SYNTHAJoy —Ace 79450, 60¢

Mr. Compton is assuredly an author to keep your eye on. Unless I miss my guess, he will prove to be very influential on the other British sf writers presently going through a fish-out-of-water stage, and may very well end up in the same league as those (Clarke, Sturgeon, Farmer, Asimov, et.al.) who have shown that "new" ideas and techniques of storytelling, to be successful, must always be imbedded within a story which is deserving of the attention.

The Silent Multitude is the author's second book to be published in the U.S., but since it carries the earliest copyright (British, 1966), I would like to discuss it first. The time is approximately 20 years from now, and the British city of Gloucester, a redesigned and ultramodern city of glass, steel and concrete, is doomed to destruction. Spores drifting down from the skies lodge themselves in granite and slakes lime (used in mortar and cement) which, in short notice, begins to crumble. At least three cities have already been destroyed, and Gloucester, her population fled, now stands in tomblike silence on Christmas Eve, waiting for the first chinks to appear in her stony armour.

Deep in the city's caverns of streets and walks, four people remain, each for a different reason, as witnesses to the final disintegration. "Paper" Smith is an old recluse whose lack of contact with the modern world has left him unaware of the approaching danger; in the Cathedral, Dean Goodliffe delivers his service to an empty church, for unlike his congregation he has been unable to tear himself away from the spiritual side of his nature; Sally Paget is a reporter equipped to take notes and photographs of a great city's death-scene, and, Sim, son of the architect who designed the city, hopes to wrest his identity from the ruins of his father's greatest glory. A final viewpoint is presented with Tug, Paper's free-roaming tomcat whose activities are not curtailed but merely disordered by the disaster which surrounds him.

The crumbling of Gloucester is the allegorical incident that provides a catalyst to the drama of four human lives that begin to move in unexpected new directions as the old, preconceived notions of each person concurrently fall with the structures of cement. Paper's old "combat" wounds — a result of his previous, disastrous marriage which culminated in a dispute with his wife over the morality of artificial insemination — begin to heal in the light of day after festering in the darkness of years. Dean Goodliffe is forced to watch the destruction of the physical tributes to God before fully realizing that God's strength lies within Man himself. Sally and Sim are both intensely interested in the city's downfall, but their ef-

forts to relate to each other are repeatedly thwarted by a wall of preconception that separates them with an almost physical force. If similar to Ballard's "catastrophe" novels, Compton's book at least disposes of the pedantry that has made Ballard's works almost unreadable, and concentrates on the interactions of characters who have depth of feeling and can therefore invoke response from the reader. One scene in particular, where the Dean is reduced to helpless tears as the pinnacle falls from the Cathedral, is an expert emotion-wringer that stands without crutches of sentiment. In dealing with death, destruction and self-sacrifice, the author doesn't attempt to smother his audience with excuses and explanations; instead, he lets things happen as they may, as they would in any non-fictional circumstances, and trusts the reader to believe that people are subject to the caprices of both nature and themselves.

The Silent Multitude is by no means a precedental novel, though it is a good and entertaining one; Synthajoy, on the other hand, is. Balanced, exacting, sensitive to the exigencies of both character development and convincing science-fiction elements, Synthajoy is one of the most rewarding and compelling sf novels of the decade.

In Kingston hospital, Mrs. Thea Cadence is undergoing treatment for a psychotic condition, a treatment which involves the use of Sensitape, a device invented by her husband in which the emotional responses of the human brain can be recorded and played back to others. Thea worked alongside her husband and his assistant, Tony Stech, from discovery through development of this mechanized mecca for millions of the world's humans who, dissatisfied with their own lives, can find any emotional void they wish to fill, from the esthetic needs of music and art to the physical desires of eroticism, satiated with Sensitape or one of its derivatives. Dr. Cadence made a fortune from his invention (mostly from the popularity of Sexitape), and goes on to discover something he calls Synthajoy, the "ultimate" brain stimulation, which Thea thinks "...grew out of our society as organically as the concentration camps had grown out of Nazi Germany" (p. 152). At this point, Dr. Cadence is shot to death, and Thea, tried and sentenced for murder, is placed in the hospital to undergo contrition with the very tapes her husband invented.

Compton has not satisfied himself with writing a mere sf-mystery story, however. A mystery usually only dazzles with the denouement, and a science fiction story often dazzles with its careful societal or technological base, while Synthajoy combines the best of both with a psychological study of madness in which the climax is only a hint of the real beginning. The result is brilliant!

The plot is constructed in a jigsaw fashion that keeps the reader busy as hell fitting pieces into place as soon as they appear, only to discover that the picture he is building is terribly distorted and not at all what he originally thought it would be...and this is quite understandable, since the reader gets the picture through the eyes of a mental patient. As Thea drifts between the fuzzy world of the present, with its Doctor and Nurse (whom Thea insists is her

"wardress"), and the solid but disorganized recollections of the history that brought her to the hospital, the reader becomes so immersed in Thea's point-of-view that, right or wrong, madness or sanity, he is solidly behind her every step of the way. Thea becomes so real that her breath trembles the page and her tears splash across the reader's cheeks; and, when it is too late, the reader also discovers in a moment of true horror that more, much more, of Thea's personality is transmutable.

The author has wisely avoided the lethargic stretches of pseudo-science that mar many novels which hinge upon a new invention, and he has done it believably since Thea's person would hardly be aware of the technical side of the matter. The most stunning achievement of the book, however, is not the inventive, captivating plot but the brilliant cast of characters seen from a single viewpoint. The bizarre menage a trois involving Dr. Cadence, Thea and Tony, is not a mere author's excursion to liven up a sagging pace; it is a development that comes into existence because of the characters, not for them. If you have ever been ill and only partially receptive to the activities around you, you will immediately identify with Thea as she seeks to escape into dreams, away from her hospital surroundings. There is even a seemingly minor subplot woven throughout, as Thea struggles to convince her nurse that she is being subjected to "guilt" rather than "contrition" tapes, which gathers importance as the story begins to coalesce with a terrifying clarity. And there are revelations made along the way which come with such shocking suddenness that the reader is almost forced to stop and catch his breath while he rearranges his thoughts — exempli gratia: Thea recalls her first sexual experience with her husband, ending with a heated burst, "And the bloody fucking bastard cheated her. Cheated her all the shitty way." (p: 93) This is shock, yes, but not gratuitous shock. I have nothing but kudos for Mr. Compton, who has written a valuable dissection of the human psyche in a science fiction novel that should last for a long, long time.

—Richard Delap



A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE by Peter S. Beagle—Ballantine 01502, 95¢

Let's face it. If you're a normal person, death is not one of your favorite subjects. Although at first reading Beagle's masterpiece seems to be about death, it is not. It is about life and one man's finding it.

Picture this: Rebeck, living alone in a cemetery for 19 years, thinking he doesn't fit "outside", afraid to face the real world, instead literally living with the dead until he isn't sure himself if he is alive or dead or either.

A raven that talks, supplying Rebeck with food and argumentative company. Mrs. Klapper, the stereotyped Jewish lady who befriends Rebeck, and with help she convinces him to leave his mausoleum.

And a cast of thousands that didn't cost Rebeck a cent. They're all dead. Especially Michael and Laura, who help Mrs. Klapper persuade Rebeck to leave.

One flaw: Michael is a Catholic who committed suicide, and his grave is re-dug and he is moved. As I understand it, this wasn't a Catholic cemetery (or Mrs. Klapper's husband Morris couldn't have been buried there). So Beagle must have sacrificed technicality for plot, as Michael's removal forces the spirits of he and Laura to leave the cemetery.

As I said, a book about life.

—Dave Burton



THE BLUE STAR by Fletcher Pratt Ballantine 01602, 95¢

Ballantine has been publishing what they call adult fantasy (a term I dislike, for it reminds me of "adult" westerns) for some time. Hereafter, apparently, such books will be introduced by Lin Carter and will bear the head of a unicorn as brand of the herd.

Packaging trivia aside, Pratt's novel is set in a parallel world where witches are real and magic works. The Harold Shea series on which Mr. Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp collaborated were notable for limiting the operation of magic and defining the natural laws of its operation. In this novel, Pratt may have intended to proceed further in this direction and write a fantasy in which magic was limited to a few, specific functions. A witch can control the minds of ordinary individuals and her husband, when he is carrying her blue star

jewel, can read the mind of someone into whose eyes he looks. Aside from burning of tablecloths, that's about it. The author has fenced in the magic so closely as to squeeze the life out of it and, although the Art (as magic is known in the world of the Blue Star) has weight in several crucial turnings of the story, the net result is that of a historical novel with a few frills.

Evaluating this novel is difficult, for its components, taken individually, are hard to fault. The dialog is inventively fashioned and often witty, the plot is unpredictable and unwinds in an unpredictable but logical way, and the two main characters are real and interesting in a touchingly pathetic way. I worried about them, though that is not quite the same thing as caring about them. It has "interesting turns of phrase," says L. Sprague de Camp. That it does.

Consequently, I am at a loss to explain my reaction to the book: I was bored numb by it.

Excellent though the parts appear to be, the aggregate book is stultifying. I have found Fletcher Pratt's sf to be less than spellbinding (Double Jeopardy being the worst example), but those stories showed no sign of the care that has apparently been lavished upon The Blue Star.

I certainly can't recommend it, but I suspect that the way my mind works has a great deal to do with my reaction. Others may enjoy it.

—Hank Davis



THE SALIVA TREE AND OTHER STRANGE GROWTHS by Brian Aldiss—Sphere 10839, 5/-

One of the annoying facets of sf publishing concerns prolific British short story writers like Aldiss and Ballard. The contents of their American and British collections differ so widely that a complete works must include those from both countries, whatever the overlap. Most of the stories are available on both shores but there are always some left out of any book on one side. Of the ten stories in the current book, "Legends of Smith's Burst" is included in Starswarm (Signet) and "Danger: Religion!" will be available in Neanderthal Planet and other stories (Avon, January). The title story, as an award winner, is to be found in the Damon Knight-edited Nebula Award Stories (Pocket Books).

For all of Aldiss' novels, a good half of his reputation must stand on his shorter fiction. And though "The

Saliva Tree", eighty pages long here, is technically a novel, I still classify this as short fiction. As such, it is a major work in Aldiss' total output. (eg. "Flowers for Algernon" is a major short story, but a minor novel.) A quiet farm in turn of the century England is visited by a pair of ET's. They make the farm prosper, with the aim of eventually devouring the entire animal and human population. The seeds of several of H.G. Wells' tales appear here and the viewpoint character corresponds with Wells. It is told in a quiet Wellsian idiom that is generally unobtrusive and wholly appropriate.

"Legends of Smith's Burst" tells of a crazy world inside a nebula created out of the collision of masses of matter and anti-matter. It's a wonderful story but I might note that the text has been changed from that in Starswarm. This version is much more wordy and awkward.

Padding, it's called. There is also a lot added to "The Saliva Tree" but that isn't hurt as much. The atmosphere there is intensified by further description. In "Legends" words and phrases are changed to more complicated, less striking ones.

"Danger: Religion!" is an alternate worlds story. The hero leaves his post-atomic-war Earth for a more peaceful one. But the alternate is totally church dominated and facing a revolt by its large slave class. Between the action and the moral questions it's an above average Aldiss story.

"The Source" might be described as a search for the end of the circle. Universe-ranging "Seekers" stop off on an Earth returned to the primitive.

They are looking for "man's greatest achievement" and only the leader solves the problem: by getting out of the "flatland" and exercising the third dimension. Theme aside, though, the story limps.

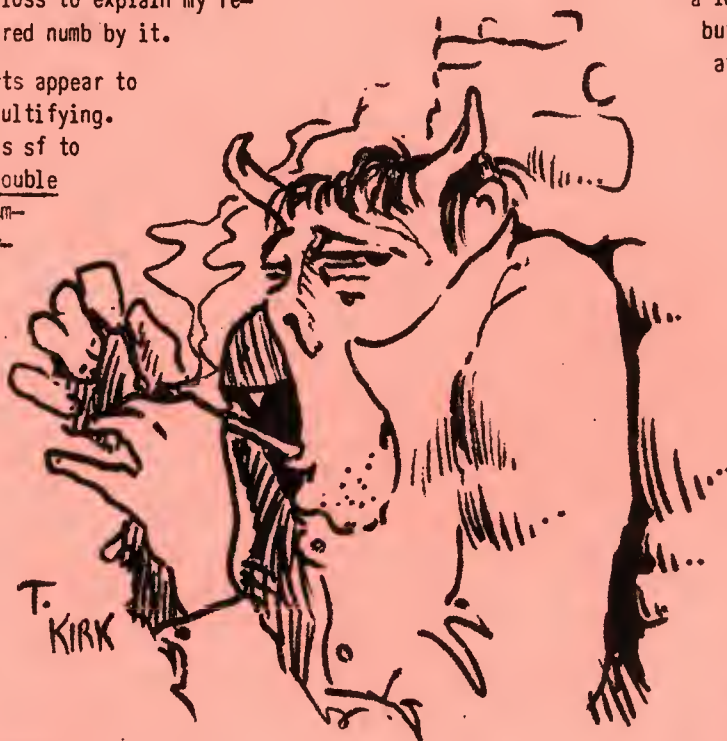
None of the remaining stories are sf. There are three detective shorts, a historical piece, a parable and a light story about an sf writer. All are well done and enjoyable.

