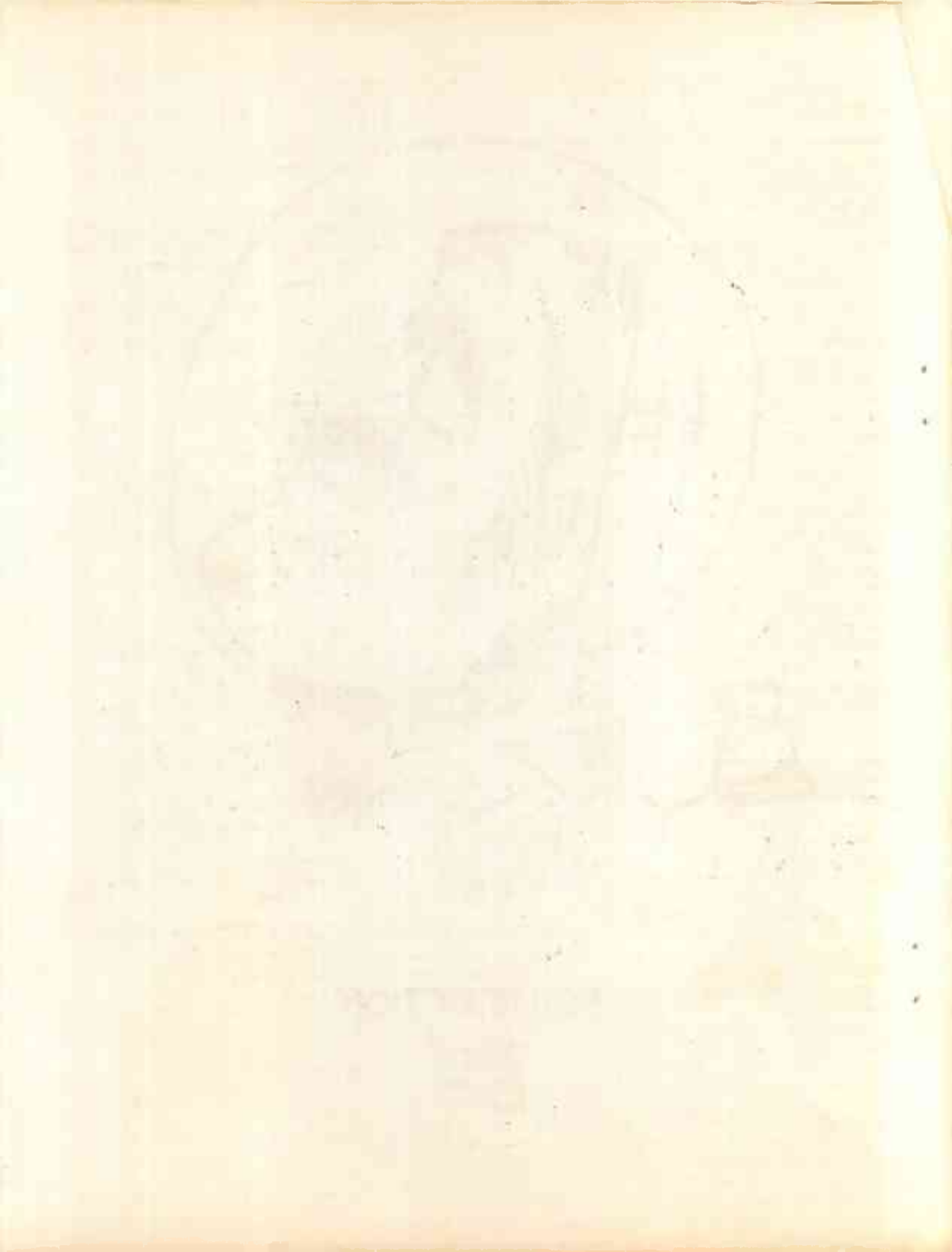




SCIENTIFRICTION

special
albino
foolscap
issue



Scientfriction Four/
POSTHENSILE is edited
by Mike Glycer of 14974
Osceola St., Sylmar CA
91342. // Someday soon
I'm going to study the
colophons of the zines,
I get and see how many
versions of "the usual"
exist. Mine is this:
NO subscriptions are
available, and those
being paid off for old
Sylmarillion subs will
have four ticks of the
remaining issues owed
deducted due to this
issue's outrageous
size and my previous
remark that an issue
over 14 pages would
justify my subtracting
two ticks. Remaining
obligation, if any,
is reflected in the
total number of ticks
left (3). I'll send
out a sample issue for
25¢, but you may not
get it until the next
issue is pubbed: I al-
most never have any
back issues due to
the small (175) print
run. Trades: those I
trade all-for-all are
noted (T), those I
trade one-for-one are
noted (t) and I must
have a response from
you by next issue to
be retained on the ml.
STFR is available for
substantial locs wheth-
pubbed or not. Artists
with work on file are
under no additional ob-
same applies to book
reviewers. Articlars
get the issue they ap-
pear in, and the fol-
lowing, before incurri-
ng new obligation to
respond. Anybody about
to be dropped has a ?

-----TABLE OF CONTENTS-----

- 2 EDITORIAL by Mike Glycer
10 STFR LETTERCOLUMN: Amos, Morley, Abramo-
witz, Downes, Chauvin, Smith, Glick-
sohn, Kaufman, May, Andruschak,
Pournelle, Simmons, Keller, Ayres,
Flynn, Singer, Tackett, Mayo, Trask,
Indick, Long, Martin, Birkhead
29a Sears & Roebuck Co. Follies of 1908, by
Randy Bathurst;
29f Townley frontispiece for:
30 RIEFENSTAL, by Lou Stathis
33a FAN FUNNIES by James Shull
34 CONAN THE PIMP by Ken Mayo
40 COLONIST, poem by Richard Mezo
41 STF IN ACADEME, column by Joe Sanders
44 FUTURE:IMPERFECT by Andrew Darlington
48 ANTEDILUVIAN APOLOGIA, Henri Chapdelaine
53 FRAGMENT OF THE AFTERWORLD, by Jon Inouye
53a FAN FUNNIES by James Shull
54 JON INOUE: FURTHER INSIGHTS,
by Bruce Townley, Esq.
57 THE ZINEPHOBIC EYE,
column by Mike Glicksohn
62 WAS GOD A BURNT WEENIE SANDWICH ABAN-
DONED IN GRAND CENTRAL STATION
review by Andrew Darlington
65 POSTHENSILE: Letters on PREHENSILE 14
Townley, White, Franke, Hertz,
D'Ammassa, Schweitzer, Walker,
Lindsay, Wolfe, Chauvin, Hollyn,
Davis, Silverberg, Offutt,Wallace,
Hulse, Grady, Capella, Jenkins,
Pardoe, Bloch, Sawicki, Hlavaty
37 SPACE:1999 THE COSMIC ABORTION, review
by Darrell Schweitzer
80 BOOK REVIEWS: Schweitzer,Keller,Burns,
Shoemaker, Coopersmith

*****Artists*****

Bill Rotsler,4,20,23,28,51
Randy Bathurst, 6,29a-e,42
Barry Kent Mackay,5,82
Al Sirosis,13,38
Grant Canfield,15
Simon Agree,18,77
Bruce Townley,29f,56,78
Reed Waller,31,43,73
Mark Schirmeister,33
James Shull,33a,53a
Jim Young,36,70
Jim McLeod,48
Ken Fletcher,57

PROTOSTFR



**Mike
Glycer**

1. DEPARTMENT OF SECOND THOUGHTS:

It's important that someday I learn to do this zine's editorial before I get into production: doing it at the end as I have this time not only leaves me in the position of trying to write while drained of energy and impatient to finish the zine, it leaves me, this time, up against the deadline. Tonight I fly out to CONFuSion, presumably with fifty copies of this creature scratching and snarling among themselves in my baggage. Will I finish in time? Or will I end up with a fanzine that starts on page 10??

This zine, once touted as my special holiday issue, was interrupted in production. It stopped in November.

By earning an MA I became immediately unemployable. Ironically I'd just finished outwaiting the State of Ohio and collected the first of several checks designed to compensate me for the pleasure of being out of work. Two days later I was out soliciting job applications (the coin of the realm in unemployment circles) and somebody actually had the nerve to offer me a job. While it ended up to be schlepping heavy boxes around a department store, it was four times as lucrative as unemployment. And it was vastly preferable to a clerk's job, for I was up and around all day. Having had a taste of the secretary, rhetorically speaking, eight hours a day on one's backside churning out hackwork, under blinding fluorescents, I know that to be a job requiring so little motion that the inactivity itself is fatiguing.

Back in October I took Civil Service examinations; got back scores two months later. The scores, based on academic qualifications, experience, and test performance, are merged for ratings in six job classifications. With a range between 70 and 100, I scored a pair of 94s, a 91, a 90, an 89 and an 87. One of the 94s is in writing and editing, and another is in the ambiguous classification "Contact Representative" -- sounds like a fancy name for a hit man.

The job was seasonal; I was laid off January 4 and made a beeline for the unemployment office... Since then fannish writing has occupied me on a full time basis: a long article for Geis, turned down; a semi-long review for Geis, taken; and umpteen zillion stencils to type and pub for this oddly large zine. I am reminded of Taral Wayne MacDonald's review of the zine in SIMULACRUM: "With luck STFR will evolve into replacing PRE, though Mike would undoubtedly argue which kind of luck that was -- for him." I simply cannot let this happen again. This zine literally occupied my full attention over a two-week span. Now if, protest as I may, I get a Real Job, there's no way I'll ever again have this much time to devote to so frivolous a cause. In those circumstances I'd probably have to revive PRE! (Simply to save the running-off time). This issue's size can be attributed to cleaning out the files, so in that sense the need for a gargantuan zine will be less: I disposed of 14 pages of letters on PREHENSILE 14; I dispensed with 13 pages of articles that had

accumulated in the files, at least eight months old; and I made a stab at emptying the book review file which failed due to problems with the typewriter I'd been using. Those who are waiting me to print their filed material still can depend on its publication in a soon-to-follow STFR 5. Unless I get hired, of course....

Finally, in second thotting the issue, I want to apologize to the world, to myself, and to Bruce Townley for a remark I make in the lettercolumn, something to the effect that another artist lacked Bruce Townley's sophistication. I can only claim as my excuse the fact that I was sober when I wrote it, and there's no telling what I'll say when I'm in that condition. I mean, that has GOT to be the depths of pompsoty, not to mention pomposity (out, damned typo!)

2. CAN'T TELL THE PLAYERS WITHOUT A PROGRAM Months ago when Andrew Darlington sent me his articles I had just finished reading several British fanzines that complained their fandom's zines were on the whole utterly debased. Darlington's submissions, and Harry Bell's illo at right already on file, triggered my imagination: the zines pubbed on that side of the pool needed a sort of Marshall Plan. More American-based pubbers would have to start creating British zines. GUNPUTTY is one, the only one America has. I'd have to pitch in. And the idea swelled until I envisioned Amerifen dispatching drumloads of olive drab mimeo ink, khaki stencils, castoff corflu, GI slipsheets, war surplus feud material to build circulation, a comprehensive aid package. Then I sobered up, which spoiled the entire game...

It's as well I didn't get carried away, given Mike Glicksohn's zine reviews in this issue which in fact credit the British with some of the finest zines and best writing available anywhere. I suppose it's just that some portions of fandom there haven't clued into the fact: perhaps Glicksohn will do for them what Lafcadio Hearn did for the Japanese, that is, show that what they already have commands considerable respect.

The fans Over There produce a variety of fanzines, each associated with some bizarrely-named clique. I'd never managed to sort out who belonged to which clique, since the publishers assumed their audience knew who THEY were, and everyone else was left to fend for heeshelf.

I pleaded with Dave Rowe, news vendor par excellence in the Three Kingdoms, to draw me up some sort of identifying roster, so that we could intelligently appreciate the shadings of each zine's editorial bias.



Therefore, thanks to Dave Rowe, who scribed it, I can present the following MENAGERIE SCORECARD:

GANNETS (Newcastle): Ian Williams, Harry & Irene Bell, Thom Penman, Ritchie Smith, Rob (Tweed Elephant/Granny) Jackson, Dave Cockfield, Kev Williams, Jim Marshall (both of 'im), Henry PiJohn, Josh Rawlings, Ian Maule (now in London, primarily a Gannet but acceptable now also as a Kitten or a Rat). Honourary (?) Gannet: Gray Boak (because of Newcastle birth).

BRUM GROUP (Birmingham): Vernon Brown, Ray Bradbury, Pauline Dungate, Pete Weston, Rog Peyton, Hazel Reynolds.

KITTENS (London): Arthur & Wendy Cruttenden, Brian Hampton, Bernie Peek, Janice Wiles, Coral Clarke & brother Bruce, Gerald Lawrence, Fred Hemmings, Chris Bursey, Dave Rowe.

WOMBATS (Huntingdon): Darroll and Ro Pardoe.

POLECATS (Derby): Mike & Pat Meara, and possible Dave Piper.

RATS (London): LeRoy & Christine Kettle, Rob Holdstock, John Brosnan, Pat & Gra Charnock, Greg Pickersgill, Simone Walsh, Malcolm & Christine Edwards.

MAD GROUP (Manchester): Pete Presford, Brian Robinson, Ian Buttersworth, Chuck Partington, also Skel & Cas (who are also the SaD group -- Stockport).

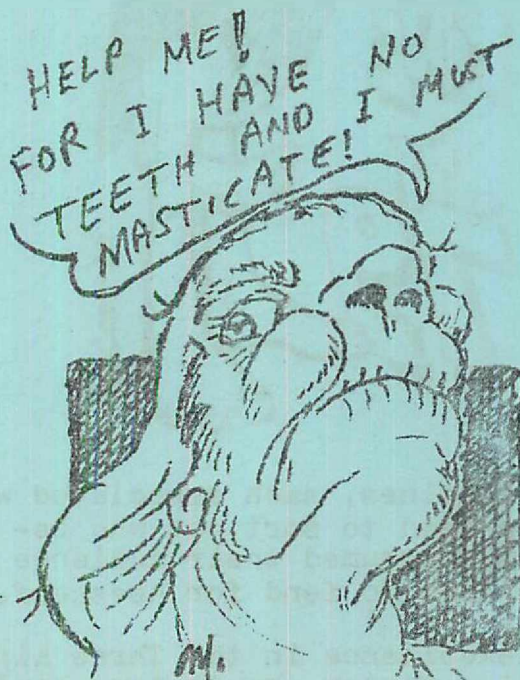
CHELTENHAM GROUP (Cheltenham, would you believe?): Gra Poole.

Says Dave, "This is no attempt to list all members, just the prominent ones I can think of offhand.

3. MOTHBALLING THE FLYING CIRCUS

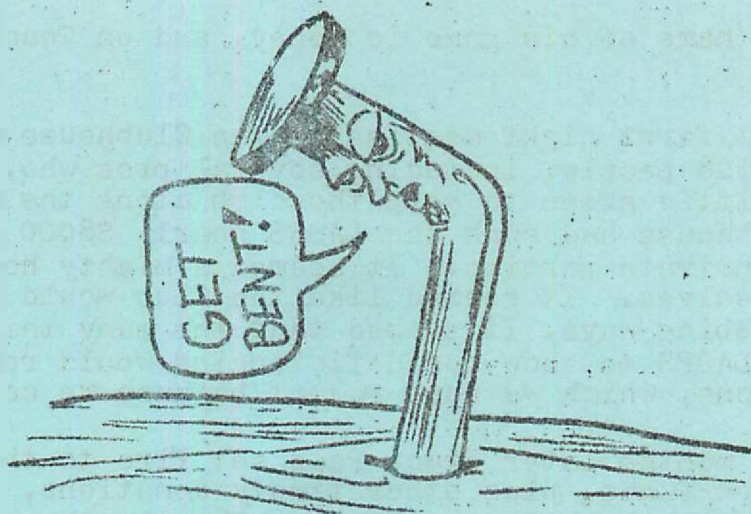
Dave Rowe also consented to tell us of the fate of Monty Python's Flying Circus, a British comedy group sweeping through fandom via their PBS appearances, films and records.

"Monty Python has folded, apparently the group can't stand each other in real life. Eric Idle did a short TV series in the same vein on a very low budget called "Rutland Weekend Television." (He also did a Radio programme -- much the same called "Radio 5"). There are several MP records available, including one with a loop ending, and another with two grooves on one side. Also there's about three books based on the TV series."



If STFR readers are sufficiently interested, I can try to obtain the right to reprint an interview with John Cleese recently run in a ~~1977~~ offbeat magazine here.

Meanwhile, John Cleese, Eric Idle, Terry Gilliam and perhaps others who ended up in MP did a radio show once upon a time called I'M SORRY, I'LL READ THAT AGAIN, AGAIN -- available through National Public Radio.



The development of a Pythonesque group in America is not far away: anyone who has seen SATURDAY NIGHT on NBC and the work of "The Not Ready For Prime Time Players" will recognize in their sophisticated/slapstick/boorish/satirical comedy an American style freelance group of the same quality.

4. AN ESSAY NEVER SENT TO BOSTON, IF YOU PLEASE, UPDATED FOR 1976

Somebody wanted to know the inside story of the LASFS Clubhouse? That tale of harrowing finances painted in Aztec yellow, APA L blue, Yampolsky mauve and Ed Green, concealed in Studio City between the plant shop and the butterfly store, across the street from a swingers' bar? Why, naturally --

Wait a minute. You say you're the new editor of the Proper Boskonian? That's the NESFA zine, isn't it? I thought so. Now every time somebody from NESFA pops up at the clubhouse -- and it seems like it happens every week -- we always get treated to "But this is the way NESFA does it." They're always on our case, man -- "Why don't you publish books, why don't you run a proprietary convention, why don't you furnish this service and that service instead of letting the Building Fund suck up all your money and for what?" Now do you think for a minute that I want to reveal the innermost secrets, the pet foibles, the irrational anarchy of the LASFS Clubhouse?

Pull up a chair.

"...And lastly, I have a paperback copy of SF 15 by Ted Carnell," said the Treasurer, resuming the auctioneer's post from Daugherty who'd sold a few items for old times' sake. "What am I bid?"

"Five dollars," said Ray Bradbury.

"Ten dollars" said Harlan Ellison.

"Twenty."

"Twenty-five."

"Forty."

Ellison paused, put his pipe back in his mouth. He took out his wallet and thumbed through the folding money. He put it away. "You've got it, Ray."

The name of his game is money, and on Team LASFS Bruce Pelz bats clean-up.

That first night meeting in the Clubhouse we attracted in the vicinity of 108 people, including several pros who, as long-time members, flashed a little green to help the club along the way towards solvency. The Clubhouse had sunk the LASFS nearly \$8000 in debt, mostly money lent by private parties. It seemed a mighty hole from which to be pulling ourselves. It seemed like the Club would continue its austere, money-grubbing ways. It seemed that the many things NESFans always held up to LASFS to show our deficiencies would remain forever Eastern affectations, which we must reject because we could not indulge.

Ten months later Bruce Pelz set fire to the mortgage. The last of the LACon funds, plus other timely donations, had swelled the coffers, put the club back in the black. Shortly thereafter Pelz began divesting himself of the responsibility if not prestige and influence of his offices: Milt Stevens took over as Chairman of the Board of Directors, Ed Finkelstein followed Barry Gold in attempting to fill the seat of the Procedural Treasurer. Pelz retained the office of Corporate Treasurer due -- he said -- to the upcoming audit required by the state to continue the club's corporate status.

LASFS, ever slowly, started to acquire the trappings of a solvent organization. Shelves for the library. Exterior paint. A mimeo. Tables for APA L collation. The first of a planned series of proprietary cons.

Towards the end of 1975 LASFS was suffering the crowding brought on by attendance of 80+ people per meeting. Milt Stevens broached the news: deficit financing for expansion of the building.

Watch out, NESFA. We're catching up. All we need now is one all-consuming feud, and the chief officers tossing some people out...



Billy Jack vs. The Critics

A CONTEST/SWEEPSTAKES

Wherein letterhacks make the Irish Indian's flying
feet appear the soft caresses of love in comparison

KEN AMOS
7005 Bedford Ln.
Louisville, KY 40222

I admit it. I am cursed with that
plague West-Coasters contemptuously
call devotion to the '75 World Champion
Cincinnati Reds. You can perhaps guess
what this letter is about. ((Eek!))

That's right, a rebuttal against the somewhat overzealous attack you made
on everything connected with the Reds organization.

Having met you at RiverCon this summer
I found you to be a seemingly rational Dodger fan with an excellent
grasp of the game of baseball. It was with this in mind that I read your
article in Scientifriktion 2 and at the time I was not overly upset.
Recently, however, I read some comments from other readers and decided
to reread the editorial. I am now simmering barely below the boiling
point and I hope to set a few points straight as both sides of the argu-
ment need to be heard.

First and foremost you criticize the
Reds' announcers (by the way, that's spelled Brennaman) and I grudging-
ly admit you have some justification. Some mind you, not at all to the
lengths you go to. Your main objection is that they refer to the Reds
as "we" and otherwise inject themselves into the game to the point of
totally obscuring the game to the listener. I believe that if you list-
ened more closely to the games you would find that they are just as
quick to applaud a smooth defensive play from the opponent as from the
Reds. ((Rather than the pair's self-injection into the game, which I
did not notice, their partisan perspective colored the game to a degree
that obscured the objective performance. A good announcer cannot call
an objective game -- the creative talent required involves interpreting
events to communicate the emotional tone, the relative weight of the
contest, as well as the on-field performance. But the way this pair
did it better serves the win-at-all-costs diehard fan than the fan who
backs his team but wants a good, well-played match too.)) Admittedly
Joe Nuxhall leans so much towards the home team as to be offensive to
the visitors, but to say the same for Marty Brennaman is an injustice
(I think his professional ability was well proven by his work in the
World Series. ((So happens Brennaman gets all the Series shots --
Scully's baseball calling doesn't get heard so that people have a stand-
ard of comparison. Unfortunately, Scully's football calling, which is
now nationally available, is not up to the same standard.))

Next I would take issue with the line
that refers to Nuxhall as "the gravel-voiced ex-jock" and says that he

reels off statistical gibberish. I find this somewhat insulting to call a hall-of-famer "an ex-jock", and what in your mind constitutes "statistical gibberish." After all, Baseball thrives on statistics. ((I called him a "gravel-grunting ex-jock," a description listeners may themselves judge the aptness. . His Hall of Fame status did not automatically raise his IQ -- I can't demean his sincere effort, but I seethed to hear the results. Statistical gibberish is the recitation of lists of numbers which have no bearing on the immediate play. "Ex-jock" -- man, if there was ever a fellow for whom the term and all its connotations of gum-chewing, hanging around his old field, doing whatever he can to keep from passing from the game into the cold workaday world, it's got to be Nuxhall. He has very little skill in illuminating play despite a long productive career -- yet he's the "color man." Unfortunately in broadcast circles an athletic reputation impresses producers more than journalistic ability.))

I must concede to you on your next point. It is true that the announcers came down on the Dodger fans because of a small minority and Pete Rose does tend to agitate the crowd a good bit. But I really don't believe the whole affair is that important anyway. ((Far from it -- it's of the essence. Season before last when Rose was subjected to similar treatment around the league his performance suffered significantly. The fans have no right to abuse the players; the contest is between the teams, not between men and mobs. Dodger fans must already regret the result -- Rose's move to third will undoubtedly cost the brilliant Ron Cey his All-Star berth: Rose's play there was impeccable.))

The statement you made previous to that struck closer to home, and I'm afraid that your view might be more universal in the West than I would care to think. This is that the Eastern fans are chauvinistic about the East and don't have any interest in the West Coast teams. How could anyone think this for a moment when teams like the Dodgers, the A's and others are all contenders every year. Maybe you classify Cincinnati as a mid-western town and are talking about Boston and such teams further east. I can't speak for them personally but I find it difficult to believe that they are unconcerned with happenings on the West Coast. I simply know too many people who anxiously await news from the late games on the West Coast (myself included) to ever take your sweeping assumption seriously. ((Having returned to LA with its astoundingly biased press I now wonder if there's any town that fairly reports sports. But certainly the Midwest and East are every bit as prejudiced. How else could Archie Griffin win two Heismans over Davis, Chuck Muncie and Joe Washington -- when he's constantly being tackled from behind in breakaway situations? Neither Anthony Davis nor Ricky Bell ever had that happen to them. But the vast majority of votes are held east of the Mississippi; draw your own conclusions.))

I could go on and on but I would like to concentrate the rest of my attention on the remark "What really nauseates me is the uncritical devotion Reds fans give a team made up of the most self-indulgent and pompous bunch of overrated bigmouths in the game." First off, I don't give the Reds uncritical devotion and I certainly don't believe the Reds have a larger share of such fans than, say, the Dodgers. But this is not the point. The point is your hasty assessment of the Reds themselves. First you call them pompous and self-indulgent. Who are you making reference to? Certainly not the soft spoken

Don Gullett or George Foster, both devout Christians. Do you interpret Bench's confidence as pomposity or Rose's hustle as self-indulgent? As I go down the list of names I see very few who could even be considered somewhat cocky. I visited Los Angeles this summer and I found the LA papers to be very fair to the Reds with none of this unprovable slander. So please clarify who fits your definition of pompous and self-indulgent and if at all possible try to give more than general opinions. ((Darrell Chaney. The first time I heard a Reds game he was on the postgame show popping off about the Dodgers -- who that year wiped up the Reds. Sparky Anderson -- though for all that self-puffing I'd swap Alston and cash for him on the Dodger bench any day. Pete Rose -- somebody who flips off the crowd and tosses trash into the stands, without any idea of who it might hit, is strictly a jerkoff. But I freely admit my excessive rhetoric.))

Secondly, you refer to the Reds as over-rated. Do I really need to go through all the achievements the Reds have established this year. ((No, but I bet you will...)) After winning 108 games and beating the excellent Dodgers by 20 games, they went on to beat the Pirates in 3 games and won the Series in seven.... Morgan won the MVP award by the largest margin in Major League history (beating Stan Musial's 1946 record, or do you consider that statistical gibberish?). The only part of the Cincinnati Reds that was not applauded was the pitching staff and that was merely because they weren't as good as average, excluding Don Gullett, sidelined with a broken thumb for six weeks. So again please tell me why they were overrated and what they would have to do to rise up to their rating. I'm awfully afraid the bulk of your article sounded like the remarks of a sore loser who is trying to salve his pride by demeaning his opponent. ((If you had read the article when I wrote it, when the Dodgers, coming off a year as National League champs, were six games in front of the Reds and led the series with the Reds 4-3 after an exchange of at-home sweeps, you'd have gotten a better perspective on it. Even so, the Dodgers, who fell behind the Reds by 20 games in their division, still beat the Reds ten out of eighteen games. My fault was not embitterment but hubris -- the arrogant assumption that things must continue as they had gone. Ooops. Anyway, lord forbid the Reds should ever land a decent pitching staff.))

By the way, I really enjoy STFR and hope to continue receiving it. Don't you just love controversy?

THOMAS MORLEY
1000 Morewood Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

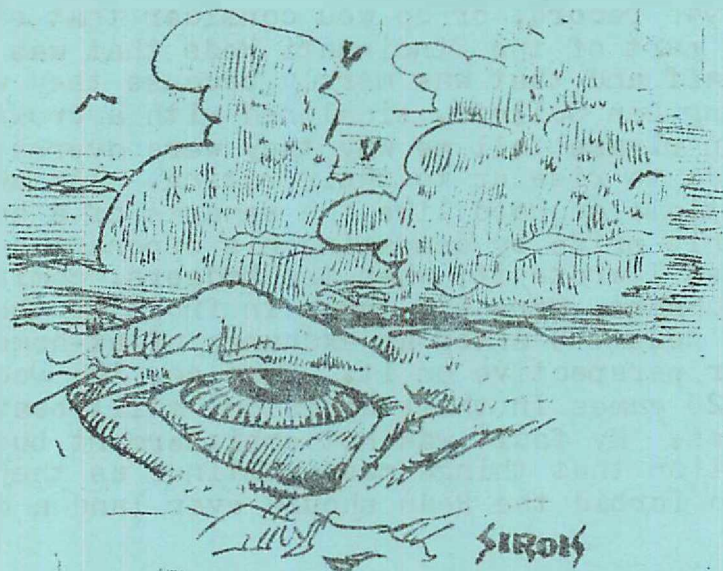
Concerning baseball announcers, have you ever heard Bob Prince, the voice of the Pittsburgh Pirates? ((Prince has since been canned and rehired in Houston.)) He's an announcer surrounded by

much controversy. Bob Prince's critics call him ignorant, prejudiced towards the Pirates, and all sorts of things. Prince is certainly unique in his broadcast style. If the game is boring (and dammit baseball games on the radio and boob tube can be excruciatingly boring) Prince doesn't care, he'll just talk about something else. This is the cause for one of the major criticisms of Prince. While in the middle of some long discussions about what happened after what game where, which all took place twenty years ago, Bob Prince occasionally misses a pitch.

Prince's critics always harp on that: my own opinion is, 'big deal.'
If the game is boring anyway who cares about one pitch...

Other charges against Bob Prince are more serious, as what happens when an umpire makes a marginal call against the Pirates. BP will harp on it for the rest of the game. He will be absolutely convinced the call was wrong, he will constantly replay the tape of the call. If the Pirates lose, BP will blame it on the one call. This I find obnoxious.

Prince's commentary is full of Princeisms -- Home run: "kiss it goodbye." Various types of hits: "a bloop," "a blast," "a bug on the rug." And after every Pirate victory: "We had them all the way!" One very good thing, Prince gives the score OFTEN. How many times have you tuned into the middle of a radio broadcast and had to wait 5-10 minutes for the goddam score? Not so with BP, he gives the score about once a minute. The guy must surely be demented. Who else would come up with the ideas of "WE GOT THE GREEN WEE-NIE" or Babushka Power?



ALYSON ABRAMOWITZ
Box 3-C-4
1060 Morewood Ave.
Pittsburgh PA 15213

I found your Midwestcon report to be the most fascinating thing in the issue. But... I am going to object to parts of it. First of all I approached you about Prehensile at the con suite party (on the patio). I remember be-

cause I was determined to get a good picture of Bill Bowers this time, who you were talking to. I'd just seen the other Mike (Glicksohn) who told me you two were about. 'Twas the first party I got to, so couldn't have been later than 9 or so on Friday night. I was at the party when BEM told the story of Friday night at the Pink Dragon, though. Listening to Mike, Mike, Bill and Bill (have some of you considered changing your names to something a little less common?) ((Like Ken, Tom, Larry, Jerry, Bruce, Bob, Joe... How about to Poul Meade IV?)) Ron Bushyager reminds you of Jerry Kaufman? I've gotten to know them both to some degree this past year and they are very different.

LARRY DOWNES
21960 Avon
Oak Park, MI 48237

The Midwestcon Report. For starters, all of Michigan Fandom (read: WJF) had already decided you were a hoax (a lot of us still believe it.) In addition there are some of us (read: me) who

wish Ro Nagey were a hoax, and apart from the constant references to that dear, dear, dear...boy, your report was very enjoyable, if not excellent. I didn't even have to egoscan to like it. ((That'll be the day. However, your wishes have been granted. Since I haven't heard from Nagey since he left here in September, despite good reason to expect to, I can only conclude that one of two possibilities intervened: the first, that Russia dropped an atomic bomb on Ann Arbor, or second, that there is no Ro Nagey, only another fake in plastic makeup, probably designed by Bjo Trimble, scouting fandom in preparation for its invasion by the combined forces of SPACE:1999, The Starlost, and Planet of the Apes fan refugees. Why Bjo? Who else do we know, Bjo having participated in key phases of makeup design for FLESH GORDON, with the talent to produce a fake so convincing that a staunch trufemfan like Lin Lutz would become engaged to him? Eh? ~~Take that Nagey!!~~))

SMOFFing is any discussion between fanzine fans that other fans wouldn't understand. (Definition courtesy of the Leah Zeldes Library of Hyperfan-ac.)

Now about myself and Glicksohn: You seemed to have gotten some wrong ideas which I'd like to clear up. ((First, how about clearing up the grammar in that sentence?)) Soon after the second issue of my fanzine I had a short, but vicious, "feud" with Mike concerning my right to publish what I wanted and still call it good...or something like that. The whole thing ended with us deciding to avoid each other in the future. He had been joking around the whole thing, but I was dead serious. I was really PO'd. So when he kept attempting to meet me at Midwestcon I got somewhat preturbed /sic/. Eventually, though, his charm and personality got to me and I decided to give him a chance...at that point I asked you to "introduce" us, with the implication that I wanted to start over again. But don't feel bad about misunderstanding the whole thing, I was under a great deal of pressure at Midwestcon and I seemed to be getting a great deal of that "Young Harlan Ellison" shit that I despise, and as a result was rather nasty and emotional throughout the con. Maybe next year I'll do it right. ((I wouldn't believe this whole explanation even if it was TRUE! But I will defend to your death the right to confuse issues...))

