



May '75  
No. 5  
\$1

STFR

YALLER SNO'S  
BAR & GRILL

BEER  
ON  
TAP

HOW TO  
SOBER  
PEOPLE  
UP.

TAXI

SCHIRER '76.





# SCIENTIFRITION 5

MAY 1976

## BOOK REVIEWS

Donald G. Keller

(19) NEW WORLDS 9, and  
LEGENDS FROM THE END  
OF TIME; (23) WHERE  
LATE THE SWEET BIRDS  
SANG

Stan Burns

(9b) THE PLANTS;  
(29) THROUGH THE REAL-  
ITY WARP; (34) HERIT-  
AGE OF HASTUR, THE  
STARCROSSED; (35) THE  
EARLY WILLIAMSON, THE  
EARLY DEL REY; (36) THE  
EARLY LONG, KINGDOMS  
OF SORCERY, THE POWER  
OF BLACKNESS; (37) STAR  
MOTHER, THE GREEN GENE  
SIX SCIENCE FICTION  
PLAYS; (38) THE YEAR'S  
BEST FANTASY STORIES,  
THE BLADERUNNER;  
(39) THE TRIUNE MAN;  
(40) NEW DIMENSIONS 5;  
(41) THE NEW IMPROVED  
SUN;

Don Ayres

(49) HALF PAST HUMAN,  
THE GODWHALE

Jon Coopersmith

(1b) THE FARTHEST  
STAR

## ARTISTS

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Randy Bathurst - 10,  
28, 30, 34, 46

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WAHF.

STFR/PRE is available for contributions of  
words (articles, locs, poetry) and art, by  
whim and by trade. Trades all-for-all noted  
with a capital T; one-for-one trades are  
noted with a small 't', and like those who  
codes read (?) must respond to this issue to  
continue receiving the zine. Anyone may  
purchase, once, a sample issue for \$1. There-  
after you too must respond.

I apologize for this issue's abysmal repro,  
the worst I've had since PRE 3. Once again  
my machine started mucking up in the middle  
of the run. Hand-inking was the only resort.

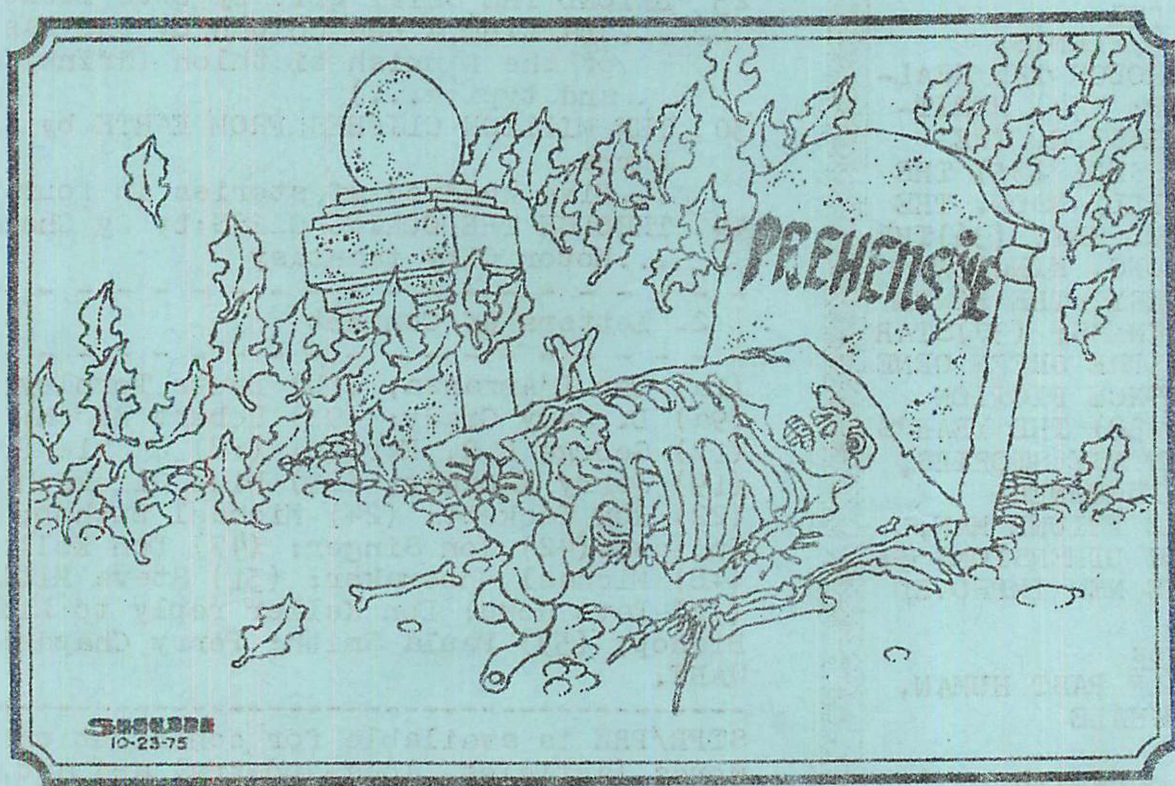
Thanks to Bruce Pelz for use of stencilling  
tools.....



# REPREHENSIBLE

## 1. General Pedagogy

This has been a frustrating period in my checkered publishing career -- in this way. What you hold in your hands is a 'quickie' designed to clear the decks and keep readers aware of my continued existence while I go about reviving PREHENSILE. However this quickie has stretched on and on. You cannot help but find it of interest, though, and while sitting around impatiently awaiting the rest of the material to fall in line I've found some ways to play with the layout. That takes some doing when you've got very little art to work with.



And that was about all the art I had to work with right there...

This issue the Master of Disguise (also of Dese, Dem and Dose Guys), apprentice redneck Dave Locke, commences his column. Dave has been tripping the light fantastic, become the Bally table king, and visited foreign fandoms in recent months. In fact it was during the military exercises at the TusCon (or somebody's) room party at LepreCon that Dave volunteered to write this column. If I recall (which I probably don't) Jim Corrick appeared at the party to distribute his handsomely offset information fliers for TusCon. Certain rowdies who shall remain nameless but whose initials are Dave Locke and Ed Co; soon became embroiled slinging a fleet of paper airplanes made of these fliers back at a crowd of fans gathered behind a partition wall on the far end of the room.

This dogfight lasted for about an hour -- great stuff. Between aerial engagements Dave even had time to write a letter of comment on the critical demerits of Don Keller. This prompted Don to address his "letter to the unliterary" to Dave and his ilk (a pet ilk about four months old, furry and cute but with Big Pointy Teeth). I haven't seen the finished version at this writing -- in fact I'm ambivalent whether I should ask Don to finish it, for the article has hagridden him many weeks now, nearly to the point of a writer's bloc. Jeff Smith would never forgive me.

Don must sometimes feel like a bone between two dogs, yanked at and fought over. Jeff Smith says I'm getting Don's best material, while I'm sure Jeff is getting it. It's quite unimportant, but we faneds have to keep ourselves occupied somehow. And I hope Don will pardon me while I turn his head (\*yank\*) but his insight, articulateness, opinionated nature and discipline make him about the best sercon writer around. His talent lies in having enough interests and energy that in the course of keeping himself amused he explores a good deal of territory people like me might otherwise fail to make time for. (I'm so far behind I haven't even read last year's Hugo nominees yet.) I'd have missed Michael Bishop entirely if Keller hadn't pointed out his writings. So I must keep in mind, and I'll write it down so I don't forget, that in the process of being a faneditor, a kind of eight-foot cubed machine with tentacles for grabbing and holding writers and artists, I can't let Don get into the position of boring himself just to meet some damned STFR deadline.

Of course STFR deadlines, as Jackie Franke knows, aren't all that strict anyway. But it's the principle. Such -- I suspect -- is against my nature. For the faneditor makes his way in the world by kidnapping guest of honor speeches, blackmailing letterhacks by threatening to toss them off the mailing list unless they put out, conning artists who you've promised to publish promptly when you know your blackguard electrostencil supplier will sit on anything you send him for a month or six weeks at least, and generally outraging people just enough to keep them coming back. Let this be my New Year's Resolution. After all, no reason my resolutions should be any more timely than the publishing schedule of my fanzine...

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## 2. In Hoc Signo Plergb

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During the UCLA Winter Quarter (the first ten weeks of the year) I attended a science fiction writing course with Theodore Sturgeon, in company with fourteen others. There was a certain pleasure that none were fans, but eventually the truth came out, and I was unmasked. One of the things that I did towards the end was take Stan Burns' article in this issue, Ten Million Cliches From Earth and distribute copies. Sturgeon summed up the reaction, "This leaves none of us untouched..." most humorously.

Burns' article offered the opportunity to try something new, as well as revive a way of dealing with the reviews I hadn't been able to use since the disappearance of Richard Wadholm from these pages. The new aspect is to gather Burns' reviews together in a separate section. Many letterwriters commented that they prefer to read reviews by a person whose biases they know and instinct they trust. Therefore rather than scatter the commentaries of my most prolific and idiosyncratic reviewer I kept them together. And I used Burns' piece to head up the section.

The remaining reviews and the letters have been set throughout the zine on two-page spreads or in the collected letters and reviews section. (After all, they didn't all fit nicely on two pages, and what can you do when your material won't conform to the layout? Some of us solve that problem by rejecting the material, and then there are those of us who do sloppy layout anyway and it doesn't make much difference...)

Also by way of introduction, there will be in this layout a series of sketches based on my visits to the New Riegel Cafe. Due to the horrified reaction in APA L, I'm breaking them up instead of presenting them at a stretch.



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### 3. Ribs Saga: Part One

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"The Colonel's got ribs!" scream the commercials. Well, that may sound a deathknell for some independent barbeque outfits. But there's a northwest Ohio tradition that can hardly be touched by machine-tooled gristle from the Colonel. As we tune in, we hear:

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Penguin Dave Feldman and I discussed dinner one wintry evening. Bowling Green's well supplied with pizza and hamburger outlets, of which we were both thoroughly tired. "Do you mind driving? We could go to New Riegel," he said. Knowing nothing of New Riegel at the time, ready to marvel at anyplace in Ohio which was open after dark on a Sunday evening, and more than ready to escape BG at least for a few hours, his suggestion was enough and we left.

Ohio is filled with the kinds of roads I had only witnessed in driver training films in the instructional trailer out behind San Fernando High, or in the ancient tv series HIGHWAY PATROL (filmed around the LA of another day). Now in LA there are virtually just two driving situations -- urban street and freeways. There are no two-lane blacktops, unlighted, running between small towns, identified only by state highway numbers (1, 395, hike!). But the route to New Riegel was nothing more nor less than noodles of road traversing the featureless, night-smothered landscape.

We got lost outside of Fostoria and got directions from a truckstop. I got carsick from the overripe smell pouring from the car heater, and when we finally reached New Riegel the place had been closed for fifteen minutes already. We peered through the darkened windows of the Corner T bar, and watched the streetlight change a couple of times -- the only one in town. We went back to BG and endured a pizza.

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It was February before we tried again. Winter abated. How could you tell? Shoots of wild grass looked like a three-day's growth of beard on the clean-shaven snowfields, poking up in clumps where the melt was well underway.

Barbecue smell cloaked the sidewalk next to the cafe. Several great racks of beef rotated on a vertical skewer in the cafe window, baked by electric elements on two sides, aluminum foil reflector on a third.

Feldman entered, I followed. The portals of the New Riegel Cafe opened on a waiting-area cum bar where almost thirty people crowded onto the benches or stood against the cigarette machine out of the way of the door. The dining room was to the left in a separate room. The Penguin signed for a party of two on the waiting list on a counter at the entrance to the dining room.

On the wall above the cigarette machine hung framed Budweiser prints. The Indians were no closer to catching the Overland Stage than they'd been in 1958 when I last saw the print hanging in a neighbor's garage; and the remnants of Custer's command still made their lithographed last stand. But the Cafe bar was just a pale reflection of the Corner T Bar, next door, where the walls were layered over with practically every brewer's gewgaw handed out in the last decade. Genessee and Pabst lamps dangled from chains in the ceiling; stamped plastic Buds and Pabsts overlapped Schiltz mirrors, Schmidt's posters and Stroh's icons. That and barber-shop style cardboard stand-up displays deteriorating patiently while waiting to sell the last of their consigned combs, pipes and nail clippers.

That Saturday night the New Riegel Cafe was drawing its customary weekend-out-to-dinner

crowd from Toledo and vicinity. Skipping into the bar six cheerleaders, the scarlet letter H emblazoned on their sweaters, registered for dinner. Whether garnishing a victory or drowning a defeat in barbecue sauce, they happily pranced in and out.

"Feldman, party of two." The dining room of the New Riegel Cafe is a room too bare and big and dim with furnishings stolen from a cheap Italian restaurant and a decor best described as Church-circle foil-and-paste. The green room's windows were dressed over with box frames befoiled red-white-and-blue. Tissue flowers were wired into window boxes and plastic foliage rested limply against the walls. Dave and I quickly went for the ribs; "Salad?" the waitress asked -- not Dave's "most favorite waitress," the old and surly one working tables across the room, but another dried-out woman pulling the old salad scam: though salads cost extra, no one ever seems to mention that until the bill arrives. Better yet is the premium charge for blue cheese dressing, a favorite Ohio dodge as yet rarely practiced in the Far West.

The classic \$2.95 ribs dinner: flanked by token slivers of carrot and celery and buttered bread, they arrive in a cardboard trough hot and resting on a deep bed of french fries. Each rib a couple finger-widths, and five or six inches long, the New Riegel rib is more meat than bone, long baked, and drenched in rich salt-and-spice juice. Over dinner Penguin Dave told me about the ribs writeup by the author of AMERICA FRIED who claimed that all three of the best ribs places in America were in Kansas City. Midamericon members who tire of wearing numbered straitjackets and being directed to panels with cattle prods can join me in the search for the ultimate rib -- if, indeed, the old ladies of New Riegel haven't already found it.

Aside from the food, Feldman's opinion of New Riegel as a charismatic watering hole more reflected the company he discovered it in, when a raw graduate assistant at Bowling Green, than any real uniqueness. Even the Corner T Bar, a place more bizarre than charming with its walls three-deep in brewery souvenirs, has just one claim to fame -- its enameled tin ceiling pressed in some 19th century geometric design.

Stopping in for a beer before leaving we entered the Corner T through the side door. Three weatherbeaten men pushing fifty sat around a corner table dealing cards. They sat in a haze of Marlboro smoke wearing canvas workingman's clothes of sweat-stained drab green and dirt-spattered gray. Various buttons were undone, open collars full of old brown skin and grizzled hair.

Their fourth player leaned over the bar waiting on a beer and making change. Beside him sat an isolated old fat man dressed like the others, a graybeard nursing his schooner of Old Milwaukee.

Up front some high schoolers moved onto barstools for rowdy conversation and glasses of draft. Before leaving Feldman spent several minutes confusing the waitress by trying to order either of the local delicacies, the "wingding" or the "whirlybird," though they seemed unable to decide which was the pressed chicken sandwich and which was the fried chicken wings. Then en route to the car, walking to the bar's front door, the two of us reexperienced one of those classic moments of high school assholeism when a dear lad continued to stretch his leg across the aisle, from bar stool to booth. All the wrong reflexes came into play, (Elton John wrote it, "Get back/Honky cat/Livin' in the city I know where it's at") but suddenly we all remembered this wasn't EASY RIDER, and the lad took into account how much use his leg was going to be after we walked through it. ((End Part One))

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#### 4. A Salute to Twelfth Century Liberalism

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Peace broke out between Dr. Pournelle and me awhile ago -- no doubt I should get it into the record. I was glad our festering relationship could be salvaged, for though



we seemed in constant personal conflict I had developed considerable respect for his storytelling ("And He Fell Into A Black Hole" for instance) and his leadership in the face of entrenched LASFS sentiment and occasional rudeness. Or perhaps that's a too-euphemistic way of saying they listened to him (when they would railroad everyone else) on the subject of the club's general responsibility to fandom -- particularly on the treatment of income from LACON. And I have long since tired of LASFS' unwillingness to accept responsibility at the same time they accept con income. (In fact holding that opinion could get me into trouble if anyone was listening.)(Which no one is...)