—Berry Gillam



NIGHTFALL AND OTHER STORIES by Isaac Asimov—Doubleday, \$5.95

This is an anthology of the best short fiction by Isaac Asimov during his thirty-year career. Since most of the stor-



ies appeared in the leading prozines, many of them should be familiar to longtime fans. In my case (and, I suspect, that of other recent fans), most of the stories are new, so the book comes as a welcome addition to my library.

There are 20 stories, 7 of them novelettes, the rest short stories. It's interesting that all of the novelettes are pre-1957, which indicates just how serious the lack of Asimov science fiction has become in recent years. While the short stories in the collection are generally enjoyable, it is the novelettes which make the book as good as it is.

"Nightfall" is probably the best known Asimov short work, and it is the story that is intended to sell the book. All of you are probably familiar with this story of eternal daylight. It is worth saying, though, that "Nightfall", fine as it is, is not the best story in the book.

The best story comes down to a choice between "Hostess" and "Breeds There a Man?" Both are scientific theory stories but take different approaches. "Hostess" presents the idea of a parasitic race of pure energy that inhabits the bodies of humans, and over the eons has formed a symbiotic relationship with them. The effect of this symbiosis is as well as the discovery of the existence of the energy beings makes this story read almost like one of Asimov's mysteries.

"Breeds There a Man?" is a much more low-key story, along the 'we are property' lines. Only in this case we are merely bacteria. The problem is that we don't know of the existence of our host race, and they are using us for experiments. One of their experiments involves us destroying ourselves by nuclear war. Superb.

There are other fine stories in the book, notably "C-Chute", a study of what makes a man a hero; "In a Good Cause", a political story of the different approaches used by different men to achieve the same ends; "Sally", "Green Patches", "Strikebreaker" and "What a Beautiful Day" are also far better than average.

I recommend this book to everyone.

—Bob Sabella



DAUGHTERS OF EARTH by Judith Merrill—Doubleday, \$4.95

As reviewers have frequently remarked, there is a cloying women's magazine quality about the fiction of Judith Merrill, as predictable and unvarying as the damp smell of diapers wafting out of the basement laundry room of a Long Island co-op. Merrill is the epitome of the lady SF writer:

most of her major characters are female, human and emotional elements are central in a soap operaish sort of way, and she has a tendency to drown a chapter or scene in an outpouring of the prosaic. This approach does, however, give Judith Merrill and two or three other female sf writers the ability to look at human situations and inter-personal relationships from a perspective unique to the genre, a genre usually dominated by men and women who write like men. When the approach works (or, in the modern parlance, "grooves"), it produces some memorable stories. When it doesn't work, which is most of the time, it results in Woman's Day-type hack work with a couple of rocket ships and an atmosphere dome thrown in.

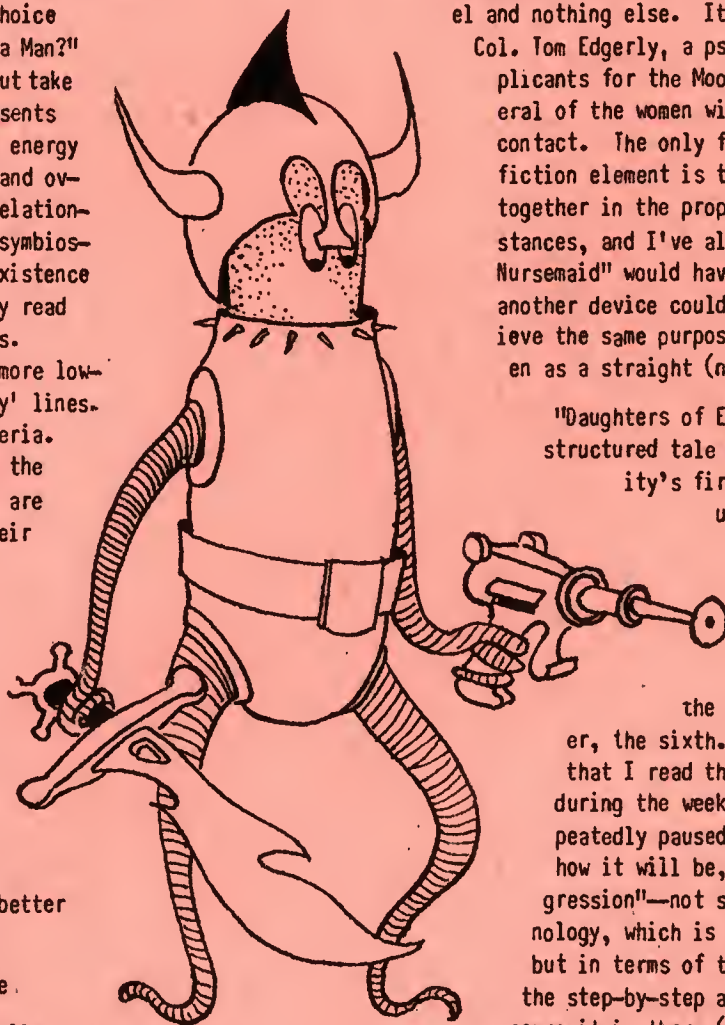
The three novels (actually novellas) collected under one cover in Daughters of Earth are in an ascending order of worth, beginning with "Project Nursemaid", a flat piece distinguished by an interesting idea about space travel and nothing else. It is a character study of Col. Tom Edgerly, a psychologist screening applicants for the Moon Base project, and several of the women with whom he comes into contact. The only function of the science fiction element is to bring the characters together in the proper psychological circumstances, and I've always felt that "Project Nursemaid" would have made a better story if another device could have been found to achieve the same purpose and it had been written as a straight (non-sf) novella.

"Daughters of Earth" is a curiously structured tale which chronicles humanity's first few steps into the universe by concentrating on six women in direct line of descent, the story being told in the form of a letter from

the fourth to her granddaughter, the sixth. It is worth noting that I read this part of the trilogy during the week of Apollo 11, and repeatedly paused to think, "Yes, this is how it will be, this is the logical progression"—not so much in terms of technology, which is sparsely detailed here, but in terms of the feeling of the thing, the step-by-step advance Out There just because it is there (like Mt. Everest), the constant mixture of fear, dedication and

excitement. Within "Daughters of Earth" there is also another story, taking place wholly in the lifetime of the letter-writer, of mankind's first contact with another sentient life form. The physiology of the aliens is well-drawn; the remainder of the tale is adequate, but not exceptional, and missed some opportunities in the broader realm because Miss Merrill was focusing almost entirely on the character of Emma.

The third novella, "Homecalling", is a tour de force and



the undoubted gem of this volume. The basic plot is simple enough: a spaceship crash lands on an unknown planet, the adults on board are killed and the only survivors are two children, an 8½-year-old girl and her little brother. The planet on which they are marooned has as its dominant life form an intelligent, telepathic species physically and socially resembling *permites*. On this framework, Judith Merrill creates a brilliant tapestry of ideas, motivation and emotions. "Homecalling" is exceptional, first, because the human heroine is eight years old going on nine, and she is consistently so. This is difficult to do; generally, such a child hero is not believable as a child (e.g., in *Rite of Passage*, where Mia Haverro was—psychologically—12 going on 25). The second exceptional element is that, contrary to nearly every author who has dealt with such a life form, Merrill does not make the "termites" soulless and evil and cruel. On the contrary, they are persons, except for the lower types bred to perform certain specialized tasks. The social order is not held up as a horrible example; it just is, and within its limitations the aliens are as "human" as we are...and perhaps more ethical. Third, there is the characterization of Daydanda, the Lady of the Household (queen "termite"), one of the two viewpoint characters (Deborah, the child, is the other). A substantial part of "Homecalling" involves the efforts of Daydanda, an unusually independent, open-minded lady, to understand the strange ship and its inhabitants. This is a fascinating series of short chapters, done beautifully; Daydanda's torturous attempts to interpret each new fact and observation in terms of her world's frame of reference serve to make her come alive as one of the most sympathetic "bugs" in science fiction history. The structure of "Homecalling" consists of many short sections, switching back and forth between viewpoint characters, a device Merrill has used before (in, for example, "The Tomorrow People"). It works well, except in Chapter XVI, where she tells the story simultaneously from both viewpoints in double columns. That experiment doesn't work, nor could it, for the simple reason that it's impossible to read both at the same time, which would be necessary in order to get the effect intended. The result of this attempt to translate a cinematic device (split screen) to the printed page is merely annoying. The only other criticism to be offered of "Homecalling" is that the novella might have been more powerful had the ending been tragic—that is, had the difficulties of communication between two such radically different beings ultimately led to Daydanda killing Deborah, or vice versa. As it stands, the ending is a bit flabby. "Homecalling" remains, though, the finest thing by Judith Merrill that I've ever read.



—Ted Pauls

STAR NAMES: THEIR LORE AND MEANING by Richard Hinkley Allen
—Dover, \$2.50

This book, originally published in 1899, was reprinted in 1963. While its astronomy is a bit out of date, the

detailed accounts of ancient star lore are most interesting. Allen lists the 88 generally recognized constellations in alphabetical order, along with a number which were proposed at one time or another during the 17th-19th centuries but did not achieve general recognition. He lists a great number of names for the constellations and their principal stars, from Egyptian, Euphratean, Greek, and principally Arabic sources. (The term "Arabic" is misleading. The medieval Arabs, like the ancient Romans, were conquerors and lawmakers, but under their rule scholarly pursuits were more commonly undertaken by Persians, Greeks, or Jews. These wrote in Arabic, and so such men as the Persian Omar Khayyam and the Jewish Maimonides are generally regarded as belonging to "Arab" culture.)

Allen has a more informative and entertaining style than is commonly found in reference books. In addition to the constellations, he discussed the "Lunar Houses" and the legendry of the Milky Way. Though a sympathetic interpreter of ancient lore, he has no patience whatsoever with astrology, and frequently calls attention to the ludicrous statements made by followers of that ancient delusion.

Numerous digressions make this not only an account of star names, but also a general history of astronomy and mythology. Perhaps the best recommendation of Allen's book is the fact that, since its original publication 70 years ago, nothing else in this line has been published in English. The only modern work comparable to it is von Brunsart's *Kleine Lebensbeschreibung der Sternbilder* (Kosmos, Stuttgart, 1963), which was apparently compiled without Allen as a source, but which has the advantage of being copiously illustrated with pictures from earlier planispheres and stellar atlases.

—John Boardman



LOGAN'S RUN by William F. Nolan and George Clayton Johnson—
Dell, 4933, 75¢

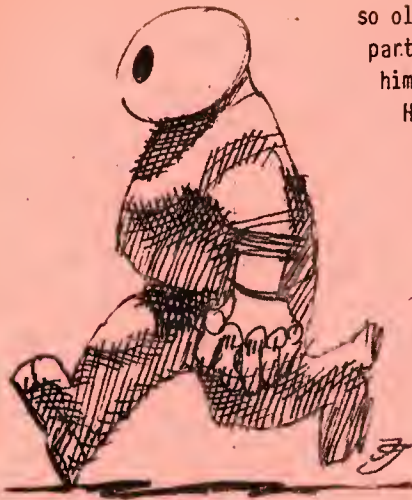
It moves. It does that.

It is inventive. It overwhelms the reader with sf gimmick after sf gimmick.

It is slickly written. Too slickly, perhaps.

The basic notion of euthanasia of the aged to make room for the young in an overcrowded world is not new. A Richard Matheson story rooted in this theme is a minor classic. But this yarn tightens up the screws and scrunches the idea as far down as it will go. When a citizen turns twenty-one, comes euthanasia. No cheating on the total of birthdays allowed when radioactively color-coded flowers blossom in the right hands of the citizenry. When it goes from red to black, time becomes a depleted resource. For those who shun the compulsory euthanasia, the Sandmen are available with their super six-shooters firing varied and sophisticated projectiles.

Logan is a Sandman with one day left to live. Intending to go out in grand style, he follows a (literal) underground railroad along which black palmed Runners flee, searching for a legendary Sanctuary operated by a man named Ballard who is



so old that his hair is partly white. And Logan himself is a problem. He strides through a world of technologically augmented voyeurism, cybernetic child-rearing, jet-stick riding gypsies, abandoned undersea cities, and robotic re-plays of Civil War battles, and he is a real drag. In a richly colored

world, he is colorless. And I am completely unable to accept him as being on the verge of twenty-one. Thirty-five I might believe, but not twenty-one. Perhaps people approaching twenty-one in Logan's world would behave as if they were thirty and up, but I can't buy it. Logan comes on as an old-timer for his time.