Oh yeah, I almost forgot...you were the only former feuder that Warren Johnson and I didn't send a postcard to from Windycon. Yes indeedy. WJJ was in attendance there, and has actually gotten back into fandom to a small degree. (Corresponding with one fan and contributing to APA-50.) Of course, you can read his Windycon report in IC #4 if the spirit moves you. (Mike? Mike? Talk to me, Mike!) ((Hm, how should I take that? After all, somebody who should know once told me that none of the fans who are really worth feuding with will. If he regards me as continuing a feud, does that lower me in status? Or does the fact that he remains alienated show the potency of my long-gone-by words, thereby increasing my status? We big name fans are constantly beset by these traumatic inner debates, you know.)) ((Actually any enjoyment WJJ

derives from fandom he is more than welcome to so far as I'm concerned, and his reappearance in it suggests he derives some.))

CY CHAUVIN
17829 Peters
Roseville, MI 48066

Re Leah's article: I just can't get into this real heavy stuff, religion. Give me sci-fi anyway.

You make some interesting comments re Jerry Pournelle. And I was just beginning to respect the guy: not for his sf (which I haven't read), but for his nonfiction and fmz letters. I thought his suggestions in MidAmerican Progress Report 3 regarding panel items, and the preparation that panelists should have, etc., very good. But he does seem touchy about any negative comments on his fiction whatsoever. Hopefully, his sensitivity will wear off. Actually, this sensitivity will probably make people wary of reviewing his books at all -- and he'll find that it is infinitely worse to be ignored totally than to be badmouthed as well as praised.



I don't know if I should tell you that Glicksohn and Larry Downes have made up. They are friends now, in fact. Indeed, consider certain passes Glicksohn made at Downes and Fan Fair and Windycon, they could be... But no, I don't want to spread nasty rumors. By the way, I have the perfect manuscript sitting here should you ever care to blackmail Larry. Full of sexual fantasies and all that. Great fanzine material.

My "best cryptic expression" at Midwest-con was merely a way to prevent me from throwing up. Ugh, was I sick. I spent most of the con wishing I wasn't there. ((Which, at least, explains the tendency you showed for fading in and out of view. At first I thought it was the quality of the con suite Jack Daniels, but now we may all rest assured that Cy Chauvin is partially telekinetic.))

SHERYL SMITH
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I'll start the ball rolling by flatly disagreeing with your view of LOVE AND DEATH. I thought that was Woody Allen's most ambitious and successful work to date -- it had a little meat on it for

a change (unlike the gentleman's other work, which goes down like cotton candy) and was mercifully free of mechanical performances, unlike the overestimated SLEEPER. ((Pardon me for editing apart your parallel parentheses, but, as you say farther along, they are sooo confusing -- and as editor-typist I hereby claim the parentheses for the greater glory etc.)) ((As to LOVE AND DEATH, I fail to see why a few tired and over-worked references to Russian classics somehow save an extremely derivative, slapstick crock. but perhaps it relates to my love for THE LONG GOODBYE, Altman's savaging of a Chandler book, which most detested.))

I had fun reading Leah Zeldes' piece on Herbangelism, almost as much fun as I'm having feuding with that young lady. I don't feud ordinarily, but decided that since Leah was determined to take offense with me at (a) things said about her by folk who happen to be friends of mine, and (b) things done by me with her friends, aggression was the easiest course. I wonder, though, whether she is taking the business as seriously -- nay, solemnly -- as she seems to; a quirk of her style, perhaps. ((Like not closing bathroom doors.)) Herbangelism has got to be the most off-the-wall religion, or parody thereof, I have ever heard of, and it seems a perversion of the thing to take it with a devoutly-straight face. Owell... ((But since perversion is doubtless an underpinning of the faith, you can have it both ways. Disclaimer.))

As for Downes' letter, due to the multiplicity of double parentheses, I can't figure out which of you to castigate for those cracks about me. I assume they're about me, since a tote bag containing fanzines is mentioned, and I've never heard Sheryl Birkhead carries one! However, be it known that I do read these much-travelled things eventually -- and I have utterly no knowledge of anything concerning pictures of Mike Gorra in the buff (or even dressed)-- all I did was write him some half a dozen letters: I've never even seen him! I mean, why me? Am I the only experienced person on the mailing list, or what? Anyway, my photographic experience is zilch. ((You tell me -- as a couple of former friends said, and the fact that they both said it speaks either for its truth or my choice in friends, those who do the most talking...))

And that's all I can think of at the moment. Maybe someday you and I and Jerry Kaufman can all have a conversation. ((A morass a trois?))

MIKE GLICKSOHN
141 High Park Ave.
Toronto, Ont., CANADA

I was delighted with Sam's and/or your fannish version of "Abou ben Adam" (or however it might be spelled), especially with the departure from the original at the end. I've never needed any help to best Bowers in a battle of wits, but I've no objection to others kicking his carcass now and then while he's down. ((When is he ever up?)) It's the only thing that keeps his (and OUTWORLD's) circulation going!

I'm surprised to discover that even with a small relaxed convention like Midwestcon there can be a wide variety of conventions experienced. (I was at my first Octocon this fall and we spent a lot of the time in the bowling alley; is that what they call smoffing?) I was at the Midwestcon you reported on, but I had no idea whatsoever that porn movies were shown. No one told me: do you suppose they're trying to protect me from something? Or someone? ((You mean you'd be interested? Bowers told everyone that because of your advanced dissipation it would only depress you to be invited...))

I'm amazed at the way you sprinkle the report with actual witty quotations supposedly taken from the conversation at the con itself. At first I was left with a feeling of awe at either your memory for recalling them so long after the fact or your thoroughness in writing them down on the scene. But after I'd read a

a little more, I understood just what you were doing. When you attributed a coherent and almost comic remark to Bowers I realized you were making them all up!

I do remember saying some of the things you attribute to me, though, which is an amazing feat considering my usual state at conventions. I especially recall the remark to Larry Downes about fanzines and the delicious sensation that immediately followed it as I hurled his fanzine across the room into a corner where, Cincinnati maid service being what it is, it probably festers yet. That remains the only fanzine I've ever thrown away, in almost a decade of fanning. ((What, perseverant degeneracy!)) For that, and that alone I hasten to add, Larry's name will merit a footnote in the annals (or is it "anals"?) of fandom.

I also recall the tossing of Ross Pavlac into the pool but I deny having any part in it. I was lying in my usual end-of-convention stupor on the grassy slopes at the far end of the pool when the incident took place. Hell, at that time at any convention I'd have trouble picking up Ross' shoe even if his foot wasn't in it!

Good luck with this new printing medium you've discovered. It seems somehow more friendly and amateurish than your old way and may well be the wave of the future!

JERRY KAUFMAN
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New York, NY 10033

I got PRE and STFR. My faith is restored. And yer Midwestcon report cracked me up, esp. the description of our meeting and the party with Downes/Glicksohn/Avedon Carol, et al. No chance of you

getting off the mailing list now. And yes, we should get together at some convention -- like maybe Westercon next year.

PS: "Evial" also predates Herbangelism, you can tell Leah. And shouldn't the proverb be "I believe because I am absurd"?

JEFF MAY
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Liberty, MO 64068

After reading through this issue of STFR and successfully beating off impulse after impulse to write some witty comment or other I came to your Midwestcon report. If that actually was a

Midwestcon you attended, that is. Did you really start out with such a negative impression of Midwestcon? Or is it that you dislike smoffing and fanpolitics. ((Oh, I love smoffing and fanpolitics, but as they say, if you can't join 'em, beat 'em.))

I am not a fanpolitics person, as a rule. Intensive skull sessions on how to swing a vote to or from a con, or whatever the hell it is they talk about in such are not my cup of tea. When backed into a corner and talked at about such I get restless. I've been known to feign sleep, claim my mother was calling me, or shout "Earthquake! Earthquake! Smof cancelled on account of earthquake!" when trapped by a would-be Secret Master. However, I never perceived smoffing as more than a harmless diversion. I just can't think you're ser-

ious about that line: "when every fan east of the Rockies (more or less...) congregates at an unknown Ohio site and raps fanpolitics for three days in a row and then goes home in a glow of self-righteousness...." ((I'm glad you can't think I'm serious about that line, since it was, indeed, part of an entirely facetious beginning. I described the picture painted for LASFS-ians, not my serious conception of it.))



Both you and Ro Nagey (from what you write) have strongly negative definitions of "smoffing." "Knife-in-the-back gossiping," "power-lust fanpoliticking." The people I hear speak of it seem to define smoffing as any and all talk about winning cons, running cons, getting people to help with cons, as well as similar stuff applied to clubs and other fan organizations. Except that it is boring there aren't any negative connotations. ((Judging from reports on fmz material which I have not actually had the opportunity myself to read, the correct usage of SMOFFing is as a pejorative. Secret Master of Fandom was mixed satire and insult when invented -- hardly an idly-used synonym for rapping and conrunning. If its meaning has been diluted through misuse and overuse, what a loss: it sort of kills off my favorite pejorative description "smoke-filled SMOFs."))

By the time I started to read page 37 it got a little personal. After all, I am one of those "KC people." At Midwestcon were myself, Allan Wilde, Bill and Sherry Fesselmeyer, Ken Keller, and a few others I wish I could remember. ((Was Ken there; I don't recall him offhand.)) At any rate the only one I know for sure as a smoffer is Ken. Bill might stand still for some smoffing (as defined by me) but Sherry isn't a smof and Allen isn't, and you know how I like smoffing. If everybody at Midwestcon was slipping off for a smof session every 13 seconds, the 13 smoffers present must have stayed rather busy. (The "others" I list are not smofs either, I think.) Anyhow I saw the KC smoffers too often for me to think that much smoffing was going on. I rather think the self-importance explanation is closer to the mark.

One of my boyhood ambitions was to be considered charismatic, but now when the term is applied, it seems to damn me with faint praise along with the rest of the KC people. Sure we wanted to be well-thought-on. What bidding committee doesn't? We'd still like to be well-thought-on. We want people to come to the KC regional and we want to be greeted at cons, not ignored; so of course we try to make a good impression. But, I don't think that's what you meant by "charismatic." ((I don't mean it as a value judgement but a factual description of your/KC committee's magnetic effect on parts of fandom.))

Some of us aren't entirely convinced of the actual need for a hardcover program book. However the general attitude among those who don't believe wholeheartedly in it is that it won't do any harm so long as it doesn't spend us into the ground.

HARRY J. N. ANDRUSCHAK
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San Gabriel, CA 91775

Did we attend the same NASFiC? I had a hell of a good time from start to Sunday afternoon, when I had to go to work.

Met Don Wollheim at the meet-the-pros party and spent half an hour talking about DAW books and its financial shape (very good). Picked up some interesting info. But I couldn't find out just who is/are "Gregory Kern" in the Cap Kennedy series.

Also met Bill Ellern, who is writing new Lensmen stories with the permission of Doc Smith. Had a long jaw about his newest work. And Mario Zimmer Bradley. Wow! Thanked her for "Heritage of Hastur" (my candidate for the Hugo), and received news on upcoming books.

And I met other pros and fans throughout. I got laid. I enjoyed the movies, panels, masquerade, art show... Hell, I had a great time. But perhaps that's because I went to the con just to have fun.

About the only thing bad was that reading of SEEDS OF CHANGE, but how were we to know that Dr. Fournelle would be uptight about it?? We were just having a little fun, damnit, and it was a poor book.

OK, next time we'll tear a Gor book apart. Nobody wants to admit that John Norman is his friend. Or Perry Rhodan, nobody admits liking it either. Happy?

JERRY POURNELLE
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Studio City, CA 91604

SCIENTIFRICTION THREE finally makes clear to me something I had not known: you take our minor contretemps rather seriously. You have my apologies. It is easy to pull your leg, and I have

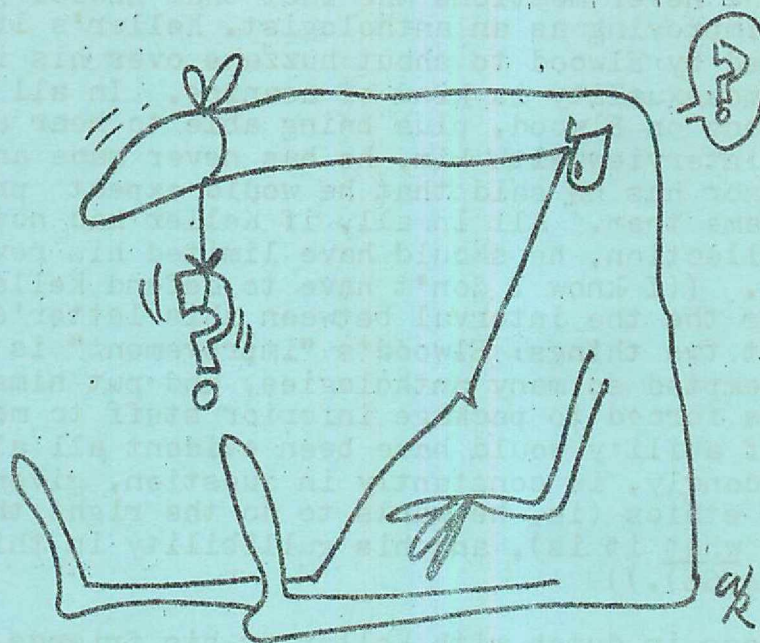
done so with some regularity. I like a good fight, too. I hadn't known that I was. With two short conversations, capable of significantly diminishing your pleasure at a convention. I really intended no such result.

You have my apologies if in the past I've offended you deeply. I really thought we were playing light games, and I've given them no real thought outside the tiny fractions of time that we've been in communication. I suppose I should have known better; but you see, I don't take seriously the off-the-top remarks I make in the circumstances in which we generally meet; and it didn't really occur to me that you did. I've had that problem in the past, and it's one good reason for my being a writer as a career; I don't always know the effect I have on people.

So. I am sorry if I have made you unhappy.

I did go out of my way to explain one of my actions at NASFiC for what I thought was an obvious reason: I valued your opinion. Even that seems to have been taken wrong, but I

assure you I wasn't at that moment playing games.



STEVE SIMMONS
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San Marcos, CA

I recently heard some of Keith Emerson's older works with a group called Nice. Some of it was very impressive when considered from either classical or rock viewpoints. I had discounted

him in favor of Wakeman since most of Emerson's recent stuff has been pretty straight rock. But the things I heard on the Nice tapes make me think that Emerson is just in rock for the money and his head is somewhere else. There's nothing wrong with that; I wouldn't mind latching onto a little of that r&r dinero myself. But I look with expectation to a rumored solo Emerson album.

Another one of the problems with most present classical/rock fusions (or bastards, if you prefer, as usually it's one raping the other)(seriously, I can't find that much difference in quality of music between Wakeman and the Boston Pops) is a lack of discipline. Classical music is easily spoiled by letting your drummer take off on an extended solo that bears no relationship to the work at hand, and the same applied to Wakeman's or Lake's occasional instrumental flights of fancy. They're nice in their place, but they don't belong in a classical work. ((Then you don't regard jazz as a classical form? That's the problem if one denies the admissability of ad lib performance.)) I have heard that a lack of seriousness was one of Wakeman's problems with Yes. After having heard Journey to the Center of the Earth and King Arthur I can believe it.

I like the minireviews by Stan Burns. He does as well or better than Buck Coulson in letting me know in a few words if I'll like the books or not.

Don Keller's review of FUTURE CORRUPTION kind of irritated me. He'd obviously made up his mind before he

opened the book that he wasn't going to like it which he showed by his snide remarks about Elwood. It is a point for Keller that he did like some of it, but he never mentions the fact that Elwood just might possibly have been improving as an anthologist. Keller's line about reviewers being expected by Elwood to shout huzzahs over his inclusion of a story on homosexuality is kind of asinine. In all the fannish reading I have done on Elwood, plus being able to hear a tape of an as-yet unpublished interview with him, he has never made any bones about his prejudices, nor has he said that he would expect praise if he occasionally overcame them. All in all, if Keller had nothing good to say about the collection, he should have limited his review to the length of Burns'. ((I know I don't have to defend Keller to you, since you've met during the the interval between this letter's writing and publication. But two things: Elwood's "improvement" is artificial -- if he hadn't attempted so many anthologies, and put himself in a situation where he was forced to package inferior stuff to meet deadlines, his real level of ability would have been evident all along. That real ability, secondly, is constantly in question, given his prejudices, his Swiss cheese ethics (ie, he wants to do the right thing, but often needs to be told what it is), and his gullibility in things literary (eg, SEEDS OF CHANGE).))

Before I get my ass in dutch with Keller or his friends, I would like to point out that I do respect him as a reviewer. I liked his review of MOTE IN GOD'S EYE even if certain other parties did not. I didn't agree with much of it, but I found when I read the book that many of the things he mentioned were as he said. However, he said that he liked neither Niven's nor Pournelle's earlier works ((not so -- he said "I usually enjoy Larry Niven's stories" as a matter of fact)), and I found the fact that he did say some nice things about the book anyway enough for me to shell out for it in hardback. Nothing like knowing the prejudices of the reviewer to help you understand him. ((Absolutely.))

Your commentary about West Coast fandom vs. Midwest Fandom hit home. As you may know, my first real fannish activity started while I was living in Indiana, and I had hoped that fandom out here would be reasonably the same. I don't think that it's officiousness, though. I suspect it's that Midwest fans don't demand to be entertained at cons. ((Why can't it be both?)) The biggest bitch I heard at NASFiC was that there weren't open parties everywhere. The thought that kept running across my mind was "If you don't like it, why the hell don't you start one." Rather than lose new friends, I kept my mouth shut. But there are a few nice ones, and I was impressed with Ed Pink & Co. for doing their damndest to refuse my money contributing to their open party. Midwest fans are willing to sit around and talk, to go out and buy a little booze, to filksing, and generally more willing to take care of their own fun. I realized that I may get burned by a few people for this comment I've just made, but what the hell -- they're the one's I'm complaining about. If someone wants to be cliquish and petty, it saves me the trouble of having to decide that they're no one I wanted to know anyway.

Re the Pournelle bit -- just one question that never did get cleared up in my mind -- did you personally dislike MOTE? Had you even read it when you got Keller's review? ((Yes I had read it, and it didn't turn me on. I did not find it up to either's standard individually, nor was I caught up in the air of "fun" which

favorable reviews uniformly pushed as its biggest attraction. I had taken notes for my own review and was agonizing over writing the thing when Keller contributed a review that embodied my attitudes, and expressed them far more ably than I could have. Had anyone else contributed another publishable review, favorable or otherwise so long as it said something different, I'd have run it. That is the essential point in my mind. Had I known this tempest was bound to arise, hell, I'd have solicited a favorable review -- and I never solicit any part of view on any book.))

DON KELLER
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The experience of Wakeman, the Moody Blues, et al. (to say nothing of the hideous travesty of the orchestral

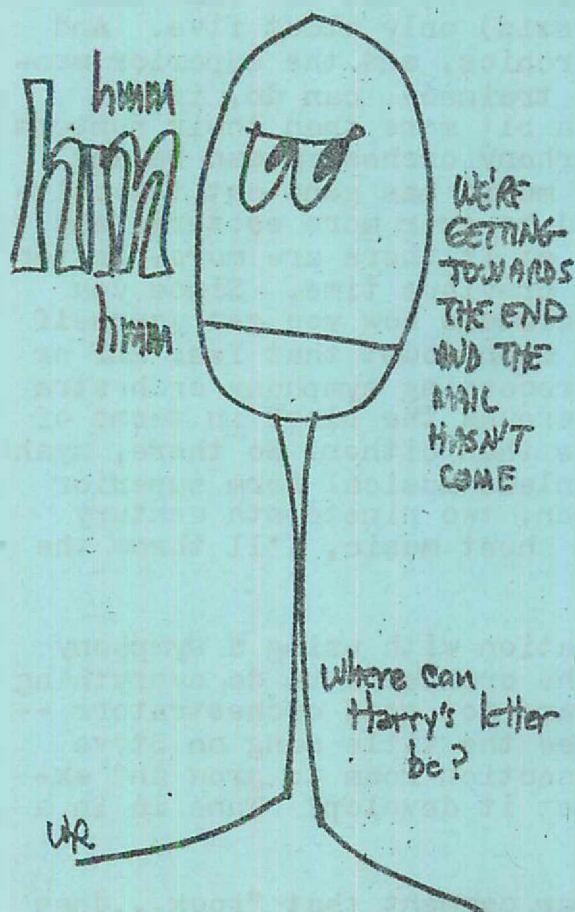
TOMMY -- a line calculated to get a rise out of Don Ayres) has proven to my satisfaction that a rockband/symphony orchestra fusion is not viable. The ends sought are too different. In fact, from my superficial and abysmally ignorant knowledge of classical music, I have to opine that the symphony orchestra is an institution past its prime. It's been around too long essentially unchanged (am I wrong?). The rock band as presently constituted is only ten or so years old, and the form that seems most complexly viable (Yes, ELP, Genesis) only about five. And these bands, because of their use of electronics, and the superior musicianship (some, like Wakeman, classically trained), can do, if not quite what a full orchestra can do, quite a bit more than their numbers would indicate. ((I don't see how the symphony orchestra can be any less prime now than it ever was; symphonic music has gone out the cultural window, with new composition dedicated to ever more esoteric and nonperformable works, but any way you look at it there are more, better and wider-heard orchestras now than at any previous time. Since you buy elitism down the line it's easy to understand how you get yourself into these academic chuckholes. Yet I very much doubt that Yes, ELP or their ilk are more popular than any given recording symphony orchestra -- whereas Elton John not only boots them around the block in terms of acceptance, I enjoy Elton John a sight more than either. So there, nyah! What makes one highly technical and emotionless musical form superior to another? Or if you'll grant me Beethoven, two nineteenth century draft choices and an undisclosed amount of sheet music, I'll throw the argument.))

The temptation with using a symphony orchestra with a rock band is to lean on the orchestra to do everything (secondary problem being most rock people are not good orchestrators -- Patrick Moraz of Yes being an exception, see the title song on Steve Howe's BEGINNINGS), and not give the rock section room to grow and experiment. Leave the rock band alone and let it develop! Tune in in a decade or so and see what is happening.

As for your comment that "rock...does not demand near the effort of the listener that classical or jazz does" my first temptation is to say "bullshit". A more reasonable reply would demand that you define what you mean by "classical," "Jazz," "rock," and "demand." Are you going to sit there and tell me that Yes' "Gates of Delirium" demands less of the listener than "Ravel's "Bolero"? ((No!)) I have been listening to the former piece for a solid year now, and I am just beginning to realize how sophisticated and complex it is....

I have been listening constantly for two years to their previous album, TALES FROM TOPOGRAPHIC OCEANS, I have it on right now as a matter of fact; and while it is in many ways a less advanced work, I am still finding new connections and thematic developments in it. I don't expect to exhaust either album anytime soon. Come back in ten years and I expect Yes in some form will still be composing (the term "songwriting" no longer applies to them), probably doing stuff that will make their current output look immature. (Compare RELAYER to their first album, some five years previous).

But of course I'm doing a sort of knee-jerk reaction; when people put down rock, I automatically bring up Yes and their lesser progressive cohorts as evidence against it. ((When people put down rock I automatically turn their names over to Ken Keller to add to his roster of "brain damage" cases)) But I also listen frequently to people like Neil Young, Led Zeppelin, Argent, Wishbone Ash, Frank Zappa, Strawbs, etc. who are admittedly working on a much smaller scale, in a limited-length format, the "song." Conversely, Yes has had no song shorter than around nine minutes on their last three studio albums. So I see what you are talking about.



What really irked me, though, was the comment on jazz. Now, what jazz I've heard does not seem any more sophisticated than a lot of rock; too is locked into the same basic format (state theme -- improvise, developing theme -- restate theme) and relies more on the ability of the musicians for its quality than on compositional strength.

Enough! On to other matters.

Actually, Mr. Pournelle was not browbeating me in our conversation; it's just that any conversation between him and myself would seem as though I was being browbeaten. And the only thing I was penitent about was that I had done such a hasty, ill-considered review of the book and not given it the proper drubbing it deserved. I think what irks me most about the book is that Pournelle claims he is not writing literature, but only trying to entertain, yet seems quite willing to let others (Heinlein, for instance) praise it to the skies at the expense of other much worthier books which are literature. ((So what do you expect him to do -- tell Heinlein to shut up, or tell his publisher not to run a favorable tagline on the cover? Come on, now.))

At least the award voters had some taste. ((Yeah, but weren't they the same clowns who voted for the fmz award? Screw 'em...)) Footnote: any piece of writing that does not aspire to be literature of at least a low-level sort does not deserve publication. ((Bullshit. Er, pardon

my French, I should say "define what you mean by 'literature.'" My own definition terms literature as all retrievable text, including the words on CRTs -- which survives in the culture. And Webster's is not much different: "all writings of prose or verse...without regard to their excellence." Admittedly that's one of four concurrent definitions in the dictionary, another closing "such writings considered of having permanent value." But of what does permanent value consist? That is the central question. If Pournelle strives to entertain, is that not of value, and is not his work thereby literature? under either definition. Taking the matter any further brings to bear irreconcilable ideologies, of course, but suffice it I think you reach too far with that dictum "does not deserve publication."))

MOTE is, basically, a giant Star Trek episode, an artistic format I have largely outgrown, and I found it massively uninteresting; I finished it only out of a sense of duty. If I want to read a Star Trek episode, I'll go to David Gerrold's YESTERDAY'S CHILDREN, which, while no masterpiece, is still a much superior piece of writing.

After Mr. Pournelle discovered that I was an English major, he asked me in effect what the hell I was doing infringing on his little club. That stopped me for a minute; having considered it, my answer is that I grew up on sf, just like most fans, I am an sf fan first and an English major second. But then again I read both THE LORD OF THE RINGS and MOBY DICK around my tenth birthday. There is much more to the world than sf, and I read a lot of it; but it seems to me that the two forms are not incompatible. I can't see anything inherent in sf that makes it necessarily pulp literature. And it pains me to see the amount of pulpish sf that gets into print -- and condoned by the readers. ((Trouble is that those slurred writers are in part serving a readership that doesn't want anything "better."))

Enough of that as well. As I said, your Midwestcon report was quite well done and enjoyable. I still like your LACon report better, but egoboo does wonders, I guess. As for Leah Zeldes' piece on Herbangelists...they're even crazier than I thought they were.

DON AYRES
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I suppose I shouldn't heave the letter column without a few remarks on Steve Simmons letter, since I met him this last weekend at LA 2000. Don Keller, for whom I've written a classical col-

umn, had commented on several of the remarks contained therein at a point where I'd not yet really read the letter; I expect you've long since received what I gather was a rather scathing letter from Don. I should report that Don and Steve reached some point of understanding and that I was hardly as antagonistic as Steve seemed to expect.

I don't know that classical music requires an effort to listen to it; my custom is to just throw it on the turntable and go about my business. If it's any good, the composer will soon turn my attention away from the work at hand. On the other hand, let there be no mistake; most of the rock music I hear (whether in the store or on a jukebox or in a bar or wherever) literally bounces off;

five minutes later I can't tell you the title of the song that just played -- the hell with that, 30 seconds -- and I rarely associate groups with the songs they made famous, much less know the lyrics of any of the songs.... For the most part, the problem with rock is not in holding my interest; it's that they never manage to get it.

GEORGE FLYNN
27 Sowamsett Ave.
Warren, RI 02885

After the nice things you said about my previous loc (I didn't think that much of it myself) it's really about time that I responded to STFR 2. Better late than never.... You are in error: all fen do

not agree on beer; can't stand the stuff myself.

JON SINGER
167 Vine St.
Middletown, CT 06457

Snide note: after blessing me for vouching for you, you're still going to drop me if I don't loc? Miserable ingrate! ((I know you meant it humorously, but where else will I get to explain my

esoteric policies, seriously? One of them is that people who ask for a sample issue and profusely promise to write an loc, and don't, get axed mercilessly. Not immediately, to be sure -- you didn't loc STFR 2, just 3, for example. But I print just 175 copies, and have no room for deadwood. What do you think this is? PREHENSILE?))

I don't know whether I can really get into minireviews as a regular thing, but I must admit that Stan Burns really did a job on MANDRILL. Total demolition in 10 lines... The one for THE ENCHANTED PLANET is, if anything, even better.

I laughed out loud at "Abou Fen Bowers." And at Midwestcon: I think maybe there were 5 or 6 fen who didn't get laid at Midwestcon. Not only that, I didn't get to see any of the porno movies, either.

Something you forgot to mention about the FAANs: when Lise Eisenberg and I arrived and caught Ro, we were expecting labeled statues, since we knew they were handmade and couldn't be identical. Moshe Feder had filled us in fairly thoroughly....What we were given was a happy look from Ro and the comment "Randy said you could just figure out which was which. We assembled the plaques to the bases, looked at the statues, and, by Ghod, Randy was right! We had NO TROUBLE at all picking them out.

ROY TACKETT
915 Green Valley Rd. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Dammitall, Glycer, howcum you keep moving around the country?

I suppose that being a (surely not?) Master of Popular Culture you simply must force yourself to the movie theaters to see what is happening in films. ((Why, everybody knows that critics don't have to know anything to be critics -- just ask Fred Fohl or Lloyd Biggle. So why should I have to see any films?)) I am, fortunately, able to pass up most of that stuff in favor of doing something useful, such as drinking gin and sleeping. We've been to the movies three times this year...let's see, A BOY AND HIS DOG, THE RETURN OF THE PINK

PANTHER, and GIVE 'EM HELL, HARRY. I think I saw an ad in the paper informing me that 2001 will be back in town shortly so I'll probably take that in again for my annual recharging.

Do you think, ol' sumorassler, that when it comes to American culture, pop culture is all there is? ((We could only end up playing the definition game, discussing such a question. Because the answer can be either yes or no. After all, given the mass sales of supposedly elite music -- ei, or ie, classical -- that must be reckoned in the popular culture. On the other hand I think that ultimately we must study culture, period, rather than choose up sides in a manner that implies the extinction of one or the other. In fact academe as we presently know it is what requires institutional extinction. Now study, the maintenance and extension of knowledge, and a good general education are all essential to the continuance of civilization, but anyone familiar with the system realizes that reform from within is impossible. In fact, the genuinely gifted teachers -- even the effective ones -- are discouraged in the current scheme. What use is such a bureaucracy?))

I dunno about LA giving away their Westercon bid this year. It could very well be that fans are simply looking for something new. We know what kind of con LA will put on, but Vancouver may come up with something fresh. ((Which implies its Westercons have been stale, and if you think so, others undoubtedly agree. I find that odd since its programming has been even more brilliant than recent Worldcons', thanks equally to Program Director Milt Stevens and the genius of the region's pros and fans such as Digby, Alderson etc.. And on the social side, Vancouver can hardly offer an improvement on the current California ouerve simply be removing the con 1200 miles north. I expect it's one of those damned fannish prejudices compiled from all the best cliches: throw the rascals out, get new blood in, share the con with other regions; and having set their minds that way, those fans will have to be offered an utter disaster before they'll open their eyes. An utter disaster being unlikely, despite those horrid facilities, one can anticipate a self-fulfilling prophecy of a great Westercon.))