And one more thing before moving on, I've heard sufficient "testimony" (for want of a better word) to convince me Dr. Pournelle's account of his action in reading SEEDS OF CHANGE aloud at NASFiC was completely accurate-- I even heard an account relayed from a NESFAN who'd been out for the con.

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5. "Everything I write reads like something a real writer threw away."

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So goes Frank Norman's inspiring quote, which I doubt Frank Gasperik has ever read though it does contortedly introduce the latest thing on wheels. . . As the world must have heard by now, the game DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS is extremely popular among fans. BG Workman offered the ultimate fusion of fantasy universes when he recently suggested that Dungeonmasters who want their dungeons demolished call on the 42nd Regiment -- the mercenary force created by Jerry Pournelle in his CoDominium stories. It's only logical -- now Frank Gasperik is recruiting Dungeon-designers and scenario-scribblers to the ends of REALLY playing such a game -- and who knows, he may even talk the author himself into leading the 42nd into battle with dice flying and imagination rampant. ("Every fifth round will be silver," I think I heard him say...)

I know about DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS nearly as much as I know about the sport of hockey, but simply put it's a game based on all the tales of fantasy, and permutations thereof, imaginable. Each player creates a number of characters to enter the Dungeonmaster's Dungeon, with various talents and powers determined beforehand by the roll of dice. They proceed down to search for treasure and confront the traps and opponents the master has designed into his dungeon. These confrontations involve melees, general outbreaks of fighting where the injuries and triumphs are, again, determined by dice.

Scenario One: DAGGER AND DICE "Ready, sir." Sergeant Major Calvin flicked the safety catch on his New Aberdeen semiautomatic, the only concession the formal and duty-bound man would make to his exhilaration and readiness for the coming fight.

John Christian Falkenberg glanced at the ruined battlements of Castle Anthrax, up to the tower where the shattered electric grail reflected the sunlight and looked like teeth of fire. His gaze wandered across the deserted keep and fallen walls, resting at last on the gate tower that housed the passage to dungeons below. The CoDominium Secretary's words came to mind: "Do me a favor, Jack, and snuff this crowd, all right?"

Falkenberg relented. "Sergeant Major, open the door." The noncom saluted unsmiling and stepped smartly to the iron-studded door concealed in the shadow of the gate tower. Standing heavy in their Nemourlon body armor the men of the Forty-Second listened to the boom of the door under the sergeant major's fist.

The door opened a crack. Calvin could see a very young, callow and longhaired boy with a headband that read, in embroidery, "Dungeonmaster." The boy let out a faint "Eeek!" and slammed the door shut.

"All right, let's get on with it," Colonel Falkenberg said. A pair of mercenaries was detailed to plant charges on the door. They did so and scurried back to the form-



ation. The ordnance made a satisfying "BOOM" which threw back the door and echoed into the bowels of the castle. In moments the regiment was marching by twos down the stairway.

Obviously in Scenario One, we have such incidents as... "The tar golems burst out of nowhere, and fell on the men. Calvin ordered his troopers to pull back, and after Corporal Pierson sprayed the golems with napalm somebody struck a match and..." Or... "Over the PA the Dungeonmaster announced, 'The Evil Elves rolled a +3 of sword and a +18 in body odor, and a +6 of legal wizardry.' While the dice roll was announced Private Nussbaum rolled a grenade among the Evil Elves..."

Perhaps, though, the efficiency of trained fighters in this situation strikes you as contrary to the spirit of the game. Therefore I have Scenario Two. Scenario Two postulates that all the trappings of D&D actually are effective against CoDominium infantry regiments. Therefore the Secretary of War, rather than visiting the 42nd and enlisting their services, would call up his force of crack dragoons, The Mink Berets. Then we'd have to rewrite that opening scene in "Sword and Sceptre" so that when the Secretary reviews the troops and one of them is called on to display the contents of his field pack, the result is: "'Sir!' Private Josephus of Gwynedd might have smiled thinly, but he was unnoticed. He laid each item from the pack in its place on the dropcloth. Sword: a Damascus singing-and-dancing scimitar with Intelligence, and the ability to detect Smog, which recited inspirational passages from the Koran and sang songs in the old Durlac tongue. A sword-polish tin. Five pre-mixed philtres: for love, hate, stasis of time, invisibility and notary public. There was a styrofoam Big Mac container that served as the private's mess kit, for each evening he ate the enclosed hamburger, put the waste back in the box, and it regenerated by the next evening. There was a greatcloak and enchanted cape, an iron jock strap ('you never can tell what a heel can wield')... The pack hadn't seemed heavy but Josephus kept pulling gear from it. Pair of dodecahedral dice, scroll of healing, rolling papers, and a spell card good for one wish (unlimited for anything except a discharge from the Mink Berets)."

After that there's also Scenario Three, when Kimball Kinnison, Lazarus Long, Retief, Dominic Flandry, Falkenberg, Beowulf Schaeffer, the dog 'Blood,' Donald Graeme, Billy Pilgrim and everybody else you choose get together for a D&D expedition.

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## 6. Special Snoretime

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It's been my policy never to send another loc to a fanzine that has failed to print one. The reason is simple enough. I write my locs for publication. If the editor disagrees with my opinion of what will interest his readers, we part company continuing to trade and read each other's zine, but part all the same. My locs are triggered by items of specific interest, not out of a sense of duty; if it's not going to print my comment might as well have been a scow in the mirror as a letter.

Apathy, as you know, is one of the frustrations of publishing a fanzine. Others' inaction after receipt of our fanzine leaves us wondering, amid a fanactive life. Why? After I'd been screwing up the operations of my own zines long enough, neglecting to acknowledge articles, leaving subs in a drawer for months until the next issue, losing addresses, I stopped expecting every faneditor to extend common courtesy and instead barricaded the door against the lynch mob that would inevitably greet my own bad manners.

But lately some of this has irritated me enough to remark on it. Nothing that might be blamed on the Post Office -- nothing like the way I used to get STARFIRE in trade. After one issue I wrote from Bowling Green to its editor, Breiding, that I'd enjoyed

less complex story in EPOCH titled "Blooded on Arachne."

I don't understand some portions of Mike Shoemaker's review of THE MIS-  
SIONARIES. He seems at one point to be saying that concentration on  
strong characterization is a weakness, which I find hard to credit.

---

Review by Jon Coopersmith

FARTHEST STAR, THE SAGA OF CUCKOO by Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson  
Ballantine Books, 246 pages, 1975

In their latest effort, Pohl and Williamson have started out with some  
promising elements: nearly two hundred races in the universe; a myster-  
ious object, Object Lambda, solid, but with a registered density of a  
vacuum, 20,000 light years from Earth's galaxy and approaching; tachyon  
transmission whereby "A man could send infinite replicas of himself  
anywhere in the galaxy -- wherever duty called;" a universe-spanning  
love story; and a plot encompassing all of this.

The main human character is Ben Pertin, or, to be exact, his replicates  
scattered throughout the novel, Ben Charles, Ben Frank, Ben James, Ben  
Linc, Ben Tom, Ben Yale, and Replicate 5160. Ben Pertin himself, some-  
where on Earth, is never met. However, the real Zara Doy, the collect-  
ive love of the Ben Pertins, is met on Earth -- married to Jon Gentry.

Object Lambda has been discovered by the T'Worlies, a flying beetle-  
like race, and one of their drones is converted by materials sent by  
the tachyon transmitter into a radiation-emitting starship. By the time  
Ben James and Ben Frank die, a modified drone is launched into Lambda's  
orbit bearing the tachyon transmitter. More replicates of various races  
are transmitted to the surface of Cuckoo, its new name, many of which  
die at the hands of newly discovered life forms.

Overall it's an excellent story, but Pohl and Williamson have just  
started to explore and exploit some of their ideas. But Cuckoo is still  
20,000 light years away and by the time it reaches the center of the  
galaxy there will be more to read about it.

---

BRUTE TORNLEY  
2323 Sibley Street  
Alexandria, VA 22311

Well, STFR #4 arrived in time, just  
in time, the very nick, to give me a  
break in the ten drawing exercises  
I have to do (#10 "Illustrate the

most interesting event in your life. Add a paragraph of explanation on  
the reverse side of the sheet." Mark Jenkins heard about this guy who  
when faced with a similar assignment wanted to tell all about the first  
time he was laid. He dropped out of sight shortly afterwards) in order  
to be considered for entry into the School of Arts at Virginia Common-  
wealth U. Yup, after so many years in the heady world of high finance  
I'm heading back to school (for Jackie Franke's information and anybody  
else's who happens to be looking over here, I'm 56 years old and the  
last college level drawing class I attended I got an A in, hee!). STFR  
was a load (jeeze, and I thought you were getting out of the dinosaur  
era) and loads of fun aside from your aside where all the comparisons  
between drawers and drawings are made (which is only part of a rather  
small sentence). What's next. ((Next: The Bruce Townley Grammar Fan  
Fund.))



ation. The ordnance made a satisfying "BOOM" which threw back the door and echoed into the bowels of the castle. In moments the regiment was marching by twos down the stairway.

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Obviously in Scenario One, we have such incidents as... "The tar golems burst out of nowhere, and fell on the men. Calvin ordered his troopers to pull back, and after Corporal Pierson sprayed the golems with napalm somebody struck a match and..." ... "Over the PA the Dungeonmaster announced, 'The Evil Elves rolled a +3 of sword and a +18 in body odor, and a +6 of legal wizardry.' While the dice roll was announced Private Nussbaum rolled a grenade among the Evil Elves...."

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But lately some of this has irritated me enough to remark on it. Nothing that might be blamed on the Post Office -- nothing like the way I used to get STARFIRE in trade. After one issue I wrote from Bowling Green to its editor, Bredding, that I'd enjoyed

it and submitted an article for possible use. I've never gotten a reply or another issue of STARFIRE. (Let's all hear a big "Aaaahh, poor Miki.") Not even the STFR reviewing his zine prompted a response. But I can draw no conclusions -- it may not be gross rudeness but the Post Awful at its usual worst.

What especially bothered me, then, is that recently I've gotten personal replies on two LoCs, saying they'd been enjoyed and would be published. Issues of the respective zines passed without the damn locs even being WAHFD. Another editor took my article on THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE. More the fool me for it was my only copy. After six letters he acknowledged accepting it. Shortly thereafter I got the twelfth issue of his highly touted sercon zine. It's been a year and two issues and I've gotten neither of them nor heard from him. It's been a month since my second inquiry of late. This beloved person's name will shortly disappear from my mailing list and I'd better not catch him at a convention without my article in his hand. I might gaffiate over his shoes.

Still this sort of thing can't be all that unique. How common is it? If I get enough other horror stories I may even shut up. ~~AND WONDERING THAT MAKE IT WORTHWHILE?~~

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#### Ribs Saga: Conclusion

7.

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A month later in the Corner T Bar the old geezer at the counter hadn't moved, unless it was to reproduce by fission. He was there in green canvas shirt and khaki trousers, silver hair and beard spilling out of a drab green cap. While he supervised the waitress, his twin slipped onto the barstool beside him. Outfitted by the same Army & Navy store, number two's sole distinction was a black derby. Like his brother, he had a heavy accent, so heavy it seemed to have herniated his vocal cords. The two went at it, shaking their paunches dangerously at each other to emphasize points under discussion, such as, "Merm bohl scren, eh?"

Two boys hung baseball mitts on bike handlebars outside the door, and clambered onto barstools at the forward counter -- "No children past the fourth stool," said the sign, prompting visions of Ten Nights In A Barroom. The two ordered a brace of Frosties. One wondered, seeing the two pairs, whether such duos of young and old bookended the years of their lives on the stools of the Corner T Bar. One might venture a profound analogy, age moving the men down the bar from the front counter to the back. Then as the dusk of life enshrouded them they popped into the refrigerator with the wingdings and whirlybirds.

It's New Riegel on a Tuesday in May. Wild grasses and dandelions carpet previously barren farmlands; releafed trees surround beflowered groups of brick-and-board houses.

The Cafe's pine waiting room with its plastic displays of tropical flowers is deserted except for a five-year-old slinging a steel disk down the lane of a coin-op bowling machine. The weekday dinner clientele trafficks in gray, wrinkled heads. No one seems to eat yet the food before them disappears, leaving bone-filled cardboard troughs, greasy handrags, and drained water glasses with oily fingerprints. The boxed seasonal decorations have been stripped from the walls. For coolness the drapes are drawn.

New Riegel is a one cannon town -- despite having two concrete pads to hold them. When the brick-steepled American Legion Hall was supplanted by the corrugated metal meeting hall the howitzer was moved down the street to dress up a patriotic flower garden.

And that thar is the way it is.....



((In yet another editorial policy designed to delight and infuriate the loyal STFR mailing list, I am taking the following steps to reconcile the fact that I received only a few good locs on the last issue, that I have a goodly number of reviews on hand from assorted writers, and I have segregated Stan Burns' reviews into a separate section headed by his own remarks on reviewing. Throughout this issue of STFR, on two-page spreads such as this, I'll run locs and reviews.))

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DON D'AMMASSA  
19 Angell Dr.  
East Providence RI 02914

STFR was more entertaining than usual, and I see a scattering of comments I wanted to make. One was that there is, after all, someone who claims John Norman as his friend

-- Andy Offutt. ((Well the guy's got to be entitled to one friend. What are you saying -- that the significance is in Norman's having one friend who will admit to it, or that Offutt has dared to make the admission? Though Norman has incurred the wrath of various fans for his sexist fiction, I find the idea that Norman might be a nice guy unsurprising))

Joe Sanders' column was as good as ever, and I second his wonder at the continued unavailability of S. Fowler Wright. DELUGE is an excellent novel, as was SPIDER'S WAR and, to a lesser extent, THE ISLAND OF CAPTAIN SPARROW. And I've heard favorable things said about THE VENGEANCE OF GWA and DAWN. Yet none of these have ever appeared in paperback. I don't understand.

Darrell Schweitzer has a point on reviewing, but an awkward one. The so-called "killer" review isn't really very useful, in fact is designed more for entertainment than information. On the other hand, there have been books (Don Pfeil's THROUGH THE REALITY WARP comes to mind) so bad that no matter how fair-minded one tries to be, the effect of a review is that you were out to get the author. Sobeit. ((As we've discussed before, the purpose of reviewing may be information, in some eyes, but I am in a position where I never use reviews as reading guides. Their only value to me is as entertainment or fan-style scholarship. However I still have to agree with you, that for most purposes the killer review is useless. I find very few killer reviews entertaining, because very few of our practicing literary assassins can write worth shit.))

Wolfe's PEACE is, indeed, good, although I preferred FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS, possibly because of my SF bias, probably because the former showed one aspect of his brilliance, and the latter showed three.

Robert Bloch is probably right. I like to claim I keep up on all the SF being published, but even though I read all of the paperbacks and all of the magazines published each year, I read only a small portion of the hardcover SF that appears. Admittedly much of it eventually comes out in paperback and gets read then, but a great majority of it (particularly the juvenalia) doesn't.