Still, the book is packed—perhaps even overcrowded—with sf ideas and wrinkles galore. None will be surprising to hardened sf fans, but neither will they be hackneyed. And though the facile prose sometimes veers towards the purple end of the spectrum, making the book read rather like a Doc Savage novel that had been written with a sale to PLAYBOY in mind, it is always slick, always polished. If it occasionally is polished to within an inch of its life, at least it never drags or bores. Though the enjoyment derived from the book is strictly one-dimensional, the fun is definitely there to be had.

According to the cover blurb, this is "the most brilliantly imaginative science fiction novel since 2001." Dell Books is apparently on a timeline separate from the rest of us, for the hardcover Logan's Run was released before 2001 was published. And I am amused by a new twist in the publisher's gambit of legitimizing sf. Usually such cover blurbs compare the book they decorate to 1984 or Brave New World.

But perhaps we should be grateful to Dell for pushing the book as sf. The hardcover publisher didn't.

—Hank Davis



RIOT '71 by Ludovic Peters—Walker & Co., \$3.95

This is one of a large class of books about which you can get a good argument going at a convention. Is it science fiction, a murder mystery, or a mere political extrapolation involving no new scientific techniques?

The book takes place in the England of the very near future. It is assumed that a depression of 1929 proportions

exacerbates the already tense racial situation in English cities, and that a racist organization starts urging the easy way out by deporting Negroes. In the middle of this situation are a team of detectives about whom Peters has already written a few novels. The white population is agitated by the murders of a number of whites under circumstances arguing ritual slaughter by an African terrorist organization. The first victim is the deputy leader of an NAACP-type liberal, integrationist organization, in a move designed to discredit liberal approaches to the race problem.

An escalation of clashes, stimulated by a neo-fascist conspiracy, finally brings on nationwide race riots which drive the government to total collapse. The author shows how inertia and tacit racism on the part of whites are the biggest stimulants to racial violence, a lesson we have also learned here. While the Nordic League makes its bid for power amidst a wave of lynchings and lootings, the two detectives and the sister of the first white victim trace the threads of a conspiracy into the lair of the enemy. They are assisted by a Negro modeled after the "responsible militants" of the Roy Innes variety, who is giving whites one last chance to prove that they aren't all racists.

Riot '71 is convincingly written, with much realistic detail and a message of urgency. Save that the racist demand is for the deportation of Negroes, rather than their subjugation, this state of affairs could easily arise in the United States. There are only a few minor cavils: Could a fascist organization of our own time act with the coherence and discipline of the book's Nordic League, and, Must every American in an English book have a name indicating German ancestry?

Particularly relevant is the plea made by a white liberal leader when his assistant is apparently murdered by Negroes: "Isn't it a fact that this death, perhaps more than any other could have done, highlights the desperation of the Negro in this country? To fight, to kill our enemy argues a sort of rough, biblical logic. To kill our friends argues ably, indiscriminate hatred; it argues a mind taken to the point where friendship has become meaningless; it argues a mind convinced that the whites of this country have forced it to the point of total racial conflict; so that even the offer of a white man's friendship is an insult so violent that only death can wipe it out."

—John Boardman



THE NETS OF SPACE by Emil Petaja—Berkley X1692, 60¢

This novel might have been one of the more literate (albeit less exciting) Ace Doubles selections, and from the length (123 pages) one could guess that Petaja had something like that in mind when he wrote it. It qualifies eminently in terms of plot, characters and treatment, which are, respectively, standard, one-dimensional and mediocre. However, the writing itself displays some facility and even flashes of genuine creative talent, and the author's portrayal of one of the novel's alien life-forms is vivid and memorable. So The Nets of Space is not entirely without value.

It concerns Donald Quick, a devotee of Don Quixote, who while working on the Centaur III (interstellar spaceship) project is exposed to "time gas". This mysterious substance, also referred to as "space-time gas", is what makes the spaceships zip through space. Inhaled, it has mind-boggling effects that make LSD look like weak coffee by comparison, and following his exposure to it Quick undergoes months of intensive psychiatric treatment. He appears to have recovered, but after a brief vodka binge Quick begins periodically going into a comatose state and having strange dreams. In the dreams, the ships of the Centaur Project have been captured in the nets of the Sacred Fishers of the Seventy Systems, and the human crew members, along with Quick, are one of the delicacies being served at a dinner given by the High Priestess Poogli. She is a leading personality in a race of mile-wide crab-like beings which is slowly dying out for want of the live, intelligent creatures they must have for food. Later, Quick dreams of finding himself in another world, this time a modern-day Lilliput in which he is the mile-high giant in a world of civilized, officious creatures about the size of small crickets.

Quick's persistent dreams are studied with great interest by Dr. Leonard Kelter and his beautiful assistant, Donna Elena Dulce (whom the hero naturally calls Dona Dulcinea). They consider them merely unusually strong dreams; we, of course, know better. And eventually a radio message is received from the three interstellar ships: sounds of confused panic and the words "Giant net!" repeated over and over. This brings Prof. Torwald Masterson, the surly genius responsible for Centaur III, into the picture, and he wisks Don off to the Project's main installation to study him further. In his next "dream", Quick sees the Sacred Fishers setting off for Earth to strip it clean of human life for their Sacred Larders, and sure enough observatories begin picking up objects approaching the solar system from outside the galaxy. The game seems to be up for Homo sapiens, but Don saves the day by visiting the Lilliputian world and trading his copy of Don Quixote for an ultimate weapon, called "limbo gas" (Petaja has this thing about extraordinary gases with incomprehensible properties). The Sacred fishers are zapped in the nick of time, and everybody lives happily ever after.

Basically, Petaja has written a superficial sfadventure novel with a rabbit-out-of-the-hat ending. There is some attempt at real characterization of the central figure, though it is not enormously successful, and the Sacred Fishers are portrayed nicely. But that isn't enough to warrant my recommending this book to anybody.

—Ted Pauls



DRAGONS, ELVES AND HEROES (VOL.1)—Ballantine 01731, 95¢
THE YOUNG MAGICIANS (VOL.2)—Ballantine 01730, 95¢ Edited by Lin Carter.

"We read fantasy...to enlarge our spectrum of life-experience, to enrich it, and to extend our range of experience into regions we can never visit in the flesh," says Lin Carter and I agree. Of Great Readers, a few are academically motivated, reading primarily as an act of social conscience, but most, the most voluminous, are withdrawn people.

One type is the barroom intellectual. Precocious and gentle, he finds his bookish sensitivity a burden in Marlboro Country. Sexually and socially insecure, he escapes his "effeminacy" in insatiable adventurousness, but is always isolated from the world because he is isolated from his desired Self.

Another type, handicapped emotionally or physically, unable to function by their own inflated standards which they impose on the world, find vicarious fulfillment in the polished discipline of prose, a reality that is unified, progressive, and comprehensible in contrast to their personal chaotic stagnation. I believe this type will love Mr. Carter's books.

"...to be honest, I can hardly imagine the person who would prefer reading about Uruguay (rather than fantasy); doubtless there are many such, but if so, I feel sorry for them." As a Urugophile, I appreciate Mr. Carter's compassion. It's not my fault. I'm a victim of a literary disease called Relevance. I could not read through these two books cover-to-cover. From Beowulf in volume one to Lin Carter in volume two is a long way down, and only two virtues led me into the abyss.

One is Mr. Carter's wordy, but very interesting and well-researched, introductions. Mania is a fascinating truth and Mr. Carter's is a more pleasant than most. Also, whether epic fantasy bores you or not, it is Relevant to any understanding of contemporary literature. If you can not tolerate it, but wish to know something, I recommend volume one.

Secondly, once I would have loved these books, so nostalgia carried me part way. It is a shame Mr. Carter restricted himself to Tolkeinesque fantasy and did not include more.



classic fairy tales.

Mr. Carter is a naive critic who leaves himself open on every page for lacerating satire. He is understandably defensive, for by society's definition he is a screwball and he knows it. Nevertheless, he persists undaunted and I suppose this makes him as heroic as one of his mythic supermen.

—Paul Walker



THE OTHERS Edited by Terry Carr—Fawcett Gold Medal G2044, 60¢

Seven stories about the "alien Secret Masters of the World", three of them classics. If you haven't already read R.A. Lafferty's "The Six Fingers of Time", Damon Knight's "Be My Guest", and Heinlein's "They", by all means buy this collection. Each of these stories covers a different facet of the "secret masters" concept and does it well enough so any other short story on a similar theme is automatically a second-rate copy.

Of the other four stories in the collection, Daphne Du Maurier's morbid little piece about a woman who had an eye operation and saw people with animal heads, "The Blue Lenses", is a classic if its type, but out of place in this book because it doesn't really fit the "secret masters" theme. The same complaint applies to Phul Dick's "Roog", a surrealistic sketch about alien monsters and garbagemen. Richard Matheson's "Shipshape Home", about an apartment building that's really an alien spaceship, is what I'd call typical 1950's sf hackwork — mildly interesting, but too shallow to reread even once or remember very long. The only real bomb in the book is Ray Nelson's "Eight O'Clock in the Morning" — the hero is told by a hypnotist to "wake up" and does — he wakes up all the way and suddenly can see the alien monsters that control the world and feed on humans. The theme of this story is just as imaginative as that of the three classic stories, it's just that there's virtually no story development at all — everything just "happens" to the hero, zap, zap, zap, the end, with no time for suspense to build up.

—Earl Evers



EPISTLE TO THE BABYLONIANS by Charles L. Fontenay—Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, \$6.25

One frequent comment about science fiction in recent years has been that science is realizing science fiction predictions so fast that writers have to hop to it to keep their themes ahead of the reality. One theme that has remained exempt from such outdating by scientific progress, up to now, is the well-known "superman" theme. This one has seemed in no more danger of becoming outdated than it was in the days of van Vogt's Slan.

But now Charles L. Fontenay, a newspaperman who was a fairly prolific science fiction writer himself about a decade ago, has come forth with a book that says the superman — or at least his progenitor — has been among us, here and there, for a long, long time. The book, Epistle to the Babylonians, is not science fiction. It is a mixture of philosophy and scientific research, and supports its contention with references to history, biology, psychology and anthropology.

The sort of intellectual "leap from the known and accepted" represented by this book could not be expected to go over well with academic Philistinism. Fontenay's agent warned him that he'd never find a publisher for his book, and he almost didn't. When the University of Tennessee Press decided to tackle it as an experimental venture, five appraisers in different academic fields

looked it over before it was accepted, and two of them — both psychologists — waxed wroth in a violent disagreement over each other's divergent judgments.

According to Fontenay, the incipient superman is "Homo individualis," a man who is free, by virtue of his genetic inheritance, of the restrictions of man's "social mind" to a greater extent than the majority of mankind. Appearing now and then as great creative geniuses, these mutations have been the key figures in man's advance to civilization from the stone age, according to the author's thesis. They are still part of the human ("Homo socialis") gene pool, emerging and being reabsorbed under changing forces of natural selection, and have never quite attained the status of a separate semi-species, Fontenay says.

On the basis of this concept, the author has constructed a theory of the rise and fall of great historical civilizations, which has never been explained heretofore on any scientific basis. And he thinks that, by the use "Homo socialis"

BEING A SECRET
MASTER CAN BE
FUN



has made of the contributions of "Homo individualis" to his society, the modern environment is exerting heavy selective pressure against "Homo individualis" — without whose creative approach, civilization cannot survive.

Fontenay is the author of three science fiction novels — Twice Upon a Time, Rebels of the Red Planet and The Day the Oceans Overflowed — and many magazine stories such as "Escape Velocity" and "The Silk and the Song." To this, his first non-fiction work, he brings the imaginative insight and freedom from rigid preconception that have made science fiction almost as much a predictive field as a fantastic one.

—Perry A. Chapdelaine



HOMUNCULUS, A Magic Tale by Sven Delblanc (translated from the Swedish by Verne Moberg)—Prentice-Hall, \$4.95

Drawing some blatant analogies on the cruelty of Man, the suffering of the innocent and the confusion of the young (along with countless barbs at American, Russian and European attitudes), Mr. Delblanc has used a fantasy framework more as an excuse than a framework for his satire which skips effortlessly between the funny and the grotesque without much differentiation. In some ways similar to Vonnegut's recent Slaughterhouse-Five, mainly the softening of the lines between fantasy and reality, Homunculus works harder to get attention; it reminds me very much of Tony Richardson's film, THE LOVED ONE, which often made the mistake of assuming that offensiveness, in itself, was humorous. Despite the lapses in taste — which, do not get me wrong, have nothing to do with the erotic content — the book is moderately funny and short enough for a one-sitting reading.