As for LASFS...I am still of the opinion that a revival of SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES would do much to brighten their image in fandom once again. The club doesn't really have enough contacts outside LA. ((It's probably damned lucky not to. If the rest of fandom could sit in on LASFS' discussions of its "fund for the general benefit of fandom" LASFS' self-serving hypocrisy would set off another round of feudworthy remarks. That fund came about when the last of LACon's assets were pumped into the treasury. A large chunk was immediately used to pay off the mortgage. The few clubmembers with consciences managed to salvage the rest for a separate purpose, at least seemingly. But nobody except LASFS knows of this fund for fandom's benefit. What's more the directorate keeps a hammerlock on it with the provision that any project launched from the fund must have a built-in mechanism for repaying the investment. Hence around \$1500 sits in the kitty, LACon profits, of which roughly \$1000 already bought up the club paper. Except for Jerry Pournelle the club would probably have ripped off the rest long since -- and in any case he loses support by continually reintroducing the argument that the writers, having generated the money through their participation in LACon, deserve some say

in the disbursement of profits. The inferred assumption that SFWA, as bargainer for the writers, would want such a power has often led to the fear that denying SFWA would someday produce a writers' boycott of worldcon programming. Myself, I think the writers deserve some voice, but I don't mean SFWA. SFWA should strictly butt out. Of its 500 or thereabouts members, what fraction actually appeared on panels? Well under one tenth; which is a very narrow footing on which to base a SFWA claim to a voice in the money. Any worldconcon with a sense of responsibility (and political savvy) would poll its panelists as a means of deciding profit disbursal and take the results into strong consideration. Thereby the writers involved would have a degree of say in moneys they help generate -- but by no means are wholly responsible for generating -- and the rest would have no right to complain. But you can bet your ass nobody in power is going to do that. And in LASFS, where selfishness is a way of life, despite Pournelle's strong voice, it seems just a matter of time until the virtual fait accompli is made official.))

((As to Shaggy, nobody with enough brains to make it go is gullible enough to try it. Aside from the fact that some of the club's most influential fans simply don't WANT it revived, the rank and file of the club has no interest in genzines, meaning a revived Shaggy could only thrive on energy diverted from existing local zinefans. English translation: it isn't worth \$50 an issue and a prestigious title for me to let Lee Gold tell me how to run Scientifriction.))((Meanwhile, back to Roytac))

Hey, squirrel feeding is great. We enjoy it. We did very little of it this year, though. Too much plague in the land of enchantment this year to get close to any rodents. (Ha, you thought I wouldn't be able to sneak a reference in....)

Aljo is a fine young fan but his poetry isn't. And if Don Keller prefers stories that are "experimental and progressive," well, I won't tell anybody.

KEN MAYO
68 Pratt St.
Bristol, CT 06010

I really liked Scientifriction 3 from the title on. Mike Glicksohn's column is really outstanding, and I think your vast astral body should blot out the sky over Toronto more often. And Stan Burns'

minireviews are also good. Short, to the point, no bs at all.

But what I really enjoyed the most were the articles on Herbangelism and your conreport. You'll have to excuse me if I make some stupid remarks, but I'm still not sure how to take that article. Is that stuff about the religio trying to get incorporated in California on the level. ((Yes.)) It's certainly some of the funniest stuff I've read in a long time.

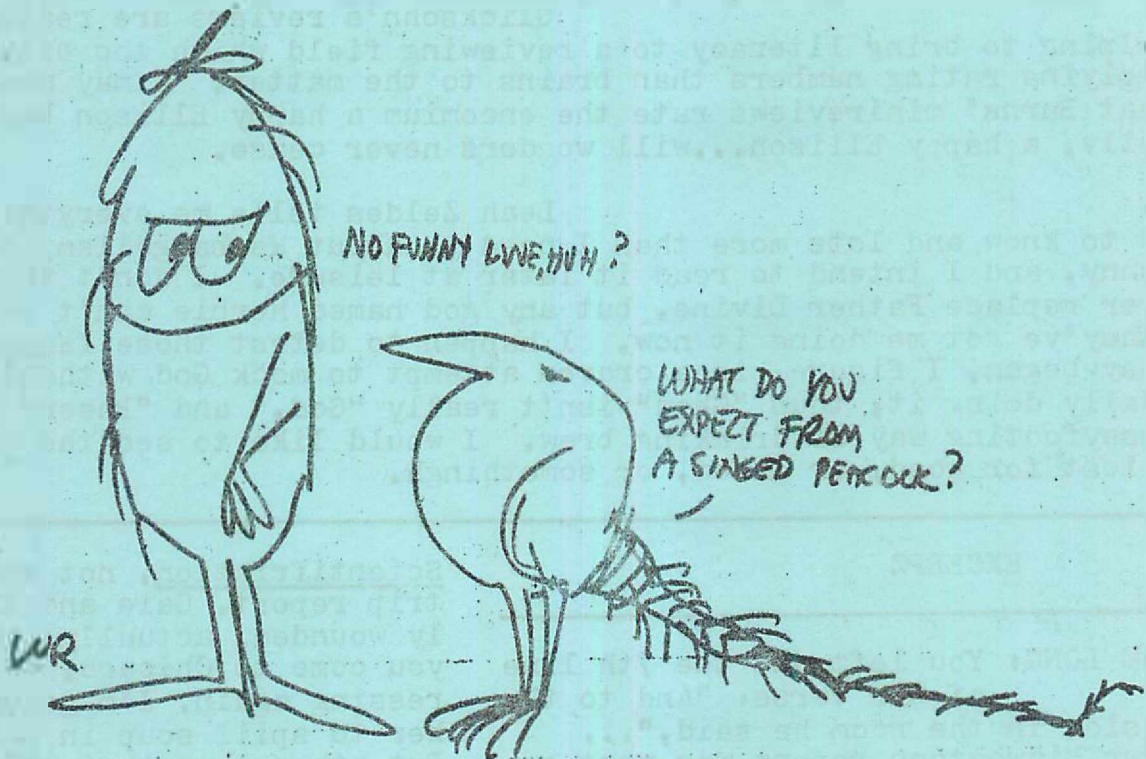
LAURIE D. TRASK
6D3 Morewood
1060 Morewood Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Congratulations on your ten-speed, but you should remember: Tanstaaf! ((Why? I'm not planning to eat it!))

Stan Burns wrote some interesting reviews, and I especially liked his comments on ORBIT 16. My feelings for "Mother and Child" have always

overshadowed the rest of the collection. It is one of the best novels I've ever read. But can the ending really be called "pedestrian?" It is a highly logical, carefully worked out conclusion. And those last few pages especially conveyed Etaa's confusion and the alien's strong sense of responsibility. "Mother and Child" tops my list of Hugo nominees, in an otherwise mediocre year for pro sf.

Why did Jerry Kaufman ever remind you of Ron Bushyager?



BEN INDICK
428 Sagamore Ave.
Teaneck, NJ 07666

I was shocked to read you were finishing your Master's. I thought you were a shining-eyed, rosy-cheeked frosh. Not that your PRE writing was adolescent, but Fandom has some precocious kiddies.

((Well, Buck Coulson once offered a guess to Florence Jenkins that I must be about 13 years old, but not on account of my precocity...))

I saw LOVE AND DEATH last night, and, strangely, was not as hard on it as you. After Allen's EVERYTHING/SEX, I swore off the bastard. Not because of his chintzy leery little sex schticks, but for his antisemitism (self-hate, parent-hate, etc. as shown in the scene with the Rabbi). I was positively livid. I missed SLEEPER, which SFolks liked, so I gave L&D a chance. Here, in a clever bit at the beginning, he atoned for the antisemitism (the priest showing photos of "what Jews look like" to a naive Allen. "Is THAT what they look like?!" "Hah," says the priest, "you should see the German ones -- they have stripes!"). This was very effective. After that it

was mostly downhill, with redundant pseudo-sophisticated New York type party chatter, downright foolishness wherein pretty ladies are always after him; cheap laughs (using Yiddishisms out of context, knowing the in-group will laugh -- but do you know what a "mieskeit" is?) And, imitating Groucho. It leads to comparison with DUCK SOUP, a tale of war also, a brilliant film, logical in its absurdity, genuinely funny as well. Personally, I think Allen, with his big budget here, his daring irreverence and a free hand had all the makings of a small classic -- but he missed, and by a lot.

Glicksohn's reviews are really excellent helping to bring literacy to a reviewing field which too often is busier applying rating numbers than brains to the matter. I may mention, too, that Burns' minireviews rate the encomium a happy Ellison bestows. Golly, a happy Ellison...will wonders never cease.

Leah Zeldes tells me everything I wanted to know and lots more than I need to about Herbangelism, but it's funny, and I intend to read it later at leisure. I don't think it'll ever replace Father Divine, but any god named Herbie can't be all bhad. (They've got me doing it now. I happen to detest those fannish h's. They began, I figure, in a craven attempt to mock God without quite really doing it; thus "Ghod" isn't really "God," and "Bheer" is a pussyfooting way of drinking brew. I would like to see the qualifying h lost for good, or ghod, or somethingh.

EXCERPZ

SAM LONG: You left out the 7th line of our verse: "And to the vision in the room he said;"... Your Midwestcon report was most enjoyable...as I write this I'm re-reading that conrep and chuckling over the partyquotes on pages 41 and 42. Dammit, I never can remember good fannish bon mots such as I hear at cons, and to write them down at the moment of utterance kind of ruins the spontaneous atmosphere. I envy your memory of such things -- tho I daresay some are not so much "", as "", no? ((No -- ah jest goes ahead and ruin the spontaneity by writing 'em down. I only note quotes, however, which explains certain unintentioned gaps in the retelling as commented on in other locs.))

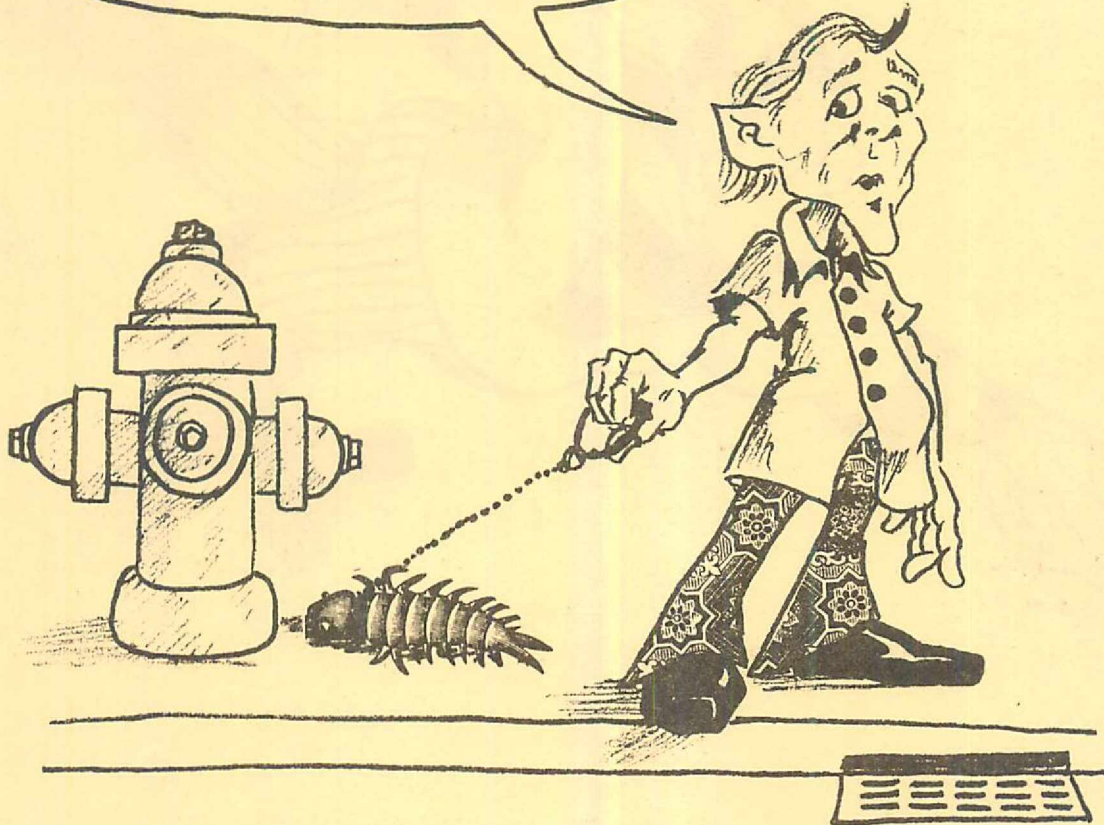
GEORGE RR MARTIN: Last time I was in Ann Arbor I read Ro's copy of Scientifriktion... Although Prehensile was better, since I wasn't even mentioned in

Scientifriktion, not even in your trip report. Gale and I were deeply wounded, actually. Next time you come to Chicago, if she's waitressing again, I'm going to tell her to spill soup in your lap. But other than that we've forgiven you... ((In writing such reports there are always these gristly decisions: to follow the dictate of subjective pleasure, or avoid the dictate of Voltaire who said "the secret of boring is to tell all." Next time I guess there won't be any such conflict since any zinefan who likes to read about Dave Locke getting his boils pricked will undoubtedly be fascinated by Glycer getting his prick boiled...))

SHERYL BIRKHEAD: Leah does entirely too little writing. Herbie-ish Inquisition? Racked by bheer, pilloried by IPA? (Coors? don't ask me -- I wash my hair in beer....)

WAHF: A.P. Tree, Bill Patterson

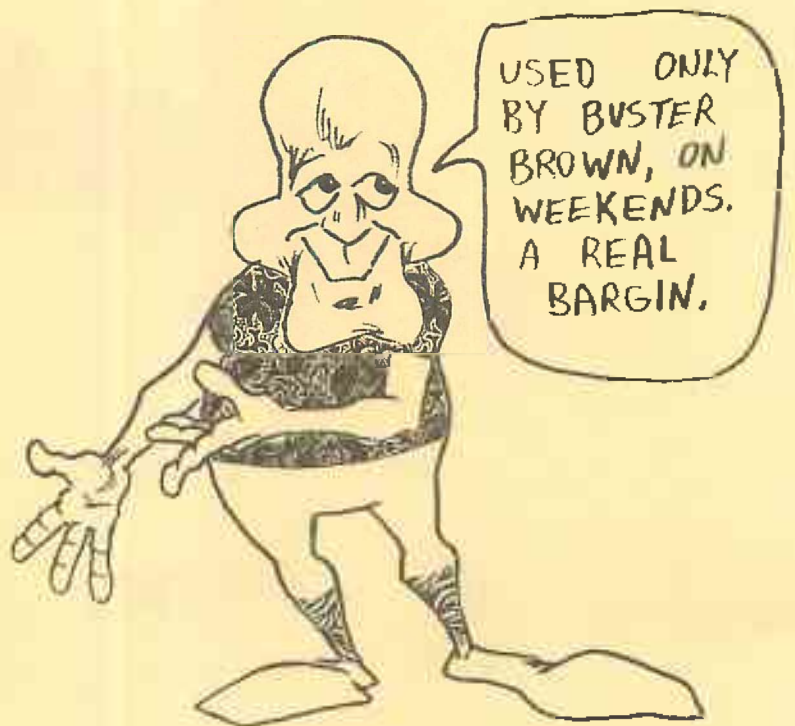
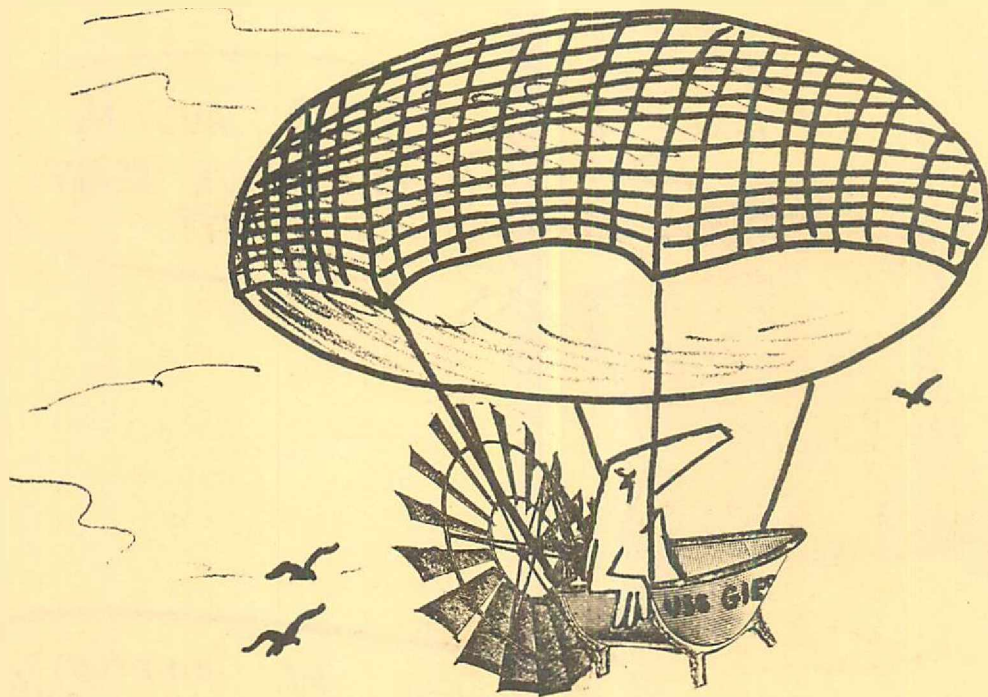
NOT HERE BOWSER,
THERE'S PEOPLE
WATCHING.



SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO.

FOLLIES OF 1908







ALICIA AUSTIN,
EAT YOUR HEART
OUT!

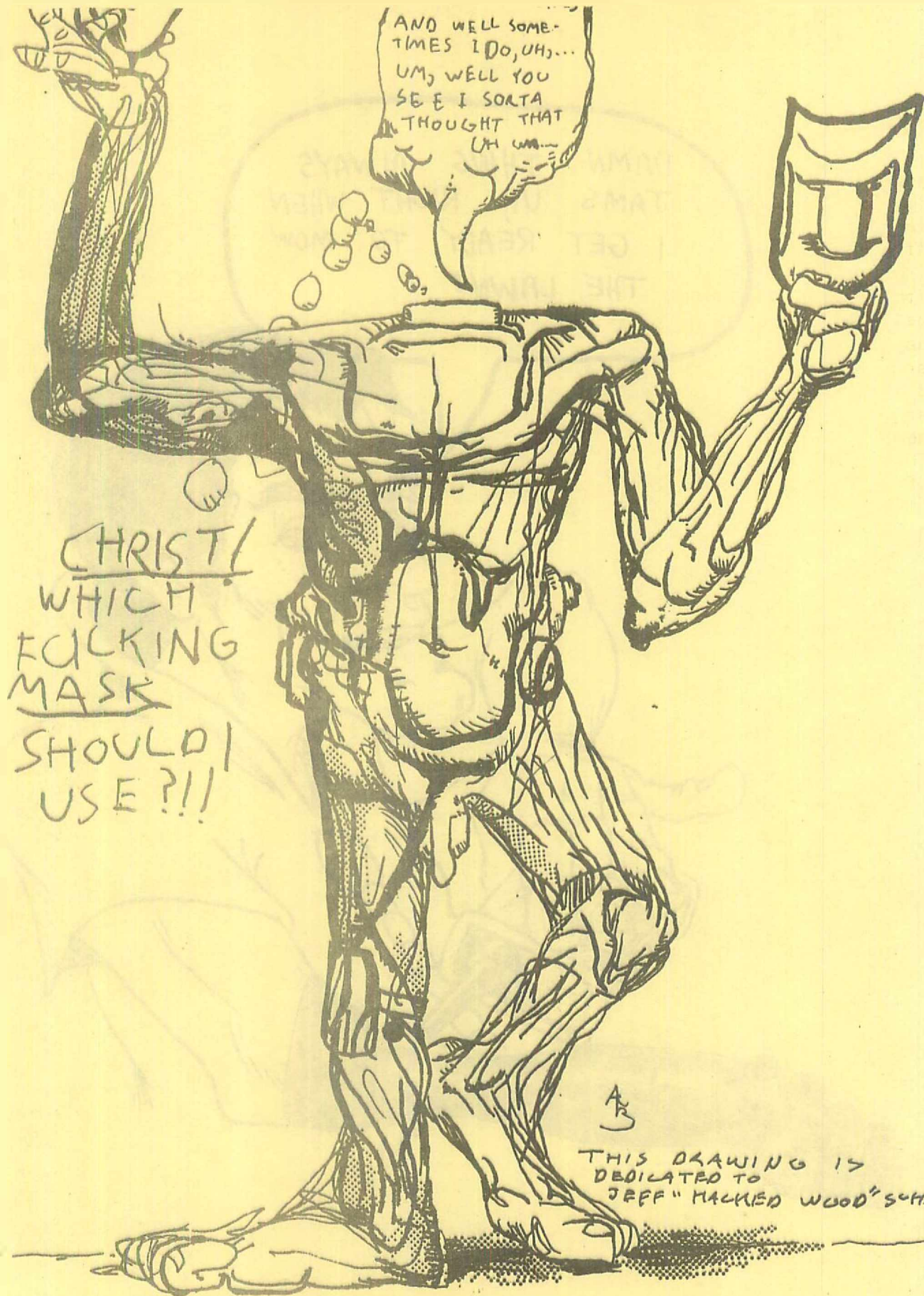
HONEST MR. HONEYCUTT,
I WASN'T TOUCHING THE
SPAGHETTI.

GET THEM
PSUEDOPODS
UP!



DAMN THING ALWAYS
JAMS UP, RIGHT WHEN
I GET READY TO MOW
THE LAWN!





AND WELL SOME-
TIMES I DO, UH, ...
UM, WELL YOU
SEE I SORTA
THOUGHT THAT
UH UH...

CHRIST!
WHICH
FUCKING
MASK
SHOULD I
USE?!!

A/B

THIS DRAWING IS
DEDICATED TO
JEFF "HACKED WOOD" SCHALLER

RIEFENSTAL LOU STATHIS

Saw a neat movie the other day. It's called *OLYMPIA* and it was Leni Riefenstahl's film of the 1936 Berlin Olympics. It was like four hours of *The Wide World of Sports* intercut with some neat pix of the Fuhrer smiling and clapping. My first introduction to Ms. Riefenstahl's films came back when I took a course in The Propaganda Film at Stony Brook. One of the films we saw was something called *TRIUMPH OF THE WILL*, a film record of the 1933 Party conference in Nuremberg. Great stuff. It had me singing Deutschland Uber Alles for weeks, and drinking gallons of Lowenbrau. The film is a bit boring, that is if unlike me you don't get off on endless shots of pounding jackboots, right-arm hard-ons, and vast panoramas of grim-faced, goose-stepping Aryans. But *TRIUMPH* was not merely a propaganda film, it's more. It's a Wagnerian Documentary. There are no specifics, only mass archetypes. It's an attempt to mythologize (what were then) current events. The film is 9/10th long shots, with very few carefully chosen closeups. These shots are used to accent certain sections and to make the high-party officials larger-than-life ubermenschen. And it's fascinating to watch.

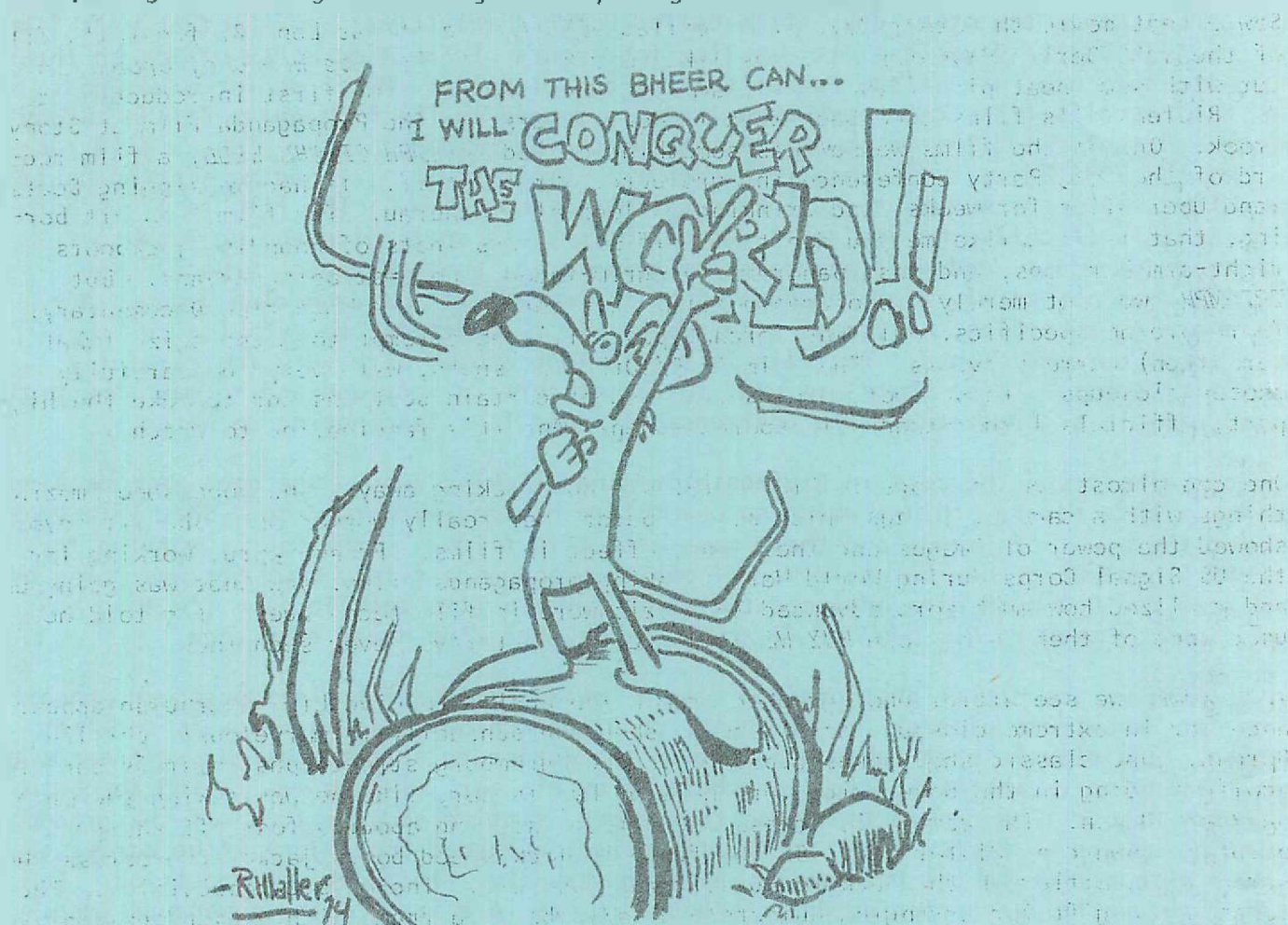
One can almost see the cogs in Riefenstahl's mind clicking away. She does some amazing things with a camera, things which no one before her really worked on. She, if anyone, showed the power of images and their mass effect in films. Frank Capra, working for the US Signal Corps during World War II making propaganda films, saw what was going on and realized how much more advanced the Nazis were in film techniques. I'm told he used some of them in his own *WHY WE FIGHT* series, but I've never seen them.

In *TRIUMPH* we see Hitler photographed from a low angle, to give him superhuman appearance, or in extreme closeup facial shots, shouting sensually in marvelously chilling German. One classic shot takes a parade in the Nuremberg streets past a staff car with Adolf standing in the back, right arm held up by his ear, like he was taking the oath on Perry Mason. The camera is across the street, sitting about a foot off the ground pointing upward at Mister Big. So the frame is lock-kneed boots jackknifing across the screen with Hitler in the background smirking insanely. Incredible composition. The woman has a gift for arranging objects/bodies/limbs in a frame with tremendous image-evoking power. Rows of erect arms (incredibly sexual to me) with straining fingers touching the demigod. Extreme closeups (the most effective use in the film) of some classic, chiseled granite Aryan faces reciting a pledge to the Fatherland. Their hair is like the surface of a pool table, their skin whitepink and scrubbed shiny, their eyes rounded and insanely ecstatic like Cousin Brucie's or Sandy Becker's, with misty ethereal light framing the wide ovular head.

How someone can remain unaffected by this film is beyond me. If it doesn't manifest itself as an exhilarating primal sexuality, then it will in fear. Fear of the monotonous throbbing bass drums. Fear of the awesome elemental power (like Thor) that they flaunt. The film shouts in your ear and slaps you across your face with its strutting bravado -- "WE ARE SUPERMEN. WE WILL DESTROY YOU."

We see a stadium at night. Searchlights of incredible power surround the stadium. They are pointing upward, forming walls thousands of feet high. The effect of this "Cathedral of Light" is nothing short of awesome. We are in the stadium, which is filled to capacity. In the central area blocks of black clad automatons begin marching to the steady thump of muffled bass drums. The stream is endless. Your frame of reference is dwarfed. You have *never* seen that many people in one place at one time. Except maybe the Lexington Avenue Line at 5.00. There must be hundreds of thousands of

people there, holding torches and beating their drums with their fists. Then it begins. A thundering noise that you realize is a million straining vocal cords screaming in unison: *SIEG HEIL! SIEG HEIL!* over and over. They are yelling with every ounce of energy their bodies can muster. It'll scare the living shit out of you. I was ready to go out and get a nose job. Anything to show I wasn't Jewish.



By *OLYMPIAN*, Riefenstahl's art has been refined. Where *TRIUMPH* was a horrifying nightmare, *OLYMPIAN* is a lyrical ode of harmonious peace and physical excitement. The opening is a slow intimate study of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, and the great athletic fields in Delphi. The music (by Herbert Windt) flows romantically over the scarred columns and piled rubble. It begins building. We pull back to a spectacular view of the Parthenon seemingly floating in a clear sky sparsely littered with fibrous clouds. The Olympic flame ignites a torch held by a beautifully proportioned naked, young man. He begins running with the torch held high in his right hand, glowing and spitting. He threads his way through the ruins and reaches a road. We then see a montage of roadways, naked runners with torches and maps of the route indicated, through the Balkans and to Berlin.

The star of this movie is the human body. And not the closed fist or the stamping foot, either. The sprinter is in slow motion, the gymnast twisting himself in the parallel bars, the precision-tuned human body performing a strenuous feat like a well-oiled machine. There is no undercurrent of fear running through *OLYMPIAN*. We are not supposed to run and hide after seeing this movie. We are seeing the pride that the Third Reich had in its physical superiority. The adolescent bully-boy threats are gone. Nazi Germany has attained a maturity (if you can call a psychotic mature), a self-conscious arrival at confident adulthood. They don't have to drive the

message into our heads anymore, they let the action speak for itself. The affected arrogance is no longer necessary. They are saying "See what we can do?" Look at the German officer Handrik in the pistol shooting event of the Pentathlon. His back is perfectly erect, right arm held toward the target perpendicular to his front. Look at his face -- no trace of concentration or strain. He's confident of his superior abilities. No worry (what, me?). After all, he's a German, isn't he? No matter that he comes in behind the American in that section, he will win the event, he's sure. Of course, he does.

I think if Riefenstal had a completely free hand with this she might have made a slightly different movie. I don't know for sure if she had to make any concessions, but certain sections certainly do come off that way. Like I think she would have concentrated more on bodily movements in each event and its interplay with the objects involved (pole vault, bicycling, rowing, gymnastics, etc.), instead of some sections that are more journalistic in their recounting of the events. There is also an announcer shown frequently on screen against a rear-projected crowd backdrop, who served absolutely no other purpose than telling you what was going on. Curt Gowdy or Howard Cosell would've been better. The sections that I think Riefenstal really cared about and worked on were the more balletic ones where it was quite unimportant who won. There is one idyllic section that opens on a misty morning run along a lake by a crew of gorgeously proportioned Aryan runners (old Leni must have really gotten her rocks off on this one). The music is soft flute noodling. We cut suddenly to the runners leaping in slow motion into the lake. Then we're indoors in a dark, wooden sauna cabin; we pan over the reclining bodies, the white skin practically glowing in the shrouded light. Outside, the cabin has a porch that overhangs the lake. The boys are toweling themselves, massaging each other's limbs, and horsing around much as young American jock-types do in the lockerrooms and showers. The camera pulls back slowly and the sun, glinting low on the horizon through the trees, sets on Valhalla. Beautiful.

There's more: silhouettes of naked females, one body and multi-armed like Kali, eclipsing the sun and waving loosely floating arms. A somewhat surprising tip-of-the-hat to Jesse Owens ("that great American Negro") who rips the field with his explosive running, and wins everything pulling away. His blackness stands out most prominently here, not only because the narrator keeps reminding us of it, but also visually as he is a striking contrast in a film otherwise composed of whites and grays. His legs are long, hairlessly smooth and muscled only as Jack Kirby could draw them. He runs like someone built and bred for the task. His legs stride in multi-yards, while his upper torso remains erect and steady. Only his head bobs convulsively and arms pump furiously. You watch him in fascination, and then you suddenly realize that the rest of the runners are cruising along as though united by a pole, and Owens is wasting no time putting ground between them and himself.

The music is very prominent in this film. Much of it is what one expects from a Nazi propaganda film: Wagnerian pastiche. The blustering horns are there, and very nicely done I thought, but there is also contrast, and close interaction between physical action and the tone of the music. And of course, it is grandiose, sweeping, and grandly uplifting. It was also interesting to note the way the German band played "The Star-Spangled Banner" when an American was awarded a medal. It was at the exact same tempo that German martial music is at -- sounded good, too.