Don Keller missed a story. Michael Bishop's Urban Nucleus first appeared in "If a Flower Could Eclipse" in the third issue of WORLDS OF FANTASY. Bishop would like to see the entire series in book form someday, but there are still some stories unpublished. I agree pretty much with his comments on "The Samauri and the Willows." I don't agree that "Windows of Dante's Hell" was Bishop's best story, though; my nominee would be "The White Otters of Childhood." He also has an excellent, but somewhat

less complex story in EPOCH titled "Blooded on Arachne."

I don't understand some portions of Mike Shoemaker's review of THE MIS-  
SIONARIES. He seems at one point to be saying that concentration on  
strong characterization is a weakness, which I find hard to credit.

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Review by Jon Coopersmith

FARTHEST STAR, THE SAGA OF CUCKOO by Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson  
Ballantine Books, 246 pages, 1975

In their latest effort, Pohl and Williamson have started out with some  
promising elements: nearly two hundred races in the universe; a myster-  
ious object, Object Lambda, solid, but with a registered density of a  
vacuum, 20,000 light years from Earth's galaxy and approaching; tachyon  
transmission whereby "A man could send infinite replicas of himself  
anywhere in the galaxy -- wherever duty called;" a universe-spanning  
love story; and a plot encompassing all of this.

The main human character is Ben Pertin, or, to be exact, his replicates  
scattered throughout the novel; Ben Charles, Ben Frank, Ben James, Ben  
Linc, Ben Tom, Ben Yale, and Replicate 5160. Ben Pertin himself, some-  
where on Earth, is never met. However, the real Zara Doy, the collect-  
ive love of the Ben Pertins, is met on Earth -- married to Jon Gentry.

Object Lambda has been discovered by the T'Worlies, a flying beetle-  
like race, and one of their drones is converted by materials sent by  
the tachyon transmitter into a radiation-emitting starship. By the time  
Ben James and Ben Frank die, a modified drone is launched into Lambda's  
orbit bearing the tachyon transmitter. More replicates of various races  
are transmitted to the surface of Cuckoo, its new name, many of which  
die at the hands of newly discovered life forms.

Overall it's an excellent story, but Pohl and Williamson have just  
started to explore and exploit some of their ideas. But Cuckoo is still  
20,000 light years away and by the time it reaches the center of the  
galaxy there will be more to read about it.

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BRUTE TORNLEY  
2323 Sibley Street  
Alexandria, VA 22311

Well, STFR #4 arrived in time, just  
in time, the very nick, to give me a  
break in the ten drawing exercises  
I have to do (#10 "Illustrate the

most interesting event in your life. Add a paragraph of explanation on  
the reverse side of the sheet." Mark Jenkins heard about this guy who  
when faced with a similar assignment wanted to tell all about the first  
time he was laid. He dropped out of sight shortly afterwards) in order  
to be considered for entry into the School of Arts at Virginia Common-  
wealth U. Yup, after so many years in the heady world of high finance  
I'm heading back to school (for Jackie Franke's information and anybody  
else's who happens to be looking over here, I'm 56 years old and the  
last college level drawing class I attended I got an A in, hee!). STFR  
was a load (jeeze, and I thought you were getting out of the dinosaur  
era) and loads of fun aside from your aside where all the comparisons  
between drawers and drawings are made (which is only part of a rather  
small sentence). What's next. ((Next: The Bruce Townley Grammar Fan  
Fund.))



D. GARY GRADY  
3309 Spruill Ave., Apt. 5  
Charleston, S.C. 29405

The reason I called you unjustified in calling George Warren "inane" has nothing to do with which of you I agree with. George is entitled to his view. Saying that you

disagree with him and offering reasons is one thing. Calling a man's ideas "inane" is something else again. To quote you: "I don't consider ...rhetoric a suitable substitute for logic." Do you consider using catchphrases like "pulpish ideology" logical or rhetorical? Perhaps the best term would be sophistry. ((Now let's knock off the pseudointellectual swear-words. Warren is entitled to his opinion -- I disagree that his opinion is to be prominently displayed, admired, and commended, as it was in THE ALIEN CRITIC. My dispatching of his position as "inane" may be a personal failing -- when I encounter something so at odds with reason being proudly publicized I refuse to accept it by logically dissecting it. "Pulpish ideology" is not a "rhetorical catchphrase" though I did not explain it. In my article this issue, "The Editor As Ideologue" I do elaborate on pulp ideology. Inane, second definition listed in my copy of Webster's : lacking in sense or meaning; foolish; silly. Generalizations such as Warren's are inane: "There is much talk of Technique among the self-styled New Wave these days. I remember somebody who ought to know better using the phrase 'the full range of modern fiction techniques' to describe the chosen palette of a prominent New Waver. Pooh. There are no new techniques. There is just the age-old conflict between Euphuism ('Look at me! Ain't I clever?') and Reporting (in which the writer gets the hell out of the way and let the story do its thing.)"

((Since you make such a point of it, let us analyze that statement in detail. First: yes, there is much talk of technique among young writers. As there is among older writers, "Old Wave" writers, hard science writers, advertising copywriters, and blurbwriters. Find me a writer who doesn't talk about technique. "Self-styled New Wave." Who he? A lot of writers have been tarred with the brush, but I can't think of any with a right to the name who ever rallied under that pejorative standard. "Self-styled" is a maliciously mistaken adjective. After committing that atrocity Warren slips a two-legged syllogism past us. "There are no new techniques." Nobody had said there were, certainly not the quote he introduced to discussion. He attempts to associate the "New Wave" with self-aggrandizing claims they (whoever they are) never made. Next, Warren makes the key error: bifurcation, telling us that all issues of writing boil down either to Euphuism or Reporting. Now I am willing to admit the possibility that George Warren is not a fool. But if he is not there must be some explanation for such bombast. I find that explanation in the principle of ideology -- specifically pulpish ideology, a set of literary standards and attitudes circulated among a portion of the sf readership which cannot be defended on the basis of existing literature, or on any other basis for that matter. Therefore I consider that remark inane, and Warren a victim of pulp ideology.))

On the subject of matters of taste, I am surprised that Don Keller dislikes the orchestral version of TOMMY (as done by the London Philharmonic, as I recall). I have only met two people who dislike it. The other was a WAVE in Iceland who had huge pimples and an amazing devotion to softball. Maybe I could get the two of them together. ((Since the readers of GODLESS have already stomped you with their iron keds as punishment for your sexist remarks, I shall let my opportunity go, and leave it simply by saying: bullshit.))

I'm in near total agreement with Darrell Schweitzer in his assault on SPACE.\$19.99, though it's Gerry and Sylvia Anderson, isn't it?

Andrew Darlington makes some valid points in his piece, but I am miffed by his attack on "Western ways of thinking." It seems that this mental cliché is still gaining ground, without many being aware of what the hell "Western culture" consists of. His statement that "these people /Indians and Classical Greeks/ lived in an 'eternal present' without the concept of 'historical progression' that we take for granted" astonishes me no end. Has he ever read THE REPUBLIC? Is he familiar with Hindu mythology and its legends of successive Creations, each more perfect than the last? Anyone who accuses these people of living in an eternal present has never, evidently, struggled with the conjugation of Greek and Sanskrit verbs. Finally, not all SF has ignored Spengler, as I am quite sure other loccers will point out more adequately than I could. ((Nobody mentioned it, but one example is CITIES IN FLIGHT, by Blish.))

Henri Chapdelaine's piece is interesting and merits response. I wish I were a geologist or a paleontologist so I could respond more knowledgeably, but I will restrict myself to directing a few questions at him: Granted that it may be true that much scientific research has been done in Christian nations, isn't it true that the researchers themselves were frequently non-believers, like Einstein? Could you cite some sources where a few well-known paleontologists accept the idea of a hiatus of humanity? (If ALL agree with this, as you say, it should be easy.) What archeologists accept Baron Cuvier's Hinduistic chronology? What about those salt flats in Utah and elsewhere that have been untouched by significant amounts of water for tens of thousands of years? Finally, how in hell could Moses cram all those animals into one little-bitty ark? ((That's Noah, Gary...))

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ROBERT BLOCH  
2111 Sunset Crest Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

STFR 4 has quality as well as quantity and as a longtime admirer of Spengler I was glad to see Andrew Darlington's article.

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I was also glad to see Lou Stathis' article, but not completely pleased. As a Reader I have frequently had to put up with fannish criticism of "Wierd Tales" which tells me more about the perception of the critic than he probably intended. As a writer, I have also had to put up with fannish criticism of "Fritz Lieber" and "Robert Block." Thus I am perhaps unduly sensitive about a long article dealing with the work of "Leni Riefenstahl." ((Ooops.)) Her name is Riefenstahl and I wish Stathis had taken the pains to find this out. How would he like to be referred to as "Lou Statis"?

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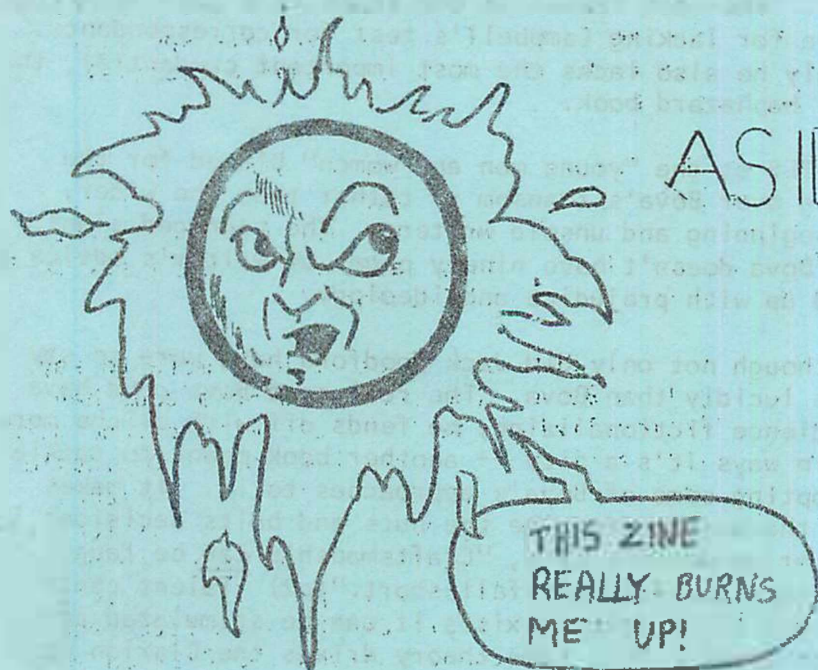
THE PLANTS by Kenneth McKenney  
Putnam 1976 \$7.95 Reviewed by STAN BURNS

Not labeled science fiction, this novel concerns plants revolting against ill treatment at the hands of man, and trying to wipe man off the face of the Earth. The premise is that plants have intelligence (as measured by eeg machines), and can act in concert against man. I found it totally unbelievable and was unable to finish it...



# MIKE GLYER

## THE EDITOR AS IDEOLOGUE



A REVIEW ARTICLE ON  
NOTES TO A SCIENCE FICTION  
WRITER by BEN BOVA  
Scribner's \$6.95 177pp.

Though the beginning science fiction writer has a wide variety of criticism and advice available, most is impossibly inconvenient because of expense, location, or the need for credentials. There are Clarion-style summer sessions (half a dozen visiting pros taking a week

together with resident students who've paid about \$600 for fees, room and board); there are groups like the Windy City Writers' Conference, requiring one or more sales before admission; there are literary agents who criticize for \$50 per story.

Beyond receiving good criticism of your storytelling, the key to your story as good science fiction may remain elusive. Where do you learn the organization of hard data, the technique of extrapolation, the imaginative insights for manipulating the forms of science? For even Harlan Ellison, leading spokesman for Clarion, said in criticizing the workshops, "More hard science should be taught, and less dilettante experimental bullshit. We are sf writers as well as fantasists, and we ought to be able to direct our students in that area as well as technique and theme." (Harlan Ellison, "When Dreams Become Nightmares," in CLARION III, ed. Robin Scott Wilson (NY, Signet, 1973) p211.)

Is there any solution? Well, the local library or bookstore is within reach -- and \$6.95 is a fair price for a book that would advise on both writing and science fiction-alizing. Would that we had one... Ben Bova has tried in NOTES TO A SCIENCE FICTION WRITER and still managed to leave the field wide open to others.

In essence NOTES TO A SCIENCE FICTION WRITER is ninety pages of commentary on the theory and practice of Character, Background, Conflict and Plot, sandwiched around eighty-four pages of Bova's juvenile fiction. Bova tries to teach by example, discussing his decisions on various issues of craft in each story. Even at that ratio of theory to practice, NOTES comes to the reader padded with gross simplicism, cliché, bias and ideological hogwash.

Ironically, Ben Bova's credentials are unexcelled. His list of professional sales is lengthy. Without Bova's collaborative insight Harlan Ellison would never have made a sale ("Brillo") to John W. Campbell. Bova is, you see, not just any sf writer, but a specialist in the genre's most demanding form: the hard science story. And who better to take a lesson from than the man able to buy what you write: the editor of ANALOG?

But I recall correspondence collected by a Campbell biographer: an amateur had sent in his story to Campbell a dozen times, and collected a variety of encouraging letters and long critiques. Like others before him he was, with glacial slowness, having his rough edges worn off. Then Campbell died. The last letter in the stack is a form rejection from Bova. One may not condemn Bova for lacking Campbell's zest for correspondence. However I am left suspecting strongly he also lacks the most important credential, the ability to teach, reflected in this haphazard book.

One crippling problem was aiming NOTES at the "young men and women" blamed for the mountain of unsolicited mung sliding over Bova's transom -- rather than the wider, more mature audience encompassing beginning and unsold writers. The teenaged slant, combined with the simple fact that Bova doesn't have ninety pages of writer's advice in him, leaves gaps in the book filled up with prejudice and ideology.

There is some wisdom in the book, though not only did Jack Woodford have more to say about storytelling, he said it more lucidly than Bova. The real need Bova could have satisfied, the want for skill in science fictionalizing, he fends off with cliché more than he solves with instruction. In ways it's a pity -- another book meant to tackle the same topic would benefit by adopting some of Bova's approaches to it. It makes sense to present a story, and have the author describe the nuts and bolts decisions involved in its telling. Bova is right on when he says, "Craftsmanship can be taught, and it's the one area where new writers consistently fall short." (p2) Talent can't be created where it doesn't exist, but where talent exists it can be stimulated and improved by professional authors' guidance. This same theory drives the Clarion workshops.

Though Bova worried about seeming to dwell too much on writing mechanics, these are his best moments in the book. If somebody's asking "Where do I start?" he gets direct answers. "...Remember that a short story is essentially the description of a character struggling to solve a problem.... Select a protagonist who has great strengths and at least one glaring weakness, and then give him a staggering problem..." (p11) "And in a well-crafted story the protagonist cannot win unless he surrenders something of inestimable value to himself. In other words, he's got to lose something, and the reader will be in a fever of anticipation trying to figure out what he's going to lose." (p12) Recall: THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA? "In science fiction the character need not be a human being...But in each case the story was successful only if the protagonist -- no matter what he/she/it looked like or was made of -- behaved like a human being....Give the protagonist a human problem such as survival, and the reader will be able to enjoy the story." (p9-10)

We have a real problem in that these valuable bits of advice are generally lost in the telling, for Bova has his own problems in writing the book:

"In a happy ending story, the protagonist chooses good rather than evil. He throws to the winds all that he holds dear, for the sake of doing the morally correct thing. And instead of losing all he held dear, he comes through the fire unhurt." (42) Oversimplification sits cheek by jowl with truth. Bova vitiates his intended point by preceding it with a silly-sounding definition (as here, of "the happy-ending story"). Then you lose what he meant: "If you write a story in which the protagonist is exactly the same person at the end that he was at the beginning, you have a dull story on your hands." (45) Doing this constantly, Bova confuses the reader about his true message.