Sebastian, an ex-chemist, is determined that he is meant to create life. Not just any life, but a human being. He works diligently in his bathtub laboratory mixing up some very odd concoctions including such ingredients as his own blood and urine. His first creation is a cyclopedian monstrosity that he is forced to destroy; but his second, the beautiful homunculus, is a perfect human being, a young, strong and handsome young man whom he names Bechos. Between battles with his wife, Olga ("a little foul-mouthed"), sessions with his mistress (whom he first met by beating up in a museum) and working hours in the bathroom, Sebastian wanders about Stockholm, invoking sorceries while in the grip of quite outrageous fantasies, most of them heavy with eroticism stemming from an obvious fear of impotence. What's worse, he has a very bad habit of acting out his fantasies, sometimes in full public view.

Interwoven with Sebastian's adventures are the dastardly actions of the people determined to wrench the secret of creating life from Sebastian as soon as he discovers it (if not before) — Colonel Guschev (Russian Intelligence), Commander Hubert S. Hettner (CIA), and the Prime Minister of Sweden. Perhaps it's simply that I'm

biased, but the Americans seem to be the butt of far more than their share of jokes — though I suppose any country that can take I AM CURIOUS (YELLOW) as seriously as America has is asking for it — and Delblanc seems to believe such American items as PLAYBOY are simply hypocritical coverup for a nation rampant with queers. And as tasteless as all this may be, I feel rather embarrassed to admit that the two American he-men fighting over a giggling transvestite had me laughing quite uproariously. You don't suppose he really knows what he's writing about? Hmm...

In case any Russians are reading this, I ask them to consider their own homologous intentions before they start pointing fingers, and especially to notice the bit about General Abaganian and the ballet shoes. (haw haw)

The supporting cast of characters undergoes a complete change in nearly every chapter as they keep getting killed off with clockwork regularity. Everyone eventually finds a reason, real or imagined, for creating destruction, and this little message of responsibility seems to be the novel's primary focus.

Delblanc's writing leans heavily on similes, ranging from the stark: "Time floated like yellow light down the walls of the palace, dead time, like urine, secreted from the stone" (p. 3); to the grotesque: "With one skillful stroke Sebastian cut his son's throat... The head fell, lolling against his neck, and the wide wound in the throat gaped like a toothless mouth opening for a scream" (p. 70), to appalling exactitude: "Hettner stretched himself out on the deck and began masturbating like a baboon" (p. 168).

I think this is one of those books you either love or hate; so I'm going to stand here in the middle and let you decide.

—Richard Delap



ARMAGEDDON 2419 A.D. by Philip Francis Nowlan—Ace 02935, 60¢

I'm told there was a "simpler age". Anyway, if there ever was, this book was a product of it. The inspiration for the BUCK ROGERS comic strip, this appeared as two novelets in AMAZING STORIES in 1928-29. The author was hired by a feature syndicate to write continuity for the strip. The book itself is a pleasant diversion.

Of course, its attitude toward things is somewhat more outdated than its style (A good Mongol is a dead Mongol; and Long Live America's Manifest Destiny), but the most archaic features have been removed and the story is action-packed, the characters interesting, the prose well-paced. If you go for this sort of thing at all, this is your book.

—Paul Walker



The Banks Deposit

Prozine Commentary



Within the last twelve months, two thirds of our "permanent" prozines have gone through metamorphoses. Only ANALOG and F&SF are still around in the same bodies.

AMAZING, the oldest of all, and its companion FANTASTIC took another of their all-too-frequent drops to the cellar a few years back, when Ziff-Davis sold them to Ultimate. Since then, several editors have tried to roll them up the hill again, and it looks as if Ted White is finally getting there.

When Ultimate first took over, the zines went to an almost-all-reprint basis. The few new stories tended to be good — Zelazny's "For a Breath I Tarry", Leiber's "Stardock", and Davidson's "The Phoenix and the Mirror" (badly cut) come to mind — but not enough in bulk to outweigh the reprinted mass of primordial hack.

Under editors Harrison and Malzberg, the amount of new stuff gradually increased and also became "New Wavish" in flavor, in strange contrast to the '40s and '50s reprints. I imagine that Ultimate made a little money with its low-budget issues and all-reprint things put out on the side (like THE GREATEST SCIENCE FICTION EVER TOLD) (I'm not kidding, they called it that), so that more cash was available for new fiction when Ted White became editor in the Fall of '68.

What with publishing schedules and the fiction backlog, Ted's accession didn't show until well into '69. By the latest issues I have (Apr. '70 FAN & May '70 AMZ), he had transformed the magazines

The fiction is all new now, except for one reprint per issue. New cover pictures have replaced the second-hand German trash (Some of the new ones may be just as trashy, but wotthehell.). The departments have fanned out until some people call AMZ and FAN "Ted White's fanzines".

In fiction, Ted's had best luck in getting novels, which are run un-cut in two installments. Even with a limited budget (which I assume is what Ted has), novels are easy to come by. Far more are written for book publication than the existing magazines can absorb as serials, and I assume that the writers are always willing to pick up a little extra from magazine serialization, even at low word rates, before book publication. So Ted has been able to get novels by Silverberg, Vance, Dick, and (surprise) Ted White, as well as Fritz Leiber's novella, "The Snow Women", a part of a forthcoming Ace Fafhrd-Mouser book. His best coup was tracking down Piers Anthony's often-but-undeservedly-rejected Hasan.

No doubt Ted's had a rougher time with the short fiction. He's had some of the big names and some of the new names, but he's relied most heavily on the generation of fans-turned-pro who are his friends and contemporaries (and I suspect he's had to twist their arms a little) — names like Greg Benford, Terry Carr, Lin Carter, Dick Lupoff, Alexei Panshin, and Ray Russell. He's also tapped the younger generation of fans-just-turning-pro, like Robert E. Toomey and Gordon Eklund (the latter with a fine first story). Ted even has to write some of the stuff himself.

The fiction is more conventional under White than under Harrison or Malzberg. He's stated in his editorials that he isn't looking for any particular formula, old or new, but merely for good stories with strong characterization. That's a formula or a sort — certainly the far-out "experimentalists" will sneer at it — but it just may be a formula for selling science fiction magazines.

The changes at GALAXY and IF are more subtle, but they may eventually prove as sweeping. Here, it was not a salvage operation but the transfer of a smooth-running machine.

Last spring, the old publisher of the Galaxy group sold out, and the new proprietor brought in Ejler Jakobsson to replace Fred Pohl as editor (Fred retained an emeritus position on the masthead). Lester del Rey and Judy-Lynn Benjamin remained on the staff, while Franc L. Roggeri became Art Director with Jack Gaughan as Assistant Art Director.

The new editorial policy seems more a shift in emphasis than a decided break with the past, and the difference can be seen more clearly in IF than in GALAXY. Formerly IF was openly (in the fan press) described as printing "nothing that would offend the parents of a twelve-year-old reader". That wasn't really an absolute policy (remember the sex in a couple of Heinlein's novels, among other things), but IF was oriented toward the juvenile reader in that it favored action stories

A Column By

Banks Mebane

as its main fare. IF pays lower word rates than GALAXY, and it has served as a dumping ground for stories that were crowded out of GALAXY or that didn't fit GALAXY's "image". Since that image tended to be conservative, some of the fresher stories in idea or style would show up in IF.

IF still pays lower rates than GALAXY, but I don't think it is now being edited with a juvenile slant. I don't mean that it will publish the next Dick Geis sex epic, but it does seem a little freer with something like Frank Herbert's Whipping Star, a serial that started in January. Whipping Star wouldn't have been too out of place in the old IF, nor would the sentimental-poetic vein of James Sallis's "This One" (also Jan.). It's just that the amount of such different stuff is greater than it used to be. Oh, IF still prints straight action stories (and why not, if they're good?), and it still carries a lot of one-punch shorts (but the pages have to be filled). The mix is a little different.

The change in GALAXY is of the same sort, but it's not so easily spelled out. GALAXY has always tried for a quality image. Under Pohl, it tended to print solid stories by big names, stories with adequate characterization and believable extrapolation. It was a good commercial package, but often (let's face it) a trifle dull. If it was dull, I think the cause was the policy of nothing but stories in the same crafted, well-plotted vein. Anything looser, anything even slightly experimental, certainly anything excitingly different went into IF or into WORLDS OF TOMORROW (while it was extant — it's now to be revived, as is WORLDS OF FANTASY). Farmer's River-world stories appeared in WOT, and one can't imagine Fred Pohl putting them in GALAXY.

Ejler Jakobsson seems to have a more eclectic policy for GALAXY. The January issue includes Dannie Plachta's prose poem "The Last Night of the Festival", which Pohl would probably not have bought at all, and Theodore Sturgeon's "Slow Sculpture", which he might have put in GALAXY but probably with the feeling that it didn't really belong there.

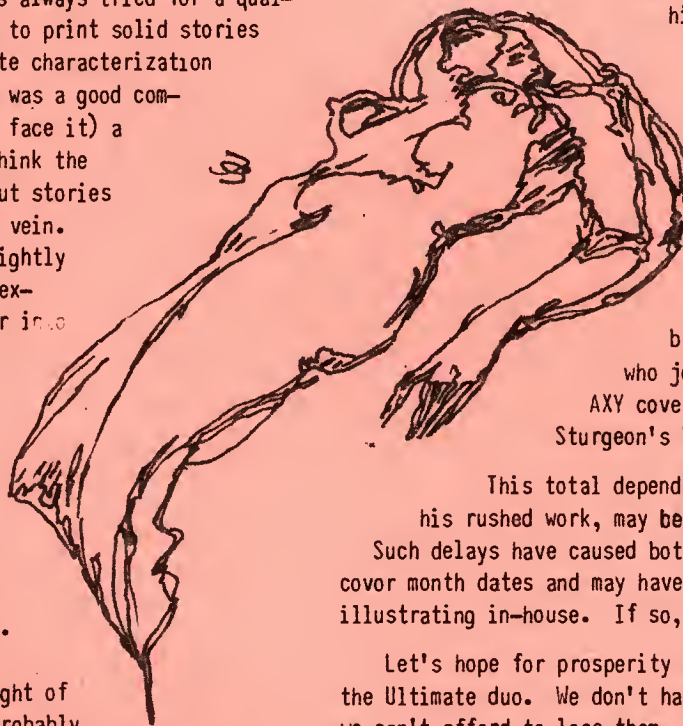
In trying to polarize the differences here, I'm over-emphasizing them and doing an injustice to a fine editor, Frederik Pohl. He's not really so cautious as what I've written might imply — he's bought and printed his share of way-out things (but not usually in GALAXY). The mix, again, is just a little different. It seems to me that Jakobsson is a bit more willing to take a chance, and this has brought a sense of freshness to IF and GALAXY.

A lot of the freshness I sense is visual as well as literary. Jack Gaughan has done practically all the art-

work for recent issues of IF and GALAXY. The Gilbert cover on the March IF is the first non-Gaughan cover in six months, and it carries on the trend that Gaughan has set, in which bright colors and bold shapes fill the page and dominate the lettering. These eye-catching covers contrast with the boxed-in pictures that used to give GALAXY a somewhat dignified appearance. Gaughan's covers aren't dignified, nor are they meant to be. They show his exuberance and the playful wit with which sometimes he echoes something in the tradition — his February GALAXY cover puts some visual ideas out of Robert Delaunay into a Pop poster.

Gaughan deliberately varies the style and technique of his interiors, which lets him do whole issues without monotony. Some of his work, particularly in the last three months of '69, seems too rushed, but in the '70 issues he's done some magnificent things: his four woodcut-like decorations repeated throughout "The Last Night of the Festival", with a full page and double page also for this story something after Beardsley but with a feeling of pen flow in the arabesques instead of Beardsley's stasis,

his whirling double page for the third installment of Whipping Star (March IF); his McLuhanesque collaboration with Harlan Ellison for "The Region Between" (March GALAXY) with sources as far apart as Leonardo's notebooks and Egyptian hieroglyphs. He's even brought in his wife, Phoebe, who joined him on the December GALAXY cover and did a fine interior for Sturgeon's "Slow Sculpture".



This total dependance on Gaughan, and some of his rushed work, may be caused by printing troubles.

Such delays have caused both GALAXY and IF to slip the cover month dates and may have made it necessary to do the illustrating in-house. If so, I for one don't regret it.

Let's hope for prosperity both for the Galaxy group and the Ultimate duo. We don't have that many sf mags around — we can't afford to lose them.