A few things crop up in *OLYMPIAN* that Riefenstal used to such great effect in *TRIUMPH*. Like the Cathedral of Light, for instance, where the searchlights surround the Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremonies. Again we see a familiar sequence that opens on a solo female gymnast kneeling on the ground waving her arms in some pseudo-artistic fashion. Little by little the camera pulls backward to reveal that she is

part of a group all performing the same movements in unison. We then dissolve into a long range-shot of an entire stadium filled with flagging females -- thousands of them. The shot is equally effective here.

The film is filled with nice little touches here and there. Like during the hammer throw when the second American contestant comes to the throwing point the narrator intones: "And here's another American. They keep popping up don't they?" Or during the cross-country horse-riding section of the pentathlon where a particularly treacherous jump into a puddle proves to be the undoing of most of the riders, with hilarious results. Or a beautiful sequence where the sky over the Olympic Stadium suddenly becomes overcast with huge puffy clouds. Also the constant racial reminders -- Negroes are constantly identified as such, as if we needed their help. A sprinter is called the fastest runner in the white race. The constant reminders that the Fuhrer is watching, with shots of him in very human poses surrounded by the likes of Goebbels and Goring....

Meester Stathis' article reprinted from RHINOCRATIC OATHS #7

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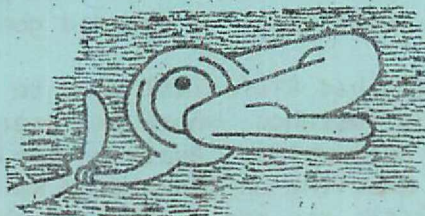
BARNARD'S PLANET by John Boyd. Berkeley/Putnam's SBN:399 11529-2 \$6.95
1975 219 pp. Reviewed by James Shull

I consider that sf can be placed in one of two categories: that of light commercial entertainment, or as art in spite of itself. Those works which are concocted as "art" generally are failures as they overposture, bore, and overbear literarily. The exceptions are successes ultimately termed "art."

Since publishing is a commercial venture, then there is an understandable reason for the existence of BARNARD'S PLANET by John Boyd. Though the situations and characters are unreal and unbelievable you can, through the course of the novel, come to accept them. The author's style is readable though bland. The story begins as a wandering star with planet moves near enough to Earth that an international six person crew can explore it for Horticultural reasons. Later developments reveal their true mission to be the rearrangement of time and future events in favor of the UN and United States. Reference to "the Russies," the sex, the general development and handling of the characters (who remain characters in the worst sense of the word), and the lack of resolution of characters' motives mar the book.

Yet it's acceptable as light entertainment, and whether it's a success or not lies in its appeal to you.

The cover, though bright in colors, is muddy in technical execution. Further, the cover doesn't illustrate anything from the book. The type graphics are pedestrian.

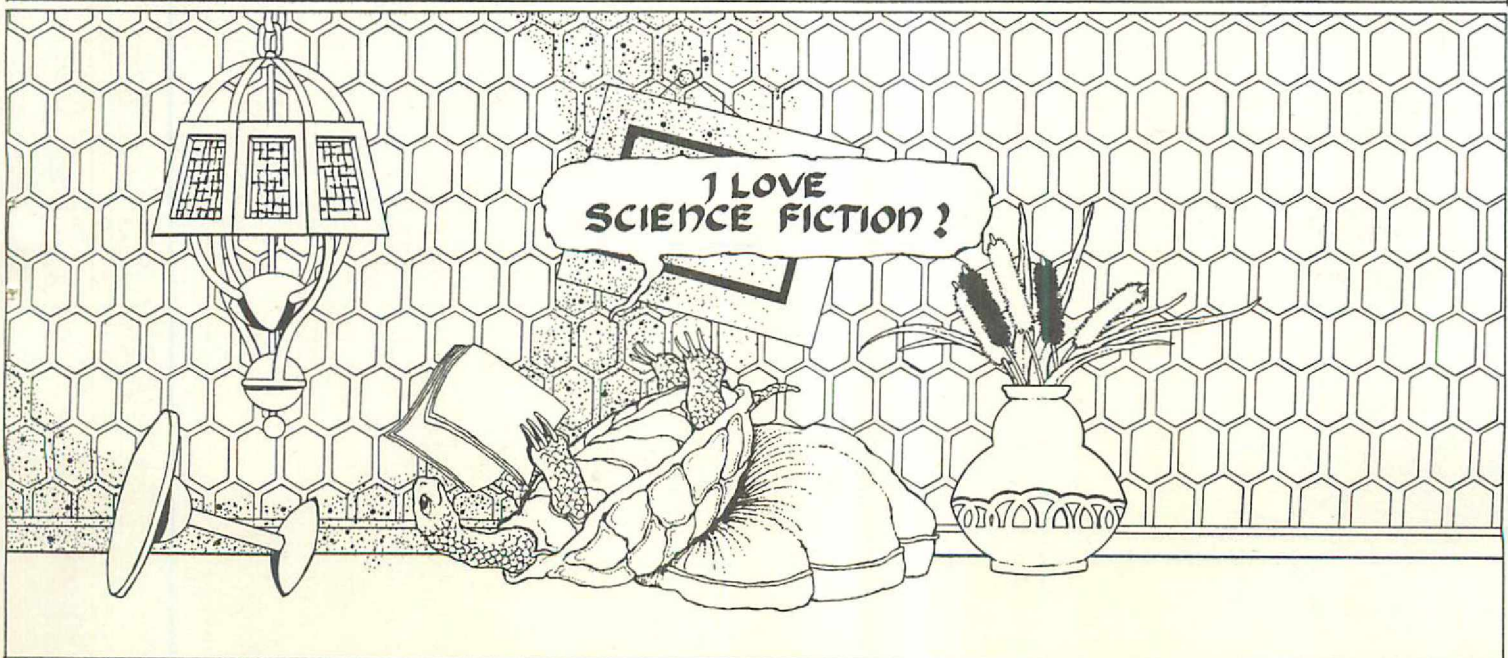
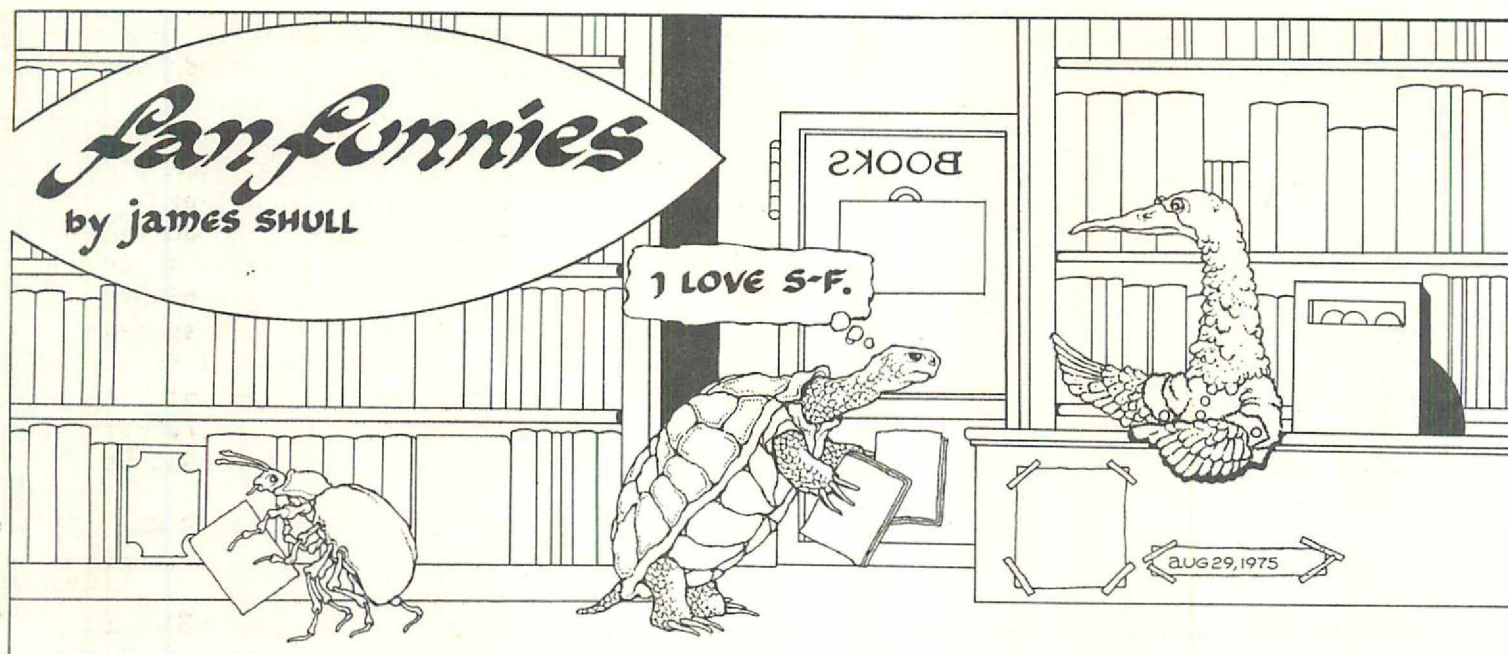


Riefenstal

Lou Stathis

fanfunnies

by james SHULL



ken mayo

CONAN THE PIMP

The early morning summer sun shone on the crowded streets of Copealium, a bustling seaport crowded with traders, caravaneers and moneychangers. In colorful costume the men and women of Copealium shopped, saw the sights, drank and whored and exhibited their skill with the dagger while unburdening vendors of their goods. From time to time howls and shrieks of delight would fill the air as a bear was baited, a streaker was nabbed and introduced to the quaint Hyperborean custom of running, in the back door, or up the dirty road; or as a pot of boiling oil was emptied on unwary passersby by a playful reeve.

Copealium, a very ancient and wealthy city, made its money in, trade with other Hyperborean kingdoms, trafficking in scrimshaw, high precision optical instruments, bootleg dulcimers, dime novels and assorted mechanical devices of a pornographic nature. And it was to this rich and powerful city, some time before, one Conan, the former king of Aquilonia, came to remake his fortune for the umpteenth time. Rebellion had come to pass and chased this barbarian-become-king from office as word went abroad of his strong attraction for horseflesh. So strong, indeed, that it would go unequalled until the fatal attraction of the Cossacks' queen. There being, obviously, no heirs available, the country was plunged into civil war to decide the fate of the throne.

He reached the gates of Copealium with his only worldly possessions, the clothes on his back, his oaken walking staff, and an almost endless repertoire of old battle yarns -- himself as hero -- guaranteed to put the most boisterous tavern to sleep in moments, and a backfile of a notably narcissistic muscleman magazine. Unfortunately for Conan, the boor market was glutted; he was forced to take a job with a local sorcerer. He did quite well despite a notable lack of natural intelligence and aptitude, until events culminated in an unfortunate incident involving a ubiquitous broom and equally ubiquitous waterbuckets. Conan was thrust back in the shadow again.

Then one day it happened. Conan met the girl of his dreams. She had everything a man could want, including oaken arms, rippling muscles like bands of steel, and an insatiable appetite for bloodshed and violence. Conan would at last be happy as he and the little woman, one Rubella by name, prepared to settle down to a life of plundering, looting, raping and pillaging. But, alas, this was not in the entrails of the chickens, as the shamans say. The years of wallowing in wine, wassail, and self-pity had taken their toll. No more could Conan swing his axe as in the days when hundreds fell with one blow of his mighty weapon, or one whiff of his noxious breath. The magic had melted from his mighty limbs. He swallowed his enormous pride and turned to his helpmeet, his beloved Rubella. It was decided that she

would go into business, and he would be her manager. Two rooms in the red torch district of Copealium became their offices. A rough neighborhood, it was frequented by thieves, murderers, lowlifes, and degree-holders in the liberal arts. In one room Rubella would accept gentleman callers, and it was quickly decided that the other room would be used by Conan, also to accept gentleman callers -- unofficially, of course.

Summertime meant swarms of citizens in every street of trade, and therefore most every one would soon pass through the red torch district. First of all, the district encompassed 85% of the city. Second, every important citizen whether in politics or commerce made a point of visiting the district to contribute his coppers to stimulate the hypersensitive Hyperborean economy. Not to mention have his ashes hauled.

Down an alleyway wove a black-garbed figure. Passing an open doorway he was assailed by a semicoherent drunk who spoke with a barbarian accent curiously familiar to the fans of Robert E. Howard and L. Sprague DeCamp. "Cudja help an old altar boy, Father, wudja?" The priest of the mystery cult hurried away, leaving the drunk to his own devices. Several short seconds later the priest was on the receiving end of one of those aforesaid devices, a crossbow bolt, that nailed him to a fruitcart long enough for Conan to pinch his purse.

Retaking his position in the doorway, Conan watched humanity stroll past. From time to time he'd assail a rube with his hearty "Hey mister, wanna buy my sister?" Few did, possibly fearing a familial resemblance.

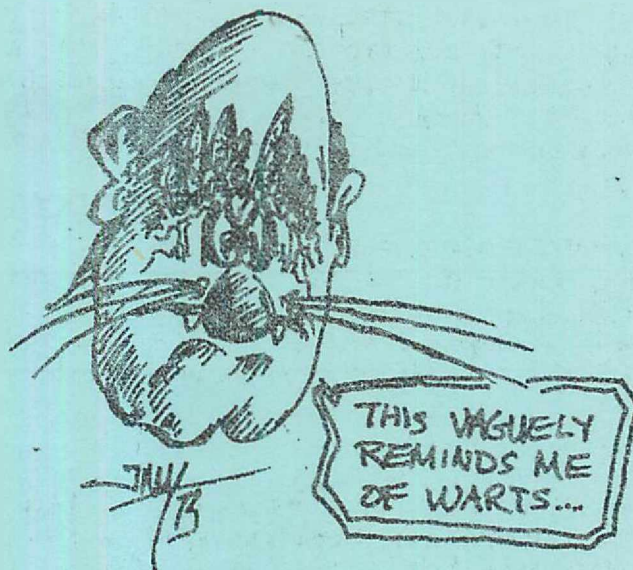
Times were rough, but Conan knew that convention season wouldn't let him down. Soon after the incident with the priest Conan spied a young man walking his way. He was a comely youth, arrayed in the cap and bells which signified him to be an ensign in the Royal Nemedian Navy. Now was Conan's chance. Coily, he called out "Hey, Sailor, looking for a good time?" Not wishing to appear unfirmedly the itinerant ensign admitted that he was. "How much?" he inquired with a sheepish grin that drove Conan wild with desire. "Twenty coppers, cheap at half the price," replied Conan. Not being one to haggle, the young sailor quickly reduced the price to three coppers, a ticket to the next pagan sacrifice, and a Captain Midnight secret decoder ring filched from his cereal box at morning's mess.

Conan led the young man up the creaking stairs to where Rubella awaited with baited breath. (Today was Tuesday and on Tuesdays Rubella always baited her breath with garlic.) She left him in an outer chamber formed by a flimsy partition, while she hurried into the bedroom proper to ready herself. Looking about the room the nervous john spied a silver dollar on a table, next to a pile of prison-issue clothing that instantly reminded him of a story concerning a noted lady of the night hight "Sandpaper Annie." Apprehensive, he tried the handle of the door, only to find it locked. He prepared himself for the worst.

Meanwhile, after locking the door, Conan had entered his room to relive past glories. He did this often when Rubella had company, as it was not necessary to attract new business for the time being. Conan's room could have been called opulent, though garish is perhaps the better word. War banners and pennants covered the walls, as did blood-encrusted weapons, slashed tunics and various disembodied hands, feet and heads. A large mirror was placed on the ceiling, directly over the bed, plundered by Conan in days gone by. It was the sight of his beloved bed which sent Conan's mind to work dredging up past exploits. There had been Scipio, the butcher-boy with legs like a strong young bull and big brown eyes. There had been Hasdruple, an

orphaned waif who'd broken Conan's heart by running away with the milkgirl. Perhaps his favorite was a boy come in on the caravans from the east. Named Youssoufaki he was dark-skinned and almond-eyed, with a kick like a mule.

Conan was shaken from his reverie by the creaking of the steps. With only the barest trace of his old lithe self, Conan sprang for the door. Upon opening it he saw the young Nemedian ensign trying to sneak out without paying for his hour of pleasure. "Piker!" growled Conan as he lost his balance on the stairs and both he and the Nemedian tumbled to the street below.



Picking himself up, Conan cursed in a hoarse voice made weak by long years of giving orders to everyone within earshot. He had to struggle to make himself heard over the jingling of the ensign's bells, which were sewn all over his motely uniform, but were most prevalent on his coxcomb hat.

"Welcher! Sercon fan! Revisionist! Cheapskate!" cursed Conan. "Give me my money or I'll split you in two!" cried Conan, recalling a younger day when neither he nor his threats were idle.

The young man gave his silver bells a shake, as if to ask was there some mistake, remarking in perfect Nemedian "I don't know what you're saying." He turned to walk away, an ominous itching burning in his groin as he half-waddled down the street to the nearest free clinic.

All at once the old fire he had thought dead rose into Conan's eyes. The sinewy muscles of his back attempted to knot themselves into their former shape and so give height and stature to the broken wretch. The indignant barbarian king raised his potent voice and yelled "Police! I'm being robbed!"

Even at his dullest hour Conan recognized his mistake. Though the ale-bloated sack which was once Conan's belly proved too tough to let him stand straight, the ensign's laughter at the thought of a patrol through the red torch district sent the strength born of flickering pride through Conan's arms and legs. With an arthritic leap forward Conan raced to the waddling stiff, pausing only to liberate a short sword from the back of a recently mugged tour guide. Once again he confronted the ensign.

"This is your last chance," he said. "Give me my money or face the consequences." Always the diplomat, Conan left open the door to reconciliation. The ensign laughed again and turned to leave.

As he turned, the bells on his cap jingling, he ran into the curved arc which was the barbarian's blade. Steel bit into flesh and bone as torso was separated from head. The ensign's purse flew open and before the two halves of his body hit the street his money was in Conan's hands. Conan grinned demonically, putting the coppers in his waistband. Ever the one for morals, he quoted with the wit so dear to the horses of Aquilonia, "Money of love is the loot of all reevers..."

Space:1999

The Cosmic Abortion

a galactic hatchet job by reviewer DARRELL SCHWEITZER

Gardner Dozois loves to tell people about an incredibly awful story he found once in the course of reading unsolicited manuscripts for GALAXY magazine, wherein the planet Jupiter "falls out of its orbit" and comes rolling down the side of a solar system (apparently shaped like a funnel) "onto the Earth." The world is saved by a scientist who builds a cobalt ray in his basement, nearly lost again when he forgets to take the safety off (I'm not making this up!), and finally Jupiter bounces off into the Sun.

The story was rejected, of course, and for more deliciously incredible details you'll have to consult Gardner's introduction to the anthology A DAY IN THE LIFE (Harper & Row 1973). Every slush pile reader encounters dozens like that in the slush pile, but I wonder how many of them feel a sickening sense of deja vu when they turn on the television and find one turned into a major new series in national syndication.

What I'm talking about is SPACE:1999, on at 7pm Fridays in these parts, starring Martin Landau and Barbara Bain, and created by Gerry and Sylvia Johnson, who were previously ignored for FIREBALL XL5 (in which puppets acted like people) and UFO (in which people acted like puppets), and now have perpetrated what must be the silliest science fiction series ever to hit the tube, far worse than LOST IN SPACE, ROCKY JONES, or even SPACE ANGEL. And they pissed away umpteen million bucks doing it. SPACE:1999 isn't just a total flop, folks, it's a first class, red-carpet all-expenses-paid, inflationary catastrophe.

The plot is fully as slack-brained as that GALAXY reject. All the literary brain-damage cases in the world can take heart -- they really do buy that shit and produce it -- but the rest of us can feel let down once again by the self-appointed dingdongs who know "what the public wants." We, the public, do not want SPACE:1999 if there is any hope for us at all.

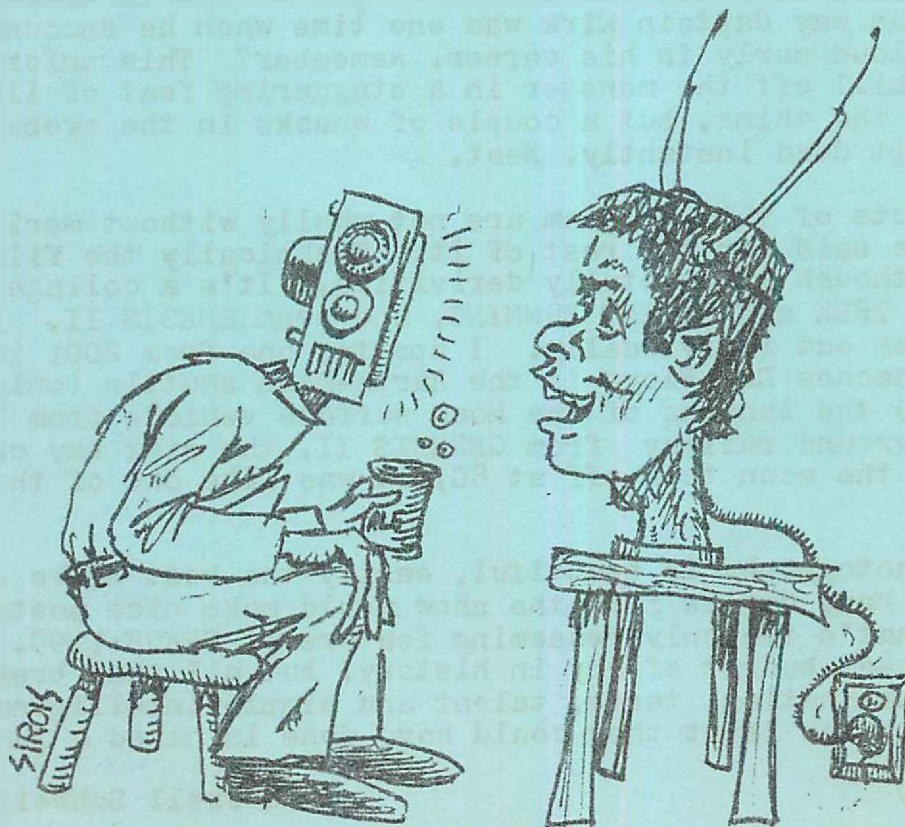
The first episode went like this: There's a problem on Moonbase Alpha. People are going crazy, and right before they flip out their eyeballs (usually just the left one) turn green. Medical experts tell us that these are symptoms of radiation (the doctors at Hiroshima might beg to disagree), but strangely there is no radiation to be found. (The way they detect radiation is classic. With a rod, like checking the oil in a car. Stick it in something, pull it out and see if there's any radiation on the end.) Later it transpires that the villain is "magnetic radiation", which is why it could not be detected, and it's coming from a pile of reactor wastes dumped on the Moon. (In itself a silly idea: If you go through the fantastic expense of rocketing the junk into space, why not stash it in the Sun which will vaporize everything, rather than build a special facility on the Moon to store wastes? No, they didn't

think of that.) For some reason this stuff is getting hot, and it's shooting off lightning bolts which knock down spaceships with incredible accuracy, and exploding with a series of loud bangs in the vacuum of the Moon's surface and the director's scientific knowledge.

But that's only the beginning. The radioactive goop goes off with such a kick that the Moon is knocked clean out of its orbit, although Moon-base Alpha is almost undamaged, and it's not very far away from the dumping site. Needless to say, if it were possible to produce such an explosion (also banging resoundingly in this vacuum), and if it did not break the Moon up into little bits (which I think it would do), it would most certainly create such a violent Moonquake as to destroy every man-made edifice on the surface, especially nearby bases. However, we are apparently supposed to believe that this is a highly unusual explosion, not bound by orthodox physics. How else could an explosion on the far side of the Moon push that sphere away from the Earth?

Hang onto your hats, and here we go bounding across the cosmos to bigger and grosser scientific inaccuracies. First of all, SPACE:1999's crew seems not to know what I knew by the time I was in the first grade, and that is that there are nine (count 'em, nine) planets in the solar system, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, in that order outward from the Sun. A tenth planet, or an eleventh, would have to be out beyond Pluto somewhere, where it is very cold, and because it is very cold the atmosphere would probably be frozen on the surface like frost, and the result of all this would be that the place isn't very hospitable to humans. Yet in the first episode we encounter the planet Meta, which is in the Solar System, not very far from Earth it seems, since the Moon approaches it not long after breaking out of orbit. "Maybe our future lies there," intones Landau as the credits roll on.

No such luck. The second episode ignores Meta entirely, and tells about



an expedition to the planet Ultra, which is also in the Solar System. (The writer's knowledge of the conditions in the Solar System come out in the dialog: "After all we've learned about black suns and neutron storms and radiation and light!" or "We're lightyears away from Ultra." I'll have you know that the Solar System is less than a light year across by a good measure, so you can't be light years away from anything in this neighborhood and still be in the neighborhood!) We are absolutely sure that it's in the Solar System when the astronaut blathers on about the "dream of interstellar travel" which has not yet been achieved. Nope, Meta and Ultra both revolve around our sun, if the SPACE:1999 people even realize that planets aren't just sitting still out there.

Anyway, the intrepid explorer docks with one of the many derelict alien vessels orbiting Ultra (the old Sargasso Sea in Space shtick, so trite they used it on the cartoon STAR TREK once) and this alien ship, which is, one would assume, the product of an entirely different technology has an airlock coupling system which fits perfectly. (The Apollo/Soyuz crews needed special equipment, you will recall.) Inside is a monster which promptly eats three out of four crew members, while the fourth is up in front of the cabin trying to fix the controls to the sliding doors. The creature is a tentacled affair with a glowing eye and a red-hot furnace in its belly, which draws people irresistably to their dooms by means of flashing lights and suction. It seems to subsist entirely on the crews of spaceships ("Like flies caught in a web") and considering how large the universe is and how likely a spaceship is to be wandering by any particular point, the entity must feed about once in every hundred billion years or so.

The rest of the episode is monster-killing, an exercise in stale cliches ranging from the traditional male chauvinist ("You stay here" told to a female member of the boarding party, when she's armed and able as the rest of them) to the traditionally space opera-ish (screaming girl rescued from slimy monster by hero with ray gun), to old STAR TREK plots. You see, the surviving member of the first crew is not believed, and is overcome by a sense of guilt and a need to prove himself against the monster, exactly the way Captain Kirk was one time when he encountered a malevolent white cloud early in his career. Remember? This unfortunate dies, and the others kill off the monster in a staggering feat of illogic. Ray guns won't stop the thing, but a couple of whacks in the eyeball with an axe will knock it dead instantly. Neat.

The visual aspects of this program are not wholly without merit, which is more than can be said for the rest of it. Technically the filming is rather good, although it's totally derivative. It's a collage of scenes from 2001, STAR TREK and SILENT RUNNING, and even GENESIS II. If you want you can pick them out individually. I spotted one from 2001 in which the stewardess approaches Dr. Floyd in the Earth-Moon shuttle (only there's no floating pen) the landing of the Moon surface vehicle from the same film, the underground railway from GENESIS II, the sick bay of the Enterprise, and when the moon took off at 8G, it was like one of the higher warp speeds.

Yet the color photography is beautiful, easily the best we've ever seen on television. Many stills from the show would make nice posters if blown up, and that's the only redeeming feature of SPACE:1999. The series has the highest budget of any in history, but all that bread won't buy quality where imagination, taste, talent and simple intelligence are so utterly lacking. The least they could have done is hired a junior high-

school kid with a C+ average as science consultant. He probably would have spotted the major errors.

But they didn't, and there's no excuse for SPACE:1999. People, here's a show that deserves to die more than any other in a long time. Don't watch it. Avoid. Write to your tv station and complain. And if you like adult science fiction go read a book: forget about the idiot box.

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COLONIST RICHARD MEZO

Red and chill are the sands of Mars
In the late evening;
A great sea of forbidding silence
Stirs and grows,
Contains
One artificial and dependent Earth.

Past the uniformed douainers of Spaceport II
And through the lock and grapple
To the stark shadows of the outer hatch.
Into the disconcerting freedom
Of an alien soil,
Oxygen bottles hanging
Like the burden of ancient sins.

Glowing in light, this city of dome
Dreams under a bombardment of meteorites,
A fine layer of dust. Home.
Under the myriad of bright stars,
We pursue some forgotten purpose,
Obey dictates we cannot understand.
Home is where we go to die.

Yes, work and root to the bone,
Staring from our fluid eyes
Into dry, hard distances. These folded canals
Spread like a web of enormous dinosaur spines,
Thrusting deep without corruption or hope.

Lost now to the dimness of memory:
The soft shimmer of green fields,
The sweep of scattered goldenrods
In September twilight. Against this gathering dark,
No towhee of autumn, no killdeer of spring.

STF IN ACADEME

[BY] JOE SANDERS []

Mike Glycer recently relayed to me Bob Silverberg's comment on the first installment of this column: "Joe Sanders' essay depressed me considerably. To see anyone as intelligent as Sanders evaluating sf stories according to the positive or negative attitude of their protagonists confirms my recent dark conclusion that there is little place in modern American sf for the serious writer. It's sad to see him combing through two whole anthologies in search of 'hopeful implications' and rejecting anything that would upset Norman Vincent Peale."

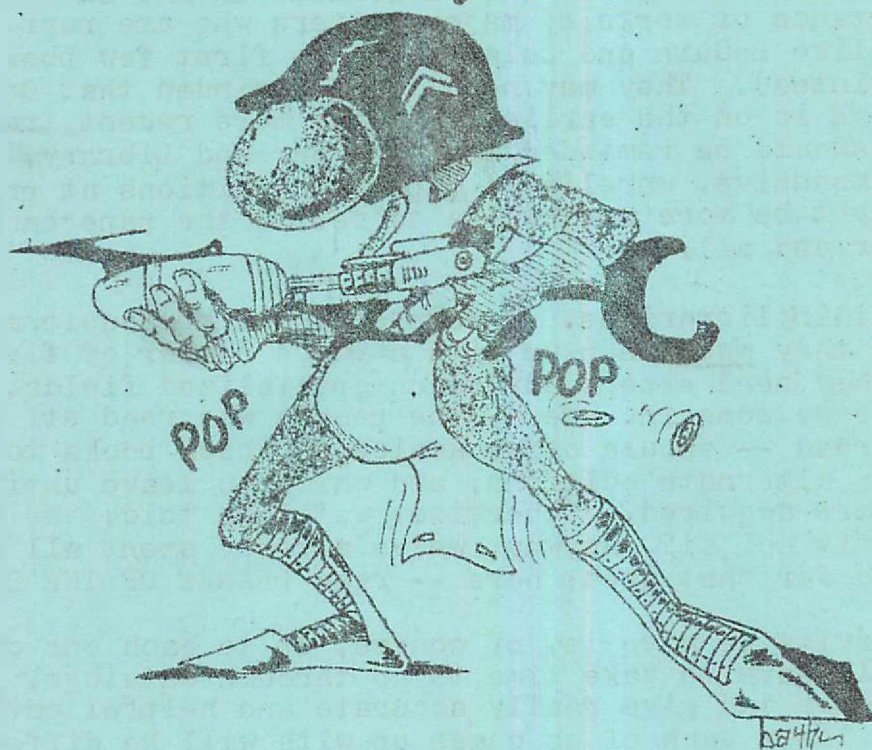
There will be a short pause while I pound my head on the tabletop.

Yes. Now what I actually said had nothing to do with evaluating stories by their overall positive or negative attitudes, let alone the attitudes of their protagonists. That shouldn't much enter into evaluation; it doesn't in my essay, and I hope that it doesn't in the way I treat works in the classroom. When I teach -- as I'm doing now -- Zelazny's LORD OF LIGHT and Conrad's HEART OF DARKNESS in the same class, I don't make the former's hopefulness or the latter's gloom the basis for liking or disliking. In evaluation, the question is not what the work's attitude is but whether the work honestly earns that attitude, as I'd say the stories by Zelazny and Conrad do. In the first installment of "STF & Academe," I was talking about the way textbooks represent the nature and range of sf, and I'd like to move onto a related topic this time. I have a feeling that this business is a pretty silly red herring anyway, coming from Bob's own disenchantment with writing sf and his inclination to oversimplify criticism to justify that disenchantment. I'd be very sorry to see Bob use anything I wrote to confirm his decision to quit the field -- "Born With The Dead," for one, earns its bleak attitude splendidly -- but that's a personal thing for Bob to work out.