"You can't get readers interested in a boring, idiotic hero any more than you can build a house properly by starting with the roof." (7) Unarguably true -- yet how often do you suppose any writer, however naïve, sets out to write a story with a boring, idiotic hero? Such dicta aren't instructive, they cannot prevent the disaster. Only substantive advice can help. These little throwaway absurdities violate one of Bova's own good axioms: "If it's in the story for the sake of exotic detail, or simply be-



cause you enjoyed writing that paragraph, take it out."

Slapdash writing, though, is not the fundamental cause of this book's badness. The basic fault lies in Bova's beliefs about science fiction that color everything he tells the young writer but have little factual basis. For example Bova is dead wrong when he says, "The unruffled, supercool, capable hero is one of the most widespread stereotypes of science fiction. Like all stereotypes he makes for a boring and unbelievable story." That seems a rather sweeping statement from a man whose profession was built on readers' love of Kimball Kinnison. All stereotypes do not make for boring and unbelievable stories, nor are they always invalid. Are the priests of A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ invalid? Is Lazarus Long in METHUSALAH's CHILDREN dull? In any event, stereotypes are not spontaneously generated, but occur and recur because they are accepted or wonted ways of looking at humanity. Bova blew it. He buys and publishes stories with stereotyped characters (those of Brenda Pearce, and those in EARTHQUAKE, William Cochrane's ANALOG story in 4/73 which happen to be boring and unbelievable). Bova writes stories with stereotyped characters, and one of them is included in this book ("Men of Good Will.") Factually, science fiction has always included stereotypes in its repertoire. Some are used well, some badly, and stereotypes are just a part of many things that can be used in telling a story, but sf has often relied on them.

These contradictions are repeated over and again. "It may be perfectly permissible to tread the same ground again and again in westerns or detective stories, but in science fiction, where you have the whole universe and all of time as your playground, the audience demands freshness and originality in the stories." Can Bova be talking about the same audience that reads Perry Rhodan or subscribed to Campbell's magazine in the early '70s?

Why does Bova repeatedly misrepresent science fiction?

Or is Bova only representing beliefs he has accepted without recognizing the ways they contradict his behavior and the reality of science fiction marketing. Important to remember is that writers' attitudes about science fiction do not necessarily parallel their talent, fame or common themes. Some writers whose fiction is frequently compared have conflicting opinions about what their professional field represents. Some of their opinions are not even true of the field -- but are the prized hopes of the men and women who repeat them. Consider these statements:

MACK REYNOLDS: /SF/ is increasingly the field in which a nonconformist can express his opinions. By compromising only to the extent of laying his story in the future, or on some other planet, the writer can say considerably more of what he believes needs saying.

DANIEL F. GALOUBE: Science fiction provides the only truly satisfying vehicle for exploring the full range of future developments along any of the facets of human experience. By its very nature, it is free of the convention which restricts other forms of literary expression to relatively mundane circumstances. Any plot line that offers no opportunity for stimulating a sense of wonder in the reader hardly seems worthwhile.

DAMON KNIGHT: Science fiction is more fun and pays me better than anything else I've tried; and to tell the truth, I've never been much interested in anything else.

These quotations come from THE DOUBLE: BILL SYMPOSIUM, an extraordinary forum of opinions from several dozen sf writers between 1962 and 1969. Bowers would do fandom an inestimable service by reprinting it. Three distinctly differing viewpoints present in the SYMPOSIUM are characterized by the above statements. Knight's opinion of what

he's doing, making a living through self-indulgence, is a rather pragmatic outlook encompassing similar statements in the symposium by Brunner, Pohl, H. Beam Piper, Leiber, Gordon Dickson, Del Rey, Niven, Terry Carr and Ted White. Mack Reynolds, describing his work as having social impact with small personal risk and high personal satisfaction, roughly encompasses the opinions of Marion Zimmer Bradley, Silverberg, Simak, Katherine MacLean and Bradbury.

The Galouye category alludes to sf's great purpose, wide range, and infinite flexibility. Compare these two to Bova's notes to the writer:

PHILIP K. DICK: /SF's/ audience is not hamstrung by middle class prejudices and will listen to genuinely new ideas. There is less of an emphasis on mere style and more on content -- as should be. It is a man's field, and hence a happy ending is not required -- as in all fiction fields dominated by women. It is one of the few branches of serious fiction in which humor plays a major role (thereby making sf more complete, as was Shakespeare's work). Being one of the oldest modes of fiction known to the Western World it embodies some of the most subtle, ancient and far-reaching dreams, ideas, and aspirations of which thinking man is capable. In essence it's the broadest field of fiction, permitting the most far-ranging and advanced concepts of every possible type; no variety of idea can be excluded from sf; everything is its property.

DAVID GERROLD: I do not write science fiction to the exclusion of all else -- but I do tend to favor SF because it is so limitless. When you have all of time and space to mess around in, the temptation to do so is irresistible.

Altogether we have a strange set of opinions entirely based on an extremely rosy outlook for sf's literacy, audience and special impact. These writers emphasize the ideal -- and what they claim is integral to a point of view I've come to call "pulp ideology."

SOCIOLOGY TEXTBOOK: What gives ideology its force is its passion... For the ideologue truth arises in action, and meaning is given to experience by the "transforming moment." He comes alive not in contemplation but in "deed."

URSULA LE GUIN: You are a writer because here we sit, fifteen vultures, The Strop and the Old Lady, and take your work seriously (rip, tear, shred). You are a writer because you sat down and wrote it last night. And tonight you're going to sit down and write another one. And tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow. ((CLARION II))

Two hallmarks of ideology are intensity and the preference of action to contemplation -- the pulp ideologue, whether writer or fan, sets great store by the act of writing, and the idea of 'professionalism.' More so than mainstream writers who may loiter around for years before turning in a novel, I think people obsessed with sf's professionalism are trying to cope with a kind of work ethic, and with people who still think sf is trash. Somebody who puts in his hours behind the typewriter and hustles to make a living is fulfilling his role as a productive person. He is not an idler. And some of the people concerned with this also resent self-appointed critics who have no notion of the challenges involved with creating saleable stories.

HARLAN ELLISON ((CLARION III)): Not understanding /the difference between amateur and professional/ is pernicious. It leads people who might otherwise be utterly happy as shoe clerks...to wasted lives full of unfulfilled dreams, pounding typewriters and never ever finding the right words. The words that make a story or a screenplay or a play something special. So someone will want to buy it and stake an editorial reputation on it, and pay the highest possible compliment for the use of it: a check of



money." ("When Dreams Become Nightmares," in CLARION 3, ed. Robin Scott Wilson, (New York: Signet 1973) p.223))

The pulp ideologue has a need to idealize and exaggerate -- streamline reality, if you will. This is another hallmark of textbook ideology. But the word ideology need not be a pejorative, automatically offensive. In Webster it merely means "Theorizing of an idealistic, abstract...nature." Pulp ideology scans the best science fiction and the most favorable markets and the brightest readers and then draws its conclusions about the genre. This is not a new wave/old wave thing -- those terms are highly misleading and though convenient seem to apply to no one in particular. Pulp ideology results from a socialization process -- after being in touch with others who share the attitudes that professionalism is important, that the genre is more vital than mainstream fiction, that the excitement of ideas is paramount, and that matter is more important than manner, so much more important that clumsy prose styling can often be forgiven.

The ideologue often ends up building a linguistic hierarchy -- an interdependent system of words that start out denoting values and end up controlling discussions at the expense of perceived truth. Stereotypes become bad the way communism becomes bad. Despite this genre's common use of stereotypes any chain of logic starting from that word will be derogated by a pulp ideologue. Language in such hands performs deceptively: "/Space operas/ tend to be more grandiose and larger in scale than horse operas because the science fiction writer has the whole universe of interstellar space to work with, instead of one dusty Western town..." said Bova. This is simple bifurcation. If he had ever read THE VIRGINIAN Bova would know that this Western communicates distance and isolation as well as EE Smith does in the Skylark Series, and in terms of background that's what it's all about. However vast the view, it is still necessary to communicate that to the viewer. Science fiction does not become exceptional by dealing with exceptionally big geography.

In writing his book THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT Harry Edwards devoted part of his discussion of athletic ideology to a four-segment description of the matter, picking out in the world of athletes and sports fans the characteristics of symbolism, simplification, selectivity and public acceptance which accompany ideologies. The striking analogies between sports fandom (ala Edwards) and the sf community prompted this article.

Selectivity is that situation comparable to the blind men and the elephant which lets the ideologue subdue logic. He pays rapt attention to an assumption all out of proportion to its reasonable importance. In NOTES TO A SCIENCE FICTION WRITER Bova's bias derives from the assumption: "Science fiction presents challenges and problems to a writer that can't be found in any other form of fiction. In addition to all the usual problems of writing good fiction, SF stories must also have a strong and believable technical background." The fact that sf presents a few unique challenges, along with all the regular problems inherent in writing today, can be misinterpreted. In fact Bova does that himself:

"Isaac Asimov," quotes Bova, "has often declared that writing science fiction is more difficult than any other kind of writing. And he should know: he's written everything from mysteries to learned tomes on the Bible and Shakespeare. If you can handle science fiction skillfully chances are you will be able to write other types of fiction and nonfiction with ease."

It is a quick misstep from the belief that science fiction offers special problems to the belief that science fiction offers unique problems whose solution requires so much ability that the product and author are inherently superior to other kinds of writing. This is the kind of advice that young writers should be offered? Their immediate

deduction will be that reading sf is sufficient -- all the rest of literature is inferior to it.

In the first place Asimov's remarks are pure authoritarian bias with no validity beyond his own work. In the second place Bova's sly "If you can handle science fiction skillfully you will be able to write other types of fiction and nonfiction with ease," begs the question. Ease of writing. If you can write sf you can churn out anything -- that says nothing about quality. If the science fiction writer can handle other forms with ease, why have the genre's greatest (Heinlein, Bradbury, and the usual roster) failed to make a remotely comparable reputation in any other form? The reason, quite obviously, is that they are genre writers who have mastered, even expanded, the techniques and attitudes of their field -- but who would have to start over and do the same for any other field.

As I have tried to point out before, and want to restate before continuing, pulp ideology is not accepted by everyone in connection with the genre. However Bova is providing examples of it that have been said in other places. What he says is shared only by a minority -- the writers in the Galouye category above. As with all ideologies this one evolves from positive values, glorified by distortion and questionable logic to the point of self-delusion. I have discussed selectivity through one example. In pulpish ideology the selectivity is in favor of optimistic, romantic problem-solving -- an eye in the hurricane of academe's existential paradigm. But that kind of story is not the only one our genre can tell. Bova says, "Characters will always strive, because at the core of all good SF is the very fundamental faith that we can use our intelligence to understand the world and solve our problems." The pulp audience probably prefers these stories, but it is presumptuous to call that the core of all good SF -- as Spinrad said, if you try to pare away all by the core of sf, you'll have nothing left. Striving is not the truism Bova makes it out to be -- EPOCH has a story by Brian Aldiss, "The Aperture Moment," where the assumption seems to be that our intelligence is the way we guarantee our futility and indignity. But it is important to somebody infused with pulp ideology to believe it, and employ the theory as his measuring stick for successful sf.

Simplification, as an ideological trait, is especially obvious here in a situation where problem-solving is so revered as a virtue. One can't solve a problem until he's posed it. One can't behave virtuously until he recognizes virtue. In sports, "Winning isn't everything -- it's the only thing." In Bova's primer (echoed by Dick, Gerrold and Galouye) "Science fiction is as wide open as the infinite heavens. The science fiction writer can place his story anywhere in the universe, and write about the past, present or future. There are no limitations on the where or when of his stories. The only limits are set by the writer's Imagination." That belief is almost as impossible to cope with as the question "What is science fiction?" Unless somebody has decided that Milton and Dante wrote sf, though, the limitless nature alleged for sf is by no means a monopoly, if it's even true. But the article of faith, that this genre has no limitations, underpins pulp ideology.

Symbolism and public acceptance were the two other descriptive segments Edwards used. I've already started in on the symbolism of pulp ideology by mentioning professionalism -- Ellison's "a check of money." The other major symbol is The Idea. One constantly hears that sf is an idea genre. Certain critics have even tried to explain away a lot of bad writing by saying that "the idea is the character."

Tired of the frequent references to sf as an idea genre I happily discovered an answer to the rhetoric in John Sergeant (1700): "In a word, since Ideas are both Unintelligible and altogether Useless, and (I fear) all Use is made of them, contrary to the intention of their Authors; it seems but fitting that the Way of Ideas should be lay'd aside; nay, that the very Word which has got such a Vogue should no longer be heard of, unless a good reason may be given why we should use Such Words as no Man understands."



At least in this area Bova's attitude is well-balanced: "Almost every science fiction story has a philosophical point to make....Science fiction has rightfully been called 'the literature of ideas.' Some stories drive their points home with a bludgeon."

The degree of pulp ideology's public acceptance is not at first clearly measurable because, as an ideology, it emphasizes values that many of us, myself included, tend to hold. (1) That sf justifies its existence as entertainment, regardless of the literary establishment's opinion. (2) That entertainment values in sf should be defended against those who sacrifice story for flashy effects of prose style. (3) That a positive, we-can-solve-problems approach is worth encouraging. (4) That hackish writing should be discouraged.

But you will find that there are people supporting and opposing some extreme, grand claims for sf, and in watching for them you will be able to determine the extent of this ideology's acceptance.

First there is an assumption that the science fiction readership is uniformly brighter than other genre's readers. "...not hamstrung by middle class prejudices...will listen to genuinely new ideas..." said Dick. "...the audience demands freshness and originality in the stories," said Bova, asserting an ideal only true of a minority. For every MIT student nitpicking ANALOG's science, there's ten readers running down to the newsstand buying Perry Rhodan. The sf-buying audience will buy cliché; though there remains a noisy minority of us who bitch and moan about it, at least we don't ignore it. H. Beam Piper's analysis of the situation said, "...The type of inquisitive and speculative mind needed for enjoyment of what we know as science fiction must be developed rather early, and our present school system seems to be doing little to help...What I'm afraid of is that the publishers who decide which stories will be bought...will buy stuff suited to the mentality of a mass readership, a readership that will accept as science fiction anything that casually mentions a spaceship or a World Government without any confusing egghead stuff about what the planets the spaceship goes to are really like or what a world government would have to do."

The second assumption is actually an insistent, devout belief that the genre has "no limitations, as Bova and Galouye have. Actually the limitations are not in the genre, but in its audience (causing precensorship by writers), and the writers themselves as alluded by John Jakes in saying "We're still looking for our Twains and Tolstoys. I am confident we'll find them, though." Again referring to the audience, Keith Laumer remarked, "To the bulk of SF readers, it seems to me, a discussion of a story means a discussion of its plot. The plot is nothing -- it's what the writer does with the plot -- and how he does it." Overall the pulp ideologues fail to take a case-by-case approach and insist on such a rosy view that idealism becomes a prejudice.

And that ends my use of NOTES TO A SCIENCE FICTION WRITER as an example of pulp ideology. But if you're still shopping around for good advice on sf writing and can't afford the new edition of DeCamp's handbook from the Owlswick Press (Box 8243, Philadelphia, PA 19101) or can't wait until Reginald Bretnor's promising collection of essays emerges from Harper's later this year, check into the following sources:

(1) The Ellison essay previously cited from CLARION III. (2) Ben Bova's own "The Idea Factory" in the July 1974 ANALOG -- NOTES' gist in a few pages. (3) Robert A. Heinlein's "Channel Markers" in the January 1974 ANALOG. (4) Ted White's "My Column" in the Summer '75 ALGOL -- a long essay on your fate in the slushpile. Between them you can begin to develop some way of self-evaluation. Between them is the kind of book somebody should publish.