—Banks Mebane
Feb-Mar 1970



Subscribe to MUSTANG REVIEW, a non-academic poetry magazine. (We can use imaginative sci-fi poems to 14 lines.) \$2.00 a year or \$5.00 for three years. Sample copy 50¢. We rank No. 4 in the nation and are in Harvard College Library. 212 So. Broadway, Denver, Colo. 80209.



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... Count me in among that small group of people who failed to find any hint or sign of spiritualism or other teleplasmic claptrap in Bob Shaw's fine novel, Palace of Eternity. I am also a member of a minority in another way: I thought it a much better book than current critics and reviewers are admitting. You are the first to agree with me outloud that it is a worthwhile book.

Terry Carr sent me galleys on the book and invited my comment good or bad. I said a lot more about the story than he had room to reprint on the jacket, including my belief that the story had a reasonable chance of winning some award. I don't recall now if I mentioned a specific award, but I very definitely thought it worthy of one because of that twist and unexpected departure two-thirds of the way through the book. A lesser writer would have fallen back on some form of spiritualism and permitted the protagonist to join the troops of ghosts hovering around the planet but Shaw, bless his typewriter, avoided the ghosts and spirits and showed the troops to be living things which were killed when human spaceships plowed into them.

Perhaps science fiction readers today are mentally lazy. Perhaps they aren't capable of making the effort of under-

standing more than superficial space-opera, or robot-, or far future-, or overthrow-the-dictator opera. They may be reading too rapidly, or absorbing too lightly, or paying so little attention that when they chance across an idea such as Shaw used here they leap to the conclusion he is describing human ghosts or the like. It bodes ill, and all that.

Last year, I worked up a great enthusiasm for Picnic on Paradise, and nominated the Russ novel for an award, but alas it failed to make the final ballot. Not enough people thought as I did; most of the reviews I saw dismissed it as something of a failure. I still disagree with those opinions and a second reading was as entertaining as the first. Now, Bob Shaw must suffer the same fate, I suppose. Maybe my liking a book is the kiss of death.

Meanwhile, I think you're slipping as an editor. No one was slain in the letter column of #35.

((I was' Didn't you see me lying there bleeding from the knife Harry Harrison slipped between my ribs?

I can't win—when there's blood in the scuppers everyone is turned off by the mayhem...and when all is peaceful there are complaints of lack of controversy. Write me an article, Bob; slay Piers Anthony again.))

RICHARD DELAP
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Oh, wow, lots of interesting letters with lots of arguments just waiting to be made. I'll start with Barry Malzberg who simplifies the relationship between sf and mainstream. He says that sf "is now beginning to undergo the stylistic convulsions, schisms and innovations that were worked through and out of American fiction by 1930." These schisms, etc., have never been worked out of fiction and are still much in use today; it's just that the imitators are no longer innovators and the style does not become so prominent that it outweighs the content...at least in the better books, which do not include Ellison's Dadaism or Brunner's Dos Passos. Very few books will outlive the crowded limbo, sf or mainstream, but Malzberg is at least right in suggesting that too many sf novels are taken too seriously by fans. Reading Bug Jack Barron, for example, without relating it to its particular period in history simply shows it up as a childish, sloppy inversion that will be remembered only for its vile notoriety, if that.

Had Dean Koontz made his comments on his own "Temple of Sorrow" before Mebane's review, one might be tempted to take heed. In retrospect, however, these things are too easy to say. Secondly, Koontz mentions a "novel of sheer entertainment is not the place for political polemics or for propaganda of any kind." Bullshit. A novel of entertainment is the best place to say these things, and when done without lectures it is most likely the best way to make readers do some thinking of their own. He's right to protest Stine's clumsy assumptions, but I think he doth protest too much...and for too long.

I only ask Brian Aldiss this: if he's so worried about the influence of Piers Anthony and the like on writers such as Charles Platt, "who is still at an impressionable age," then who influenced Platt to write such drivel as Garbage World? Anthony? I hardly think so. Aldiss is the man calling others "a shit" and he should realize this, as well as knowing that if he's too old to be "corrupted in this way" then maybe he's dead.

Since the mixup in Mrs. Jenkins' book order from Ballantine was cleared up with a mention in SFR, let's see if you can do anything for me. Last August I ordered and paid for a copy of Eando Binder's Lords of Creation from Belmont Books. I'd never seen a copy of it and, completist collector that I am, I was sort of anxious to have it. 2 months later I sent a polite inquiry. No answer. Another polite inquiry. No answer. Four inquiries later, I still have no copy. Is Belmont really run by a bunch of money-hungry shits? Or is it that nobody ever leaves the water cooler?

Oh, wow, I surely hope you can goose Grennell into keeping "The Square Needle" coming in. Really, really funny.

The book reviews this time come up with a couple of items that I must comment upon. First, Geis, I accuse you of unnecessary and major rudeness, for which you should immediately soak your mouth in sterilizing isopropal (no, on second thought, you just might be twisted enough to like the

stuff!). You, you damn fool, are the one who published Mat Linder's review of Galactic Pot-Healer, then you immediately follow by calling him "insulting and ridiculous." If you have a differing opinion, write a counter review and don't start making Final Comments from your throne (..and if you ever pull that trick on me, I'll have your balls under a steamroller!). I'll bet that nice Alter Ego would never pull a dirty trick like that!

((I am blameless! It was Alter who did it. I remonstrated with him, but he insisted, and since it was his day at the typer—

"Alright, Geis! Knock off the lies! I heard you snortling and snirking as you composed that put-down of poor Mats. Here's a foaming beaker of isopropal."

Alright...I did it! It was thoughtless of me. I'm sorry, Mats. You may knee me in the groin as punishment...but only if you have a certificate proving you are a mad dog.))

Secondly, I simply must violently disagree with Ted Pauls' review of The Space Barbarians which, as Pauls doesn't mention, was published as stories by "Guy McCord" in ANALOG. It was unreadable in the magazine, worse in one lump as a book, and epitomizes all the weak points of Reynolds as a writer and Campbell as an editor. An "enjoyable evening on the planet Caledonia"? Reynolds himself answered that one: "The only good Caledonian's a dead one, sir, like everybody says."

Piers got in a lovely touche at van Vogt re the Hasan comments. As much as I respect Piers (and as little as I agree with him) it's nice to know he's not afraid to stand up for equal judgement.



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If Virginia Kidd and R. A. Lafferty want to spread the word on the Asterix books by Goscinny & Uderzo, the following info may be of help.

In the first place, Asterix the Gaul and Asterix and Cleopatra, #1 and #6 in the series, are due to be mass-marketed in an American trade edition by William Morrow in March and May, respectively, at \$2.95 each. The packaging and promotion will be aimed at the comic-strip sophisticates; the people who buy the POGO and PEANUTS quality paperbacks and the KRAZY KAT reprint book. They'll be full reprints: 48 pages in full color on high-quality paper. Fans won't have to order Harcourt's schoolbook editions; they'll soon be able to brows for themselves in the humor section of their local bookstores.

For those who don't care to pay \$2.95 apiece, there's an English edition of the two plus Asterix the Gladiator (#4) from Brockhampton Press at a considerable saving. Brockhampton won't fill orders due to contractual agreements with Morrow, but B.H. Blackwell Ltd., Broad Street, Oxford, ENGLAND, will. Full price including postage and insurance charges comes to around \$1.75 each. In addition, you don't have to pay in advance; Blackwell will bill you with the book. Since the

Brockhampton translations are full of Brittisms, I'm very curious to see if the forthcoming American editions are going to be re-translated into American idiomatic English.

There are 14 titles in the original French edition so far. These are, in chronological order, Asterix le Gaulois, La Serpe d'Or, Asterix et les Goths, Asterix Gladiateur, Le Tour de Gaule d'Asterix, Asterix et Cleopatre, Le Combat des Chefs, Asterix chez les Bretons, Asterix et les Normands, Asterix Legionnaire, Le Bouclier Arverne, Asterix aux Jeux Olympiques, Asterix et le Chaudron, and Asterix en Hispanie. I order them from the Belgium publisher/distributor, Editions du Lombard, 1 à 11, avenue Paul-Henri Spaak, Bruxelles 7, BELGIUM, where they're 79 Belgian francs (\$1.58 U.S.) apiece. Why pay a big import markup if you can avoid it? I've never had any trouble with Lombard taking my personal check for the equivalent amount in U.S. money, though it would probably be polite for anyone who's interested to inquire first to make sure this is permissible. (As a matter of fact, since the devaluation of the French franc, the books are about 10% cheaper apiece ordered from the principal publisher in Paris, but Lombard provides faster service and sturdier packaging so I'm continuing to deal with them.)

I echo Lafferty's praise for the series. So must lots of people since, according to TIME magazine, there are well over two million people paying over \$1.50 a volume for these things. Rene Goscinny's scenarios are unbelievably funny just on the surface, and you can go mad trying to discover how many levels his humor has. As an example, aside from the Asterix books, he writes another series of Arabian-Nights adventures about an evil little Grand Vizir who's always trying to overthrow the Caliph and whose plots naturally backfire on himself in unexpected ways. His name, and the name of the series, is le Grand Vizir Iznogoud. The books are in French, the setting is ancient Baghdad, but if the reader doesn't understand English the pun in the name is lost. My personal favorites are Goscinny's Westerns, the Lucky Luke series, which are just plain hysterical. Aside from his portrayals of the Daltons, Calamity Jane, Billy the Kid, Roy Bean, and other more-or-less real persons, his plots include characters such as an undertaker who sings "Whistle while you work", a henpecked husband named Oliver Flimsey, a card sharp named Claude Pushpull, a villain named August Oyster (you know what they say about oysters in a month without an 'r'), and Ran-Tan-Plan, the Stupidest Dog in the West ("... except I didn't know he was a cat, I thought he was a furrin dog — a tenderpaw ..."); towns such as Gun Gulch ("... city of hardy pioneers, we have hearts of steel, souls of iron, and bullets of lead!"); and dance-hall songs like, "She was from Kokomo, Indiana, and known as Iron Fists Diana; and the boys from Frisco, Cal., all fell for the iron-fisted gal ..."

((Yes, that is plain hysterical.))

With luck the Asterix books will sell well enough that Lucky Luke will be translated into English, too. In the meantime, Lombard has the latest four volumes at 75 Fr. (\$1.50) each: La Diligence (Stagecoach), Le Pied Tendre

(The Tenderfoot), Dalton City and Jesse James. Anybody who's writing to Lombard might ask for a copy of their catalog of comic books; they've got some good science-fiction, too.



GREG BENFORD
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Banks Mebane was quite penetrating in his look at Silverberg's "Sundance." I thought this one of the best two or three stories of 1969, but I suppose not enough pros read F&SF to have gotten it onto the final Nebula ballot. (The correlation between items nominated for the Nebula and the free copies sent throughout the year to SFWA members, as you've undoubtedly noticed, is quite high.) "Sundance" amazed me with the emotional impact carried by a rather tired and simple plotline — simple when unraveled, that is. It is an object lesson to people like me, who tend to overintellectualize short stories and load them down with complicated thinking.

To clarify my comments on Chip Delany's article. I thought it funny because it seemed to say someone really wrote like that — by picking one word, then the next, and focusing so closely that the interrelationships between individual words were paramount. Now, this view is fine for later analysis, in those deadly hours when one is rewriting and trying to see through all that shimmering magic of what he thinks he's written, to the cold sentences that actually made it onto the page. But to write like that? It is to laugh. As James Blish remarks in this issue, something like Chip's analysis can be used to unstop a logjam in the psyche, but I cheerfully doubt that working writers think in individual words. I think in phrases...I think.

((I...do...too.))

Anyway, after some discussion of this with Chip, I have now come to regard his article as a sort of convoluted poem, the object of which is to show us, by indirection, the mystery of words and just how incredible the whole reading-writing process is. And in that way, I think it works wonderfully well.

I like Ted Pauls' reviews. He cogitates. And Hank Stine does very nicely, too. You are probably running the best sf reviews around, next to AMAZING.



PIERS ANTHONY
Florida

So Charles Platt is now the editor at NEW WORLDS and plans to incline it a bit more toward SF. Hm. How about trying some SF writers, then—Anderson, Panshin, Brunner, Offutt...

((I'm sure Charles would love to, but they have to send him stories first. How about YOU, Piers?))

Ask Bob Tucker whether he prefers a straight review or a column discussion on The Year of the Quiet Sun.

((I should think that is properly your decision. However ... Hey, Bob...?))

Panshin, Toomey! No, no! We of the dreadful-novelist & turgid ramblings ingroup must not quarrel amongst ourselves! In the interest of spreading balm upon the wounds, I shall grant that there is a bit of the young turk and the turk in all of us, and no one should feel cheated merely because he has not yet achieved his full flower thereof.

In fact, I'll even lend the youth and turkiness of my name to your projects. Think, Panshin, of the literary success you might achieve with a character named "Anthony"! With proper management you might even develop it into a series, provided you locate sufficient readership.