If he just wants to work out his frustration at being misread, he can have my seat in front of the dent in the tabletop.

* * *

Let's consider a recent development in the academic treatment of sf: the packaged basic library. I've seen ads and sample bound books from Hyperion, Gregg and Garland. I believe Arno publishes a series of moldy oldies, and I've heard that Hyperion will do a second group of reprints. I've already expressed my judgement of the (shoddy) editorial work of the Hyperion series, in a recent STARLING, and I'm putting together material for a critique of all the series from that angle. Right now, though, let's just accept the fact that these series exist and that they're being widely promoted and sold to school librarians as "the definitive series" of sf books, etc. Some publishers offer a package deal for mass purchases. All are trying to make their offerings look as vitally important as possible; that, after all, is what they're in business for -- to sell a lot of books and to make money.



Consider the problem from a librarian's standpoint, though. A few years ago, when funds for library development were plentiful, a librarian could grab all the reprint series on the market (at the school where I was teaching six years ago, that's exactly what happened; the state legislature dropped an enormous grant on our library and we scrounged like crazy to come up with enough titles to use up the money). That's no longer the case. Money is very tight around the schools these days, and library budgets are especially pinched. As a result, librarians must pick and choose the reprint series they can buy or buy from.

And that's where we come in. Most librarians just don't have the background in stf to judge which series to buy whole or which books to select from different series. If we care about what books go into the libraries, however, this becomes rather more than a monetary question. The

books in the school library are the ones that teachers are apt to use for research assignments, that academics are apt to concentrate on for serious criticism -- and that will use up the money that might have gone into maintaining a contemporary collection. If we do care about how library collections represent stf, I think we want to prevent blind selection of things like A COLUMBUS OF SPACE, THE HORROR OF THE ASTEROID or IN CAVERNS BELOW, at the expense of other, more fully representative works. Each of the currently available reprint series contains valuable material, but in each case it would have to be augmented by material from outside that series -- and in some cases the deficiencies of the present editions are serious enough to make them bad bargains. Librarians may not be able to make that kind of choice by themselves. They may need someone to remind them that the lovely Dover editions of Wells, Taine and Burroughs that surely should supplement the works available in the series; they may need to be advised of the importance of Heinlein, Asimov and Clarke (not available in any series) and the relative importance of works by major writers who are represented by lesser works (like LeGuin and Zelazny, whose first few books are the only ones reprinted). They may need to be reminded that Gregg's edition of Zamiatin's WE is on the earlier, not the more recent translation. Finally, they should be reminded that the Garland Library, for one, is reprinting inexpensive, unreliable paperback editions at premium prices and that it might be more worthwhile to rebind the paperbacks themselves -- sleazy paper and all.

I'm not badmouthing librarians. I respect their professional ability very much, but they must keep up with a large number of fields and it's obvious that they need expert advice on specialized fields. And that, again, is where we come in. We -- the people who read stf and who care about what we read -- should offer advice on which books to buy first, which to buy in alternate editions, and which to leave until other important books are acquired. Otherwise, we'll be told, "We don't have that one -- is it sci fi? Anyway, we've already spent all the money we could afford for that area; here -- read PLANET OF THE DOUBLE SUN."

Exactly what advice we give is, of course, up to each one of us. And, of course, we'll have to take time to go through catalogs, BOOKS IN PRINT, etc., so we can give really accurate and helpful advice. And, of course, the lists each of us comes up with will be different -- I wonder, for example, why only one of S. Fowler Wright's cold-minded novels is available in a reprint series. And, for one last of course, it will take all our tact and cunning to get our advice across.

But if we don't make the effort, who will? Who can?



Future imperfect

ANDREW DARLINGTON

When a science fiction writer creates a society a hundred or two hundred years into the future he is performing a remarkably complex feat. Familiarity with the genre, if it has not yet bred contempt, has bred blindness to this fact. Science fiction has created, over the last century, its own definitions of the future which has become more or less accepted; or perhaps it is society which has developed its own preconceptions about the future, onto which writers have latched and elaborated.

Few writers of sf today seriously think of their work as being prophetic in the literal sense. Yet much of it begins from commonly accepted standpoints and ideas of the future which are seldom questioned.

The concept of logical development of the future (barring 'accidental' extermination by nuclear or germ warfare) exists, and is as unique, as remarkable, as the process of its creation. But the logic of neither should be accepted on face value alone. The writer of science fiction, in particular, should be open to the fullest possibilities of the future, of which, at the moment, he does not seem to be aware.

Consider an analogy. From birth to the age of puberty a child may grow in height from two feet to five-and-a-half feet. This fact could be interpreted as a 'trend', and then projected into the future. Over the next ten years, by this method, it could be expected that the child would grow to a height of nine feet, then over twenty years to 12½ feet! This of course is self-evidently ludicrous. Yet writers attempting to portray societies of the future continually expect us to accept the fact that he will grow in this manner.

We know that the child will fluctuate a few inches in height over the next sixty odd years, given a normal lifespan, after which he will die. This process is inherent. Yet we the readers of science fiction set in the future, and for that matter, the Western world at large, extrapolate from past history certain trends, project them into the future, and accept a future constructed thus more or less as a reasonable concept.

Perhaps you have already dismissed this idea as "literary nitpicking" because you re-

gard fiction as "just something that passes half an hour," but if you feel that Creative Literature, in which science fiction has its place, is of value, then the point will be seen to be a valid one.

Our concept of the future is inherently based in our concept of time, and in our interpretation of history. It depends upon the selection of certain cultural "points of interest" from a given period of past history, interpreting the historical differences of these "points in time" into trends -- and ultimately projecting these trends into the future. Just as a boy's growth over the first ten years of life can be interpreted as a "trend" that will continue indefinitely. The faults in this way of thinking become obvious. To be able to look at the future, and to be able to make certain long-range predictions about the nature of that future, requires a view of history as a continual process. An objective view of history, an understanding of the laws of history as a continual process beyond the restrictions of the cultural blinkers that we, through a historical accident, happen to possess. That is, beyond the restriction of Western ways of thinking.

Very few writers are prepared to make this attempt -- or probably don't even realize that such an attempt can be made, and perhaps should be made.

We have been born into a particular cultural epoch -- have grown to accept its norms and, by and large, its values. We judge other cultures by our own standards which is to an extent inevitable. Total cultural disassociation is probably impossible. But an attempt can be made.

Writers like Moorcock and Jack Vance, portraying the future as a series of civilizations and cultures each with a limited built-in lifespan, period of decay, and collapse seem to point in the right directions. But nowhere, to my knowledge, have these precepts been analyzed from a deliberate, as opposed to the intuitive, point of view. The human race, historically, has complexified, multiplied (phenomenally over the last few centuries), covered and civilized the world says Asimov as the basis for his FOUNDATION trilogy, therefore the writer reasons, the race will further complexify, multiply, cover and civilize the Galaxy. This trend, he argues, despite minor setbacks, will continue indefinitely. He uses the same basic argument that "proves" that a growing boy will grow forever. He ignores the total view of world history as an 'organic' process.

This is understandable. The Western world as a whole accepts this "world as history" view. But that does not mean that it is necessarily correct. Oswald Spengler, a German social philosopher, published his epic work "THE DECLINE OF THE WEST" in 1917 to advance this theory. The book stands as one of the few which, although it may not fully convince its reader, will change the way in which that reader looks at the world. Like the works of Nietzsche, Kant, Marx, McLuhan and the ideas of Marcel Duchamp, it questions certain concepts and gives an added insight in this way into the possibilities of the universe.

Lysenko, the Soviet agro-biologist, attempted to prove that environment absolutely conditions the development of living organisms. From a slightly different tack Spengler points out that all human beings view the world through culturally "rose-tinted" spectacles according to the social environment in which they grow and mature. This claims he is true in all fields of behavior and knowledge. Even Mathematics, which is usually quoted as one of the foundations of universal knowledge, which supposedly lies beyond cultural variation. Spengler proves that this view is not necessarily true. Different applications and emphases of mathematical constants in architecture, astronomy, and the "pure sciences," the development of the concept of infinity (a concept which was totally alien to the ancient civilizations' way of thinking either

temporally or spatially), or fractions, algebra, and geometry, has altered the mathematical view of the world.

Spengler argues that the Western 'way of thinking' which is but one of an infinite number of 'ways of thinking,' with all the inherent limitations and confines of any other culturally-tied process, is obsessed with the time-concept. The idea of time as an ordered sequence of events leading in a particular direction. An idea utterly alien to the thinking of the Indian or of Classical Greek cultures. These people lived in an 'eternal present' without the concept of 'historical progression' that we take for granted.

In such societies, the literature that we class as 'science fiction,' set in the future, could not possibly have developed. For, according to their 'world-historic view' tomorrow and the day after tomorrow would be no different significantly from today or yesterday.

When Hegel speaks of the 'realisation of History,' when Marxists speak of the inevitable progression of society from feudalism, to imperialism, to capitalism, to socialism, they are, argues the Spengler theory, speaking from within the confines of the Western time-progression concept.

From the earliest Christian monks copying illuminated manuscripts, to make their beliefs permanent for an unimaginable future; through the great Victorian historians like Macauley and Gibbon who so ordered the past to prove that everything led up to the creation of the British Empire (upon which the sun was never to set); to Darwin who logically ordered natural prehistory according to the same empirical concept; to today's age of neatly ordered history laid out in sequenced progression in our museums giving the effect of a single cohesive and natural process; when books in acres of print record, analyze history and interpret prehistory; when posterity is viewed as a projection of now, on which we base our decision to take out life insurance policies and mortgages, pay for the headstones on our burial plots, keep photographs -- all of which identify us racially and individually as creatures within a moving, changing dimension of time.

The ancient Egyptians attempted a similiar permanence with pyramids and embalming of the dead. We know and can accurately chronicle the lifespan and sequence of the Pharoahs -- even analyze their relationships from blood tests. Yet of the kings of Dorian Greece, who came later and lacked, or rather had a different concept of time and hence of posterity, we know nothing. Spengler wrote 'we know the exact birthdays and death days of almost every great man since Dante, and moreover we see nothing strange in this fact, Yet in the time of Aristotle...it was no longer known with certainty if Leucippus, the founder of Atomism...hardly a century before -- had ever existed at all; much as though for us the existence of...the Renaissance had become pure saga!'

An individual is born, grows to maturity, to old age, and dies. This is as true of plants as it is of mammals, of reptiles, of species, of stars, as far as we can tell of the galaxies and the universe itself. Life is cyclic. A natural, organic process. Spengler argues that civilizations and cultures (which he defines as separate phenomena), and ways of thinking, have a similar cyclic nature. They do not develop continually, indefinitely into the future, as Western thinking and science fiction believe.

The cycle of thinking of Western Man has already passed its zenith according to Spengler's analysis, and there is impressive argument to support him. The growth of Western philosophy from Descartes ended with Hegel because it could go no further along that path; the subsequent work of the Existentialists and of Wittgenstein attack philo-

sophy from outside the framework of that tradition (such as the structure of language). The growth of Western music climaxed somewhere around Wagner, today's musicians like Cage and Stockhausen look beyond the Western musical tradition and way of thinking for their ideas. A similar process of 'breaking down' outworn traditional cultural barriers is evident in the related fields of sculpture, painting, dance, and 'concrete' poetry. They all indicate and prophesy a breaking-away from the main body of European culture and thought which is becoming outmoded and irrelevant.

Yet we who call the Orientals 'inscrutable' because we cannot fully understand their culturally opposed way of thinking, easily accept Hollywood actors in fancy dress populating the movie version of ancient Rome, speaking with American accents from scripts proclaiming American concepts of freedom and patriotism (which have only evolved over the last few centuries!); and we populate our future with their direct Western-thinking counterparts.

It can be argued that Spengler himself is a victim of this shortsightedness. His book is called "DECLINE OF THE WEST." 'Decline' is a subjective term. The decline of one way of thinking gives birth to another way of thinking, which in turn creates its own culture and civilization as different from its predecessor as it will be from that which it precedes.

Just as Dorian Greece gave way to Western orientations, time continues. Change is the order of the universe. What is most significant, and what is most exciting about the future will not only be in manner of clothing worn, transportation used, or form of dwelling, but the 'way of thinking.' In every birth are the seeds of death. This is true for civilizations, including Western Civilization, as it is true for human individuals. A speculative fiction which does not take this factor into consideration cannot claim to present a fully evaluated picture of the probable future. Yet how much SF recognizes this fact?

.....MINIREVIEW BY STAN BURNS.....

NEBULA AWARD STORIES TEN: Edited by James Gunn, Harper 1975 \$7.95

These nebula awards stories anthologies, containing both the award winners, and several close runners up, are generally one of the best buys in any year for top flight sf. This collection is something of an exception. I must state my prejudices here: I disagree violently with many of the award choices for this volume, and disagree with all the other stories that are reprinted. Martin's "Song for Lya" isn't here. I think it should be. Neither is Tiptree's "The Women Men Don't See." Nor Niven's "Hole Man" nor several other choices. Of what is here, the three award-winning stories (two of which are not so marked on the contents page), I disagree with all of the choices. LeGuin's "The Day Before the Revolution" is a good story, but I doubt if it would have won all by itself; predating the action of the Nebula-winning THE DISPOSSESSED, I think it coasted in on the tails of that deserving work. Too much background information for the story is contained in the novel, and I don't think it stands strongly when read alone. Eklund and Benford's "If the Stars Are Gods" I feel was awful: contrived, wasteful, without a proper ending, a glorification of cultural suicide. Silverberg's "Born With The Dead" is not one of his best pieces. It is too intellectual, too far removed from reality to be truly effective (as compared against TIME OF CHANGES or DYING INSIDE -- noth superior fiction). The story drifts when it should std up and scream -- far too static. All in all, there are some good stories here, but none of them are my choice for the "Best of the Year." Wait for the paperback edition.....

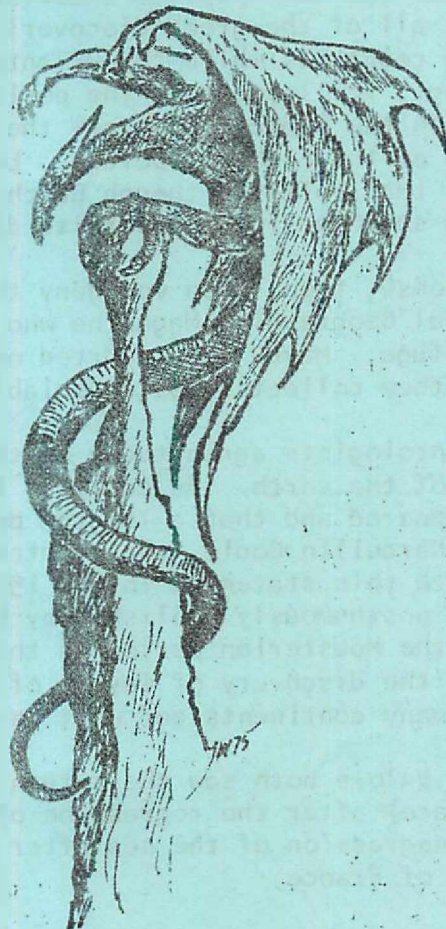


EDITOR'S REMARK: Since it was Father Chapdelaine's murder which was used to justify the Anglo-French war against China in the 19th century, I suppose it's only fair for the name to crop up again in a theological connection. This letter is NOT a Perry Chapdelaine pseudonymous product -- it's from his relative, and passed along as part of Perry's never-ending campaign to keep the discussion boiling.



You asked why in hell parthenogenesis is so important? I gave you the whole story in my preceding letter and within the text I hid the reason why it's so important. Upon it and within it is found LIFE. Sorry but I can't repeat it. Either it goes above a reader's head or straight into his heart. There's no two ways about it, no monkeying around with it. Over the years I've learned never to repeat in more complex terms what was given in a way so simple that even a child understands it. And that's the way I keep it, even putting aside the long and cumbersome words such as parthenogenesis to make sure the reader knows what I'm talking about.

As far as the rest is concerned, far be it from me to try and change your mind on what you believe, on your set of values. The Galileo story has been blown way out of proportion by people who think that time necessarily brings progress-- but few remain who see the regression in our daily lives and in what we label fictitiously as science. Only recently have we begun to see real progress in history because the real historians are leaving behind the Congressional records and histories of governments and taking their research notes from the mimeo works by geneologists. When that history is written, we find that what happened to the common man, the average citizen, was really what happened to the country. When the political mumbo jumbo is set aside, we begin to see



ANTEDILLUVIAN APOLOGIA

that the heart of a people, its intelligence, its knowledge, its science, and its progress, were really the lot of the little people whose bones are ashes yet who were the real country and not the figures of men who loom mightily in schoolboy history texts. I've seen both sides of Middle Age history and long ago selected the unpopular side, the one no one believes in but which is the true side of any society.

At any rate, I offer no point for consideration or for study as though I were ready to present a bill to be voted on by popular consent. The Truth remains eternally even if three billion people were to vote against it. More than three billion persons have seen the sun since Adam and Eve chose the wrong way and discarded parthenogenesis yet it remains eternally as the Road to Life. Even if everyone until the end of time rejects it and chooses the wrong way, God will never change and the first way will be the last.

Apparently you follow the arguments of the rationalists, failing thereby to see beyond your senses. If all men were rationalists, there would be no science of Astronomy today and man would know little of the universe. There would also be no electronics, and none of the more popular theories that have made our technology. It remains however that all of the great discoveries from the 13th century onwards were made in Christian countries while the Orientals with their fatalistic ideas have done little or nothing. Still you take the position of Voltaire whose great work was to pour ridicule on the Bible and on all the arguments of his time -- eventually to deny the existence of the Flood or Deluge. Luckily, the German poet, Goethe, was a man more brilliant than Voltaire though Goethe's works remain hidden while Voltaire is still hailed as sunshine in an otherwise dark world.

In this sense, then, when you deny the Flood, you pay no heed to the work commissioned by National Geographic Magazine who hired world acclaimed experts to collect evidence of the Deluge. Maybe they started out by denying it, too -- I don't know -- but the evidence they collected was undeniable.

All paleontologists agree today on the HIATUS or the age when man disappeared from the face of the earth. As early as 1918, Sir Bertram Windle showed that Paleolithic man disappeared and that a lengthy period followed in which no man walked the face of Europe. Marcellin Boule, the greatest modern European authority on paleontology, agreed with this statement in his 1952 edition of "Les Hommes Fossiles" (Fossil Men) which was posthumously published by Henri Valois, a still living expert. Both these men gave the Mousterian period as the time of man's disappearance. All of this is proved by the discovery of layers of loess around the world so that it is now known just how many continents and what parts thereof were submerged.

Boule and Valois both saw the return of man to Europe (the Cromagnon, Grimaldi and another race) after the regression of the waters but added that there was again a minor transgression of the sea after the return of man -- which evidence is found in the caves of France.

Reader's Digest back in 1958 when I was in the Air Force ran an article on the Sahara Desert to show that it was once fertile land with a large population. Traces of civilizations have been found under the sands, rivers and lakes traced throughout their beds, and particularly near these bodies of water are found tool and pottery in large quantities. According to the authors, archeologists and paleontologists, the Sahara became a desert between 8,000 and 10,000 years BC. Now, all the tools found under the Sahara are those of the Old Stone Age in its early period. None were ever found of the end period of the Stone Age nor of the Middle Stone Age. But much higher in the sands which are greatly stratified were found tools of the New Stone Age along with smelted copper. The Hiatus was VERY pronounced in the Sahara and the

fertile land became a desert immediately after the Flood. National Geographics ran a long article with paintings to depict the change that occurred with the Flood.

The same is true of Egypt, what is the Holy Land, and all the way down Africa up to the Cape. Archeologists have unearthed entire cities, many graves and campsites and generally concur that the many layers of silt with no tools or pottery, and that in a general way for Europe, Africa, the Near East and North America east of the Rockies and always these same layers dating to the same period, proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that man did in fact disappear from the earth for a rather long time.

When we consider the work of archeologists, the list is long. There are the excavations in Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. Pelican books published the work done in the city of Abraham, Ur, back in 1922 and completed only in the '50s. The author moved on and did more digging until he came up with conclusive proof such as seashells and seaweeds buried far below at the point of the hiatus to show that the Flood did exist. That book, "Ur of the Chaldees" is well worth reading! The author and his crew found a deposit of eleven feet of mud. Subsequently, excavations in Palestine revealed a layer of eleven feet of mud also and that same eleven feet, as the waters receded, covered the Plateau of Iran, 5,000 feet above the surrounding plain. It is certain, therefore, that the Deluge waters were, at places, over 5000 feet high!! In addition, Noah's Ark has long been sited high on a mountain in Turkey and my brother who lived in Ankara for more than a year brought back all the collected evidence of that Ark. However, the Turkish government has made that remote site a national monument and refuses to allow anyone to investigate further.

Henry Field, in 1955, published "The Track of Man" to describe excavations at Kish (near old Babylon). He gives this for the levels he found: Surface level: 0 feet. Neo Babylonian buildings = 5 feet (below surface). Later Dynastic = 20 feet (below). Plain level = 30 feet. FLOOD STRATUM=35 feet. Early Dynastic buildings and tombs = 45 feet. Therefore, at Kish, there was at least a ten foot deposit by the flood.

National Geographics, in Jan. 1951, again gave an account of excavations near the ancient city of Nineveh mentioned in the Bible. The archeologists found evidence of the Flood and also found 26 occupation levels...ONLY THE UPPER 6 within the historic age.

The excavators went through 16 occupation levels in the first term of their work. This was the same number found in Ur. But below these 16 levels, they found a belt of solid earth which dated as representing a break in civilization for about 1000 years.

Again in the '50s, the work begun by the English was completed in Jericho by Dr. Kathleen Kenyon. By carbon 14 dating, she and her coworkers arrived at the conclusion that the mound of Jericho was inundated at about 7,000 BC, which event caused the entire area to be free of man for a long time. This is the same time, 7000 BC now advanced by geologists for the Great Inundation that covered the earth at the end of the Ice Age.

Another interesting and revealing book is "Iran" which describes the diggings on the Plateau of Iran, 5000 above the nearby plain. In the center of this plateau one finds the most arid salt desert in the world -- and on which nothing grows nor lives. Yet digging under the salt reveals that the plateau was once a fertile plain with an extensive lake in the center, which lake was fed by the Elburz Mountains (19,000 feet high) and its many rivers. On this plateau was found so many artifacts that it is certain a civilization flourished here before the Flood. In fact, so much copper work was found that just that area was proved beyond any doubt the accuracy of the Mosaic account of how man lived before the flood! Men hammered copper into all sorts

of tools and a large number of delicate tools made of iron were found. Ploughs were found along with barley and wheat seeds. Kilns and ovens were also found, potters wheels and smelted copper, and also writing implements.

All experts, including evolutionists, agree that what made this rolling, fat and lush plain a great salt desert was the water of the Deluge, bringing in salt from the sea, the same as the Deluge deposited sea shells all over France, Germany and Italy.

I personally did a great deal of digging in the remote area of Candia, NH where I own a bit of land. And under an old colonial foundation, some ten feet or so below, I found either clam or oyster shells imbedded in the soil, all in one layer!! To my knowledge, the soil had never been disturbed by modern man but was virgin.

Other salt lakes exist everywhere as well as sea shells and mollusks. The Gobi Desert is another example, once a flourishing area. Then there's the Dead Sea, the Caspian Sea. How about Lake Chad in Africa, that French colony?

How did it happen? Baron Cuvier, whose work is generally accepted by archeologists, showed that the rainfall described by Moses in Genesis was accompanied by a sudden catastrophe: the elevation of the sea bottom and the submergence of land. Hence the sea waters mixed with the rain waters. And Moses wrote: "and the waters prevailed beyond measure upon the earth; and all the high mountains under the whole heavens were covered."

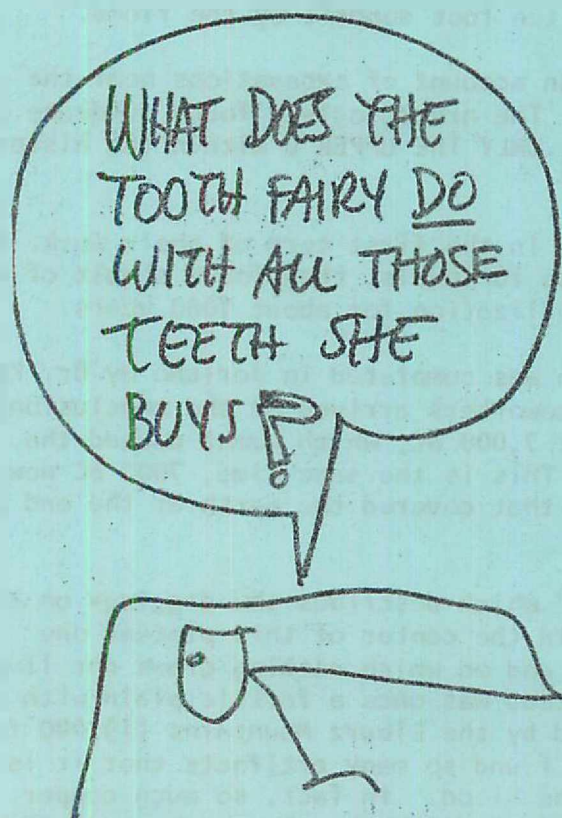
How violent a time it was is seen by the work of another great expert, Sir. H. Howorth in his "Mammoth and the Flood." If there was no flood, then how did trees and plants from tropical regions get transported to the Arctic Ocean where they are still frozen?

Why did the mammoths remain frozen up to a certain layer and all the subsequent deposits of animals were rotted as they froze in place over the ice layers? Why? Because the sudden inrush of warm tropical waters brought carcasses and trees and plants from way far south into the Arctic Ocean where they froze in place.

Baron de Geer of Sweden spent his life studying ice layers. And when he published all his works, he concluded that the ice suddenly melted about 7000 BC, the same date advanced by Dr. Kenyon by carbon dating the deluge deposits!! The actual figure advanced by the Baron was the year 6839 BC! The Finn, Sauramo, did the same work on the other side of the Baltic in Finland and he arrived at a date only 39 years different than the Baron.

All the diggings of China however fail to show that man existed there before the flood. The same is true of India for all excavations in the Indus Valley have failed to show evidence of man before the deposit of loess.

Dr. Wright, a well known American geologist, visited Asia in 1900 and dug there. He found evidence of a large scale inundation and




concluded that the waters had to be at least two to three thousand feet high to do that wide scale damage! Colonel Davies repeated Wright's work in India and then went to China and Northern Asia and advanced the same figures!

The same Dr. Wright, by digging in North America, found evidence that the Red Man was not the first inhabitant of our continent. The evidence is that the valleys of North America were free of ice long before the end of the Glacial Period. In his book Wright gives pictures of about six different fossil finds and artifacts belonging to peoples who lived here before 7000 BC. Therefore the Indian is a latecomer, after the Deluge. Howorth, who wrote five books on Glacial Periods and on the Deluge in North America says with proof that our continent sank at least several hundred feet and that at the end of the last Glacial Period, it was covered with water equal to the depth that it sank!

It is time to conclude. All men did in fact perish from the face of the earth around the year 7000 BC with the exception of those in Noah's Ark. Not only do we have the Biblical account of the Flood but profane literature also describes it. Sumerian Account, the earliest, describes the Flood in the same way yet Moses could not have read this account. The waters of the Deluge did in fact cover all of Europe, at least northern Africa, all the plains of Asia and most probably all of North America east of the Rockies. All the findings of geologists in many, many areas converge to prove that the human race did disappear suddenly and simultaneously in all of Mesopotamia and surrounding countries, in all of Europe, all of west Asia (west of the Himalayas), all of northern Africa and most probably in North America. The Bible claims that all men perished. It is generally accepted that all the animals in Mesopotamia and the areas nearby also perished but it is now thought that those in outlying areas such as west of the Rockies did survive though there is no proof either way. And it is certain that the Flood waters rose at least 5000 feet high though if Turkey ever opens the way to Study, it may be shown that at some points the water was more than three miles high!

Therefore, there was a Flood and the Bible is 100% correct, the same as it was correct when in old Hebrew it said that God alone knows how the "blood" flows within a man and that what is under a man's skin is the province of God alone and no man has the right to peer or open another man's skin. It was left to the 18th century to discover that man's blood flows in his arteries and veins -- before that time, men scoffed at the biblical idea that blood runs through a man! And it wasn't so many years ago that man scoffed at the idea of a universe in expansion, which today has been proven by the pulsars, those stars that rotate 30 times a second. And so man has accepted the false notion that God created once a long time ago and that man inherited death from God along with his entire false world that was in fact created by Original Sin. So today men know that God constantly creates anew and that to each of us he offers the very same as he offered to Adam, for he still makes woman be born a virgin! As the new Adam was Christ, so the new Eve was Mary. To show that what was born of the Spirit and not of man or his desires, Christ let himself die on the cross but rose on the 3rd day, conquering death once and for all. And Mary, as we've just celebrated, never died but underwent dormition then rose up into the Galaxies or the many mansions of the Father's House. What is born of the Father is eternal for he alone is Paternity. What comes of man and woman in their common will is unscientific chance for no one can say what his child will be. And so what comes of the will of man is death to fill the cemeteries and hospitals but also to create woes, ills and constant troubles before death mercifully cleanses the earth.

Such is the Vision spreading over the earth when that happy day rises on the horizon and God in His Trinity will be King of all the earth and men shall live eternally.



FRAGMENT OF THE AFTERWORLD

JON INOUE

(Flicker -- Channel 6):

"...good morning. God is dead. Throughout the hospitals of the world the announcement was unanimous:

"GOD IS DEAD."

(Flicker)

The voice is very masculine. The screen is now a kaleidoscope of fragments. Static:

"When God died this morning, he left one final wish. And this wish was that all men wear on their skins the Gypsy Palmolive Oil @ after every meal.

"Gypsy Palmolive Oil @ relieves radiation burns from frequent fallout. Unnecessary tension, baldness, can be avoided, if not postponed, by Gypsy Palmolive.

"Are you an ex-veteran? A Megapilot? Has your wife been transplanted into a metallic...thing?

"Don't be disappointed. Bear in mind that she is now immune to rads with Palmolive..."

(Flicker) (Static)

"Here is the tape recorded message that God left earlier this morning:

HUMANS MUST STOP WAR
HUMANS MUST SURVIVE THE FALLOUT
HUMANS MUST REBUILD SOCIETY

(And girls, God said, have you tried Johnston's Injecto? Makes bearing a child painless, even if you're raped by Russo...)

HUMANS MUST USE GYPSY PALMOLIVE OIL@.

"God added:

THIS OFFER IS NOT AVAILABLE IN ANY TRANSPLANT STATION.
GET THEM WHILE YOUR BODY LASTS.

(Flicker)

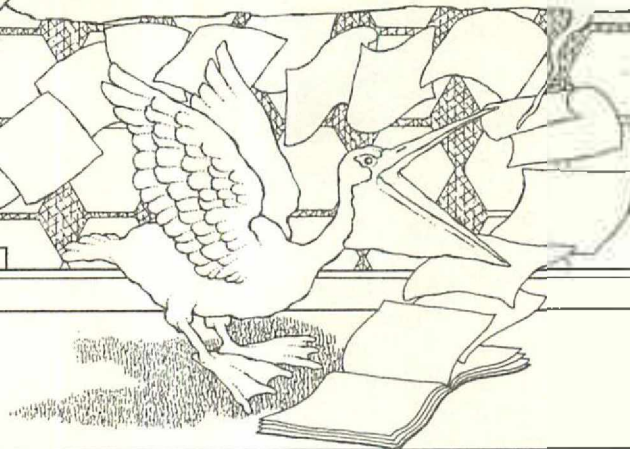
MAKE LIFE WORTHWHILE...and then God died." Pause. Flicker silence. No image but distorted flickers.

"Now, back to the show. On the East front, only twenty of our megasweepers have been destroyed. Sixteen hundred of their terradiggers, drilling crafty tunnels beneath earth to undermine our troops, have been knocked out of action...rad levels were down today..."