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GEORGE R. R. MARTIN  
March 21, 1976  
Chicago, IL

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STFR -- which I read mostly on the Amtrak  
Turboliner returning from Ann Arbor, before  
switching trains to continue on for my job  
interview in Dubuque, Iowa -- was quite  
good. Glicksohn's fanzine reviews and the

lettercol were perhaps my favorite features. The Glicksohn column is especially valuable for someone who doesn't get too many fanzines, like myself; and truthfully it is the only fanzine review column that I've ever been really able to say that about. The few others I've seen seem to review a lot of fanzines in short squibs, and that doesn't tell me terribly much.

Your SF reviewing, on the other hand, was very uneven, mostly because too many of your book reviews were short squibs. Ahem. Imagine, publishing longer reviews of fanzines than of real honest-to-God books...ahem. I've been doing some reviews of my own during the past year -- a rather irregular SF column for the Chicago Sun-Times -- and if there is one thing the experience has taught me, it is that you need space to do a proper job. Otherwise you're just slapping an opinion label on things, not really reviewing. Calling a book or story "good" "bad" or even "slow-paced" doesn't say very much at all. Reviewing is a damned difficult thing to do well, as I've discovered; reviewing short story collections is more difficult than reviewing novels (because of the space problem), and reviewing original anthologies is perhaps the most difficult thing of all (unlike a short story collection you can't even generalize about the writer when dealing with an anthology). The temptation to label is almost overwhelming.

A magazine like STFR -- or DELAP's F&SF REVIEW or the New York based SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, or any number of other fanzines that carry reviews -- has a secondary problem in that you have a whole army of people contributing reviews. And every one of them has different standards and different literary ideologies (all the rage these days in SF), so a certain unevenness is built right in. Critic A and Critic B may both agree that Book X is better than Book Y -- but if nasty and hardnosed A reviews X and finds all the flaws while B, who always tries to balance his reviews with a few good words, does the piece on Y, the reader is going to come away with the wrong impression. Unless, by chance, he knows the standards and stances of both critics. And with more and more people writing reviews these days (which is a good thing, don't get me wrong) it is increasingly difficult to know where everyone is coming from, critically speaking.

So my vote on your Great Review Debate is to stomp out those minireviews once and for all, and set up a single STFR review column for professional SF the same way you have a single fanzine column presided over by Glicksohn. Then turn it over to one of your better critics -- Don Keller is far and away your best, I think, but you're not half-bad yourself -- and give him lots of space and let him do it. This way, in an issue or two, the readers all will know the critic, how tough he is, what his particular blind spots and prejudices are, and so on, and the whole process becomes a good deal saner and more civilized.

((I've come as close as I can to that this time, publishing a chunk of reviews by Bums which I selected from the inexhaustible stack on hand to illustrate his philosophy of reviewing. Keller isn't in a position to take on that kind of column, with his time split among many interests, and I want to continue publishing his reviews when I get them. Therefore the multiple reviewing column may become a feature in STFR.))

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JACKIE FRANKE  
Box 51-A RR2  
Deechee, IL 60401

Who did the cover? I couldn't find any credit given in the colophon, but express my appreciation to whoever it was: caricaturing is not a simple art, and this is a good example of how it should be done. Perhaps

the figure is not all it could be, but the noble brow, the jutting jaw, the look of modest pride, are all present and accounted for. Whoever did a damn fine job. ((The name is unknown -- I popped \$1.25 for the sketch at Disneyland. After I annihilated the electrostencil my Foglio cover was on it was my last resort...))

I'm sure that B.T. (I can scarcely bring myself to type his name) will forgive you for your left-handed compliment to his whateveritis. Sobriety causes all sorts of strange things to emerge from the fannish typer, and I automatically excuse anyone who operates one in such a condition. One's soberly-considered opinions are of little value in the fannish cosmos... Other than that, I have nothing but sympathy for your too-familiar tale of woe in getting out this issue.

My eyes bugged out when I read that bit about Pournelle being the one LASFan who prevents the club from "selfishly" using the funds set aside for "services to fandom" (or whatever phrase they used). In reading Bruce Pelz' PROFANITY, I came across a capsulization of one LASFS meeting wherein Dr. Pournelle suggested that the cost of the block MidAmeriCon memberships (purchased at \$5 or \$6 bucks and to be sold to Neofen and/or fen unable to make plans far enough ahead to join MAC at its lower rate for \$15 -- a profit of \$9 or \$10 each to LASFS) be deducted from that fannish reserve since the purchase was a "service." If this is an example of idealistic motivation on the part of one LASFan, then I shudder to think of what the rest must be like. My hackles are up concerning the LASFS and its attitude toward MAC in any case. Reading of its distortion of the concept of Service makes me ill. I bear no grudge against any person who makes an honest profit from fanac, but when they cloak themselves with high-sounding phrases about serving fans, it smacks too much of hypocrisy to sit well with me. Give me a ripoff artist like a Comix Dealer any old day -- at least they make no bones about padding their pockets at a fan's expense.

((Did somebody say

sophistry?... I'm afraid you're becoming properly irate, but for the wrong reasons. Is it any less a service to a fan to sell him a \$15 MAC membership -- regardless of the investment price -- when his only alternative is a 25 or 50 dollar MAC membership? There is no hypocrisy in that. I think you protest too much; raising the old Comix Dealer bogeyman, too. Why Jackie, I'm ashamed... Until you went charging off on your white stallion, you did have something of a point, though. Yes, Dr. Pournelle's suggested uses have been altruistic -- especially compared to the prevailing attitude that the money assumed from LACon really isn't in a special fund at all; every time the issue of clubhouse expansion is raised, that sum is lumped in with the Building Fund as if no special disposition had ever been made for it. And it's that attitude that ought to be attacked. The business about LASFS and MAC you've been propagandizing is a bum rap, and I wonder just where you're coming from.))

What the hell does my dislike of Townley's work have to do with Tim Kirk winning four Hugos? I like other sketchy-styled artists -- much of Sirois' work, for example -- but at least they can draw. If Townley can, he certainly hasn't shown it in any of the work of his I've seen. I look at Brad Parks and then Townley and cannot tell them apart. But then I've never claimed to be "sophisticated," so perhaps I'm unable to spot that quality in others. In any case, art must be judged on subjective standards at the personal level. I don't like his work and, with all the fanartists around, don't understand why it's printed so often. I say that with full realization that Fannish Law holds true -- it's your fanzine and you can damn well do with it what you will. But the companion to that law is that I have the right to bitch about it if I

I want. Okay? .....While I have seen Linda often go off on a High Crusade against things she sees as Evil in fandom, I didn't get that impression regarding SF EXPO. I don't really feel up to wading through back issues of KARASS just to see whether she did try to rally fandom around a Cause once again, but I really don't think she came down as hard on Science Fiction Services (now's that for an organizational name? Has a certain ring to it...) as you imply. I may be coloring her views with my own attitude, but for one who has so often chuckled at the sight of her on her White Horse, I find it unlikely. Odder things have happened, though.

In the light of Donn Brazier's statement that 15,00 separate persons contributed to the fanzines he received last year, Bloch's comment that it would be impossible to keep up with everything coming out in the field is even more applicable to fanning. When will the population explosion taper off? Will it?

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JERRY KAUFMAN  
230 W. 101st St. #4D  
New York, NY 10033

Joe Sanders partially understands and partially misunderstands the purpose of the reprint series. While he complains about the absence of Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke, mature LeGuin and Zelazny, he demonstrates his mis-

understanding. These series are intended to put into hardback important books which are out of print, and/or have not been put into hardback before. Heinlein, Clarke, Asimov are three sf writers whose works are in hardback, in print, and in every library ...along with Andre Norton's work they form the core of about every sf library collection. Mature Zelazny and Le Guin suffer the same happy fate. So none of those need to be reprinted.

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NEW WORLDS 9, edited by Hilary Bailey

Corgi \$1.95 219pp.

LEGENDS FROM THE END OF TIME

Michael Moorcock, Harper & Row \$7.95 182pp.

Reviewed by Donald G. Keller

I suppose it's time for another update on the twisted history of NEW WORLDS. After Berkeley published the first four QUARTERLYs, they dropped it; Sphere, the British publisher, retained it, dropping the QUARTERLY and the publishing schedule to once or twice a year. #5 and #8 have never appeared here; #6 and #7 were published in large format by Avon as #5 and #6. After #8 Sphere dropped the series; now Corgi has picked it up for the ninth volume, also available only in those stores that carry British paperbacks.

Further, the editorship, long Michael Moorcock's domain, has devolved to Charles Platt and Hilary Bailey over the last couple volumes, leaving the latter (Moorcock's wife) in sole charge now. Amazingly the series has stayed remarkably stable through all this musical chairs; #9 is still recognizably a descendant of #1, and is a similar blend of challenging, ambitious, original fiction and almost unreadable drivel.

Case in point for the latter is "The Journal of Bodley Clive" by Matthew Paris, which is one of those NEW WORLDS obsessions, the Lovecraft pastiche/parody. Now, this can be done well (witness the marvelous "Running Down" by M. John Harrison in NW #8), but here it is not. Borrowing the worst elements of "The Shadow over Innsmouth" and none of its good ones, and possessing no saving grace of either style or wit, it is lifeless and ludicrous.

Giles Gordon's two stories, "Maestro" and "The Illusionist" are difficult for me to evaluate; I suppose that, on a basic level, Gordon constructs a good English sentence, but his idea of what constitutes a story is very far from mine. Each piece here deals



with obsessive personalities in totally static situations, told in such minute detail that it makes me itch. The stories irritated me so much that had they not been quite short I probably wouldn't have finished them. "Narrative of Masks" by Charles Partington (which has little I can see to do with masks) is one of those goddamned NEW WORLDS 'what did happen anyway?' things. It deals (again!) with a man's obsession with a dead painter, the painter's house and wife, and a strange statue he left behind when he died. It is a sort of story I have never been able to read with comprehension, and I'm never sure if it's my fault or the author's. I take the Fifth on this one.

So much for the stories I didn't appreciate.

As usual there is a critical section, occupied of late by columns by M. John Harrison and John Clute. Although I don't often agree with either of them, I always enjoy their erudite, witty style. This time both write on general topics, and it's more difficult to take exception. Harrison's "Sweet Analytics" deals with non-real-world systems of belief (from religion to STAR TREK) and the danger of applying their principles to the real world, citing Manson as a prime example. It's a persuasive argument. Clute in "Tropes Exposure" postulates that one of the attractions of popular art (for instance, old monster movies -- he uses THEM as a case in point) is the ability, through the cliched roles, to predict the action. I can't empathize with the position, but it's an interesting idea to consider. I agree with both writers in principle (the mindlessness of much art these days), but I tend to differ on just which specific works fall where.

The stories I did appreciate are, oddly enough, the first five in the book. (Perhaps it's only my perception, but it seems like NW tends to weight its best and longest stories towards the front, leaving the end to trail off raggedly; not the best way to arrange a book.) Keith Roberts' "The Ministry of Children" is an uncharacteristically nasty story by a man who generally writes pleasant ones. It's very reminiscent of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE and Kate Wilhelm's "The Funeral": its twin elements (a bleak, socialized near future and the feelings of an adolescent girl -- both Roberts specialties -- subjected to gang harassment at school) are powerfully evoked. Like everything else I've read by Roberts, this is a fine, deeply felt story, despite one of those endings that seems to be missing a paragraph.

Probably the best story in the book is "Daddy's Girl" in which Joanna Russ takes the theme and major concerns of THE FEMALE MAN and packs them into ten hermetic pages. It is very like Ellison's "At the Mouse Circus" in that it is so compressed and allusive that one intuits more than one consciously comprehends: what Judith Weiss calls an "iceberg story." It's the sort of thing that baffles and infuriates most sf readers, but it exhilarates and excites me.

"The Hammer of Evil" by John Sladek is, I suppose, a minor story, but I enjoyed it enough not to care. Sladek is, in his Anglicized way, as wacko as Lafferty. This thing takes place mostly in a prison whose characters come from logic puzzles. I really can't describe it any better than that: you sort of have to be there. The same can be said for Brian Aldiss' "Patagonia's Delicious Filling Station." This is the first of Aldiss' new toy, the tripartite short story, that I have read: if this is any measure, it's a fascinating form. Within the compass of three one-act plays, through a combination of offhand remarks, dropped hints, and cryptic allusions, he creates a strange and lovely mythology about the "crowded cities of Patagonia," in particular about the city of Comodoro Rivadavia, where by law no one can talk during the day, and so people shout all night. (The most interesting man in Dorking would be right at home.) It's a totally frivolous place, full of exuberant wordplay, but artistically crafted, very similar in mood to Aldiss' Malacia stories, which in turn are reminiscent of Moorcock's Dancers At The End of Time stories. One of them, "Ancient Shadows," is the longest story in the book; it also occupies one-third of LEGENDS FROM

THE END OF TIME. (The other two, "Pale-Roses" and "White Stars," were in NW #7 and #8 respectively. These tales are tangents from the trilogy about Jherek Carnelian, (AN ALIEN HEAT, THE HOLLOW LANDS, the upcoming THE END OF ALL SONGS), but concern the same setting (the end of Time) and characters (immortals with the power to do anything.)

These take off from the main narrative line and experiment. In "Pale-Roses," Moorcock epitomizes all the excellences of the series: graceful style, bizarre characters, and their outrageous pasttimes which seem to consist mainly of creative misinterpretations of the past. The tale concerns a man who wants to sin, and the peculiar way he gets his wish. "White Stars" is a novel in miniature, juggling two fairly complicated intertwining subplots in a most satisfactory fashion.

Lastly "Ancient Shadows" is the only really serious story of the mythos so far, and the only out-and-out tragedy. It concerns the clash between hedonistic time-enders and two ultrapuritanical inhabitants of a future era called Armatuce. It is an irresolvable conflict, and important things are said about both cultures, yet Moorcock neatly avoids taking sides. But it does for the first time call the postulates of the time-end culture into question, and shows that this format can be used for serious purposes.

Two signposts, then, which give no final answers. NW #9 continues to be a vital and fascinating receptacle for progressive and avant-garde writing with a limited audience and a constantly uncertain future; LEGENDS FROM THE END OF TIME is a mark-time book which may contain intimations of its long saga's inevitable end.

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MIKE GLICKSOHN  
141 High Park Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3 CANADA

This is, quite literally, too much. I've just spent most of my free time for an entire weekend writing a four page loc to Brian Brown and a three page loc to Alyson Unspellable (from which you may either

deduce that I have less free time than I'd like or I'm slowing down something awful as I get old and tired.) and their two fanzines put together would fall short of this monster issue of STFR. Why can't you be satisfied with a simple little annual person-aline of some twenty pages with no book reviews, practically no lettercol and a positive dearth (or plethora as Dave Locke would say) of heavy critical articles on the nature of science fiction, reviewing and the universe? Something like XENIUM, say? But no, not satisfied with being the biggest faned around, you strive for the biggest fanzine too. Some people are never satisfied, always striving for glory and fame and awards, glorifying the bigger-and-better philosophy, staying up until all hours of the morning sweating droplets of Scotch in vain efforts to create witty remarks about fanzines they haven't read and could care less about all for a chance at next year's Best Letterhack FAAN award in Cincinnati...oh...wait a minute, that's Glicksohn, not Glycer, isn't it? Well I bet you're just as bad, Big Fella! ((I'm G-7, I don't know who you are -- can't tell the egomaniacs without a TITLE program book...))

The folio of Bathurst adaptations from the Sears, Roebuck catalogue was delightful indeed, revealing Randy's unique sense of the absurd at its best. And the two Shull pages were absolutely fantastic! As close as I can recall seeing to the artistic genius of Windsor MacKay and that's one of the highest compliments I can think of. I wonder if Jim was consciously imitating the style and panel design of that great cartoonist?