Um, Toomey—your description of Fred Brown's Rogue in Space—ouch! This sounds suspiciously familiar, though I'm sure I have never read the novel. A criminal hero, a sentient named Chthon, er, Cragon? Something subtle nags my festering cranium...but if I ever tried a novel like that (and naturally I never would!), I believe I'd apply some symbolism and perhaps a more intricate structure.

To finish on an unfortunately serious note: I was disheartened by the STOP PRESS note. I did not know Evelyn del Rey, but this is unkind news.



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Franz Rottensteiner's article
"Chewing Gum for the Vulgar" is
unquestionably the most absurd set
of pyrotechnical pseudo-psychology

of dated vintage it has been my unpleasure to read. The writer is sufficiently skilled to fade slowly from sense to nonsense, by use of standard tools of imagery and the half-truth, to leave at least one reader — me — convinced, almost, that something is being said. Had the psychoanalytics used been up to date, I might very well have placed more credence in the visionary meanderings.

Moreover, I have less respect for Alexei Panshin in taking so much space to answer such garbage; but the answers he does give are worthy, and bear proper attention.

I am almost wholly ignorant of the J.J. Pierce movement, having read and listened in fandom too short. I'm not sure I understand everything which Sam Moskowitz said in your "Box 3116". Maybe it's that I don't have the facts to correlate his message.

I will certainly agree with Sam, however, when he states he has found a group that can dish it out in great chunks, but cannot take it in turn. I'm not necessarily speaking of the same group mentioned by Sam; I'm speaking of my personal experiences during the past year. Big, brave, high IQ children exist among fandom who can drive the needle to the roote, but scream like cuckolds when the needle presses elsewhere. Did I say in fandom? Perhaps I should have said in fanprodom!

I liked your idea of using SFR as official organ for

the SFWA membership. One small hitch bothers me: if I place money into the subscription, as a member of SFWA (making SFR an official forum) does Richard E. Geis still have the right to screen out my blatherings? If yes, then I'd prefer an SFWA forum under auspices of SFWA. If no, who will afford the reams of print for the reams of vituperation?

((The idea of making subscription to SFR automatic with membership in SFWA was an idle one and not seriously proposed. The difficulties would be enormous, the benefits not worth the trouble. Besides, I can think of two SFWA members who would raise the roof. And I don't need the problems that SFWA is having now with its Forum and Bulletin.))

However, all is not lost. Here is an idea I've discussed, pro and con, with many pros via letter. (To be cute like Piers, I should have said, "discussed with many pros and cons.")

Writers are scared, or unable for familial reasons, to stand and be counted when the subject of editor-writer, editor-agent, editor-publisher screwins is invoked. I've communicated with pros and fans for a very short time, and have been often amazed at the horror stories so many have to tell — but always across a table with a mug of beer in hand — or in a personal single-spaced, five page letter, with confidential written on every page. Surely your readers, and you yourself, can write books on the subject, better than I can.

Since writers cannot tell their stories, for fear of reprisals, in a public-way, they therefore are unable to share their knowledge, or pool their screwins in a cumulative way.

((That sounds vaguely obscene...))

It follows, then, that editors, agents, publishers, continue to get by with fantastic mis-treatments of isolated members which, in the aggregate, might very well make a fantasy tale in itself.

Without pooled knowledge, writers are vulnerable; vulnerable writers are easily screwed; easily screwed writers are scared, scare writers are unwilling to pool their knowledge — I suppose poverty, ignorance, pollution, and other modern diseases could write a similar but certainly more serious cycle of inadequacies.

The writing field needs to establish self-correcting feedback mechanisms which protect both writers and editors-agents-publishers. The idea I have was taken directly from U.S. Civil Service Commission publications of some time ago. Since the communist party was underground, front organizations and practicing supporters of the communist party were often difficult to spot. The U.S. Civil Service Commission accumulated facts about certain people which were reported in their bound books this way: Every lecture, every dollar, every subscription, or any active support of the communist cause was recorded after the individual's name. Some individuals had only a handful — perhaps one, two, three or several communist affiliated activities. Some individuals had dozens. Some had hundreds.

The books did not make any inferences about who was or who was not a communist. They merely reported events which had taken place. Anyone who perused the book could tell at a

glance who was probably a dupe, and who was obviously the true communist, or at least equally bad, the sold fellow traveler. Those who had only a few activities after their names were probably sucked in by the front organizations listed. Those who had hundreds were obviously the bad guys. You took your chances on those in between.

((Gee, Perry, I hate to tell you this, but...see...SFR is a front organization...and when the University of Tenn. finds out...there goes your job'))

We need the same kind of thing in SF publishing. I envision a sheet which has categories along the top. KEPT MANUSCRIPT OVER THIRTY DAYS...REFUSED TO ANSWER LETTERS...RE-WROTE PORTIONS OF THE STORY WITHOUT PERMISSION...DID NOT HONOR CONTRACT...PROMISED 6% AND 8% PAID 4% AND 6%. You make up your own categories, but try to include all the main gripes which make the writer's world so miserable.

((.. REJECTED MSS, DOES NOT RECOGNIZE GENIUS...))

Alongside the left-hand column are numbers which go from 1 through n.

Richard Geis collects signed letters from pros on a voluntary basis which report about specific screwins. Good Dick circles, or checks, or prints, or what have you, the total number of times he has received complaints against the specifics. Printer's Gallery Inc., say, might be first on the left-hand side, and it might show "twenty" under KEPT MANUSCRIPT OVER THIRTY DAYS, and so on. These would reflect cumulative figures of, say, one or two, or three year periods, whatever appropriate.

What would happen, as data accumulates, is that authors will read the matrix to place certain publishers in high priority and others in very low priority. From the editor's viewpoint, if he has lost many manuscripts, or kept them overly long, or has refused to send them back for one reason or another, that editor would begin to receive less and less of the first-rate material. Conversely, the good-guys would begin to receive more and more of the good stuff. Homeostasis between writers and editors, balancing about the ethic of decent treatment and respect!

((What would really happen is that the "good" editors would be swamped with mss, good and bad and would soon be unable to cope, thus would soon be on the shit-lists, while the former shit-listers, with time to take care of the few incoming mss, would rise up and be "good-guys." With time the list-movement would be minimal and this is a bad idea in the first place.))

I like the idea tremendously, but some pros warn me of various defects. Can we really trust Richard Geis? ((NO!!)) Won't he get mad at certain writers, and one day use the complaint letters as a basis for revenge? ((Damn right! Write for SFR or I squeal to the editors!)) What of the publishers who sue? Will the law sustain the right of writers to pool experience, and publicly identify their grievances? And who would provide the funds to protect Geis, if some irate, dishonest publisher wished to press him to the wall? And so on.

I'd like to share the above idea with others, and I'd like to hear creative pros and cons.

((CON! The SFWA has machinery for all the author complaints you mention...and does a good job.))



PAUL WALKER
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Dean A. Grennell's irritation at ANALOG seems to be universally shared from what I have read and been told. His "carping" is mild-mannered compared to the nasty innuendos I have gotten from some. Campbell is a "fascist"? "He hates young writers"? "A collection of science articles separated by short stories written by engineers"? And the fact that it is the largest selling, best-paying prozine on the market makes it intolerable!

Back in the fifties, ASTOUNDING was a legend. According to Groff Conklin, it alone spoke for SF. It was not hard to agree. Each issue contained a first-rate serial and novelet, plus two or three awful short stories.

Today, I find a somewhat different ANALOG. Apparently, a very controversial item. As many people I respect hold adverse opinions of it, I approached the mag with prejudice.

It is a fine prozine. As in the fifties, it is unique in its own way. The same way that F&SF is unique in its own way. The editorials are the work of a thinking man. Granted, no one can be expected to agree with all they say (or even a portion, necessarily), but the quality of genuine, gutsy, on-the-line opinion characterizes them all. This is a rare virtue. Most of what passes for thought today (as always) is really recitation. Right and left-wingers conscientiously study their respective party lines and parrot the words, thoughts and deeds of their mentors, usually more parrots. To think honestly and speak honestly your own personal opinion is a risky business, for you are sure to be wrong 90% of the time and, at least once, make a colossal ass of yourself. Campbell has put himself on the line again and again for years. Regardless of the merit of his opinions (and there is much merit), his courage is not to be denied by the less-courageous who seem to be the fattest parrots of all.

Secondly, there is P. Schuyler Miller. I believe his columns are worth the price of the mag. There is no one better at reviewing than he. His calm, somewhat cold, tough sanity, tempered by his aristocratic manner, make for a satisfying experience each issue.

Thirdly, there is Kelly Freas. His artwork is inimitable in today's prozines. His attention to detail. His vividness. His courage to portray the grotesque.

Fourthly, there are the stories. There is a novelet in the February issue (Robert Chilson's "The Fifth Ace") that is unbelievably good. Its starkness and horror, nice characterization, vivid backgrounds, and narrative skill make it an easy contender for next year's Hugo.

In the same issue, there is a good novelet by Hayden Howard, an interesting short story by Jack Wodhams, and a something-or-other by Poul Anderson. Not to mention, the conclusion of a serial by Harry Harrison.

So this is nothing to rave about? Are the other pro-zines? A single issue that carries a story with the power of Chilson's is well-worth following. As for the flops? Good God! IF won a couple of Hugos with a year's worth of garbage!

Finally, there is the magazine itself as a whole. It is adult in every sense of the word. This is not to be sneered at. A lot of what the New Wave controversy is about is the matter of whether prozines will cater to adolescents or to adults. All the "popular" prozines make concessions to their youthful audience. ANALOG does not. Its aim is high. Its respect for the reader is the highest in SF (perhaps, too high).

Its science articles are a perfect example. I believe the reason they stir such ire among fans is that these people are too bigoted to realize that a helluva lot of fans came to SF because of their interest in science. Or else, they went the other way, becoming engineers and chemists. Asimov and Willy Ley are fine for the English majors. But the scientific crowd deserve their share of attention and ANALOG is the one prozine that speaks on their level.

Also, some of the science articles are damned interesting. And I say that as an English major.

If Campbell is the ogre he is reputed to be, then SFWA ought to do something about him. I mean, that is what they are being paid dues for, right? ((Nope.)) If he is a "fascist bigot", then expose him once and for all. If there is simply a generation gap, then negotiate it away. ANALOG pays well enough to make it worthwhile.

If he is not a monster, then what?

Okay, then let's say he's narrow-minded. Well, from what I've read, his narrow-mindedness includes most of what is being published everywhere else. I'm not familiar with Chilson's and Wodham's work, but it is obviously not early fifties stuff. Nor is Hayden Howard's novelet. Nor is Dune. In fact, I don't believe I've ever seen cheap space-opera stuff in ANALOG that I have seen elsewhere in quantity.

I am not intimate with SF writers and fans. I may be dead wrong, but I suggest that the reason ANALOG has seemed to lose its ASTOUNDING quality is that fans and writers are boycotting it out of a nasty narrow-mindedness of their own.

Only a blind-deaf-and dumb person could ignore the strong stench of repression emanating from the American left these days. Liberals are scared. Times were when we regarded ourselves as the defenders of free speech and controversy, but since the Black Revolution, and its unfortunate involvement with the Vietnam mess, self-censorship is

the order of the day. Toeing the party line is necessary if one is to be read, at all.

This is not to suggest a blatant conspiracy against J.W. Campbell, Jr. It is the nature of prejudice, its soil and prime nutrient, that it remain in shadow until it blooms too hideous and ugly to be any longer ignored.

I suggest this is why more major writers are not making it in ANALOG. I suggest writers who publish potential ANALOG material elsewhere are doing it subconsciously on purpose and sending un-ANALOG stories to Campbell because they don't want to be associated with his allegedly right-wing reputation.

((I suggest that most pros don't let politics interfere with their marketing...and certainly agents don't, unless given specific instructions.))

And I suggest that those young writers who hate him most are stark bigots who deny Campbell his freedom to "do his own thing." That they bombard him with their own conceptions of ANALOG material, which are anything but, and, when they are rejected (often with a generous letter, suggesting much deeper consideration than they get elsewhere), they deceive themselves and others into believing it is because Campbell is "right-wing."

((There may be a pebble of truth in what you theorize, but I would like a lot of confirmation from others closer to the action. Speculations on others' states of mind is always foolhardy, and going beyond that to a blanket estimate of sub-conscious motivation... Consider, Paul, that this letter may be part of your 90% wrongness.))

I do not mean to suggest by this that Dean A. Grennell is a bigot or anyone of the above-mentioned villains. My separateness from writers and fandom may have given me a completely distorted picture.

But I have heard the complaints. And I have seen ANALOG. Gentlemen, I suggest something is wrong somewhere!

((I have a feeling I'm going to get letters...))