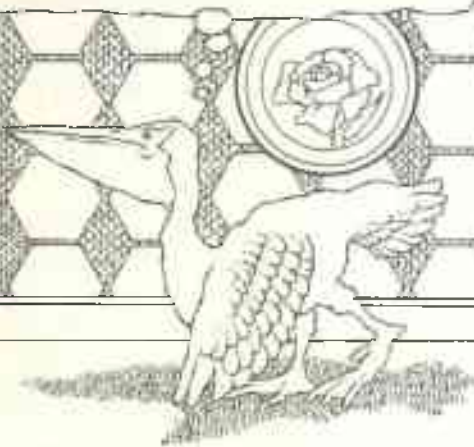
FAN FUNNIES

by james SHULL

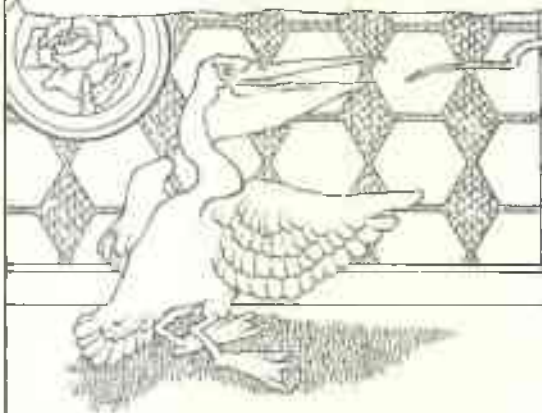
MY FIRST FANZINE DID'NT CONTAIN MUCH, BEING A NEW FAN. IT WAS HECTO, 20 COPIES, WITH ROTSLER ILLOS.



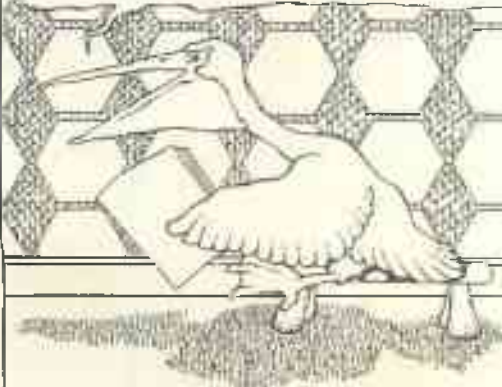
MY SECOND ZINE WAS DITTO, 100 COPIES, WITH SERCON ARTICLES, NOTES ON ERB, A FEW LETTERS, AND ROTSLER ILLOS.



I BOUGHT A MIMED THEREAFTER, PRODUCING 600 COPIES, WAS NOMINATED FOR A HUGO, RAN SERCON, FANNISH AND OTHER MATERIAL, AND ROTSLER ART ALSO.



GOING OFFSET PRODUCED 3 HUGOS, A CIRCULATION OF 7,000, A BANK ACCOUNT, PAYMENT FOR CONTRIBUTORS, FICTION, AND OF COURSE, ROTSLER DRAWINGS.



TODAY FOR THE ONE SMALL PERSONAL ZINE I PRODUCE, I USE A POTATO;... MAKES IT HARD TO PRINT THE ROTSLER ILLOS THOUGH!



JON INOUE: FURTHER INSIGHTS

BRUCE TOWNLEY

To hit it sideways requires a certain stance. Not too straight, not too wild. Semiconscious...after reading six Ellison stories in a row. Or two Gene Wolfe's. Or one Malzberg. Be ready to duck when it splatters.

-- Anonymous, Age 7, St. Louis, Mo.

Hey, here's something that you can do with a book. Let's say you're really loaded, your frontal lobes have been neutralized by the most convenient source (be it beer, chemicals of various descriptions -- depending on whatever your religious preferences are -- religion, inhalants like marijuana or spray paint, sex or other athletics and gymnastics, oxygen deprivation, deep breathing, mind control, mantra, tantra or jujube) and you've found your release. You're feeling the best you've felt in months. BUT why should other people suffer if you're feeling so good? You know that is just what they'll do if they have even the slightest hint of your real state. They'll get jealous. They'll feel worse than you do. They'll realize what a rotten condition they're experiencing. Maybe they'll even feel remorse for the envy. Senseless pain, right? And even all the more senseless if you could avoid all this grief for your friends and associates! Yes, you! It's quite simple, really. You're sitting down, right? Or at least you should be, one would think, if you're in the state above described, right? (and if you're in the state above described you're receiving this by telepathic transmissions, right? Sure!) If not sitting down than laying down on the floor by default. Gravity, you know. Can't fool mother nature. Just don't try it. Weel aanyhow, just make sure you have a book with you next time you're nullied out. And pretend you're reading it when you cross the line, enter the zone, become pie-eyed, or whatever. Nobody will be the wiser!! You bet!

There are, of course, some minor difficulties involved. But then, that's life, isn't it?

Like, for example, being sure that you have your eyes aimed at the book when you want other people to think you're reading the fucking thing. This can only be achieved through rigorous practice and memory work, because, remember, you can't see (I mean, the way you feel, why should you bother?) So you will have to rely on memory. The further down the spinal cord this memory is contained the further away it will be from the conscious mind and the safer you will be. Just practice practice practice holding a book (any book will do for now, because, remember, this is only a dry run) when you are reasonably sure that you're not under the influence and concentrate on how your neck feels after you've checked in a mirror to see that it looks like you're looking at the book from another person's viewpoint (doesn't really matter that you can see it because you are after all only doing this for the sake of your friends, other people). If you practice often enough this memory of the sensation in your neck will become so ingrained in your fiber that you will remember it before you remember how to walk or talk. All well and good. Now you are ready for anything you might do to yourself.

Of course, careful attention should be paid to the way your hands feel when you are

performing these neck memorization exercises. Looks kinda funny if you keep staring at the book after it's slipped from your hands, doesn't it? Do you want people to laugh at you, huh? Well if you want that you should be reading another article (or if you're just desperate enough, sticking another article in front of your face as camouflage.) Just keep in mind (what's left of it, wherever it or you might be) that the hands should remain in more or less the same shape so the book can be locked in a safe position. Experiment and find the shape that suits you best. Have some fun. Play around a little.

Then there is always the problem of the printing. That's the thing that tells you (or them) if a book is being held right-side-up or not. All this concentration on maintaining a facade would be wasted if we slipped up on a tiny detail like which way those tiny little figures are supposed to stand. In a word or two keep the book right side up! That means keep the pictures in the book right side up, too, not just the printing. Reach down to your most primitive levels (seem to be doing a lot of that tonight) back when reptiles had three eyes and when you were a worm that could see with its skin. That should do it. Leave a thumb from each hand planted over a printed portion of each page. Detect the patterns of light and dark with each thumb's surface and you take it from there. If, however, the book is printed white on black then the thumb trick probably won't work (only the past masters, the readers of "crudzines" as Jon Inouye would so pertly put it, can attempt this reversal). Then your only hope would be to try and sort out the indentations on the page, the tactile message of the pages beneath your thumbs. Good luck. You'll need it.

There is also the problem of turning the pages. Try, when practicing (and when you think you're advanced past the novice stage)(you're the only one who knows) to gear the page turning activities to your breathing or some other biological stopwatch of diurnal timing like maybe the sun (or if the sun isn't available, a lightbulb will do) or gravity. Again, pick the rhythm that suits you best. Who else is there to suit?

Choice of the book isn't as important as it might appear at first glance. What is important is the tone of voice you pick when you snidely explain how foolish somebody is when they ask you why you've been reading Bambi for the past five hours ("You just wouldn't understand." This gambit is always much more true than it appears to you because, of course, the one saying this certainly doesn't understand either.) One should utilize a hidden tape recorder with well rehearsed message and deeply memorized lip movements when one is still mired in the novice period. When you are proficient you can even risk the current issue of NEWSWEEK sans tape recorder.

Television fanatics proclaim that the next evolution from the book is the tube and as protective coloration renders the printed page obsolete. Not so. What do the tube diehards do after the local station signs off? One can always sit in what appears to be a delighted self-satisfied stupor when it looks like one is through with a book and it's slipped out of your hands. Can you do this with a TV set? Also it looks so much better if you have a book propped in front of your mug when you are unconsciously moving your lips than if you were doing that slumped in front of a TV set. Better living through the printed page!

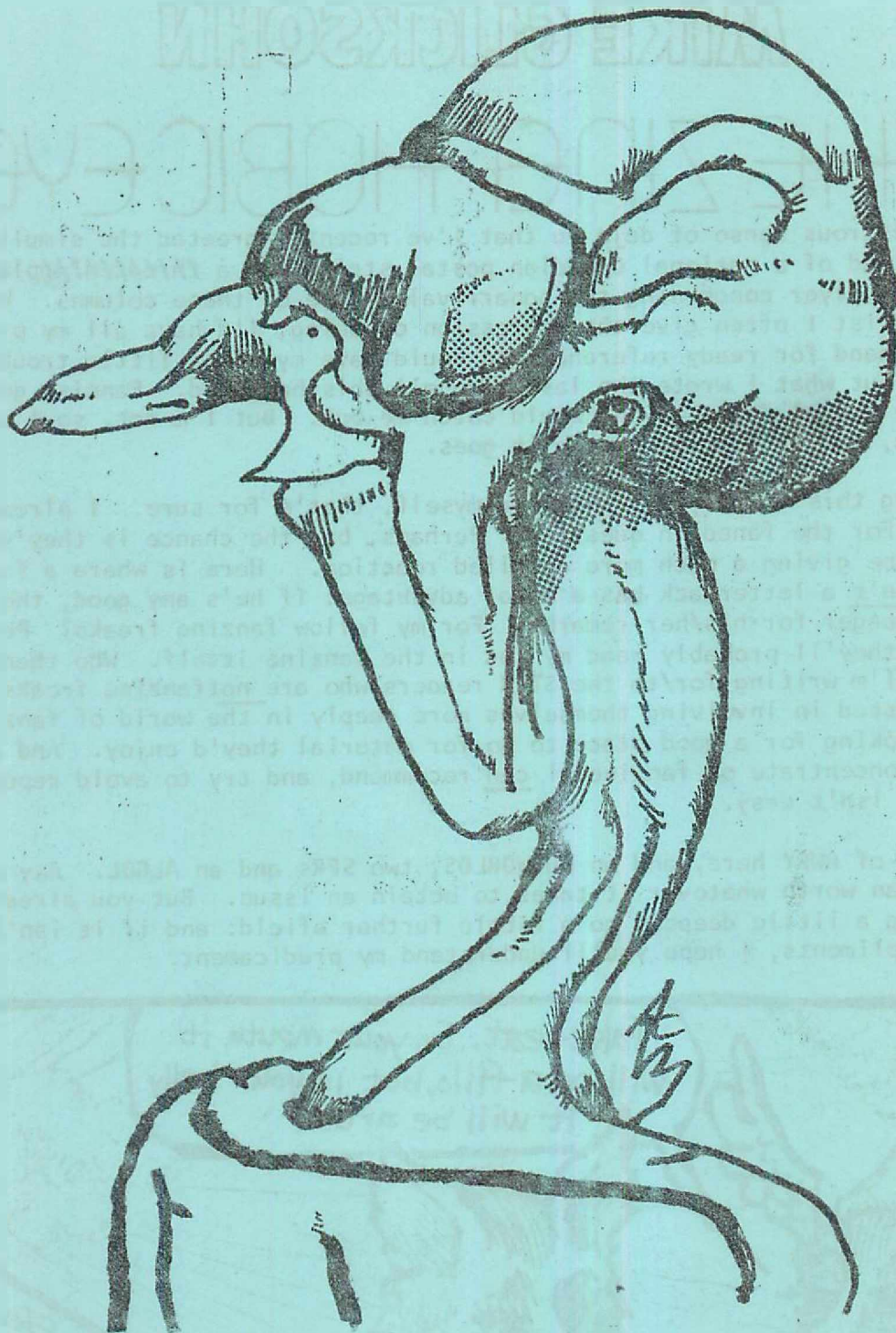
Ever wonder what everybody else is doing in this library?

Just so you won't forget who wrote this --

Bruce Townley.

-----MINIREVIEW BY STAN BURNS-----

FAREWELL TO YESTERDAY'S TOMORROW by Alexei Panshin, Berkeley/Putnam 1975 \$6.95
A collection of Panshin's stories, three of which ("The Sons of Prometheus," "A Sense of Direction" and "Arpad") take place in the RITE OF PASSAGE universe. Contents



vary from very good ("A Sense of Direction" -- probably the strongest story in the book) to the banal ("How Georges Duchamps Discovered a Plot To Take Over the World" -- a story that strives to be funny but ends up a rather pathetic mess.) Also contains "Now I'm Watching Roger," a story about the creeping insanity of three astronauts stationed on the Moon that is not only humorous but has a biting, black ending. I would, if I could have my druthers, prefer to have Panshin write the rest of the Villers novels (which are quaint, self-indulgent, humorous, pithy, and thoroughly enjoyable). Wait for the paperback.

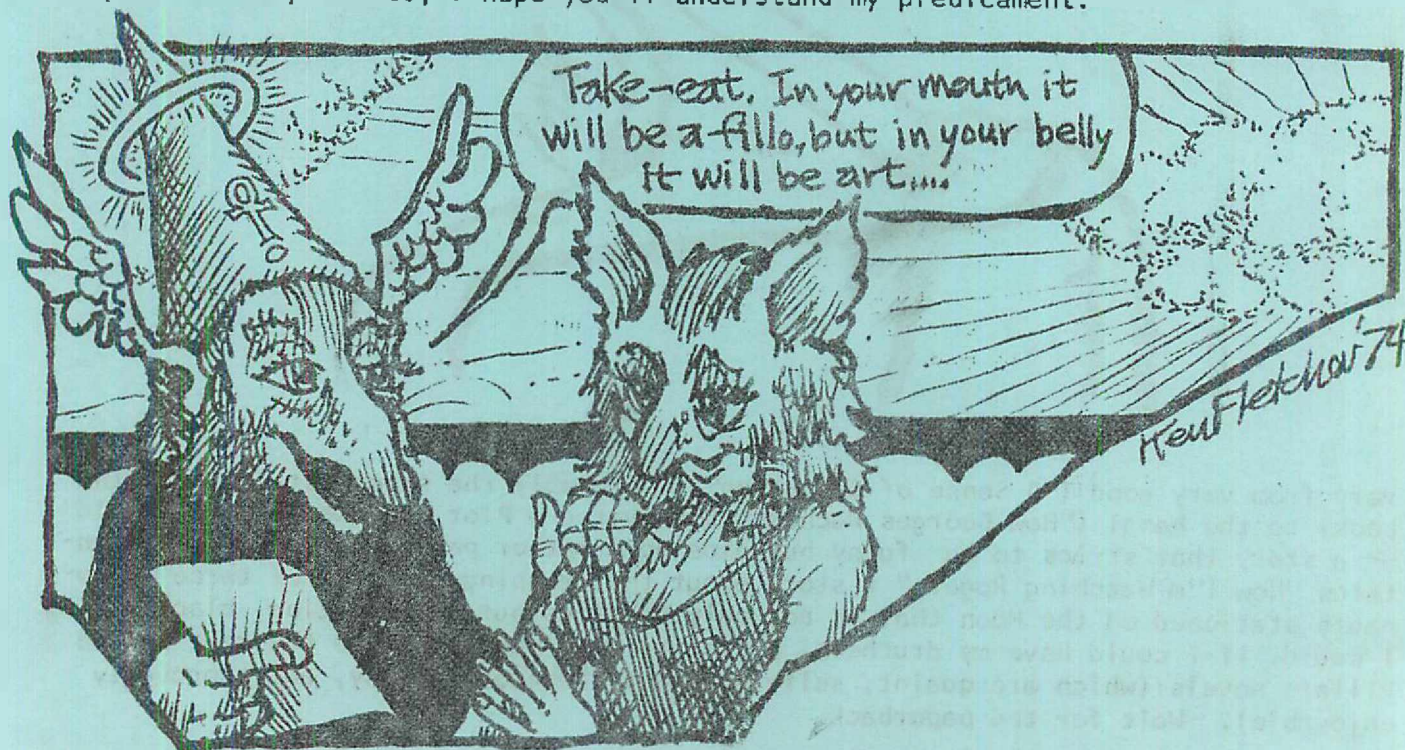
MIKE GLICKSOHN

—THE ZINEPHOBIC EYE

It's with a monstrous sense of deja vu that I've recently greeted the simultaneous arrival of the end of a national Canadian postal strike and a ~~THREATENING~~ pleading letter from Mike Glycer concerning the nonarrival of one of these columns. Were I the supreme egotist I often give the impression of being, I'd have all my previous PRE columns on hand for ready reference and could save myself a little trouble by simply copying out what I wrote the last time all this happened. Fannish generations being what they are, I doubt anyone would catch me out. But I'm not, so I can't, though they are, and it's a shame. So it goes.

Who am I writing this for anyway? Not for myself, that's for sure. I already know what I think. For the fanned in question? Perhaps, but the chance is they've already had a loc from me giving a much more detailed reaction. Here is where a fanzine reviewer who isn't a letterhack has a major advantage: if he's any good, the faneds themselves are eager for his/her remarks. For my fellow fanzine freaks? Perhaps; but once again they'll probably read my loc in the fanzine itself. Who then? I have to hope I'm writing for/to the STFR readers who are not fanzine freaks but who might be interested in involving themselves more deeply in the world of fanzines, who might be looking for a good place to go for material they'd enjoy. And that's why I try and concentrate on fanzines I can recommend, and try to avoid repeating myself. But it isn't easy.

I've a new copy of AWRY here, and an OUTWORLDS, two SFRs and an ALGOL. Any one of them is more than worth whatever it takes to obtain an issue. But you already know that. Let's dig a little deeper, go a little further afield: and if it isn't all bouquets and compliments, I hope you'll understand my predicament.



To oversimplify things to an enormous extent, there are two main reasons for publishing a fanzine (and they are certainly not mutually exclusive). You can concentrate on how you present material or you can concentrate on what you present or you can go for a combination of both. The only example of a true how-fanzine I can think of is a long-defunct Texas fanzine with four-color offset printing and some of the worst material ever to see publication in a fanzine. There are, however, a large number of examples of the what-fanzines, the unpretentious simple fanzines that are more interested in communications than appearance. These tend to be the personal-zines, and there are certain criteria upon which they should be evaluated. The majority of fanzines fall into the combination category: they strive for good appearance and a high level of communication in the content, and they are and ought to be evaluated by a different standard from their personalzine cousins. Nor, I think, should they squawk if these legitimate standards are applied to them and they are found wanting. You can't write a DAHLGREN and expect it to be reviewed on the basis of the standrads for poetry.

A case in point is STARFIRE from Bill Breiding. STARFIRE has all the trappings of a would-be fancy genzine. It has an offset cover, Letraset titles and attempts at graphics and layout, electrostenciled illos and different typefaces. And it does quite well in these areas. Unfortunately STARFIRE doesn't communicate. And it doesn't communicate because its editor can't spell, type, or use the English language coherently. And I cannot forgive this sort of careless approach in an editor who is seemingly striving for the big time. You can't put out a fanzine the way Bowers or Locke or Geis does unless you sweat at it: unless you take the time and the care to make sure that what you send out under your name is the very best that you can possibly do. I couldn't read STARFIRE with any ease or flow because I was constantly brought up short by horrendous interruptions in what I was trying to read. On a typical page of Bill's editorial I counted nineteen typos or spelling mistakes. I submit that a man who allows nineteen mistakes on a single page is not giving us his best, or anywhere near his best, and to me he is showing that he doesn't really care. I won't accept this as a reviewer, and I'll be surprised if the contributors will put up with having their articles destroyed by sloppy typing and nonexistent proofreading for very long. If you want to play in the big leagues you have to live up to big league standards. STARFIRE is bush-league in too many places.

And that is a damn shame, because Breiding has the potential for a damn fine fanzine. Visually STARFIRE is above average: some excellent McLeod artwork, competent layout, adequate mimeography. (With a better electrostencil, the colophon could have been one of the best pages I've seen in some time.) And the contents are also of big league quality, a wide variety of topic, insight, and quality of writing, but good genzine fare all the way. The sort of fanzine that should inspire a lot of reaction from the readers. But until Breiding learns the art of being an editor (although it's impossible to tell how much of the incompetence is due to the contributors and how much is the result of Bill's production) he's going to turn out an unnecessarily substandard product. I hope he learns, but his reaction to criticism suggests that it's regrettably unlikely.

A far less pretentious effort is made by Wayne Martin's E-STAR-IAN EXPLORER even though he too has an offset cover (one of Al Sirois' lesser efforts). Wayne has little artwork -- none above the level of a scribble -- titles all from his typewriter, and a collection of rather minor contents. Yet he manages to generate a moderate lettercolumn and at least knows how to spell. Witch ain't a bad place to start, write Bill? ((ED RUDE INTERRUPTUS: here I am whiffing conflu to proofread this page, and the wiseguy columnist makes with the cute spelling. Tripping over your Anglic "-our" endings is bad enough. Whatch hit, hokai?)) I'd be hard-pressed to convince you that missing this fanzine was depriving you of very much unless you

happened to be a fanzine freak like me. Wayne has a few editorial natters, Jodie Offutt has a good filler concerning the nature of fanzines and the people who stay up to unreasonable hours responding to them, appoint I find well taken at four in the morning with the shadow of Mike Glycer looming over my shoulder, and Larry Downes has a forgettable attempt at fannish humor. It's not exactly the stuff on which PhD theses are based. But the lettercol has some interesting thoughts and Jodie can't write a bad word if she tries and there's a one-page filler from Don D'Amassa which once again proves that the pun is, in certain hands, the lowest form of wit. A typical low-key genzine from someone who as yet lacks the clout to pull in the top-flight contributions but just might get there with a little encouragement. To a large extent, the fate of this fanzine is in your hands. (Makes ya feel sorta humble don't it?)

One of the minor drawbacks to living in a community as literarily incestuous as fandom is that the best writers are appearing in so many different fanzines that their style tends to lose freshness, regardless of how interesting their content may remain. I personally find I can enjoy a well-written fanzine by someone new even more than one equally skillfully created by someone I'm overly familiar with.. Which brings us to an entire spectrum of generally excellent, low key content-oriented fanzines mostly unfamiliar to North American readers. I refer, of course, to the English personazines.

As with any personalzine, it helps if you know the people in question and can understand all the in-jokes, but for sheer quality of writing it would be hard to beat the current crop of English faneds and since their products range from regular genzine right through to extremely personal personalzine, there should be something here for everyone. Some of the fanzines I'd like to mention have extremely small print runs and may well be difficult to get hold of. But picayune details like that shouldn't deny them their moment of glory on the stage of a great American genzine.

Leading the genzine field is KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE, from Pat and Mike Meara, one of the great husband and wife teams of English fandom. (There are several). KNOCKERS is a diary format fanzine (there are several of those, too) with a minimum of artwork (three cartoons in more than fifty pages) but some nice things done graphically with the typewriter and a lot of interesting contents. As with any diary, Mike writes about his thoughts and feelings at the time, incorporates reviews of books and fanzines as he reads and mixes in the letters on the previous issue as they arrive. Luckily for us, Mike is both intelligent and a damn good writer so the result is an extremely good read, combining serious and frivolous material in a fine mixture. Add to that Mike's successful battle to singlehandedly restore the interlineation to its former heights of glory (his examples are not only fun to read but also creatively typed as well) and his Free Gift with each issue and the result is a fanzine that is much more fun than most others I get while still having room for serious discussion and exchange. KNOCKERS has a sizeable North American audience already, so you shouldn't feel too lost in it.

The Mearas were probably inspired by INFERNO, the diary type zine published by their very close friends Paul and Cas Skelton. But INFERNO is far more personal than KNOCKERS, because Paul is a much less inhibited writer than Mike has chosen to be. The latest issue, an unusual 6½ x 8 size, has forty-six pages simply but attractively laid out, and a far greater percentage of fanzine commentary than previous issues have had. For a fanzine fan, of course, this is a delight. There is also a little healthy argument over fannish issues and conduct, a few well-chosen curses and all the results of typing your fanzine while merrily drunk. Once again there's an atmosphere of sheer fun about INFERNO that makes it, for me, a pleasure to read and be a

part of. Be warned, though, that Paul's earthy and often scatological approach to writing may not be everyone's cup of Glenlivet but if you enjoy good writing mixed with a large dose of insanity and enough serious thinking to keep you on your toes, INFERNO is another good place to go.

As we continue to get more and more fannish in our march through England's finest fanzines, we come to WRINKLED SHREW 4, formerly the province of yet another husband and wife team, Graham and Pat Charnock, but now evolving into a zine for Pat. The cover is an excellent example of British humor and represents a basic difference between Our fanzines and Their fanzines. Personally I like Theirs better! This particular cover has a well-mimeographed photo of Karl Marx into whose hair someone has stencilled three very obvious and seemingly identical rodents. Under the photograph it asks, among other things, "How many shrews can you find in this picture? (Caution: one of them may be a vole.)" If there's been a more delightful cover on a fanzine in the last few months I can't recall it.

Inside SHREW there's a variety of lesser contents, editorial natters, a couple of letters, the occasional filler, often very well written, but minor nevertheless, and two truly excellent longer pieces. One is a mammoth report on the last English national convention by Peter Nicholls, a renowned scholar of sf in England with a taste for liquor, an eye for women, and a way with words. It's an occasionally self-indulgent piece and it certainly helps to know the people being dissected but the sheer quality of the writing makes this one of the best conreports I've read and it could be enjoyed by anyone who simply likes good reporting, with a bite to it. For example, Peter gave the opening speech at the convention, a long and extremely serious piece that he himself admits was not suitable for the time and place. Discussing it he writes: "A dreadful fan called Hans Loose who looks like a shrunken Lee Marvin immediately afterwards attacked me by saying 'An opening talk should be brisk, witty and welcoming. Yours was long, serious, embarrassing, dull and offensive to fandom. All you English are the same, except John Brunner.' Drawing myself to my full height, I responded with a riposte worthy of my great predecessors in the art of the sophisticated putdown: Oscar Wilde, James Macneill Whistler and Dr. Johnson. 'Why don't you fuck off, you mindless Dutch cretin?' I said wittily."

Also in this issue is possibly the best piece of fan history to appear this year in the first installment of Leroy Kettle's involvement in fandom. It's very possible that Kettle is the finest English fanwriter of today and one of the best writing anywhere. Regretfully he writes for mainly a few small-circulation London-area fanzines and is largely unknown outside of England. Hopefully this fan history will help change that status. Roy writes wittily and well about being a fan ("you know how it goes when you've had a few. You're tired of the boring conversations about building starships inside Gary Webb's head or whether Hugo Gernsback (or John Brunner for that matter) could write science fiction and stay awake at the same time,") and about discovering science fiction and growing up with the mentality of a fan and nowhere to allow it expression. This is an excellent writer writing about things we have all experienced and also giving us a peek at English fan history: try and get on the WRINKLED SHREW mailing list and encourage Roy to continue his epic.

From there it's but a short step to the extremely personal English fanzines known as Rat fanzines after the name applied to the people who put them out. Some of the best fannish writing I've ever enjoyed has been in fanzines from Rats like Leroy Kettle, Greg Pickersgill, and John Brosnan. Like the fanzines from the Brooklyn Insurgents a few years ago, these are ingroupish, filled with references to fellow Rats and other British fans. Unlike their American counterparts, though, British personalzines get personal. While the insults, putdowns and slurs are not entirely to be taken seriously, there's a degree of ridicule that's unheard of in North American publications. If, like me, you can appreciate well-written sarcasm and if you know a few of the people

involved, these fanzines are well worth trying to get. For example, SCABBY TALES #1 from John Brosnan. One doesn't really need to know who Jerry Webb is to appreciate: "London sf's tame scientist Sir Jerry Webb has volunteered to take part in Project Dildous, an audacious plan by a group of scientists to fire a four hundred foot long manned dildo at Alpha Centauri. 'I may be gone awhile,' said Sir Jerry. 'Weeks even. It's hard to tell. I read in a book once that Alpha Centauri may be a long way away. Miles and miles. Even more than this.' At this point he held up all of his fingers. 'There probably even isn't any air up there so I'm taking a whole plastic bag full in case I run out.'" I don't know who Jerry Webb is, but I can admire writing like that.

And I can admire just about anything Leroy Kettle writes, as in his personalzine TRUE RAT 6, which is excellent proof to me that I'm right in thinking him the best fanwriter in England. Roy writes about his upcoming marriage: "The truth is that Chris and I are getting married on October 4th. At least I think it's October 4th. Yes, I suppose it must be as I've cancelled the Radio Times for that weekend," other English fans: "John Brosnan's zany novel about vampires down-under, called (wait for it) NIGHT OF THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BITE, has met a fate worse than acceptance-by-Robert Hale. It was returned from his ex-publishers accompanied by a note 'We fail to see anything funny in this novel.' John, whose novel is fractionally as funny as he frequently tells people it is, went berserk. This wouldn't have happened to James Bond," he gnashed." and fanzines. There is also a devastating playlet about the end of English fandom that requires considerable knowledge of English fans and their various idiocyncracies.

Okay, so this kind of writing isn't intended or suitable for the wider fannish audience. It helps to have a background that is based on the Goons, Monty Python, and the Beatles, to name a few, and it helps to have been in contact with English fans. But in a few years' time there's going to be a Worldcon in England and a lot of American fans are going to come face-to-face with their British counterparts. If visiting Americans congregate together and spend their time talking to each other they'll miss many of the most enjoyable and talented people in fandom. There's a lot happening over there, and if this brief and far from complete summary has whetted any appetites and if it results in just a little additional exchange between our fandoms, then it'll have served its purpose. Besides, if Kettle has to double his print run, it'll have served the bugger right for saying I'm not a BNF...

STARFIRE, Bill Breiding, 151 Arkansas St., San Francisco, CA 94107. The usual or 75¢ E-STAR-IAN EXPLORER, Wayne W. Martin, 4623 E. Inyo, Apt. E, Fresno CA 93702 Usual or 25¢.

KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE, Pat & Mike Meara, 61 Borrowash Rd., Spondon, Derby, DE2 7QH United Kingdom. For "substantial letters...for most fanzines in trade, and for devices for getting stones out of thout's nostrils" or \$1.

INFERNO, Paul & Cas Skelton, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 5NW, United Kingdom. Probably the usual, no price given: send 50¢ or a shot of good malt.

WRINKLED SHREW, Pat Charnock, 70 Ledbury Rs, London W11 2AH United Kingdom. "For trade, locs, pints of cider, contributions and Pernod with ice." No price given. But well worth a buck.

SCABBY TALES, John Brosnan, 4 Lothair Rd., S. Ealing, London W5 United Kingdom. Try groveling.

TRUE RAT, Leroy Kettle, 74 Eleanor Rd., London E8, UK. Plead, beg or send money.

((Editorial aside: After reading this column, makes me think the English fans don't realize the quality of their own zine. Zine after zine from there deplores the mediocrity of the British fan press. Perhaps Glicksohn will be their Lafcadio Hearn?))

An exploration of :-

"CHARIOTS OF THE GODS" (1969)

"RETURN TO THE STARS" (1970)

"GOLD OF THE GODS" (1971)

by Erich von Daniken. Translated by Michael Heron.

(Published in the UK through 'Souvenir Press' - then 'Corgi Paperbacks')

This cult trilogy is like the Guinness Book of Records. Intriguing, but ultimately leading nowhere. Although they have become media-blitzed bestsellers they cannot even claim particular originality. Those familiar with the work of Charles Fort (only recently reissued to cash in on the periphery of a market instigated by von Daniken) will certainly find nothing startling within these covers. Similarly the 'World Ice Theory,' Hoerbiger's multiplicity of moons, Nietzsche's 'Eternal Recurrence,' and the various 'Hollow Earth' concepts have been common currency for at least a century while Dr. Emanuel Velikovsky's "Worlds In Collision" (1959) idea had been absorbed for a neat decade before the publication in German of "Erinnerungen an die Zukunft" -- "Chariots of the Gods." Similarly, ideas bandied about in early pulp science fiction can be seen to have set the stage for von Daniken's acceptance, from the bizarre -- that the Solar System is a series of eggs waiting to be hatched by a Cosmic bird, that life on Earth evolved from bacterial 'contamination' from a passing starship, right through to the artificial enigmas of "2001; A Space Odyssey." Early sf had inevitable tail-end chapters in which the character revealed the fabled city, or the oracle, or the ultimate computer, and there discovered the fantastic history of the previous clutch of millenia. The appeal of von Daniken's three books seems to me to be that of these chapters -- minus the novel. Their contention that Earth religions and God-images derive from prehistoric contact with extraterrestrials cannot be reliably disproved, but then neither can the concept of Michael Moorcock's 'Multiverse' and no one (as yet) proposes that as a valid Philosopher's Stone or Universal Panacea for irritating questions. It is tempting to suggest that such fiction, and the cults of Tolkien's Middle Earth mythologies are popular for the same reason as Von Daniken's books. The mythos of speculation is, after all, just as intriguing. Following the initial assertion of the origins of the God-image (Professor Allegro blamed psilocybin hallucinations for the same phenomena in "The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross"), he develops the John Wyndhamesque idea of a deep-seated 'outward urge' inherited from the extraterrestrial gods, resulting in the initiation of the Space Exploration program ("Return to the Stars"), and in "Gold of the Gods" the contention is that human beings are descended from the survivors of a cosmic war who emerged from hiding in vast networks of underground "fallout shelters," some of which have been discovered in South America. The theme is combined with overtones of genetic manipulation. A kind of sf Gotterdammerung. Yet spun out over three volumes the ideas fall victim to the law of decreasing returns. After a couple of follow-ups to a few million sales the reiteration of "here I'm sticking my neck out" rings

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WAS GOD A BURNT WEENIE SANDWICH
ABANDONED
IN GRAND CENTRAL STATION?