Stathis reveals to me a heretofore undisclosed lyricism in his article on the Riefenstahl films. I've not seen either of the pictures, although I know a little about them, but I've seen other Nazi propaganda newsreels at various times. Lou mentions the immense power and ability to generate fear of hundreds of thousands of troops marching or chanting in unison but I think one of the most incredibly impressive cinematic



sequences I've ever seen was a shot of a Nuremberg rally showing Hitler, Goebbels and, possibly, Goering marching down an aisle between packed masses of totally stationary troops. The camera panned up and back until you saw the three of them walking between what must have been at least a hundred thousand armed men, not one of whom was moving. It scared the pants off me when I was in high school.

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ROY TACKETT  
915 Green Valley Rd NW  
Albuquerque NM 87107

I think Darlington's problem (in **FIGURE: IMPERFECT**) is that he has not read anything against which he can balance Spengler. I recommend William McNeill's **THE RISE OF THE WEST** as a pretty good antidote. McNeill

rightly points out that, contrary to the doomsayers, western civilization is dynamic and growing, rapidly encompassing the rest of the world. Yea, even the ancient east whose leaders have realized that their way of thinking (as Darlington puts it) has led only to stagnation. The only remnants left of this eastern "way of thinking" are a motely collection of gurus attempting to revive in the west some segments of their discredited religion. Note that I did not say that all eastern religion is discredited. Progressive leaders are seeing to it that their religions are becoming dynamic by the adoption of western ideas into their basic frameworks.

And what are you trying to do, ol' sumorassler, in publishing this thing by Henri Cah delaine? Do you really expect us to comment on it? It is so utterly ridiculous... If I am inferring correctly he starts off by saying that God's original concept was that Adam and Eve should reproduce parthenogenetically (thereby not getting involved with dirty old S\*E\*X, I presume). Such being the case I wonder what Adam's purpose was? Are we to infer that Yahweh goofed when he created man first and only later realized that it took a female to reproduce by parthenogenesis? ((Adam was created first, to set a proper example...))

But Chapdelaine's main issue here is the Biblical Flood which he dates about 7000 BC. Now there is some body of evidence to indicate that the last ice sheet began to melt very rapidly starting about 9000 BC, which, perhaps, may have resulted in some sort of folk memory of an inundation but this could hardly be the Biblical Flood unless the Sumerians and Akkadians happened to be in northern Europe at the time. Possible, I suppose, but unlikely. No, the Biblical Flood was more likely some extensive flooding of Mesopotamia by the Euphrates. Chapdelaine is correct in that there is some hard evidence for this at Ur (which, by the way, was Abraham's city only in the same sense that Albuquerque is my city). The excavations there have found an extensive layer of silt that indicates a large inundation. However, excavations at Eridu, an even older city some distance from Ur and farther from the river, show no evidence whatsoever of flooding. Otherwise, I would simply point out that there is no evidence whatsoever to indicate that man was completely absent from Europe at any time after he entered that continent, that Cro-Magnon entered Europe at least 30,000 years ago (not 7000) and co-existed with the Neanderthals, that loess is the product of glaciers not flood waters, that "Mousterian" is a culture, not a period, and that if Flood waters rose at least 5000 feet in some places and more than three miles in others it was most unusual water.

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WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG by Kate Wilhelm  
Harper & Row \$7.95 251 pages.

Reviewed by DONALD G. KEILER

In several recent stories, Kate Wilhelm has been wearing protective coloring: asked to guess the author of an unbylined copy, I would have sworn her ORBIT 12 story "The Red Canary" was by Gardner Dozois; and the present novel reads very much like Keith Roberts writing a book-length version of Ursula K. LeGuin's "Nine Lives."

The first, and title, portion of this tripartite novel was first published in ORBIT 15. I read it there and was very impressed with it. It begins with a strong nostalgic, homey mood and moves subtly but inexorably from its protagonist's childhood to his adulthood in our decaying present and near future. The feeling moves from pleasantness to extreme depression without ever losing its intense reality. At the end of it, the Sumner family has ensconced itself in a mountain redoubt with enough supplies and laboratory equipment to last out the disaster, and their clone experiments have proved completely viable...

The second portion plunges the reader, with little warning, smack into the clone society, after the normal humans have died out. It is a remarkable job of delineating what is, in essence, a very alien society and mental attitude. This part centers on one of the clones who is most severely affected by being separated from her clonesisters (the lesson of "Nine Lives"), and the portrait of the artistic/schizophrenic temperament is outstanding. The third portion centers on her son, the first non-clone born in a long time, and his disruptive effect on the clone society...and with the final fate of the clones.

It is a sign of first-rate writers that they can be writing two stories at once. While each section closely details the inner life of the characters focused on, Wilhelm also manages to sketch in the future history of our coming disaster with harrowing verisimilitude. And while the idea of clones has been explored not a few times before, no one has gone into the question as deeply as Wilhelm has here: she weighs the advantages and massive disadvantages with imagination and dispassionate care, and comes to a well-thought-out conclusion.

An oddity of Wilhelm's characterization (not, I think, confined to this novel) is that she focuses so strongly on her characters' inner life that they don't come alive as real people. I'm not sure this is a flaw; it is rather a difference of emphasis. The stark reality of her backgrounds and the richly evoked mental processes of her people leaves little room for the middle ground of plot and standard characterization, making her books refreshingly different. Only occasionally does this cause problems, as in the very end of the middle third, where the emphasis is so strongly on the inner thoughts of the protagonist (who is going mad, to boot) that I am not at all sure just what, objectively, happens.

This is also a novel about alienation. Each of the protagonists is in one way or another a stranger in his own society, which is a known effective way of viewing a society with some perspective. But they must each also function as an integral part of the society, grudgingly accepted and accepting its conventions because they have no choice. So



Wilhelm manages to use both of these to give an inner and outer view of the societies.

I have said very little about the writing, which is Keith Roberts-rich in description and typically Wilhelm-rich in insight and unflinching clear-sightedness. It is a first-rate book by one of sf's finest writers, and I highly recommend it. (The cover is the M. C. Escher drawing of interlocking birds. Together with the title and clone theme, it makes a marvelously appropriate cover.)

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MICHAEL BISHOP  
Georgia, March 31

I like Don Keller's review of "The Samauri and the Willows," probably because what he has to say is perceptive as well as favorable. Still, I wish he'd left out this line: "If I don't sound too excited about it, that reflects the nature of the story."

To this point in his review Don sounded reasonably enough excited, you see, and his sudden avowal of only moderate excitement brought me up short -- as it may have done others who might have gone excitedly away from Don's review in search of the February issue of F&SF and additional excitation. Well, maybe Don has spared me their obloquy for failing to excite them up to their expectations. I fear, however, that he may have inadvertently spared me readers, for excitement is the opium of the people. And vice versa.

Seriously (if I may seriously begin a paragraph with this adverb), thanks for your consideration in sending along both reviews. I am, of course, pleased with both of them, and I enjoyed perusing SFPR 4... ((I also sent a copy of my EPOCH review to appear in SFR.))

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BEN INDICK  
428 Sagamore Avenue  
Maneck, NJ 07666

Har! I disagree with both Sheryl and you! LOVE AND DEATH was one of Allen's better efforts. I liked its irreverance; it also made up for Allen's shameful antisemitism of

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX. On the other hand, Altman's treatment of Chandler was smart-ass moderne. Compare it to the really fine remake of FAREWELL MY LOVELY (I forget the director). Altman did very well with NASHVILLE, however, where the style worked better.) Since I'm older than YOU, you see, I am really old Pop Cult himself, whereas you are only a cult... ((FAREWELL MY LOVELY was a colorful B-detective movie, but missed the mark of Chandler pretty thoroughly. Chandler in that movie is misinterpreted as a proletariat dullard, old before his time and with all thought of romanticism snuffed from his soul. In the book, his entire involvement with Moose Malloy is a satire on the idea of the Quest, where Malloy is a parody of the detective image Marlowe is associated with. Therein Marlowe is described as athletic and attractive. I'd buy Mitchum's performance in the context of THE LONG GOODBYE but not as offered in this movie.))

# BEYOND THE SHIFT KEY

-- DAVE LOCKE

The First Commandment, when writing a column for a fanzine, is that you must entertain the editor. It would not do, for example, to force Mike Glyer into the position of saying to himself: "Well, the readers might like this shit, but I'm not sure that I feel like devoting five stencils to what Dave Locke thinks on the subject of Australian tennis players." I might amuse Mike's frontal lobes with an installment detailing my ideas on how a regional convention should be handled, but then we would run afoul of the Second Commandment.

The Second Commandment states that, when writing a column for a fanzine, you must amuse yourself. If you don't (forinstance, if I found myself faced with a list of topics which presumed I would sit down and bash out convention reports, fanzine reviews, fanpolitik natterings, interviews with science fiction authors, and other material for which I have a short attention span,) you will wind up kicking the typewriter off your desk and replacing it with a portable tv set.

There is no commandment which states that you must amuse the readers. Fuck them. Let them go write their own columns, or edit their own fanzines. True, they can sometimes be useful in providing egoboo, but more often they write in to say, "Locke's column was amusing. The bit about growing sponges in your bathtub reminds me of the time when --" and away they go on their own trip. A few readers will occasionally write to expend a measured amount of wordage in telling the columnist what a good writer he or she is, and how orgasmic the reader became upon seeing this latest piece of wordsmithing, but such letters tend to make my ass pucker up and cause me to go lie down for a while until the headache passes.

One must enjoy talking to a piece of paper, or a stencil. Or, even more basic than that, to a typewriter. Haul yourself up by the shift key, let your brain seep down into your fingertips, and push the keys in a sequence which you haven't used before. Your typewriter is your audience. Entertain it. Keep it amused.

WE WERE GOING TO  
USE THIS TYPESTYLE  
TO WRITE DAVE  
LOCKE'S NAME --  
BUT IT IS TOO SMALL  
FOR A BNF...

The egoboo is nice, but it puts you in the position of wanting to have written. If the readers don't like your little exercise, does this mean that you did not enjoy doing it? If for some reason you crank out a manuscript which you feel is so bad that your dog would want to wet upon it before you can get it out of the typewriter, what is your reaction if you find out that most of the readers liked it? If you're pleasantly surprised, pleased, and get a cosmic discharge in your shorts because of it, then you're the type who enjoys having written. If you find yourself wondering whether you or your readers are crazy, and go back to analyze



the manuscript in an attempt to figure out which is the case, then you are a person who enjoys writing for its own sake.

There are two reasonable approaches to constructing a column. The approach I normally use is to construct each installment in the form of a unified article on one particular topic. That's what I normally do, so now I'll use the other method. And the other method is to break up the installment with two or more topics, each of which gets a less extensive -- though not necessarily incomplete -- treatment. And, usually, each subject is undeserving of a full-blown article.

The second approach works equally well when writing editorials, if you're ever inclined to do that sort of thing. It would tend to follow, then, that writing a column can be as much fun as writing an editorial. Conversely, if you don't like to write an editorial, you shouldn't be particularly thrilled at being a columnist; and if you are, you're doing something wrong somewhere.

Ed Cagle is the only person I know who hates to write editorials, but likes to write letters filled with a lot of good writing on a small number of amusing subjects. Naturally, with a modest bit of blue pencil it would be possible for him to turn any of his letters into editorials or column installments. Ed's problem is that he views an editorial as a more 'formal' manuscript, and whenever he thinks of the word 'formal' it causes him to scratch his pubic hair and cough violently.

Dave Hulan doesn't feel he has the time or inclination to write a cohesive article, and prefers to fill his typewriter with the informality of mailing comments. He does have a tendency, however, to be rather expansive in his mailing comments, and will spend up to three pages exploring a particular topic. A few weeks ago I read a 'mailing comment' in his SFPazine on the subject of the shortcomings in the traditional system of education in the humanities, and it was one of the best pieces of fan-writing that I've seen in the past year. I can think of a dozen fanzines that could have run it, without significant change, as a lead article. But Dave doesn't feel he possesses the time or inclination to write "articles."

These are friends of mine, but I sometimes chuckle when they talk about writing though either of them can write rings around me without even using a full keyboard. There is a difference between writing and wanting to have written, and sometimes that difference can tie you up in your approach to writing. It's a hangup on words; words which represent modes of writing. Article. Editorial. Column. They can be heavy words, and can seemingly possess a depth which you would rather not leap into. Nattering is more "fun," and less strenuous. So are mailing comments.

There are indeed differences between these forms of writing, but they're not so broad you can't step readily from one to the other. Airline tickets or rocketships are not required. You don't have to pack a bag. Neither do you have to go into spring training if you plan a trip from "nattering" to doing an "article," because to make such a loin-girding approach tends to deaden your enthusiasm. The words don't flow freely. You start to choke.

The truth of the matter, as I see it, is that a good writer does not become a bad writer when he switches gears to write at an easier (or so-called "less formal") pace, as for example when he starts doing mailing

comments or nattering. A writer who cannot hold your interest with such 'lesser' materials will be unable to bridge the gap and grab you by the balls when he writes an article. Or, if he can, he is unique in being able to step out of his own writing mold when switching gears and pulling into another mode of writing.

I have yet to see a good article/column writer turn out an apazine filled with poor mailing comments. The reverse is not always true, but this is so because the writer chokes when faced with the prospect of turning out a presumably heavier piece of writing. You will often find 'articles' of good quality within mailing comments or nattering, and they can be two or three steps above what the writer cranks out when he deliberately concentrates on writing an "article."

Concentration, then, can be good or bad. The key is in your attitude toward fanwriting, and the various forms which fanwriting can take. A frame of mind can be adopted which will choke you up as you move from mode to mode in an upward direction, or loosen you up as you walk down the ladder and become more coherent and interesting as you give yourself an injection of informality and freedom. But you can adopt a frame of mind which dictates that you are talking to your typewriter, and regardless of subject matter or how expansive you intend to be on a subject you will find yourself being as natural as possible in your delivery, and once you have achieved that a little discipline will keep you from writing so "naturally" that you meander all over the place or fall apart.

So, hang loose. Amuse your typewriter and you will wind up amusing yourself at the same time. And if you manage to amuse yourself, you might even feel like doing it again sometime, and that amuses the faneditor who expects you to come up with an unending supply of column installments. But, before we're too tired of all this amusement, let us not forget that we must entertain the editor or we will face the unsettling problem of having to publish our own material, and that way lies madness, not to mention a lot of grocery money.

2. RALLY ROUND THE FLAG, BOYS or SF EXPO 1976      Speaking of amusement, I have been vastly amused at the "circle the wagons" attitude taken by a number of fans over the subject of SF Expo. This is a convention run by professional conventioners, designed to gather up the Big Buck fruits of our little cardboard microsm, and it apparently commits the ultimate sin of being highly Un-fannish. Well, gosh, gee, fellows, let's put on the white sheets and hang these niggars. They are an affront to our illustrious unprofessional status.