MITCHELL J. SWEDO, JR.
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It has come to my attention that Signet Books holds the rights to some books that should be reprinted. Included are The Demolished Man and Starburst by Alfred Bester; Starswarm, The Dark Light-Years, and Greybeard by Aldiss; and other books by Heinlein and Blish. Think SFR could help these books see reprint? I imagine many of your readers missed these books and would like to see them out again. By the way, Bester's The Stars My Destination is back in print.

Speaking of reprints, Ace has reprinted Babel-17 by Delany. I missed the book the first time around, so I'm not complaining. What bothers me is that the book still has the house ads from its original printing in the back. Prices are listed at Ace's old 35-50¢ range. Some of the books listed I'm sure are long out of print. What happens to the poor schlep who orders

from the outdated list in good faith? Does he get a letter saying he has to send more money or is his order returned? This seems to be a grave oversight.



SANDRA MIESEL
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If SFWA members think political polarization is no threat to them, let them observe recent controversies in all the major intellectual societies (biologists, chemists, physicists, historians, philosophers, AAAS, and MLA). Some of these have been quite bitter and detrimental to the particular aims of those organizations. Poul Anderson wasn't raising a false alarm.



JOHN J. PIERCE
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Sam Moskowitz tells me he has sent you a conciliatory letter of some sort and that this may mean the end of your feud with him, with me, and with the Second Foundation.

Nothing could please me more, I am not interested in personalities as such, and I'm quite ready to bury the hatchet with you — despite the fact that you never sent me that Fugghed Award you announced (I was planning to pawn it).

((But stop and think, John; a Fugghed Award has to be intrinsically worthless.

I have never feuded with anyone so far. I'm not the type. I wouldn't print your letters and send you an Ego-boo Bonus if we were feuding. I think you are wrong in many of your opinions—as you think me in some of mine—but in a feud? No. I'll continue to make fun of you, though, on occasion, because it is so easy and you are so convenient a fugghead to use. Indeed, J.J., if you didn't exist fandom would have to invent you.))

I'm still opposed to the New Wave-Thing on philosophical grounds, but that is the only objection I have. I have nothing against the new — the genuinely new — in theme and style. I want the genre to grow and develop, it's just that I don't consider any change positive — some kinds are regressive, and some don't advance the genre in any direction at all.

My tastes you may gather from the fact that my choices for Hugo awards this year are Ursula LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness (in a review last spring, I got carried away by sociological considerations which may have obscured the fact I considered it a great story) in the novel category, Larry Niven's "Death by Ecstasy" in the novella division, and James Tiptree's "The Snows are Melted, the Snows are Gone" in the short story category. These, you will note, are all stories by top new writers — no Flash Gordon, no Captain Future.

They all fall into the school I am now calling "Eschatological Romanticism" and which I have adopted as the "basis" of what I seek to promote through the Second Foundation. My approach in "Science fiction and the Romantic Tradition" was rather eclectic, and perhaps this confused some people. I think the new label should clear things up — it's more self-defining than anything else I can think up. Sf simply has to have a long-range perspective, it has to deal with the questions of "values" and "meaning" in an eschatological context.

((And your quarrel with the "new wave" is that its "values" and "meanings" in an eschatological context are not to your liking. You want Sf to go the way YOU want it to go. Fair enough. But does your fanzine, RENAISSANCE, go to a significant number of sf writers, editors and publishers to make a dent in their opinions, even if they found your opinions worthy of respect?

I mean, you're dealing with adults, and calling yourself "liaison officer" of "the Second Foundation" just doesn't make it.))

((In a second letter, Pierce writes.))

I'm sorry I have offended Bob Shaw by my review of The Palace of Eternity. But despite his explanations, I can't really say my opinion of the book has changed.

I have nothing against stories about ecology — in fact, I'm backing one by James Tiptree for a Hugo this year, and I also approved of James Blish's "We All lie Naked." But ecology is a quite realistic issue — dealing with it by resort to "egons" is superfluous at best and distracting at worst.

Despite the "scientific" explanations, "egons" can't be taken any more seriously than "spirits." They are a science-fantasy element — like the werewold business in Jack Williamson's Darker Than You Think. Only they aren't an initial element in The Palace of Eternity, which starts out as realistic science fiction with an apparent theme having to do with the problems of intellectual rigidity interfering with adaptability. The "egon" business is brought in right out of the blue, deus ex machina.

It pains me to say this, because I like a lot of Shaw's writing, but the fact remains that if he intended to warn us about ecological problems, he has gone about it in the worst possible way, creating confusion instead of enlightenment. "Spiritual" stuff makes sense in a book like Clarke's Childhood End, where it is supposed to symbolize the idea that our future evolution may be so strange it will seem "magic." But there is nothing magic or spiritual about ecological problems — mystical notions aren't needed to symbolize them. Shaw has gone all around Robin Hood's barn in search of profundity instead of making a direct attack.



TOM DISCH
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Appropos of Mr. Alfred Bester's letter in SFR 34, I'd just like to say thank you—and to ad some heart-felt advice of my own on the subject of lists.

Too few writers seem to be aware of the importance of keeping up-to-date lists of everything they do.

FOR AUTHORS WHO MAY NOT KNOW EVEN MORE

1.) make separate lists of all stories, poems, articles, etc. that you write. Be certain these lists are in correct alphabetical order.

2.) Keep card files for the same purpose. When a story or poem is sent to a magazine, such as HOLIDAY, make an entry on the card, giving both the magazine and the date the ms. was sent out. If it returns, enter the date it is received. If it's bought, enter the price, the date it is accepted, the date it is published, and the date payment is made.

3.) After one has been a "professional" for some years, one may begin to make alphabetical lists of the magazines in which stories, poems, etc. have appeared.

4.) Using the card files, chronological lists may be constructed.

5.) These lists should be kept in file folders, the folders themselves to be arranged alphabetically in a metal office file.

Once the writer has mastered all the above procedures, and observed these rules scrupulously for years, there can be no doubt of his professionalism. In fact a good filing system is a much better indication of real professionalism than the appearance of his mss., since the mss. will be seen by other people, while a filing system is done entirely for its own sake.



BRIAN W. ALDISS
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Thanks so much for taking the trouble to write to me. Let me give you the information you ask for straight away. Barefoot in the Head had simultaneous acceptances in Britain and America. The Faber edition has now been out about four

months and the Doubleday edition is due to appear in the late spring, I believe ((March 6, I have subsequently learned)). (You may perhaps like to know that Faber will be publishing The Shape of Further Things in the late spring; Doubleday may get round to it next year - they accepted it at the same time, but are behind schedule. Shape, among other things, talks about the British sf scene.)

No, I don't think I want to read John Brunner's criticism of Barefoot, although I suppose I am faintly curious to see how he goes about it. If his strictures are harsh enough or his praise fulsome enough, then no doubt some good friend will force a copy upon me! I have heard John praise the book, at a NEW WORLDS party and at Rio; but praise is sometimes hard to bear - one is so particular that it has to be praise in the right terms! My major reservation operates in the area from which I exerted myself to ask you not to send me SFR. We all know each other. Perhaps we have seen the green in one another's eyes. This makes our criticism valueless or, at best, highly loaded.

Unlike many writers, I am also a professional critic. This is why I find so much of the writing (fictional and critical) of my contemporaries just painful - and the more painful when they clearly think so well of themselves! Unfortunately - no, perhaps one needs the protective armour! - I also think very well of my own writings; so I keep as quiet as possible, in case this emerges and invites nemesis! (Well, you saw how I went on at poor Ted White...) In the case of Barefoot, I know pretty well where I failed and where I succeeded; I am sufficiently reassured by the book's reception by the underground and elsewhere not to worry too much about the verdicts of critics within the sf field. This is particularly so at present, when my novel Hand-Reared Boy stands at the top of the best-seller list - it is reassuring to find a wide and genial acceptance in the big wide world after fifteen years' diligent labour in the sf field have passed generally unnoticed!

Please don't think I had anything against SFR. I know it's very lively; it's hardly your fault if some writers have ego-mania! But the intermittent noise got on my nerves - and I have cancelled other fanzines. The best prescription for a writer remains the Roman one: silence, solitude, exile!



AVRAM DAVIDSON
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"What a pity /wrote a friend/ that your book, Phoenix, wasn't selected for the /science fiction/ Book Club..." Of course I don't know if it was even considered, but I am bemused at seeing one book which was selected, viz. A Princess of Mars. I dismiss

the possibility that this is a new book coincidentally bearing an old title; I am afraid Leigh Brackett wouldn't even call a book that nowadays; I feel it is the original ERB Princess, I wonder if the SFBC is paying royalties on it to the Burroughs Estate, and I wonder also if yet another publishing firm hasn't decided that it is foolish to support the living when you can pick the pockets of the dead for free. We are all of us, increasingly, anachronisms anyway. Soon nothing will remain but for us all to reverse the action of our pituitaries and intone, "Kipple to Kipple, dust to dust"...

Gertrude Stein once complained rather fretfully, and doubtless whilst waiting for Pussy to put the lunch on the table, "They are always telling you in books that people ate, but they never tell you what they ate." You report Charles Platt of NEW WORLDS as needing material, you tell us what he buys, and etc in good detail, and you tell us that he pays on publication: But, my dear REG, you don't tell us what he pays. Why not?

((He didn't say. I don't imagine very much. And I'm sure it would depend on the ms and the writer as to how much the much would be.))

Hey, there's Dean Grennell! Hi, Dean! How are you and your neat family? "I'd sooner sit and cut seed potatoes" is a good phrase and image; I wonder if it could be the origin of, say, "Sit, or get off the pot."?

I am glad, glad, glad (anybody recognize that?) that you

(REG) liked The Island Under the Earth (adv.)

Piers Anthony is rather sad that Keith Laumer didn't come to visit him, but I see that he doesn't give his address: "Florida" is rather vague, P.A. He says that my "letter left him with mixed feelings." Well, I want to echo that and say that his letter left me with rather mixed feelings, so there. He says several very nice (and, of course, very accurate) things about me as a writer; then says he ranks me as "one of the finest uninteresting writers" he knows of. I can only compare this to W. C. Fields' comment on sex: "There may be something better than it and there may not be something better than it, but one thing is certain: there is nothing exactly the same as it."

Onward. Mr. Anthony is still vexed—perhaps justly, perhaps not—because when he submitted a story to me, as then-editor of F&SF, he "received a note curtly rejecting it," inadequately and inaccurately appraising it, and drawing incorrect conclusions about its paper clip. Well, now, *sigh*. This was years ago, when the name of Piers Anthony was perhaps not exactly a household word ((a lovely sic)). Perhaps the key phrase was "received a note." You know, not everyone received a note. Some received printed rejection slips. From a subsequent letter to him, he says, "it was obvious that Avram did not recognize him as the F&SF ms. submitter." True, sir. I still don't. I am sorry to say that I have exactly no recollection of the incident. People who have not been editors can perhaps with difficulty conjecture what it means to keep up with an incessant flow of submissions. Eventually, not feeling able to, I resigned. I did, I think, I did try to be polite, always. But I do not always succeed. Piers says, "In short, Avram treated me contemptuously..." I wonder if the general verdict would be that I did that? But the more important issue is that Piers thought and thinks I did: and for this I am sorry.

Now, in ref. to the Third Secondary Universe Conference, I see mention of a or the Science Fiction Research Associates. Can and will someone tell me who and/or what this is? It sounds interesting.

Bob Bloch, by implication, anyway, calls me "provocative"; implies—I think—that I may be guilty of "Self-Conscious Writing"—but I will cease listing and conjecturing: and say, respectfully, that I respect Bob Bloch as a person and as a writer: and I do not see clearly what it is that he means to tell me...if, indeed, he does. Sir, would you care to be more diffuse and more specific?

Now and then (though not often) it occurs to me that I may be missing much by not reading more of what my compeers write. For example, the sentence which Robert E. Toomey, Jr. quotes from his story, "Directions Into the Darkness", viz. "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", is one of the things which sometimes make me think so.

Charles Platt again. Charles Platt asks, "Surely there must be better subject material for authors than them-

selves?" To which I reply, "NONSENSE!" Particularly not in such a publication as SFR, or, anyway, in most of it. (What editors pay is also a good subject to write about.) Where else can we write about ourselves?—or where better? "Must you write about yourselves?" CERTAINLY. What else sheds more light on what science fiction authors authorize than what they say, or "go on," about themselves...or, as Mr. Platt quotes Brian Aldiss as putting it, "about their own dreadful novels..." Mr. Aldiss, I observe with sympathy also, has been a Literary Editor, and has had to read, and to write about, many many books. I know. I have been there, too. It does something to one. Perhaps if I had not been obliged to read so much SF I might voluntarily be reading more of it now. Then again, maybe not.