Andrew Darlington

progressively less convincing.

Von Daniken, however, had a good PR machine behind him. He got the first book serialized -- as "Was God an Astronaut" -- in the Sunday tabloids. The time was right for media exploitation of psi-faculties and mysticism in general. Those not willing to either go to the fountain-head, or to assimilate the full consequences of the trend, the "Cults of Unreason" lunatic fringe Etherius Society, or the Scientology religion (founded by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard), found Von Daniken a satisfying blend of academically feasible and the awe-filled. Names like Teilhard De Chardin are thrown in for cultural reference, that all-purpose almanac "The Epic of Gilgamesh" is consulted at intervals (along with interpretations of the Bible). He even devotes a chapter to documenting UFO sightings, regurgitating what elsewhere can be gone into far greater depth and detail. The rest of the argument consists of the enigmatic carvings from ancient civilizations, various ingenious mathematical tables that prove that ancient structures, such as the pyramids, could not have been constructed by the methods generally put forward to explain them by reason of insufficient population or food supply; combined with certain paradoxical artifacts from antiquity for which there seems to be no logical explanation. In the resulting mix the bland jostles awkwardly with the thought-provoking. The books are well-researched, their compilation begun when the writer was 19, marred by the imprecision of the language -- words with technological connotations, such as space ship, space-helmet, and radio antennae are used to describe ancient carvings without qualifying elaboration and with mind numbing regularity. Yet within context the facts and ideas are competently laid out.

Von Daniken, a Swiss born in 1935 is a scientifically self-educated layman, as was Elaine Morgan who wrote the excellent DESCENT OF WOMAN. Both writers combine academic obscurities reathed in their private and idiosyncratic research with a highly readable and accessible prose style. Both reached wide audiences by accidentally hitting an exploitable vein. With it Morgan tapped Woman's Liberation, and Von Daniken captured the less commendable fringe-science mysticism market. He confronts major questions and paradoxes like a widely focused and undiscerning laser beam with a reasoning that is limited in a number of ways.

He compounds the Western tendency that takes a condescendingly paternal view of all other cultures, ignoring the fact that throughout history the human intellect, potential and capacity for invention has remained a constant. There has been no biological or cerebral evolution, only complexification of available data, and an environmental and technological expansion of horizons. Prehistory had its Einstein equivalents, all they lacked was the cultural accumulation of a few thousand years. Their genius was complete and intact indigenous to their age. The repeated underestimation of the competence of previous civilizations to overcome architectural or geographical problems indicates not extraterrestrial intervention but the writer's lack of ideological flexibility.

Neither does Von Daniken acknowledge that because the West is a technologically based society that its view of other cultures is a technological one. Those odd prehistoric statuettes and carvings look like stylized Astronauts because we live in the so-called Space Age. But is the recognition due to scientific sophistication -- or the kind of naivete that interprets history only in the vocabulary of the present, ignoring other factors or languages? He writes "seen from the air, the clear-cut impression that the 37-mile long plain of Nazca made on me was that of an airfield" (emphasis is Von Daniken's). He looks at the past through sf-tinted spectacles. The technological view is subjective -- it only gives added insight into certain factors of the past, and is only one factor of a vastly complex and diverse process.

In the same way his interpretations of the hypothetical alien intruders, their psych-

ology and motivations are mundane. The chapter "Are there intelligent beings in the Cosmos" consumes six whole pages -- hardly an exhaustive debate on an immense topic. He never appears to consider that alien societies evolved in total cultural isolation would have explored alien modes of perception, and evolved thought processes and orientations perhaps inexplicable in human terms. This will be true even considering his later intimations of actual biological links and sexual interactions with "Gods from the stars." A large percentage of his writing is rendered expendable in those terms.

The approach is that the academically naive Von Daniken offers a "fresh pair of eyes" and point of view uncluttered by laboratory dogma. It's not that the books are bad, on a "Reader's Digest of the Inexplicable" level, they are interesting. If they can dent the absolute belief which remains in science as the all-knowing oracle, then they will have served a purpose. Similarly, it's not that they are too imaginative, indeed the opposite is true. They are guilty of gross oversimplification. To attribute the birth of human awe and wonder to something trite is somehow anticlimactic.

----- MINIREVIEW BY MIKE GLYER -----

NOW YOU SEE IT/HIM/THEM... by Gene DeWeese and Robert Coulson
Doubleday, 157pp., \$5.95 Reviewed by Mike Glyer

"The blonde said, sounding slightly offended, 'Asimov is just a hyper-maniac extrovert. No girl has to take him seriously for a minute. Tucker is -- was different. He had a real edge to him.' She turned back to me. 'That really is Tucker in there? Dead?' She sounded more curious than griefstricken." If that line isn't worth six bucks to you, you needn't continue with this review. So I felt by the time I reached page six, anyway, and by the end the same applied if for less happy reasons. Despite superbly drawn characters and a naturally fascinating problem, a lighthearted ESP murder mystery with the World Science Fiction Convention for a backdrop, the effort to stay interested threatened to become more than it was worth. Coulson and DeWeese invest a tremendous amount of time telling (vs. showing) as protagonists sling theory at each other at every step. Perhaps the authors felt the thorough re-examination of every new element helped keep the book's tone serious and its plot coherent; assorted ESP talents getting in one another's way during a rash of murders could be potentially chaotic and absurd. The authors avoid that, certainly. Though, for some reason, they retain an absurd and distracting series of references by the protagonist to his "upstairs observer." Goodole Upstairs never contributes a blessed thing to the story, but remains a irrelevant motif. NOW YOU SEE IT/HIM/THEM... is worth the plowing through primarily because of the Worldcon background and heavy Tuckerization (naming of characters for one's friends). Yaz, there's Gordie, and Kelly. Is that Sandra Miesel? Sheriff Hensley "snicker* Is Kay Clarke drawn from life, and if so, was that her I saw at NASFiC? DeWeese and Coulson accurately record the local color (even if their Wordcon more resembled Midwestcon). Fanspeak crops up -- but an obvious filksing is constantly referred to as a folksing, making me suppose the authors lost a round to Doubleday's proofreaders. There's a lot fans will go for in the book -- except the price. At \$5.95 it's much too high for a 157-page book with ragged-edged paper resembling a book club edition. Perhaps the Book Club will offer it, as one should get the hardcover, for its dustjacket featuring photos of DeWeese, drafting ms. on a roll of butcher paper, and Coulson, with rifle and sidearm, hefting the jug for a swig of homebrew.

LETTERS of COMMENT

BRUCE TOWNLEY
2323 Sibley St.
Alexandria VA.

Got Prehensile 14 and I love it. You (and Milt too, of course) have paid attention to everything about Pre with #14. You've gotten it all right. Who cares now if you fold it?

LAURINE WHITE
5408 Leader Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95841

PRE 14 really was a monster issue. I will miss all those nonexistent future issues, alas. Why is it that all these zines start as little things? They have columns and artists whose work readers enjoy. The zine goes on for awhile, each issue being fun to read. Then the editor gets AMBITIOUS, spending more money to improve its appearance, increasing the pages, striving for better layout. Then the costs increase to where he has a hard time paying the bills. Subscription rates increase. Putting out the zine takes more and more of his time. Then maybe one issue a year appears. Finally the dinosaur expires. Rats! It's sad to see it happen to PRE.

Paula Marmor's cover art is beautiful. I'd love to see more art and poetry by her but have no idea where her creative efforts are going these days. ((Paula designed the 1975 Westercon PB, and is instrumental in the production of FANTASIAE.)) The bacover ((Canfield)) is nice, too. She could be a black superheroine, maybe with laser vision like Cyclops, since her eyes are covered.

POSTHENSILE

Milt's mention of tattooed women in Passing Parade reminded me of a new book called THE TATTOOED MEN, about the yakuza (gangsters) of Japan. On public tv the author explained that, while most of the men were covered with tattoos, very few of their women have them. Those who do want to show how loyal and tough they are, since extensive body tattooing is a painful process.

Mike Glycer must have taken a lot of time and trouble to transcribe the original anthologies discussion. I really enjoyed reading it.

Here is where I wanted to make a metaphor of Michael Shoemaker's defense of Van Vogt. Like there he is before the WORLD OF NULL-A, using his words like a sword to fend off Damon Knight's criticisms. But it won't work. If Van Vogt were such a good author, whatever Knight said against his fiction would not hurt him. Readers would still remember the good points of his stories, rather than his faults. SLAN was one of the first sf books I read. It stood out in my memory like a bright light. So why did I have to reread it? It just ain't that good anymore, or I've been reading better stuff.

Stan Burns clunks: I liked the John Eric Starke adventures of 20 years ago and like just as much the ones Leigh Brackett is writing today. So what if they aren't scientifically accurate? People read them for the space opera.

At least Stan Burns didn't describe INTO THE AETHER as a "fine book." It was Don Keller. A bad literary style should only be satirized in small doses. After a few pages INTO THE AETHER became unreadable. In Cy Chauvin's review of THE WORLDS OF ROBERT HEINLEIN he used some beautiful metaphors about pulling down the sf ghetto.

THE SATIED FANIVORE

JACKIE FRANKÉ
Box 51-A, RR2
Beecher, IL 60401

Since you seemed to object to me snickering at your published schedule, maybe you could enlighten me a bit. That sentence (uncredited!) from DILEMMA was written in March of this year, on an issue I'd had on hand for awhile even then. Today I received #14. That's six months at best, and most likely more than eight. Now I can but draw two possible conclusions to this state of affairs: you are either sitting on printed stacks of PRE until they've dwindled down to only a few before sending out my copy: or your quarterly schedule is one of the bigger laughs in fandom. Which is it, comrade?

Personally I don't see any reason for listing a publishing schedule in a fanzine. Regardless if an editor is as regular as an ExLax addict, or as nonchalant about deadlines as you appear to be, it's the finished product (taken in consideration of the editor's aims) that counts. PREHENSILE is still one of the best zines around, so pay heed more to the balance of that (uncredited!) review before taking umbrage...even if it was in jest. ((Got to fill that editorial with something...))

By the way, that date on #14 is a joke, isn't it? Or was I more correct in my musings than I'd thought? MAY!?! Gyer, be serious! ((Why, there's not a humorous bone in my body..Even my funny bone is carried in a black crepe sling...))

Oddly enough, since I read so few of them, the discussion you introduced regarding fan reviewing interested me the most. The point you brought forth about fans enjoying well-written material that relates to "our" field in any way is well-taken. The key words, of course, are "well-written." We don't find too many entertaining reviewers today. Walker and D'Amassa come to mind immediately, Geis, Delap and Chauvin soon thereafter, but who else is there? Coulson doesn't aim in the same direction those other gentle-

men do, and Miesel and Smith turn their turrets to yet another compass point. For the general reader of SF, the good reviewers come few and far between.

The snide comment you made about the publishability (?) of poorly written reviews was all too true. I encountered mostly that sort when I first was getting into fmz, and they turned me off reviews entirely. It's been only through continued exposure to the favored six that I've altered my opinion of fan reviewing in general -- although, in general, my first impressions still seem correct. As long as Sturgeon's Law holds true, though, the work of the good reviewers will manage to hold up the worth of the rest, in the same manner that Le Guin and Leiber, and, yes, Sturgeon, manage to keep the field of SF valuable despite the hordes of lousy writers beneath.

It took me a gawdawful long time to learn the trick of putting down a book as unreadable/uninteresting/crud after a chapter or two, instead of reading it clear through with teeth gritted, but I picked up the similar knack of skipping a review after the first sentence or two informed me of its unreadability/irrelevance/cruddiness much more quickly -- once I learned that there was indeed such a creature as the enjoyable review. It is now possible for me to read a critique of a book I've never read, or in fact never intend to -- having fallen into that trap too many times, of finding fanac consuming the time once spent reading SF -- and relish it for itself. To read it as an entity that is meant to entertain, as it stands, not necessarily for what it refers to. To say that there are good reviews on bad books, and bad reviews on good books seems axiomatic, once that point of view is accepted. "Killer" reviews as a group repel me, but darn it all, sometimes there exists such a thing as a good killer review, if it's judged in light of its entertainment factor.

I wish I could think of something pertinent and witty to say in response to Milt's editorial, but I can't; my brain's too befogged from laughter. Fan humorists are another group that must suffer from inadequate egoboo. What else can you say about them except that you thought it funny or not? Milt's material was hilar-

ious. End of commentary.

Berges made the relationship between the Bradburys real and vital, and increased my admiration for Ray (which ebbs and flows periodically from disinterest to love -- apparently another high-tide mark is approaching) as a writer and a craftsman. No more should be asked.

The transcription of the Westercon panel was excellently done and made fascinating reading. The one thing that struck me was how little solid information SF editors have to go on. They'll know by the sales figures whether they're aiming in the right direction or not, but just WHY a book or magazine is successful -- how much weight should be given to writers' names, or cover design, or wordage, or whatever (phases of the moon perhaps!) no one can say with authority. It's done by guess and by golly, and in this age of the Poll-Taker, it seems a rather backwards way of doing business. Of course, it could be that SF doesn't reap enough profit to make in-depth market research feasible, but considering that so many houses handle SF -- there must be a profit in the field somewhere -- it strikes me as an odd way of doing business.

Ah, now we get to the real meat of this issue! The fanzine review column. Hammen, Mike seems to have said it all. Amen, amen, amen again I say; I can't even find a comma to quarrel with (though I perhaps just might have changed that comma to a semicolon on the seventh line of paragraph four on page 56, but who am I to judge your editorial acumen?). Each zine that he mentions is high on my list of most beloved, too, and in virtually the same order. I would have to add YANDRO and DYNATRON in there somewhere, but those are definitely personal judgements. Mike hit all the truly quality zines in one swell foop.

Wish I couldn't write half as well as Glicksohn...

I didn't get the poem...or at least I didn't think I did. It was terribly difficult to tell if Terry was being sarcastic/ironic or playing it straight. If he

was playing it straight, then I got the poem.

Sanders, being caught in both camps, attempted to retain his balance in a most convincing manner, yet, somehow, I'm not convinced. Academe is too akin to the student biologist: they both tend to destroy the subject in dissection. Reading him express fears that readers could be turned off SF by the teaching of it is far more scarifying than the same sentiment grumbled by Joe Phann: he's speaking about his own peer group, and his fears are therefore more valid. Good Luck SF -- I think you'll need it.

I wasn't overly impressed by the portfolio of cartoonists in this issue: but that judgement might have been a bit flavored by my dislike of the sideways format they were displayed in. Being the lazy sort of reader, I'm not anxious to go through more than the minimum amount of effort in order to see an illo. Working more than necessary tends to make me resent the cause of that work. In this case, by rights, it should be whoever did the layout, but since the cartoonists are so prominently named, maybe they got some of the overflowing bile. In any case, I didn't find them particularly funny, though most assuredly, all were well-executed. ((The next fan fund will have us all chipping in for one of those mechanical devices that suspends a book over the supine, bedridden reader and automatically turns the pages! One of the facts of life about my offset printing situation is that the master copy is only six inches wide -- illos such as the ones featured in last PRE's portfolio must be published sideways or not at all.))

Ted White is right, right, right of course in his comments about the ignorance of ST fandom in regards to SF fandom. One of the things that grates on my nerves whenever Lichtenberg speaks of her "long-time association" with fandom, is that, as far as I've been able to ascertain, that association has consisted to belonging to the N3F. I don't believe that she yet realizes that the N3F is not fandom; trekkies don't seem to recognize anything that's not wrapped in the formalities of a club's constitution. If it ain't Organized, it don't exist.

But one point Ted touched on I wish he would have gone into a bit more depth. The rapid growth of SF fandom is bringing in wholesale numbers of fen, who sometimes have organized themselves into clubs, who have no acquaintanceship with Fandom as a whole. Part of this growth can perhaps be attributed to the teaching of sf in college and universities, as Sanders offered as a possibility, but regardless of the why, the what is already here -- masses of eager enthusiastic fen who know nothing of our traditions, roots, politics, or means of operation. Recently Larry Propp and I -- with far less tenure between us than Ted has by himself -- tried to explain the Facts of Fanhood to one such bright lad who was convinced that a college-based group could put on a Worldcon without the help and/or support of, for the want of a better word, Established Fandom. (The sickening thing about the argument is I really think he was quite correct. Considering the number of fen who know nothing about fandom, a bunch of neos could win a Worldcon bid, if they did it correctly... It wouldn't be a Worldcon a trufan would recognize, of course, but the name would be theirs.) This particular Bright Young Neo had belonged to a club for some time; it had a membership (I think) of somewhere around 140, but Chicago fandom was unaware of its existence until plans were being made for the first Windycon. To us, his group were all Neos, to him, encountering our anarchistic group for the first time, we were the Neos, we were the strangers outside his group...and besides, we weren't even Organized!! ((Your use of the term "anarchistic" after commenting on the regimented conservatism of "Established fandom" is rather contradictory. And the Chicago crew's ignorance of the group is unsurprising since I very much doubt they did any looking for any fans outside their clique. Fandom is constantly being reinvented, and in areas where its Elders (who may be as old as 25 or 30...) don't publicize themselves, the conclusion is foregone. You may take some solace, though, in the fact that all college groups are 95% composed of do-nothings. So it's the active seven from that Chicago club you must watch for.))

Amen to Schalles' comments about B. Townley. I simply cannot understand how this (splutter-splutter) person's work keeps

getting printed! My kids did better work in the second grade! Now Bruce is young, we all know that, but youth, no more than age, doesn't excuse shoddy work or lack of talent. I'd love to read a reasonable rationale for the continuing presence of those abominable drawings in fanzines. It can't be due to personal friendships, his work appears in too many zines, and surely faneds aren't that hard up. Schalles' work was crude, undeniably, but it at least oftentimes showed a certain wit that Bruce, alas, lacks entirely. Why, then, does Townley warrant distribution?

((I am tired of the attitude evidenced by four Hugos that Tim Kirk's style and content is the ne plus ultra of fan art -- I print Townley because his primitivistic caricatures express my own occasions of alienation in a suitably bizarre style. Besides, I don't print him at anyone's expense, I print him simultaneously with more than a dozen other artists. Townley is good at what he does -- if you don't believe it, look at Brad Parks and Simon Agree. Parks I can't stand, Agree still lacks Townley's sophistication. Townley isn't 90% technique and 10% expression, but his medium is cogent.))

Well, as for Worldcon attendees coming early for the intimate part of those huge affairs, we all know that this practice has been widespread for quite some time. In fact, I'd be hard-pressed to name any convention which does not actually, even if unofficially, begin on Thursday and end on Monday. A few manage to stagger blearily into Tuesday. So Warner's suggestion is no solution, as it is already being done and still complaints come rolling in. No, I feel that Linda's suggestion -- that we just roll along with the tide and see what happens -- is the only course of action open to us... ((NOT Linda's suggestion -- maybe mine, but certainly not hers. For some reason fandom's memory on Linda's record is rather short. She always commences discussions with the most reactionary position imaginable, then the rest of fandom pushes, pulls, screams and reasons until she acquiesces, bemusedly, to sanity. Her original position was something to the effect of "Circle up the wagons!"))

Re: MOTE -- Though I wouldn't come down on the novel quite as hard as Keller did (slapdash seems unnecessarily harsh to mine ear), I do agree with his overall view of the book being 60sish, and loaded with contradictions. I tried to do some illos of it, and was really buffaloeed by some of the opposing statements on it. Didn't either man read what the other was writing? At times I really doubted it.

JOHN HERTZ
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Re review of MOTE IN GOD'S EYE by D.G. Keller, PRE 14.

Don Keller criticizes Niven & Pournelle for writing "pages /of/ pure Star Trek; that is...1960s vintage ideas and values, /given to/stereotyped characters in spaceships... in this supposedly galactic civilization, over a thousand years from now." He winces at Scots accents, and samovars in the time of Admiral Kutuzov, and concludes that despite the thought that went into the Moties, the authors of MOTE put no thought into anything else.

You missed the point, Don. I'm no mind-reader, but I think it's obvious that Niven & Pournelle's painting of human culture makes a deliberate statement about ideas and values. Namely, that despite our present social evaluations, human society in 3500 AD will look much more like the world of the mid-20th century than it will look like, say, the world of NOVA. You may not agree with their statement, and I'm not sure I do either. But judging from the previous work of Niven (half the collaboration), which is what you say you've read, Niven has demonstrated he's able to work out different patterns of values for future societies. For the matter of that, the fact that he and Pournelle developed the value pattern of the Motie society shows that they can do the job. Unless you're trying to put a beard on Occam, if you see 1960s values in the MOTE humans (though I'd date those values earlier than that) you'd better figure those values were created that way, not left in carelessly.

Why do the MOTE humans have monarchy, duty and chastity? Is it because their society has just undergone a military upheaval followed by recolonization of outlying districts, and these are the standards we can expect to see at that stage of history? Is it because there is something durable about these standards, so that they may well outlast the flak we are now firing into them? I'm not going to write a letter long enough to choose one of these positions and defend or attack it properly. But they're both part of MOTE.

Elsewhere in PRE 14 Shoemaker defends van Vogt's frequent depiction of monarchies in the future, with "It is quite reasonable to assume that a given sequence of events brought about said monarchies." I'm not sure I'd go that far: the argument sounds too blanket-like to me: but, assuming other circumstances in the story don't make a monarchy, or a plutocracy, or a psychedelic anarchy seem incredible, Shoemaker is rapping us deservedly on the knuckles. If we're going to be in the sf biz, how can we attack any social form on the ground that it's inappropriate for "the future"? On the sole ground? Now that's reactionary. On the other hand, to take an author to task for undue fondness of a particular Gesellschaftsweltanschauung -- for example, to make the obvious comparison between MOTE and A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ, which Keller did not -- or adduce that a particular form of society might not follow from the circumstances in which it is set, or might be incongruous -- for example, to make another obvious comparison between the events of First Contact in MOTE and in Niven's Known Space stories -- which Keller also did not -- why, that is out of the shadow of the provincialism, and under the light of criticism again.

DON D'AMMASSA
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A very good issue of PREHENSILE. I was determined to finally get all caught up with this backlog of fanzines, but the three hours I spent on PREHENSILE have sort of ruined that plan for another day.

I agree for the most part concerning fan reviewers. I have some familiarity with the field myself (he said with false humility) and enjoy talking about it as well, which I suppose makes me somewhat of a rarity. And I don't know any professional sf writers at all well, except the fan dabblers such as Al Sirois and Tony Lewis, though I've corresponded with a few.

I never consciously set out to either avoid or attract the attention of pro writers, and I don't think I'd let social relations interfere with my opinion of a story, though I suppose it might moderate my language. I've corresponded with Michael Bishop a great deal and admire him deeply, but that hasn't stopped me from panning his lesser stories. Similarly, the sharp letters I've had from Dean Koontz and Michael Conney about my views have not stopped me from writing favorable reviews of their better stuff. And I don't think I'm exceptional. There are, no doubt, some fans who would fall into the trap of confusing the person with the book, but I don't think most would.

Michael Shoemaker has some good points, but on others, his defense of Van Vogt from Damon Knight is just as subjective as was Knight's original essay. And Knight himself has admitted that he underrated some elements of Van Vogt's ability in that essay. The statement Michael makes which really pricked my ears up was his implied statement that THE WORLD OF NULL A is no more an independent novel than THE TWO TOWERS. This is poppycock, and I suspect the point could have been made with a different example. Tolkien wrote the entire trilogy, after all, as a single work. THE TWO TOWERS does not have a conclusion: THE WORLD OF NULL A does. Besides, novels should be examined independently of their sequels. I recently read that Van Vogt is writing a third NULL A novel. Does that mean that every essay written to date on either of the earlier two novels was premature and now has less validity? Of course not.

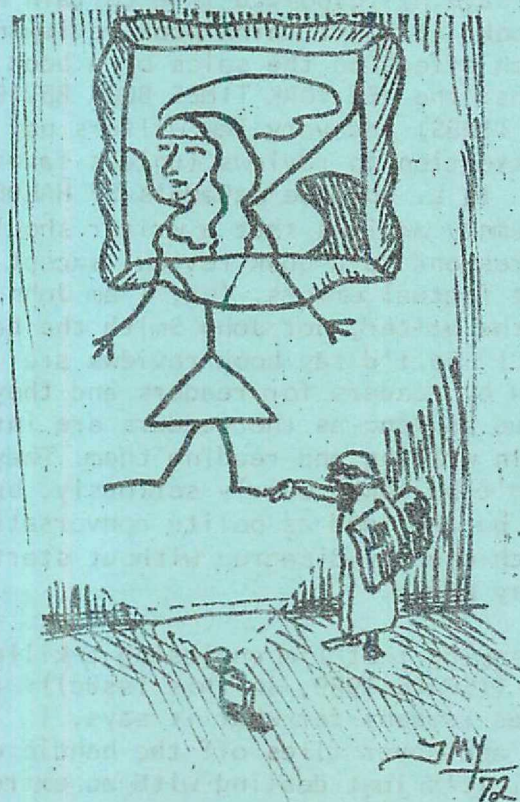
((I think there are different circumstances for different books. The critic, writing for himself, is obligated to know the sequels and books with related characters or settings: to ignore this is to create

a one-dimensional review, to ignore shadings and nuances of import. The critic who is evaluating a book for a known audience, yes, MUST review the work as an isolated example, since the audience may well know nothing of the others associated with the one under attack.))

Ben Indick falls into a common trap in his review of DAHLGREN. There is no nuclear holocaust and it is quite clearly stated that the strange effects are confined to the single city of Bellona. Although I didn't care for DAHLGREN, Ben is too rough on it.

DARRELL SCHWEITZER
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I think book reviews appeal to fans simply because fans are people who like to talk about books, which is what a review does. James Gunn admitted that he always reads the book reviews first in the magazines. I suppose a lot of us do,



In the Museum....

because we want to swap opinions with the reviewer. You'll notice that when people

actually do talk about science fiction at cons and such, this is usually what they are doing.

A book review is a reasoned argument, and as such it has to be backed up with all the evidence available. Even a killer review has to provide evidence (perhaps more than any other kind of review) and must be rational in tone. It can border on hysteria but not go over the brink. If it does it becomes abuse. Fandom has often been plagued with abuse writers -- remember Jeff Glencannon? -- but these people are not reviewers. They're a particularly obnoxious kind of parasite, who usually has to build up his ego by tearing down others, being incapable of doing it any other way. In other words, a loudmouth non-talent. The prozines aren't immune from this sort of thing either, as witnesses by "Leroy Tanner" and some of the more pretentious NEW WORLDS reviewers.

I don't believe a reviewer has to be a professional writer. All he has to be is honest, and not inclined to abuse. He's an articulate member of the audience, who simply says he responded in a certain way to a book. I don't think book reviewing has much effect on the sales of a book (exceptions: the NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, LONDON TIMES) and very few writers pay much attention to reviews (unless favorable). In L. Sprague deCamp's SF HANDBOOK he solemnly advises that a writer should never respond to a book review, except to correct factual errors. (eg, I am John Smith the writer, not John Smith the bank robber.) So I'd say book reviews are written by readers for readers and they'll continue as long as the readers are interested in writing and reading them. They shouldn't be taken overly seriously, but should be regarded as polite conversation, in which one may disagree without starting a heresy purge.

After saying that I'm enclosing a killer review ((SPACE:1999, in this issue)). It provides reasons for what it says, I think, and never flies off the handle entirely. It's just dealing with an extremely bad subject.

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Prehensile is the type of zine that I have ceased to look forward to receiving, The Alien Critic and Algol and Outworlds and SF Commentary included among others. ((Do you ever do anything besides compile esoteric lists of fanzines that you approve of?)) My tastes these days run to Title, MT, Notes from the Chem. Dept. and Bruce Arthurs' personalzine; small "intimate" congenial company. ((Your perpetual search for the intimate fanzine, while in the abstract commendable, when listed in specific examples croggles the mind. I haven't seen Title for awhile, having somehow got cut off the mailing list twice while trading all-for-all. MT is pompous but despite its large print run retains a sense of intimacy through bad mimeography. Notes is highly formal; I love the zine, but see it as little besides a miniversion of the zines you detest. I don't care if you're biased, Paul, but don't toss that bias up to me as some kind of scientific categorization.))

I have suffered a surfeit of seriousness in sf, and no longer give a tinker's damn about Delany's symbolism or whether or not Heinlein is a fascist. But I did enjoy the Bradbury interview and the Silverberg-Carr-Goldin dialog, your own views on reviews, Milt Stevens' knife-wielding girlperson, and so forth. I hate the print size. I also resent your labeling my review "experimental" (that is, the use of it). Of all the fans I know, I know only two who are aware of my reviews in Luna.

I have found that the greatest source of abusive remarks about sf writers or their books is diffidence, or feelings of inferiority on the part of the reviewer. They feel the need to come on too strong to compensate for their lack of confidence in their own judgement or writing ability. They do not trust their own feelings. They have an idea of what it means to be "intelligent" and try to imitate the sound of intelligent prose. To them, the most intelligent prose is caustic and didactic.

The greatest single corrupter of good minds is "fashion." That is, that at every point in time, which people call the "present," there is generally accepted idea of how a thing ought to be done (although by whom it is generally accepted is always vague): how one ought to think, and how one ought to write, and how one ought to write about it. This is especially pernicious to young writers who concern themselves with how they think their work ought to look and sound instead of with what they want to say. There is a lot of this in fandom, interminable essays on "what I really want to do is." ((More of that is justified than you allow. Admittedly the first time Bowers wrote about that it was more interesting than the twelfth time, and that some things ought just to be done rather than rationalized. But inherent in the range of questions covered by "what I really want to do is" are matters of substance, as well as form.))

Good writing, like good thinking, is a chancy business. One looks into ones own crystal ball and sees how one really thinks or feels about a thing, and then says it as simply as possible (which is the most difficult thing in the world), and then one has to live with it. Regardless of who you are, how travelled, how educated how sensitive, some of what you "really" want to say is going to make you look like a horse's ass; most of what you say (whether or not it was really what you wanted to say) is going to seem to you, as everybody else, as not having been worth saying in the first place; but then, again, some of it, if you ever had anything to say at all, and everybody does, is going to redeem all the rest. If you write enough, you are bound to write at least one thing that was as good as you really wanted it to be.

The point is that you cannot write more than what you think and feel; and no idea of "how the thing should be done" can save you from the final judgement on the validity of your thoughts and feelings. It is wiser, and safer, to write in all innocence and the chance that your thoughts and feelings will result in something truly original is much greater. ((Originality is not, believe it or not, the ultimate virtue of writing. Consider Shakespeare as proof.))

The problem is that people who are concerned with thoughts and feelings tend to mix and form social groups and undergo conditioning. They immediately become aware that certain of their thoughts and feelings are socially disadvantageous, if not downright dangerous. They find that they must suppress certain thoughts and feelings, or attribute them to other people (their parents, their childhood environment, for instance), and accept the cliches of the group. Of course, they do not view them as "cliches" but as the philosophy of enlightenment. And while they may be puzzled, or even skeptical, about some of these ideas, they have confidence that their respected friends know better than they: this is the way I ought to think, feel, because this is the way the people I admire think and feel. And eventually, inevitably, it becomes impossible to differentiate between one's own and one's accepted ideas. ((This is the process by which ideologies are lifted to power. Ideology, not cliché, is the word you are looking for.))

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I am not at all sure that I agree with your remarks on fan reviewers and their relations with authors. My own experience talking with authors is that I never really seem to hold a conversation about their books. Of course when you do 4 line reviews, couldn't explain why you like a book if your life depended on it, and buy all the books you review, then perhaps you can't be considered a real fan reviewer. ((Fake! Fake!))