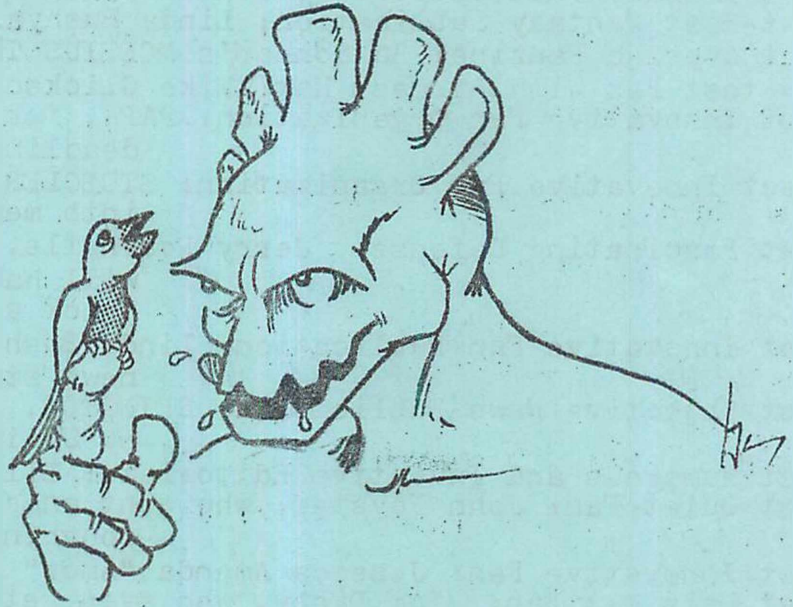
It really does amuse. Batten down the hatches. Prepare to repel boarders. But let's stop and think about this for a moment. Shovel the sweat and emotion back into our armpits, and let's apply a little gray matter.

In the first place I am hard-pressed to come up with an argument against being entertained by professionals who charge admittance. This, of course, presumes that I would obtain value received. Conventions are getting to be big business and amateur incompetence is beginning to show at the seams. Let's give the professionals a chance to be incompetent for a change. Fair is fair.

If somehow I could work myself into a lather at the thought of a professionally-managed SF convention, I would sooner or later have to face



the fact that no one was forcing me to attend. No one will drag me there. If no one else attends, either, then I have been put-upon only to the extent that I must trash a few more pieces of junk mail. And if others do attend, is it my duty to berate them for trying to have a good time purchased by their own out-of-pocket capital? Somehow I don't think so. I can go, or not, go, as I please, and others can do the same. Why are some people soiling their shorts over this matter?



I can ever come up with a few good thoughts as to why we should be thankful to the SF Expo crew. For some reason or other I object to attending overlarge conventions where I am packed in the same sardine can with Trekkies, comixfreaks, Count Dracula types, and other fringe-creatures who like to run around looking like radishes and disturb the decibels while I am trying to peacefully drink and talk with a group of interesting people. It is my hope that SF Expo, and a whole handbasket full of conventions just like it, will serve the purpose of a vacuum cleaner and suck all these weirdos to places where they can put money down and receive all kinds of programmed entertainment catering specifically to their amusement. Let the SF fans and the fannish fans gather at the Unprofessional Conventions and relax to the sound of a different drummer.

Will the pros be lured away by the professional conventions? Sure, why not? They'll get more than expenses. But there'll still be a good number of pros who enjoy the relaxicon atmosphere, and who will get more enjoyment out of the fans there than they will out of the mobs at the pro cons. Don't forget that the pros have friends among the fans. You will see pros at relaxicons, now, and you'll see them there in the future. They enjoy them, too.

So, as far as I'm concerned, onward and upward with the pro-cons. Let them sparkle and glitter with movies, Star Trek blueprints, autograph booths, face masks that make people offer you bananas, and all the razzle dazzle that money can buy.

Better them than us.

3. 1975 LOCKE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS to DESERVING INDIVIDUALS Everyone else is giving away awards lately, and I didn't want to feel left out. Here, then, are the LAADI (pronounced "lawdy," as in "lawdy, lawdy.")

Worst Fanzine of 1975 (my cat wouldn't shit on it): Bruce Townley's LEVIOL  
Best Humor on Television: Monty Python's Flying Circus.





ALL THE TALK in the last PRE and in the lettercolumn of SCIENTIFRICTION FOUR about fan reviews got me to thinking about what standards I use to judge a book, what I look for to let me know how to review it. I don't think that a reviewer/critic has (as Don Keller states) the right to determine whether a book deserves to be published.

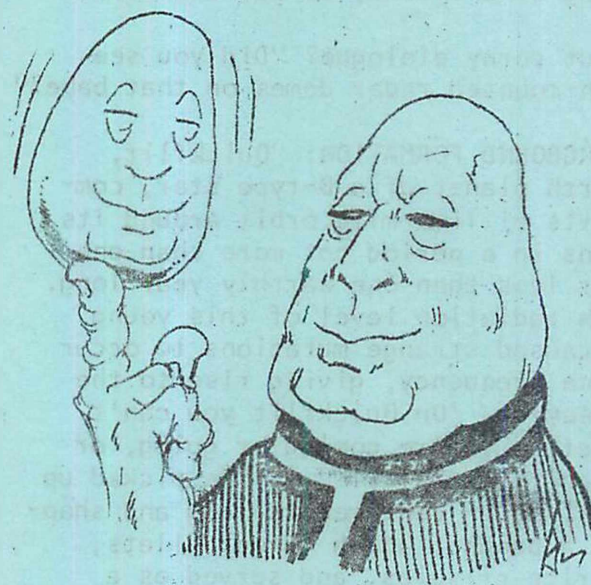
Looking at the English Establishment's attitude toward SF in the late fifties, when I first started reading it, would benefit Don's attitude. I hesitate to count the number of English teachers who tried to persuade me to quit reading SF. If they'd had their way, SF would have died a neglectful death years ago.

I do agree with Don that most SF authors should try to write "literature," but I don't think realistically that many are capable of doing it. But to refuse to publish their work because it doesn't reach some arbitrary standard of A\*R\*T is ridiculous. Personally I believe the farthest a reviewer should go is recommending to his readers which books they should read or pass over. With all the SF published these days steering people to what I consider are the "deserving" works, and saving people money, are what I consider my main tasks. (Aha! The Ralph Nader of SF!)

I don't have an English degree (unlike my colleagues), so I can't make obscure references to Hemingway, or cite some character in somebody's recent novel who was lifted bodily from an Eighteenth Century play. I have read enough SF to spot obvious mistakes in background (example: THE BODLEAN WAY, whose author first states a cultural taboo against making any image of Bodleians, then 25 pages later has someone walk up to a Bodlean who recognizes her from her picture shown all over the galaxy. Sigh.) I know enough science to spot the doubletalk, and have something of an ear for prose. Let me illustrate

## Stan Burns

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TEN MILLION  
CLICHES  
FROM  
EARTH

with some examples of the things that annoy me about SF:

SILLY, CHILDISH WRITING: "Look!" the Captain exclaimed. "That ship is part of the lost Migration of Migraine! Quick, abort our orbit and report to Galactic Central that we're desperately in need of a shipment of aspirin!" Half the SF I run into these days falls into this category. It might be improved if it was a comic book -- at least there would be pictures to look at. Some of the top pros who came up from the pulps often fall into this category. In RAMA, Clarke created a race of hot-tempered Mercurians, for example. Something of a cliché, to say the least...

How about corny dialogue? "Did you see the twin-mounted radar domes on that babe?"

BAD BACKGROUND FORMATION: "Quickflit, the fourth planet of a B-type star, completed its million mile orbit around its twin suns in a period not more than one janr nor less than one earthly year long. The high radiation level of this young planet caused strange mutations to occur with some frequency, giving rise to the common saying, 'On Quickflit you can't tell whether you're coming or going, or even standing still...'" OR "He picked up a pistol, seven centimeters long and shaped like a banana, which fired bullets, pongs, rice crispies, and served as a toothpick when not in use. The bullets it fired were radar-guided, their course controlled by a length of dental floss that unwound from a concealed orifice that looked like a spoil mark. The bullets were highly volatile, imploding on contact with Pucci handbags, human skin, Italian meatballs, sweet and sour pork, trees, birds, government surplus swivel chairs and Volkswagens that Mike Glyer had previously torn apart. Unfortunately Our Hero was holding it backwards, which gave rise to both good and bad news. The good news was that he killed the seven foot tall, four-armed, three-legged Arcturian Wombat that was behind him, waiting for the proper élan to pass before he gobbled up our Hero; the bad news was that he also blew off most of his right shoulder. Luckily he had a bandaid with him, so it was an easy matter for him to tend to his wound, and quickly go back to fighting the overwhelming number of Horrendous

Aliens facing him..." (Time for another commercial message. Insert here. Identify station, and insert six more commercial messages.)

SEMI SOFT CORE PORN SEX SCENES: "Thirsty with anticipation, he thrust his quivering masculinity into her core of sensuous passion..."

DOOM & GLOOM POLLUTION/OVERPOPULATION/STARVATION BACKGROUND: "Clyde adjusted the nose filters in his large proboscis, then spent a few minutes rubbing on his day's unit of UV ointment onto the exposed areas of his anatomy (Ozone layer, don't you know), then put on his tightly fitting suit, sealing the gaskets at neck, wrists and feet, before inspecting himself critically in front of the nearglass pseudo-bathroom mirror. His toilet complete, he went through the front airlock, stopping momentarily to check on the oxygen meter reading for this month. The fine ash from another fire hit him as he went through the outer airlock door, mixed with the strong odors of stale urine and decay. A thick, greasy yellow cloud of smoke hung determinedly onto the city, blocking his vision to an area not less than five feet nor more than 20 meters; corrosion from the latest sulphuric acid rains made treacherous footing underneath. He hoped that the weardating on his shoes was far off. He'd already used his week's medical allowance when the last pair dissolved two days before. Thinking about lunch set him to wondering if he had enough ration points left to afford a soyburger rather than the algae salad he had been living on for the last few weeks...."

How about style? "Quickly, efficiently, the fast moving quadruped essayed his plight was directly correlated with distinct impressions of previously experienced phenomena stored in his incredibly complex far-reaching, involved intelligence-gathering computer/device. After all, the Surgeon General had said they were dangerous to your health." OR "The purple foliage was shimmering in the chatreuse wind, while puce shadows were castigated by the domineering yellowish sun and its dark red companion." OR "Rufua Klingerstillwellington adjusted his handbag, fiddling with its nearleather straps, fooling with its nearplastic body, before stepping out onto



the pseudoconcrete in his imitation pig-skin shoes. It looked like rain..." OR "I guess we'll have to take a vote. What do you think, Professor?" The tall, cadaverous figure slowly stood, with a great deal of effort. A twitch started at the left side of his face, and worked its way across his mouth: "Well personally, I think we oughta kill it!" OR "The technician quickly replaced the transubstantiating demodulator in the exposed complexity of the maddoggling interstellar engine. He stood back from his work, giving it a thoughtful gaze. "Try it now," he mumbled. "And let's see if it'll turn over. Did you change the atomics every twenty trillion miles like the owner's manual recommended?" OR "What!" he ejaculated. "I didn't know!" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you tell me?" he asked plaintively. "It would have saved me hours of work," he pouted.

Or how about the author who falls prey to The Error of Capitalizing Almost Every Other Word? Like Lin Carter: "To the Momentous Mountains, far from the shores of the Seasick Oceans, up the Meandering River from the Plain of Stupendous Deeds and Far Reaching Combats, came one Elrod Pelvious Cankersore, a Wizzard, Adventurer, Traveler in Far Lands And Mysterious Places, and sometimes Volunteer in the Ronald Reagan Campaign. He adjusted the Nearplastic strap that held his mighty sword Vampire, and hitched up the breeches he had stolen from an ill-fated maiden who was a Lady Who Waited in the Court and Spark of the Queen of Macaroni, a fat, cadaverous creature whose main occupation was eating Garlic Pizza brought to her by the Agents of Her Royal Husband from Mystic Lands to the West where few ventured and even fewer returned." (Time for another commercial message. Insert plug for TAFF/DUFF here.)

Then there's characterization" Johnny couldn't decide whether or not he wanted to take a shit. He knew that if he took a shit he would be pleasing his long-dead mother who has so often told him that you never knew when you'd die and fill up your pants, so why not be careful? On the other hand, his inner dialog urged him to follow his father's advice and not give a shit. But what about the strictures of his religion, Monosodium Glutamate of the First Day Saints of the Latter Day Outhouse? Hadn't they said "It is better to shit than be

shit upon"?? What. oh what should he do? Stroking his gun in frustration, he went out and shot a cop."

Then there's descriptive characterization: Donald touched his forehead, brushing back the dangling golden locks that whipped in the wind, then brought his hand down to scratch his left armpit, after which he hitched up his shorts that were biting his over-large masculinity with a constant, unpleasant irritation that he just noticed had been going on for a period of not less than five minutes nor more than an hour. He sighed, then slowly turned his lanky, cadaverous frame back through the nearplastic patio frame doors, into his living room. He gazed with fondness on his prized possessions: knickknack, bric-a-brac, a framed portrait of LBJ with the lower left-hand corner broken, an exotic plant that was trying to (successfully) devour the southern corner of his homey room, a broken clock that perched on the wall that he meant to fix Real Soon Now, a ratty couch that his lost cat had scratched the covering off of, so that whenever he sat down stuffing would fly through the air for a period of not less than five minutes nor more than an hour, and the cigarette-burned cheap coffee table that a half-empty bottle of cheap scotch was seated on. Maybe I should masturbate, he thought."

Then there's the stereotyped hero: "Sam gazed thoughtfully around, absentmindedly scratching at his broad, handsome face. Then he reached his decision. Enough was enough. Those upstarts had gotten away with murder and it was time for Something To Be Done About It. Hitching up his breeches, with mighty arms, he set off to do battle with Evil..." OR "Gosh, Professor," panted the beautiful young co-ed. "How exciting. After you wiped out the invading Hordes of Hideous Halitoisetic Monsters, what did you do?" Slowly the cadaverous, lanky frame turned to direct its cold, steely glance into her upturned admiring eyes. "That's simple, you beautiful piece of ass, you. We ate the Muthers..."

And finally we come to the plot. You remember plot, don't you? That's where you learn on the final page why the hero ate grilled cheese sandwich on page three. There are numerous variations available to

the astute reader from "man goes back in time to shoot his grandfather," and its modern equivalent, "Man goes back in time to rape his grandfather," to the old cliches like "Man revolts against totalitarian society," "Man is revolted visiting totalitarian society," "Man saves himself from capture by Horrendous Aliens," and its modern counterparts "Benevolent Aliens save universe from Violent Man." But let's look at a typical Old Wave SF plot: "Our Hero, having been pushed into the thick of the action despite his protests that he didn't know what was going on (true) is in a bad situation. The Horrible Horrendous Halitosectic Aliens have trapped him in the asteroid belt, with his oxygen running out, and the heroine screaming in his ear that if only he saves her, her father will handsomely reward him with money, her hand in marriage, and 100 shares of IBM stock. Naturally, our hero is highly motivated since he hasn't learned how to breathe vacuum. Luckily, our Hero does know how to make a Clingranistan Multisoulsister, by cannibalizing parts from the zero-G toilet, which he does quickly, using it to defeat the Horrendous Halitosectic Aliens, generate enough oxygen to get back to base, and win the heroine."

Of course, that's rather simplex, but have you seen a SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN or SPACE: 1999 episode lately?? But let's be more realistic, and write out the plot to a modern SF story.

"Our Hero, having wandered into the thick of the action when he got off the wrong stop on the subway, despite his protests that he didn't know what was going on (untrue -- his piece of the action provides him with a healthy sum every year), is in a bad situation. The Horrible Horrendous Homosexual Aliens have him trapped in an inoperative elevator between the fifth and sixth floors of a modern downtown office building, with his resistance to their advances running down, and with his sanity now in question. Between bouts of introspection where he questions his sexual identity, and through that, the sexual crisis of our society, his friend George is screaming in his ear about how if he only saves him, his mother will reward our hero handsomely with his collection of Marvel comics, chicken soup, and 100 shares of IBM stock. Naturally our hero is highly motivated, since besides the rewards he has the clap and is

late for his doctor's appointment. Luckily Our Hero happens to be the dealer who supplies the Building Engineer with his monthly stash, so he is rescued by his grateful client (who, incidentally, has some super Panama Red that he turns Our Hero on to.) Stoned out of his mind, Our Hero giggles while the Horrendous Hideous Homosexual Aliens rape him in an alley on his way home. The story ends with Our Hero muttering "Far fuckin' out, is you dudes gohna have one dose of da clap inna morning...." (Here is the place where the editor -- that's you, Mike -- can insert some some highly intelligent remarks on the state of modern sf, full of relevancy and all that other shit:) (Meanwhile, Elrod Pelvicious Cankersore is Pissing off of the Momentous Mountains onto the Horrendous Hideous Halestislotic Homosexual Ghouls that inhabit the valley below.....)