And now I come again to the generally gentle Harry Warner, Jr. "Good grief," he writes, "don't tell me that Avram Davidson has also been repeating that old bromide about Lovecraft's sanity." Well, I won't tell him. Have I? I'm an old man, lads, 98 year of age, and my memory's not what it was. I do remember that some several years ago I did write that Lovecraft was "a twitch", and, let me tell you, a hundred and eleven different kinds of eldritch horrors descended on my head—mostly from kids who has never known HPL and who regarded him as an elder god of sorts. A few people who had known him wrote and said that there was another side to him; and, thanks to them and to other material which has since been published, I now realize that there was another side to him. The last time Harry Warner rapped my knuckles in public print I reconsidered my words and withdrew them publicly. I will, however delay my apologies for "telling lies about a gentle man" (HPL) until someone will point out just what it was I told.

I must, however, deny with all the vigor at my command, that Lovecraft and I have had "an unsuccessful marriage a-piece." I can't speak for his, but my own ex-wife has authorized me to declare that our ex-marriage was full of cusses. Since going our individual ways once more, though, we are much better friends, and hardly ever cuss each other. —I do wish, too, that Harry hadn't said that "Lovecraft and Davidson have been quite similar in numerous ways"—this has already made me distinctly uneasy, now I've thought about it. I'm not yet quite reduced to living on 37¢ worth of beans a week, though damn near it, though. I wonder if I, too, will die early ((I thought you said you were 98?)) and be better appreciated by posterity than by contemporaneity...will I even be the subject and object of a cult? with pustular pub-erts ready to leap with tooth and fang on anyone who says a harsh word about me? Will Arkham House publish my Collected Works? —Hark! Is that a click and a scrabble at my attic door? an evil, unearthly stench? a harsh droning voice and a wet flopp/flapping, a rugose and amorphous, squamous sound from the basement? No no (shwew!) I live in a one-story cottage—and I refuse to leave my notes to August Derleth. Unless, of course, he Makes me a Tempting Offer. Does he get SFR? ((Yes.)) Are you dere, D'Erlette? Christ on Crutches, 800 and 11 books: how do you DO it?

Well, well. This isn't getting my work done. It isn't even answering any of the questions I asked in my peanut-

whistle-shriek of a letter last time. In effect I asked, Why don't people buy the books I write and/or want to write? Some reviewers have implied that I ought to write other books. Randall Garrett has in effect answered my question ...and answered those reviewers, too (Not you, Geiss: you're nice.) ((Not when I'm called Geiss!)) "We write ourselves in our books," he said.

((I think you're asking questions about yourself which only you can answer...unless even your best friends won't tell you.))



JOHN BRUNNER
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The Evil That Men Do is so science fiction - the science in question being abnormal psychology, although admittedly some people decline to dignify that discipline with scientific status. It was serialized in NEW WORLDS (old style, though during Mike Moorcock's tenure), and never intended for the gothic ghetto.

Hmmm... That conjures up an interesting image: a city quarter composed of Transylvanian castles, all full of rabbis manufacturing golems and vampires who have to be driven away not with a cross but with a mogen David. Right?

The other two best? ((Last issue Hank Davis wondered about the other two after John had mentioned he thought Chip Delany's "Aye, and Gommorrah" was one of the three best sf stories ever written.)) James Blish: "Common Time." And Ray Bradbury: "The Watchful Poker Chip of H. Matisse." Though someone is bound to say that's not science fiction either.



LEE HOFFMAN
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The book reviews you run in SFR are, essentially, more "criticism" than "review". They're full of personal opinion. This is all great and fine and lots of fun, but unless the reader has an idea of the writer's tastes, they're generally not terribly useful. One really needs to know quite a bit about a critic's tastes in order to judge his opinions. This brings me to two criticisms of your review column:

1) You've got too many different critics popping in and out. I can't keep track of all of them, with their varied tastes and opinions. Criticisms by a small, steady staff of regular contributors would be more useful.

((Ideally, yes, a small staff. But it takes time to find fans who are mature, can write, are dedicated, addicted sf-fantasy readers. And in the meantime the books keep coming in for review. The editorial problems are wicked. However, with the discovery of Paul Walker, who reads like a man possessed and who can think and evaluate and write, along with Ted Pauls, Richard Delap and myself as the main-

stays, plus Fred Patten, whose reviews will start showing up in SFR next issue, (where the hell is this sentence going? "To hell, Geis! Third level, Stupid Editors Division.") SFR should be somewhat as you wish, review-wise. ("Arrrrghh!") But there will always be a sprinkle of semi-regulars and infrequenters.))

2) I'd like to see the critic's name at the beginning of each review. As it is now, I have to look ahead to find out whose opinion I'm reading, so I'll have some way of judging it as I read. More easier the other way, like with the letters, where I can tell immediately whose rant I'm arriving at.

((I've been thinking about that change, myself, so I'll make the change starting next issue. In a small way it will emphasize the reviewer a bit, which is not a bad thing.))

Speaking of rants, there is something wonderfully ostentatious about these pronouncements by Famous People that they don't want their mailboxes sullied by SFR anymore.

((I forgive Them, for They know not what They do.))



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People have been badmouthing Robert A. Heinlein lately. Not that the dear dean of science fiction (or whatever his title is) does not deserve it. He hasn't written a good story since Have Space Suit, Will Travel. But the good fellow doesn't deserve to be epitaphed "The man who wrote the book that caused Manson to (allegedly) murder sundry people." The notoriety, however, seems to have done the book some good. It's \$1.25 a throw now. Warner Bros. supposedly has the rights. And TIME magazine, no less, has offered the perfect casting.

This is all memory, but they had an issue where the cover story was on the Flying Fondas—Henry, Peter, and Jane. TIME's snotty reporter says, "Since you got bumped off at the end of EASY RIDER, and Jane was bumped off in THEY SHOOT HORSES, what do you think is the effect of film violence. Do you think the Charlie Mansons see your films and go out and kill people?" "No," Jane replies, "We all know what he read. But a psychotic can twist whatever he gets his hands on to his own ends. Stranger in a Strange Land* It's just a title." And Peter chimes in: "They should do the movie Dad could play Jubal Harshaw. Jane would play Jill, the nurse. And I'd be Valentine Smith."

*TIME clarifies the reference with a footnote: "Robert A. Heinlein's novel about a man raised on Mars who returns to Earth cheerfully ready to kill those who stand in the way of his propagating a superior race."

There is a problem I have found with science fiction lately. I loved Macroscopic. My roommate struggled to get going, and had to re-read the last chapter, but ended up liking it. Brother Richard thought it would make a good movie with Omar Sharif and R. Welch. Ken Rudolph couldn't finish it. Black Corridor freaked Henry and I and my roommate out to varying degrees, but left other people unaffected, thinking the book

flashy but trite. And Chaos Died is written in a style that makes Black Corridor look like a Larry Niven story. I almost got everything the first time through, and really appreciated the whole style of inference forcing (in me) a greater subjective involvement. Roommate Len gave up in disgust after about 100 pages (or less) in complaining either a) he understood it and it was too trivial, or b) he did not understand it, besides c) it was all bible-babble anyway.

I do not feel that the inclusion of Forrest J (no period) Ackerman weakened Blown. Phil Farmer used Woolston Heepish in Image of the Beast and no one carped. Having been to 4e's house a few times, I appreciated seeing it transmogrified in Image and glorified in Blown. What did sort of bother me was his characterizations of the couple keeping house for Ackerman, organizing his collection, et. al. It would be libelous to suggest that the characters in the books represented even a biased picture of the couple, Bill and Beverly Warren, actually in residence. Knowing them slightly from a few Westercons, the pictures of how I saw them (basically good people) kept interfering with the people in the book (lowlife parasites).

Now the subtitle for the series is: An Exorcism. An exorcism of what? The Ocs and the Trog from Earth? I can't believe that. N, all that, it occurred to me about 1/2 through the second book, is a very clever smoke screen. These books are not the outrage that some people seem to see them as. They seem (to my limited perception) to be an act of love.

The first book has, as I've mentioned, Woolston Heepish, who is the exaggeration of every fault FJAckerman could possess. Besides that, he has a suggested connection with alien ("evil") beings. Blown actually pits FJA himself (all the good, warm, human, attributes of Ackerman) against Heepish (the anti-Ackerman, the Black Forry, complete with evil powers of darkness). Ackerman confronts sexual and physiological and psychological antagonists, lending his aid to the Good against the Bad. (But is either to be judged by our humanity's standards?) He does nothing improper (participate in the orgies, or take any drugs), but is disappointed in the weird events when he momentarily wonders if someone dropped chemicals in his orange drink. And, when Harold Childe "exorcizes" the aliens, Woolston Heepish remains behind, telling Forry, "Can Mr. Hyde get away from Dr. Jekyll?"

No, I think PJF is writing these books to exorcize all that is Woolston Heepish from FJA. It is a labor of love and friendship. And, if this notion is more than just a notion, I can't wait to see the third book.

(I mentioned this theory to Henry Stine New Year's Eve. He said he didn't know what Farmer was doing, but how closely had I read Thrill City? It seems the poor schmuck who undergoes all the aforementioned thrills in the leit-motif sex parts was me. If that's the alternative, I'm for staying a virgin.)



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Dean Grennell, that Wily old devil, was always on of my favorite columnists, and this installment of "The Square Needle" (presumably the one in the left-hand item?) only bears me out. Not only does

this prince of a man manage to mention my name and give me unexpected egoboo, but the rest of the column is good to boot. He hits my nail right on the head about ANALOG. I stopped buying the magazine about a year ago, I'd estimate, and if I had to tell the truth I'd have to admit I've had a nagging bad feeling about it ever since. Sort of a denial of something once good, or a loss of a once-precious thing. I hadn't read the magazine seriously for about two years before I decided to stop buying it...but, like Dean, I wonder if I somehow wouldn't feel better if I were still laying out 60¢ every month and keeping the things whether I read them or not.

I heartily agree with his analysis that "ANALOG represents a classic instance of the evils of inbreeding." I don't believe my feelings for the magazine could be summed up any more succinctly and precisely. John Campbell once represented the golden age of ASTOUNDING, but he's certainly been in the driver's seat too long for his own good. What was that old saying about power corrupting and absolute power corrupting absolutely? Campbell prides himself in his ability to recognize new ideas, yet I doubt if ANALOG has carried a new idea in many, many years. It certainly hadn't in the last few years I read the magazine regularly, plus the additional two years I read it occasionally, and from Dean's comments the same thing apparently holds true today. I count it almost heresy to say it, but what that magazine could use is a change of editors. It might be good for Campbell, too.



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"Archive" I found fascinating. Since so much Heinlein is to be found in this issue perhaps you might be interested in this small thing I came across. On page B2 of the Putnam edition of Stranger in a Strange Land, Jubal Harshaw dictates a story about a kitten who on a snowy Christmas Eve wanders into a church manger scene. The title of the story was to be "The Other Manger" by Mary Wadsworth. I have a copy of a cat anthology (The Personality of the Cat, edited by Brandt Aymar, Crown, 1958) which features a story called "The Best Bed" by Sylvia Townsend Warner. It is the story of a starved, frozen cat who wanders into a church on Christmas Eve and goes to sleep in the manger scene. According to the acknowledgements at the front of the book, this is from The Salutation and is copyrighted 1932. Still makes one wonder. Is this a case of Heinlein subconsciously remembering the story, did he just originate the plot independently, or could The Salutation be Opus 1?

Anthony on Vance—I kept waiting and kept waiting for a mention of The Eyes of the Overworld (Ace M-149, 1966), Vance's sequel to The Dying Earth. Isn't Anthony aware of it? And what in ghod's name is wrong with using the same name in two different stories? Picky, picky, picky.



I-ALSO-GOT-LETTERS-FROM...

Of the several dozen different comments of various lengths I received concerning Franz Rottensteiner's "Chewing Gum for The Vulgar" of last issue, not one agreed with him. All took issue in various ways.

There was much approval and praise of Steve Fabian's cover, and of Tim Kirk's page.

"Archive" was well received, more so than I expected it would be.

Several fans thought Dean Grennell's new column funny and welcome his joining the fold.

Alexei Panshin was patted on the back for putting down Rottensteiner.

One fan criticized me for running Piers Anthony's long letter.

Several praised me for adroit and fair editing

One reader mentioned liking Banks Meban's analysis of Silverberg's "Sundance".

I have letters from Franz Rottensteiner, Andy Offutt and Harry Warner, Jr. which I am carrying over to the next issue.

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I should mention that several fans, including Harry Warner, Jr. if memory serves (Thwack! "Fifteen-love, Geis. That was an ace.") wrote that fans could use international money orders available at the Post Office with which to send moneys to HEICON for membership.

Supporting membership with airmail service for Heicon publications is 14 DM: to Mario Bosnyak, 6272 Niedernhausen, Feldbergstr. 26A, WEST GERMANY

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