Still, that "better not insult him, because I want to go to his next party" syndrome exists and I find myself unable to even attempt long reviews of certain authors' book because of it -- if I enjoy them I would find it embarrassing to tell them so in detail, if I don't then I'm unhappy about panning them at length. However the fan reviewer is not the same thing as the fan critic, of whom there are far too few and those generally not very good. The fan reviewer can be helpful as a buyer's guide.



Personally I once recorded all the books I read in a notebook -- I now save some note-taking, and still keep up my commitment to list fandom by simply listing the books I read (with a few additional lines of detail) on a stencil, and call the whole bit a "review" -- it isn't really, but it is good enough as a means of letting people know what is available....

I'm delighted to see Mike Shoemaker defending AE Van Vogt, who remains one of my favorite authors on the basis of the NULL A, Weapon Shops series, and Slan, and some short stories. On the basis of these I buy all his other stuff, and usually regret it later, but am unwilling to chance missing another equal to the former.

GENE WOLFE
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PEACE, the novel I lived with and loved for two or three years has been out since June now. There have been some good re-

views (notably in PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY, BEST SELLERS, the HOUSTON CHRONICLE, and CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, and the fan magazines -- bless their hearts -- YANDRO AND FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE) and some bad reviews (suck eggs). (Come to think of it I left out one of the best reviews of all, the one in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW.) But it's not tearing up the world. My wife is still hoping it will catch on, but I've switched over to hoping it will burrow from beneath; and have started a new book.

But however that one goes, PREHENSILE has burrowed from beneath itself -- from beneath that pile under Kelly /my reading chair/. The best hamburgers around here, as far as I'm concerned, are in the Victoria Station. But that's a California outfit (San Francisco), so maybe you're right. Blue cheese and mushrooms and plenty of meat.

THE NEW ATLANTIS (mentioned by Silverberg in your fine record of the panel discussion) is now out and seems to be doing well. I hope some of the people who like it will have a look at a similar book called IN THE WAKE OF MAN. The editor is Roger Elwood, and the contributors are Walter Moudy, RA Lafferty and me.

Your talk about reviewing interested me quite a bit, though I don't agree with either your most liked ("what I was really trying to do with that story") or most hated ("Say, didn't Robert Heinlein write the same kind of story back in 1948?") remarks. (I confess, though, that I've never had that second one sprung on me.) What I like is the fan who can tell me concretely and specifically what he liked about one of my stories. What I detest is the fan who tells me -- without being asked, you may be sure -- that everything of mine he's read was shit, but is totally unable to say what makes him feel that way. ("It was bad, man, you know? Just crap.")

Geis' trouble -- and I have told him this -- is that he has begun a Holy War against a kind of fiction so rare that the aver-

age reader (I mean the reader who is not deliberately seeking it out) is not likely to meet with it twice in a year. He is In the position of the dietitian determined to stamp out truffles, and his fulminations are more likely to attract new feeders to their targets than to exterminate the evil counterfeit potatoes.

CY CHAUVIN
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In response to your bit on "why do fans review books?" I'd like to say that one good reason is to provoke some discussion. Maybe this is what you meant when you said a review should be "enjoyable" to read -- or maybe that kind of review is the kind you think steps on toes and scores points for the reviewer at the expense of the writer. I don't know. I'll agree that most book reviews aren't very exciting (including a lot of my own) -- perhaps some editors loosen standards when it comes to book reviews compared with the other material they publish. Maybe too the book review grind kills a lot of creativity dead. Writing as many book reviews as Delap or Walker or any number of others do can easily lead one to write a lot of reviews that look and sound the same....I'll agree that the decision to cut the shorter buying guide of medium-length reviews and concentrate on the longer stuff is a good idea.

NORMAN HOLLYN
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Surprise ! I've changed my name! I don't know if you remember Lynn, my fiancée. Well now she's my -- gasp! -- wife. ((I warned you it wouldn't last...)) Rather than have her name absorbed/thrown out/supersede by mine, we've combined the two: /HO/CHBERG & KAP/LAN/ = HOLLYN (with a time out to seasonally readjust some spelling for easier pronunciation. ((The world of null A?))

Which means that I haven't the slightest idea who that GORT KLAATU PROFILES was about. Both Ed Cagle and Mike Glicksohn

claimed he was a hoax. I guess this just proves it. After all, I would never make such a gross comment as that sumo wrestler one, would I?

PREHESNILE 14 was read and enjoyed very much (even by me), even more so than previous issues. By gum I think your writing is getting better (and, as you know, I always was a fan of your writing -- except, oddly enough, your fantasy trips, movies, tv shows, etc.)

Actually, for my money (which isn't much) the best writing in PRE 14 is yours boy, and it is obvious that you realize it (while still trying to land the Big Names so you can Press-Type them on your cover) so what? It gives your writing a self-awareness that makes it even more interesting.

(If you'll hold on for a second you'll see how I cleverly tie all this in to your editorial, just hang in there and you'll see how organized I am.)

Now I've read all too many fanwriters who are self-assured and come across as obnoxious little twerps because they didn't realize that such a literary posture doesn't go with everyone's style (this is not even to mention those countless bozos who don't have the talent to support their self-assuredness.) But it does go well with yours. It does with Gary Hubbard's. It does with Lou Stathis (who, even to this day, does not recognize that talent enough -- for he can provide information and provide thought as well). It does with Hunter Thompson. It does with Richard Meltzer. And Harlan Ellison, Paul Krassner and a few other "New Journalists" and writers.

It's the literary smart-guy image -- the man who knows enough to be entertaining, informative, sassy, thought-provoking and demanding. And get away with it.

It works better, I suspect, in nonfiction than in fiction. But some of Ellison's stories (in PAINGOD AND OTHER DELUSIONS) reach that level of driving, nearly oppressive, cynicism. And, of course, enough of Hunter Thompson's "Fear and Loathing" pieces thread the line between

fiction and nonfiction. But it's not really important how "true" it is, it is the author's stance that matters...

I suspect that this may be a particularly American mode of thought, mainly because I have yet to read more than a handful of foreign stories (or films or music or painting or whatever) that can maintain the weight of the charge of a THE DAY OF THE LOCUST, for instance. Possibly I've been sheltered from the Real Stuff in the foreign markets....I'm beginning to develop a lot of scary theories about America.

It seems obvious to me that such a literary mode had developed analogously (if not concurrently) with the "New Wave" (if there is such a thing, I wonder.) ((Analogously, I think is the word. This "American style", which Mencken and others typified and said was inherent in the language, is at least as old as Mark Twain and E.L. Godkin, seeping into genre fiction by way of Hammett and the Black Mask school during the realism movement, it'll last as long as the American idiom does: I think Ellison got his inspiration from the poetry of Ginsburg; at least there's a stylistic resemblance. When the New Wavers overcame stfnal pulpishness they often borrowed on their realistic antecedents who by then were fifty and eighty years past. Stf is the straggler, not the leader.))

Kimberling's piece was good -- it had flavor and pathos. Life at BG sounds as savory as a Midwestern singles bar's atmosphere. Which I guess shouldn't be surprising. It is in Ohio, right? And it is a college? Nu?

HAL DAVIS
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An exceptional issue. This will probably be short, since a smile doesn't take much space on a page.

I hope Joe Sander's column will be a mainstay. His discussion of HG Wells' "The Star" was fascinating. Lately I've been receiving a journal called KRONOS, pub'd

by the Center for Velikovskian Studies at Glasboro State College in New Jersey. They've melded some interesting material: left lobe/right lobe influences on human development followed by the initial reactions of the first atomic scientists to the initial A bomb test. Oppenheimer's reaction -- awe tempered by guilt -- (to his mind at the moment of explosive release came the words of the Hindu "Song of God," the Bhagavad-Gita:

If the radiance of a thousand suns
Were to burst at once into the sky
That would be like the splendor
 of the Mighty One
I am become death,
The shatterer of Worlds)

seems to blend the reactions of the populace and the master mathematician. It reaffirms my belief that Wells was a genius.

ROBERT SILVERBERG
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PREHENSILE 14 is another beautiful issue. The Silverberg-Goldin-Carr panel transcript is particularly nicely laid out. And there's a load of meaty stuff in this issue. But Joe Sanders' essay depressed me considerably. To see anyone as intelligent as Sanders evaluating sf stories according to the positive or negative attitudes of their protagonists confirms my recent dark conclusion that there is little place in modern American sf for the serious writer. It's sad to see him combing through two whole anthologies in search of "hopeful implications" and rejecting anything that would upset Norman Vincent Peale.

JODIE OFFUTT
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Day One of the World Series. Bad day. That's all right, the Red Machine will get in gear at Riverfront. It should be a

a good series; we'll see some fine baseball. Both these teams are hungry and keyed. But if the Reds don't win, I'll cry. ((Mere games aren't worth a trufemfan's tears, as Sam Long might have said... But force of habit found me rooting against the Reds and for the Red Sox. Didn't seem to change the usual result, though, as my side went down to defeat. Baseball, bah))

Mike Glicksohn writes very well when he's under pressure, doesn't he? I also happen to agree with most of what he says.

Milt, what's a rock hound? I went to a Blood, Sweat and Tears concert last week -- does that make me a rock hound? I had a little trouble relating to the warmup comic whose jokes were mostly about pot. That's because I am a member of the alcohol generation in the midst of a college audience. The music, however, was terrific and David Clayton Thomas sang all my favorite BS&T songs.

I don't know about a tattoo. I agonize for weeks about something so temporary as a haircut. I'd like my ears to be pierced -- my dentist even volunteered to do it with some local anesthetic and orthodontal wire -- but just can't quite make that decision. Guess I'll have to stick to Cockamamies, Randy Bathurst doodles and other things that fall off in the shower.

I'm not as adventurous as I like to think I am.

DR. ALEXANDER DONIPHAN WALLACE
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As has been remarked before, sf and f is a consequent of the ignorance and enthusiasm of youth. To maintain an ardent devotion into maturity is difficult, both for writers and readers. Literary sf and f is that which is written by writers who have greater skills and knowledge, for readers who have a greater appreciation of subtlety. It is the content of sf and f with mainstream packaging....

UK LeGuin is strangely ignored in fanzines

strangely because she is the most competent writer today. Is it because there are so few nits for the reviewer to pick? ((Not so in this zine. LeGuin has been reviewed in every issue of PRE and STFR for a rather long time. Including this one.))((Indeed, I can hardly think of a sercon zine, or zine with reviews, of which the same can't be said. She's rather prolific.))

CHRIS HULSE
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Mike makes a comment about the better fanzine exciting the intellect of the reader, his reaction to the issues raised causing him/her to respond as a matter of course. Well that may be so, in my case, but I must say that no matter how much a fanzine elicits my response, be it praise or condemnation, my loc is written when it's convenient for my family and when it interferes the least with the rest of my family's desire -- "The Family" includes me -- to have some fun, or even just relax together. Therefore my locs are sometime delayed and since my mind is a steel trap long LONG rusted in the open position I can't always recall how certain articles or letters or editorials originally affected me. The mood I'm in tempers my response and some thoughts may occur to me when I sit down and write a letter. With a big fanzine like PRE it's not always possible to read it in its entirety and then write a letter containing well-thought-out reactions; sometimes a few days of reflection and consideration helps me form a reaction to the ideas and statements I can remember. Unfortunately some responses are forgotten.

Milton -- howcum your editorial is so short? Shame on you; I could have read much more, and wanted to. Unfortunately I've never met a woman who had a tattoo but if I meet one I'll let you know right away.

Interestingly enough, Shari used to be able to imitate that Pachuko street spray. Bridges were always the favorite gathering spot, it seemed. One could always find a



The Diction Wordiest.

lot of that stuff there. Anyway she and her sister made quite an informal study of the signs, solely because the markings appealed to their sense of aesthetic appreciation (whatever that is). I don't think any of them really knew what the signs stood for....It's interesting that you mention what the markings stand for because I always wondered what it all meant, since much of it is not simple name writing. I've even seen some of it up by Big Bear Lake, so it's not just limited to LA and environs.

How did you ever manage to get those Harry Bell illos? I think the man rivals Canfield in cartooning and illustrating. And as your loccer said, I've never seen his work in any other US zine.

D. GARY GRADY
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Charleston SC 29405

What I think George Warren was getting at when he said that the author should stay out of the story's way, was that art should "ideally" not call attention to technique. In other words, the writer shouldn't be constantly showing off. We consider an actor a ham if we can tell he's acting. I have to say I don't entirely agree with that view. It is sometimes nice to enjoy an author's fancy footwork with the language as an end in itself. But I don't think you, Mike, were justified in calling this legitimate viewpoint "inane" and dismissing it as mere pulpish nonsense. ((Since you don't agree with him either, why do you think I was unjustified? Sure I know what he meant -- I've been exposed to pulp ideology for years. But I don't consider its rhetoric a suitable substitute for logic))

Ray Bradbury's wife sounds like the type I'm looking for. Maybe I should do a pasteup from some of the old International Paper ads in Reader's Digest and run it in the fanzines: "Send me a woman who Reads."

I disagree with Ted White (my, what a totally original way to start a paragraph) when he says that there is no fannishness in ST zines. I have never gotten any of them myself, but some were inflicted upon John Godwin and I skimmed a couple. They had a lot of silly sercon worshipful stuff, true, but there was a fair amount of humor. I remember especially one parody in which everytime Kirk addressed someone other than Spock or McCoy he would say "Lieutenant," and 435 voices would chorus "Yes, sir!" Of course I admit that this was some time ago. Things may have changed. Certainly the pretentiousness of STAR TREK LIVES is quite distant from any kind of fannishness (the parts I read -- I gave up after skimming a few chapters at random.

RAY CAPELLA
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Alhambra, CA 91803

You point out by attempting to revise your viewpoint of sf, discarding ideological judgements that you have read stories which were quite literary but bad sf. So have I, but riddle me this: if it's literary, but bad sf, then is being good sf per se a quality apart from being a literary work? Obviously, which would mean that conversely it can be good sf and ----- . How do we review that?

((Some reviewers measure all literature, sf included, against a body of fiction deemed of high quality. Others review for a readership whose standards the man either accepts or believes he understands. Some of us do both. The sf-audience does not demand that RINGWORLD be MOBY DICK or THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA. Others say that because its form is not as rigorously self-disciplined as those classics, it suffers thereby. The sf reader could care less, as long as it tickles his fancy. Therein lie our standards.))

MARK JENKINS
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I didn't think it was necessary, but after reading Jeff Schalles' letter I thought I should say that Bruce Townley is probably the best artist in Washington DC not presently employed by the WASHINGTON POST (excluding, perhaps, Robin Johnson-Ross) and certainly one of the best appearing in PREHENSILE. I think I am fairly well qualified to speak out on this subject. ((The heck you say.))

DARROLL PARDOE
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UNITED KINGDOM

The transcript of the ORIGINAL ANTHOLOGIES PANEL was really interesting. Ted Carnell's NEW WRITINGS IN SF anthologies were (as Terry Carr rightly said) very old-fashioned in the type of story they included, and perhaps fans and people who think and care about sf tend to knock them for that reason. But they seem to have been something of a success, to judge by the number of them that have appeared, so they must be appealing to a substantial audience of some kind. Maybe we forget that out there among the 99.9% of readers who aren't fans there are a lot of people with very reactionary tastes, whose idea of good sf is quite different to fans'. There are several people in the place where I work who are quite avid sf readers (but most definitely not fans) and from discussions I've had with them it's apparent that there's a huge gulf between my ideals for sf stories and theirs. The complaint they voice most often is that there's not enough science in sf nowadays; they like "hard" science in their science fiction, with lots of spaceships and computers and matter transmitters, with the human element subordinated to the scientific plot. They like early Asimov and Heinlein, and in more modern writing stories such as Larry Niven's, with plenty of technology. Even something as innocuous as Zelazny's LORD

OF LIGHT which I made the mistake of lending out once, leaves them cold. With folks like these about there's going to be a market for old-fashioned "hard" sf for a long time to come.

ROBERT BLOCH
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PREHENSILE 14, among other things, offers a timely reminder as to just how impossible it has become to keep up with current sf. The reviews allude to items I've missed entirely, in some instances, and these represent only the tip of the iceberg. Come to think of it, many years have passed since I last heard a fan proclaim that he "kept up with everything coming out in the field." It would be impossible today, unless someone were to devote full time and an inherited income to the project. So one must be duly grateful to zines like PREHENSILE which at least clue one in as to what -- in part -- is available. And now, back to HUSTLER....



STEVEN SAWICKI
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As far as Michael Shoemaker's comments on the damage done by Damon Knight in his essay on AE Van Vogt. Does the fault lie with the writer of the essay or those who read the essay and accepted it as truth

without trying to find out whether it was true or not. Do people rely on what other people say about a book or do they read books that they themselves choose. How many people read books only because they are on the top ten list of bestsellers? How many others read books that only the critics recommend? I tend to believe that most people rely on someone else to choose the books they read. You don't have to spend a whole lot of time in those smelly book-stores, don't you know.

EXCERPZ

ARTHUR HLAVATY: You failed to mention that the most entertaining reviewer of them all, M. John Harrison, is a pro. What fun his NEW WORLDS reviews are, as he takes a single paragraph from each book and beats it to death. Of course, his reviews have nothing to do with whether the book is any good, but you can't have everything.

WAHFS IN THE STRATOSPHERE

Gil Galer, John Robinson, Sheryl Birkhead, CE Bennett, George RR Martin, Sam Long, Ben Indick, Dr. AD Wallace, Keith A. Daniels, Ian Maule

LATE ARRIVING STFR WAHFS

Dave Feldman, Barry Hunter, Lester Boutilier, Laurine White, Tom Morley, Don D'Amassa, Eric Lindsay, George Flynn, Douglas barbour, Simon Agree, Dave Rowe.

I think I have totally burned out after typing this lettercol entirely in a day while listening to KHJ's Top 40 Decade playoff -- listening to "Pinball Wizard" eight times, . . . now see what it's done? Argh

***** MINIREVIEW BY STAN BURNS *****

HOMEWARD AND BEYOND by Poul Anderson Doubleday 1975 \$6.95

Excellent collection of Poul's stories that show the full range of his talents, from tongue in cheek satire to fine tragedy. A story that shows Poul at his comic best is "Peek! I See You!" in which he related how a man outfoxes three aliens to get Earth admitted to the Galactic Federation. It seems that the only nation on Earth that is a member is an isolated tribe of Hopi Indians, and the aliens don't want to admit any other nations because then they become eligible for "welfare" in terms of technological assistance. Since humans are not an outstanding race in a galaxy peopled to excess with such races, the aliens don't want to spend the money. The story is bright, comic and somewhat sobering in its view of man's position in the universe. At the opposite end of the spectrum of Anderson's talent is the exquisite jewel of a story, "Goat Song." In it Poul mixes Greek/Roman, Christian, and Frankensteinian mythology in a superior story about how a man goes to his God, the machine SUM, to have his wife/lover/soul mate resurrected -- only to find that his own faith in his machine God is inadequate to the burden that the machine asks him in return to assume. He revolts, strikes a blow for the returning to man of the mantle of his own destiny. This collection contains several other good stories (not the least of which is "The Peat Bog", a historical set in the first century about a Greek who falls in homosexual love with a northern barbarian chieftain, with tragic results. Highly Recommended.

THE WIND'S TWELVE QUARTERS by Ursula K. LeGuin, Harper & Row
1975, 303 pp. \$8.95

reviewed by Darrell Schweitzer

Ursula K. LeGuin may well turn out to be the Shakespeare of science fiction. I know this sounds pretentious, but it is true in this way: Elizabethan drama was a young form, not quite organized, not quite aware of its own potential, a form in which some very good work had been done (eg, Marlowe) along with a lot of crap (Kyd, Chapman, etc.) and then along came Shakespeare, not an innovator at all, but the perfector of the verse play. He simply took the existing genres, romantic comedy, history play, tragedy, etc., and did a better job with them than anyone else. It, of course, required a kind of genius, not the same though as the sort of genius the early Greek dramatists had when starting from scratch.

So Ursula LeGuin is the Shakespeare of science fiction. In this first and long-awaited collection we get a by no means complete assembly of her shorter work (there's enough around to easily fill another book) but it's enough to show what she can do. She can take conventional science fiction and fantasy forms, the planetary exploration tale, the primitivism after the bomb story, otherworldly magic and sorcery, and transform them into something new and vital, something that hasn't quite been done before in the field. In short, she writes better than anyone else, and the gems abound. As Brian Aldiss said of her in THE BILLION YEAR SPREE, M. LeGuin's prose isn't merely good, it is beautiful, a pleasure to read.

Among the conventional stories we find several associated with LeGuin's novels. There's the Nebula-winning "The Day Before The Revolution" which is sort of a prologue to her (also Nebula and Hugo winning) THE DISPOSSESSED. It is mostly a character sketch dealing with the last days of the philosopher Odo, and it's an amazing tour de force of observation. LeGuin has the writer's eye, and with it she can project herself into people unlike herself, in this case a very old, maybe slightly senile, yet brilliant woman who wants a little quiet when hordes of admirers come for her wisdom, and make it all very believable. It used to be said that science fiction had a weakness in characterization, but this is hardly true anymore with LeGuin around.

Also associational are the two short Earthsea stories, these written before the multiple-award-winning trilogy (whereas "Revolution" was written after THE DISPOSSESSED) and one of them, "The Word of Unbinding" is splendid. It gives us a first glimpse of the world of the dead which is explored more fully in THE FARTHEST SHORE. The other one, "The Rule of Names" lays down the basic rules for the working magic of Earthsea, but the story itself is maybe a little too cutesy, and the ending doesn't make any sense (to me at least) after repeated rereadings. Then there's "Semley's Necklace" which is the prologue to ROCANNON'S WORLD. It's a beautiful story in itself, but it leaves me unsatisfied. If Ms. LeGuin has any serious failing it's that her interplanetary locales fail to convince. I just can't believe a medieval, feudal society complete with warring kings, elves, and trolls on another planet, the product of alien evolution. This is one reason why I have always preferred LeGuin's fantasy to her fiction. There she can write a magic kingdom story and not worry about the plausibility. There are a few "hard" science fiction stories present, such as "Nine Lives" which is about cloning, and

"Vaster than Empires and More Slow" about the misfits sent to explore a world, and then there some some unconventional, decidedly odd items present also, like "Direction of the Road" which may be the first story ever to be told from the viewpoint of an oak tree tired of stretching and shrinking as cars pass, to maintain perspective. "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" won a Hugo in 1974 to the great ire of those who claimed it wasn't science fiction or even a story. It's a statement of condition, not a narrative, as much a story as Borges' "The Library of Babel." I guess you would call it allegory. It's incisive if not brilliant (also claimed by some, the ones who voted for it) in its delineation of what is the major dilemma of America today -- the majority of the people live better than any society in the history of man, but because of this, to keep the system running, someone has to suffer. Only a few, but somebody has to pay for it all. What happens when people find out about this? Most ignore it, but a few, mostly the young ones, walk away from Omelas, right into the experimental anarchist world of "The Day Before The Revolution" and THE DISPOSSESSED, or so says Ms. LeGuin in one of her introductions. Overall a very worthwhile effort; get it.

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"The Samauri and the Willows" by Michael Bishop; F&SF 2/76
 Reviewed by Donald Keller

Most often, a Michael Bishop story is a grabbag of particularly intriguing ideas, finely-drawn character studies, some of the best prose in science fiction, and fascinating structural experiments, all stuffed into the fabric of the story so that it is apt to split at the seams; it tends to be a vastly ambitious three-quarter success.

His new story, "The Samauri and the Willows" is somewhat different: not so pyrotechnic in idea, just as impeccably literary, and much neater and tidier. In short, more mature -- which sounds odd, because Bishop's stuff shows much more maturity even at its worst than the general run of sf.

For one thing, he did not have to pull the tour de force of creating a whole new society while telling his story, because it is set in one he has used before, the Urban Nucleus of Atlanta in the year 2046, when the US has closed itself off completely from the rest of the war-shattered world. The creative work for this setting was done in the amazingly short "Windows in Dante's Hell" still his finest story. It was used again in the fair-to-middling "Allegiances" (the three will likely form the basis of a book), and alluded to as the home of the protagonist of his remarkable but imperfect first novel, A FUNERAL FOR THE YES OF FIRE.

The story centers on two characters, a Japanese-American man beginning to push middle-age, and a young black girl of large proportions. He calls her Queequeg; she calls him Basenji. As usual in Bishop, these names are decidedly symbolic. The two end up chosen by a computer as roommates, and the entire story is devoted to how their relationship changes each of them. It is a grave, quiet story with not a touch of melodrama, though it does have some disturbing psychological undercurrents. The philosophical cast of the story is the way of the bonsai and bushido (the code of the samauri), to which Basenji is devoted. It therefore has to be taken on those terms and not the reader's; for example, the ending is not a happy one by pulp standards, but by the story's standards it is a serene and far from sad one.

Among my favorite things in Bishop's stories are his little literary devices and niceties: they add a lot to the story for me. In this story I particularly liked the way that the sections written from the point of view of each protagonist (in third person limited) use the appropriate vocabulary and style: formal, economical, and a bit literary for Basenji, future-slangy and colloquial for Queequeg. There is a haiku in which I assume Bishop (since it is attributed to Basenji) wrote with surprising excellence: I have found very few non-Japanese haiku which capture the proper attitude. While the *nosai* idea is very present, it is used completely differently than in Sturgeon's "Slow Sculpture." There are some nicely-done satirical swipes at censorship, rock music and youth culture, and a serious indictment of nursing homes, effected by constructing future parallels. All of this is stirred in with a moving double character study, infused with the Eastern philosophy, and neatly tucked around itself into a seamless whole.

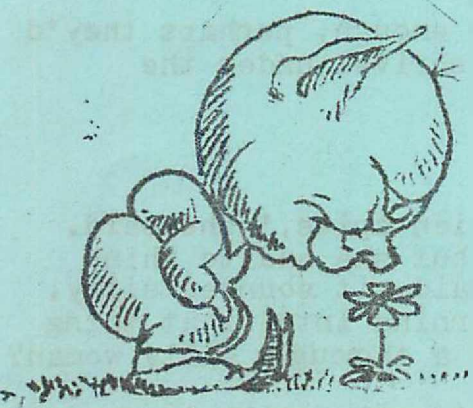
In short, this is the most carefully constructed piece Bishop has yet done, and next to "The Windows In Dante's Hell" his most fully realized. If I don't sound all that excited about it, that reflects the nature of the story: intentionally, I think, it lacks the fire and excitement of idea that his other stories have for me. Like Zelazny with his novels (see PHANTASMICOM 10) I think Bishop is experimenting with a different thing in each story (compression in "The Windows in Dante's Hell," time and memory in "On the Street of the Serpents"), and here it was symmetry and quiet mood. I serenely rejoice in the quality of this further trial run toward the truly classic story I still expect him to write. He will be heard from again.

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DOES ANYONE ELSE HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER TO ADD? by R.A. Lafferty,
 Scribner's, 1974, 273pp., \$6.95

Reviewed by Darrell Schweitzer

These days when well over half the new short stories published in America are to be found in the science fiction magazines and anthologies, it shouldn't be too surprising to discover that many of the best writers in the shorter lengths are science fiction writers, as are some of the odd-est. RA Lafferty is both. He is one of the great literary eccentrics of our time. His view of the world is unique and not necessarily related to the perceptions of the rest of us. His stories have their own biz-

arre, often absurd internal logic that seem like the product of an alien mind. Try and imagine Jorge Luis Borges as a drunken Irishman reeling off marvels by the bucketful in a manner so disarmingly matter-of-fact as to make you at least momentarily believe anything, and you'll have some idea of what Lafferty is like.



Those who still equate science fiction with the antics of STAR TREK will be very surprised by these stories. There are no heroic space captains here, but there are flying limestone islands disguised as clouds, a secret organization called Crocodile, which controls all the

attitudes and dispositions in the world, a computer that sucks souls from

its operators, a carnival magician whose better half emerges one day from the box during a disappearing act, sections of Earth which flip over on groaning hinges, a charming alien blob which makes a quick fortune in gambling casinos, and lots more, all of it unlikely, all of it new. No cliches here. At his best Lafferty is beyond compare. He is a genuinely inspired madman.

THE FOREVER WAR by Joe Haldeman, Ballantine 24767 1974/6 \$1.50

Reviewed by Stan Burns

One of the ironies of fate is that this novel was never nominated for any awards (although the part that was "Hero" in ANALOG was, I think, nominated for a Hugo.) I thought it was one of the best, and most thoroughly thought out future war novels ever written. It ranks right up with Heinlein's STARSHIP TROOPERS. The characterization is superb, the background carefully worked out. And best of all, Haldeman works out the process of near lightspeed warfare, and the vast changes that occur while the participants are out fighting. What are you fighting for, when the world you left, along with home and family, no longer exists when you return after hundreds of years? Can you continue fighting? For what? And if you survive, what can you go back to? This is the first paperback printing of this recent novel, and I recommend it to all.

THE MISSIONARIES, by D. G. Compton, Ace 53570, 1972, 22pp. 75¢

Reviewed by Michael T. Shoemaker

David G. Compton, a late starter in the science fiction field (he was born in 1930), is growing ever more competent in his skills as an author. Stylistically speaking, his work is of the highest quality; perceptive, free of cliches, excellent in evoking the proper mood for specific scenes, and containing thoroughly good imagery. He still falls a little short in plot construction, however. He still lacks a flair for imaginative science fictional concepts.

Compton's weaknesses, though, are due to his choice in subject. In this novel, as in previous novels, Compton is primarily concerned with characterization. His brand of characterization is a highly realistic one. In the manner of Kafka and others, his characters are endlessly introspective. This is not to say that Compton's world or style bear any relation to Kafka's, only that his characters actually think about what they say and about what other characters have said. They are constantly reacting to the world around them. I offer a random sample to demonstrate what I mean (random, to prove that one can find this on almost every page:)

'I don't believe it.'

If she said it often enough, perhaps they'd go away, perhaps they'd shrivel under the blast of her disbelief.

And a little later:

'I think you're Russian spies,' she said.

She didn't think it but she had to think something. Now it was said, it sounded silly. Was that what she was turning into, that thing she had always despised, a thoroughly silly woman?

The plot is very simple. Four alien Missionaries land in the countryside of Great Britain. Their Mission is to convert Earth to the worship of Ustiliath. It will be apparent to the reader that Ustiliath is a

Spinozan concept. Ustiliath is an all-encompassing whole, of which the Christian God is only an attribute. Quotes from the "Missionaries' andbook" are sprinkled throughout the novel at key points so as to enhance the plot:

The working of an individual 'miracle' is to be discouraged. As a means of obtaining converts its effects are very short term. As a means of obtaining easy popularity it is cheap and unworthy. As a means of genuinely alleviating suffering it is selective and inadequate. In the early stages of the Mission, however, circumstances may arise in which its use is justifiable. Integrity losses have to be balanced against strategy gains. The final decision rests at all times with the missionary captain.

The aliens take on human form and characteristics. This is convenient for the author because it sidesteps the problem of developing a truly alien characterization for them. The author cannot be condemned for this, however, because he allows himself to concentrate on the primary concern: the human aspect.

They make contact with a family residing in the country. In the family is Gordon, an aging general; Sylvia, his neurotic wife; and Dacre, their son, who leads a motorcycle gang. The characterization of Dacre is perhaps the major flaw in the novel. At first he is depicted as a rather despicable character in the general setting of the motorcycle gang. Later character development, though, is not consistent. The author probably did this in order to set up an inner conflict of character, but it just does not work.

As the story continues, the Missionaries gain ever wider influence thru the use of good propaganda techniques (although they are not entirely unopposed). Not much of this is ever shown to the reader. Instead the reader is told this, while the novel continues to center on the main characters.

As the conclusion approaches, it is intimated that the missionaries have an ulterior motive. It all ends just as one might expect.

Besides trying to gain an insight into human nature and emotions, the theme of the novel can be expressed in two ways. First and most obviously, it is a parallel to the past actions of our own "earthly missionaries. The second is expressed by the following quote:

And anyway, today's people moved on. Obsolescence was a necessary part even of their enthusiasms. They were always afraid that the richness of life, the variety, the freedom, the glorious motorway of asphalt opportunity would pass them by. So Ustiliath, which had been up, had nowhere to go but down.

Being the introspective novel that it is, this book is very slow and involved reading. The persistent reader is rewarded with a fine literary experience. At the same time, one cannot help but wish that Mr. Compton would exercise his imagination a little more rigorously.

The first of these is the fact that the novel is written in a very simple and direct style. The second is the fact that the novel is written in a very simple and direct style.

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