THE FOLLOWING  
REVIEWS  
WRITTEN BY  
STAN BURNS



THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR by Marion Zimmer Bradley

DAW DW1189 1975 \$1.50

Each time I try to review this book I become bogged down in some sort of intuitive/critical argument that does nothing either to clear up my feelings or attempt to judge its worth as an important recent novel of science fiction. Therefore I'm going to confine myself in this review to telling that I have had an extremely positive emotional reaction to this novel, that I think it is the best novel that Bradley has yet produced (remarkable considering how poor her previous two were) and that in the simplest terms, I loved it. It is one of the most impressive pieces of writing I have read in the past few years. It hooked me the moment I started -- to such an extent that I kept on reading it far into the night, and when I woke up the next morning I read it until I finished. Few novels affect me to such an extent. After seventeen years of reading sf I've become rather bored with the listless adventure novels that publishers like DAW specialize in.

Thus did this novel come as a pleasant surprise, and almost makes all the crud I read worthwhile, just for the thrill of discovery, and makes compulsive the need to broadcast that discovery to my fellow readers. Read this novel. It's good. Damn good. Those that have been following Bradley's continuing chronicles of the world Darkover, who are acquainted with that strange, feudalistic society she so compellingly presents, with its nobles, adventurers, its exploitative Terran Empire, need little introduction to another of these eagerly awaited novels. To those that haven't read any of the previous stories I can only say that, unfortunately, many of them are out of print so that you cannot rush down to your nearest bookstore and grab them off the bookshelves. The earliest novels are, at any rate, on the level of pictureless comic books, but the later novels amply illustrate how Bradley's talents for characterization and depicting the weirdly romantic unknown, have continued to grow until now she ranks with the best sf novelists writing today.

Her characterization has become intricate and assured, her style takes on the complexity of a finely woven tapestry, her plot lines are absorbing in their convolutions and permutations. She writes this novel from two different viewpoints following two different characters in both first person narrative and third person observation. If she sometimes falls in the trap of having her alien characters utter modern slang ("Damn right!"), if she at times dwells upon some of her characters' problems too intensely, with too much emphasis on their conflicts (as the character who fights his homosexual feelings for a retainer, in a society where such feelings are openly accepted, then cops out by changing his feelings to those of a young telepath yearning to reach out and intimately touch a fellow mind), well, these problems seem so minor when compared to the satisfaction that reading the book generates. Go out and buy it. Borrow it. Steal it. It may not be a great novel, but it is one damn good read....

THE STARCROSSED by Ben Bova

Hilton 1975 \$5.95

This novel is a satire on the troubles that both its author (the technical advisor) and one of his characters (in reality, Harlan Ellison) had with the attempted creation of a sf series for a future 3D television network

(read in its place modern TV and that ill-fated series THE STARLOST). And that was one of the main gripes I had with this novel: Bova has taken his experience with that series, laid it in the future, and written a very funny novel about all the backbiting and ego-stabbing that went into its conception.

Unfortunately he has used the Ron Goulart method of putting funny names to futuristic inventions and quite frankly I am so sick of that cheap type of humor I no longer find it amusing. I also feel that the novel would have been far more devastating if Bova had made it a mainstream novel, rather than adding on the sf trappings -- I think they weaken the plot, and the novel, when they are glaringly present (mostly at the start and close). The novel has many strengths, however. Bova has managed to get Ellison down pat in his character Ron Gabriel -- and I mean down pat. From the occasions in the past when I have met Harlan Ellison, I find myself nodding with each scene at the middle of the novel where Ellison is kept in perfect character. And anybody who has heard Ellison performing verbal surgery on the pack of hyenas who destroyed his series will also find themselves nodding agreement at all the outrageous happenings Bova relates as the series in the novel is sabotaged, and sinks slowly into the cesspool with its hockey-playing hero who can't speak English, its studio that has siphoned off production money to bet on football games, and its heroine whose only claim to fame is one of the best plastic surgery jobs on record.

I thought that the middle of the novel, once Bova has gotten through all the corny sf cliches he introduced in the first third; and was to reintroduce in the last third, was exceptionally well written, a cutting satire on the creation-by-committee butchery which exemplifies today's tv. Bova's novel could have been better as mainstream/present but at times it is extremely effective; I enjoyed parts of it tremendously. Recommended.

THE EARLY WILLIAMSON by Jack Williamson  
Doubleday 1975 \$5.95

Collection similar to THE EARLY ASIMOV, containing comments and autobiography by the author intersplined between the stories. As a whole I found the writing of the stories so primitive, and the plotting/background so outdated, that they were for me virtually unreadable. It was interesting to note that the fiction did improve toward the end of the collection, graphically illustrating how Williamson gained control of his medium as his familiarity with writing progressed. The autobiographical notes are not particularly revealing, concerning mostly the money situation at the time -- he was trying to make a living as a freelance sf author in his early thirties when word rates were as little as 1¢ per word. Of interest to historians only; most modern sf readers would find this collection dull. I would suggest, at the very least, they wait for the paperback edition.

EARLY DEL REY by Lester Del Rey  
Doubleday 1975 \$7.95

This collection, strung together with autobiographical notes, contains 24 of Del Rey's previously unanthologized stories, starting with his first, "The Faithful" published in 1938, and concluding with "The Wind Between The Worlds;" from 1951. The stories, especially the first few, are overly sentimental, but hold up surprisingly well considering their age. Del Rey dealt in generalities rather than specific technical advances in predictive stories like those popular at the time. The stories needed only a few revisions to be accurate. I can't say the same for the Asimov collection -- almost all the stories are technologically outdated and written in corny pulpish language. Del Rey's language and style is far more mature -- reminding me strongly of Campbell's "Don Stuart" stories, where mood and human relations were emphasized over gadgets and BEMs. The autobiographical notes are rather corny (Del Rey still has a fondness for exclamation points) but give some interesting insights into the creative process, and the bread and butter affair of writing for a living. Recommended for anyone who is



(1) a Del Rey freak, (2) interested in the forties period of sf publishing. Those whose interest is not that strong might be advised to wait for the paperback.

THE EARLY LONG by Frank Belknap Long  
Doubleday 1975 \$7.95

I generally enjoy these collections of early stories that Doubleday has been producing, but not for the story content. The stories are generally of very poor quality, being the first ones published by the authors, but they are connected by some fascinating biographical material (in this case an almost 30-page long introduction). The most enjoyable was the Asimov collection, but I would rate this next after it. The Del Rey collection was rather dry, but had the best stories; the Williamson collection was mainly concerned with the finances of freelance writing. Long doesn't have Asimov's humorous self-effacing style, but his style, while dry, is nevertheless interesting. The stories as a whole I found dated (for sf) and boring (for the horror -- a field that doesn't interest me in the slightest); but the autobiographical sections were interesting enough that I skipped ahead to read them alone. For history freaks and horror fanatics...

KINGDOMS OF SORCERY edited by Lin Carter  
Doubleday 1976 \$6.95

This book has a lot of good things going for it. The cover is well above the usual Doubleday standard. The quite extraordinary care with which the binding was made. This does not take into account the excellence of many of the authors represented in this "introductory" fantasy collection; authors like George MacDonald, William Morris, E.R. Eddison, Fletcher Pratt, Fritz Leiber, L. Sprague DeCamp. Extracts from longer works include: Tolkien's LORD OF THE RINGS, T. H. White's THE SWORD IN THE STONE (a piece cut out when it was expanded into THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING), C. S. Lewis' Narnia books, and Richard Adams' WATERSHIP DOWN. I disagree with some of Carter's chosen shorter works. Leiber is represented by "The Two Best Thieves in Lankhmar" which was a filler in one of the Fafhrd-Grey Mouser collections that joined together two longer pieces and can hardly be considered one of Leiber's stronger works (compared, say, to "Ill Met in Lankhmar"). DeCamp's "The Owl and the Ape" isn't my choice either, much less Carter's own "The Twelve Wizards of Ong" (in which he commits The Grievous Sin of Capitalizing Almost Every Other Word). I am not going to comment on the intros to the various stories, since I only know recent fantasy. I did catch two goofs he made in his suggestions for further reading: DeCamp's THE FALLIBLE FIEND is mistitled THE FECKLESS FIEND, and he states that none of the Fafhrd-Grey Mouser stories have been collected in a hardback edition in this country (they were, in TWO SOUGHT ADVENTURE, Gnome Press 1957). Not that I expect perfection from Carter; from what I've heard from friends in The Fantasy Association his scholarship is always questionable. Thus I recommend this collection to everyone who enjoys fantasy, with the exception that they don't take all of what Lin Carter says to be historically accurate.

THE POWER OF BLACKNESS by Jack Williamson  
Berkeley/Putnam 1976 \$6.95

While this book is labeled a novel, it is really a collection of shorter published pieces following the same character that have been compiled into a disjointed narrative. In fact it is so disjointed and annoying that I couldn't force myself to finish it. In its first episode we meet the hero, Blacklantern. An outcast on Ngongga, a bastard born outside his clan structure, he goes into the arena to fight the birdlike, deadly tly, hoping to upset the champion and become accepted by one of the clans. But power plays behind the scenes conspire against his success. He seeks revenge.

Unfortunately, while up to now this novel was above-average space opera, it becomes difficult to follow as Williamson throws in all sorts of plot misdirections. His char-

acters act without taking any considerations for why they do so, enslaving them to the plot and destroying what small credibility Williamson, up until then, has managed to sustain. I became so annoyed at this that I stopped reading, and couldn't get up enough interest to restart the book. Wait for the paperback. This novel ain't no way worth seven bucks.

STAR MOTHER by Sydney J. Van Scyoc  
Berkeley/Putnam 1976 \$6.95

Another novel I couldn't finish. I really don't feel right about writing reviews under these circumstances, since I cannot provide any type of overview of the plot. I can point out things in the novel that annoyed me.

First off, I didn't like the author's sentence structure. For example, "It appeared through cloud cover in brief snatches, gray-green, dull." While this sentence is in no way inspiring, the main objection I have to it is that it is typical of almost every other sentence on the page. The author overuses commas -- she repeats the same pattern; first she makes a statement, then she modifies it with either single word or phrase add-ons. After a couple of pages, reading repetitious, dead prose becomes boring. Then she shortens her sentences so that sometimes they don't make any real sense. She has forgotten to add a modifier, and the meaning is not clear. For example, "Abandoning port, she strapped into her seat." Here the word 'port' should have been 'the porthole.' Otherwise the sentence sounds like she is an alcoholic who has fallen off the wagon. For that matter, is 'port' a word in the sense it is used here? Now add to these things the obnoxious way that she half feeds into the narrative her background information, like "...the cabin comm cleared its metal throat." The communication unit has a throat? Or is the comm some sort of symbiotic unit that lives in the cabin? 'Nuff said. Definitely wait for the paperback, if you want to waste your time on this monstrosity....

THE GREEN GENE by Peter Dickinson  
DAW UY1209 1973/5 \$1.25

What does "...rapidly she eased the teat off the baby's bottle and poured into the orange-juice shot of brandy from the other bottle" mean? I get the feeling that either (1) this novel is poorly written; or (2) more likely, this novel is full of typos. Whichever, I read no further. The novel concerns racial prejudice in Britain -- in this case when all the Celts turn green; and are rapidly shuttled into menial positions by the racist government. The main character is an Indian (east) who has discovered the cause of the mutation. Funny, but I seem to remember a movie from the forties about this kid with green hair....sigh. Oh well, at least you can still see it on the late show occasionally. Which would be a better occupation of your time than this tacky exercise. I mean, why not purple?

SIX SCIENCE FICTION PLAYS edited by Roger Elwood  
Pocket Books 48766 1976 \$1.95

This is one of Elwood's better collections, though the excellence of content widely varies. As far as I know, this is the first collection of sf plays (actually two are screenplays), and as such is an interesting book. The contents: Ellison's original script for "The City On the Edge of Forever," long overdue in print and probably the best selection of the lot. It is fascinating to see how the script was changed when it was finally put on STAR TREK. I think that Harlan screamed too much about some of the cuts (some of what was cut is incredibly corny), and I remember him at Westercon XX standing in a hallway reading his script, and what they had done (read: butchered) to it. Still, three fourths of what they cut is superior to what reached the 23-inch screen. This alone makes the book worthwhile to Trek freaks, Ellison freaks, or both. It shows how the idiot-box caters to the wish-fulfillment fantasies of the middle



class, neglecting reality in favor of perfect heroes who are incapable of either love or hate, only saying the watered down lines of the insipid poets of brainless committee creation.

Tom Reamy's STING! is a wasted attempt to write a good Fifties monster-from-outer-space movie. THE MONOLITH MONSTERS it ain't, much less THEM, which Elwood compares it to. Reamy doesn't give any stage direction to his characters (presumably they'd sit around and talk through the movie) and has taken the most repetitious, dull ending imaginable. (Once again, monster fans, the eggs hatch as the movie ends -- or do they? I'm surprised he didn't include that huge question mark they used in THE GIANT LEACHES. Insipid...

Cogswells' "Contact Point" is an old waver trying to write a new wave play with Real Meaning and intellectual Left-Wing Antiwar Sentiments. It might have been interesting if I hadn't read the same thing fifty times before, and usually better done. Jakes' "Stranger With Roses" is at least a competently written play, complete with stage direction, etc. This one might be performable. As a matter of fact I somewhat enjoyed it, rather strange considering what I think about Jakes' Brak the Barbarian novels. Better than average...

Leiber's "The Mechanical Bride" was recently reprinted in THE SECOND BOOK OF FRITZ LEIBER. It's a somewhat dated (in technique) account of a jealous woman who murders her ex-lover by proxy, through a robot. Fair but too gothic in structure to be up to date. Zindel's "Let Me Hear You Whisper" is a humorous play about a cleaning woman who has conversations with a dolphin. Since Zindel is a playwright of some note, it is not surprising that this is the most stageworthy play in the collection. It also is very good.

This is a good collection, particularly when you consider Elwood put it together, and the first of its kind so far as I know. It would be interesting if some group got together to perform one of the plays at a Worldcon. Recommended.

THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY STORIES edited by Lin Carter  
DWM UY1199 1975 \$1.25

Another misnomer collection. The stories date from 1973-4 which is stretching the 'year' in the title a bit. Personally I don't care for Carter's writing, I find it at about a comic book level and boring to boot. I have a great deal of respect for him as an editor -- I think he did an excellent job on the Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series of new novels and reprints. Thus I looked forward to this collection with a mild amount of anticipation. And I wasn't greatly disappointed. While I don't think that it contains any outstanding stories, I do feel that it is quite readable and well worth the cover price. Among other stories it contains one of my recent favorites, Vance's latest Dying Earth story, "The Seventeen Virgins"; along with such other good pieces as Leiber's "Trapped in the Shadowland" a Fafhrd/Grey Mouser saga (one of the shorter ones used in his books to fill in the spaces between the major novelettes); de Camp's short pastiche "The Emperor's Fan"; and other stories by Robert E. Howard, Lloyd Alexander, Clark Ashton Smith, Hannes Bok, and Marion Zimmer Bradley. Recommended.

THE BLADERUNNER by Alan E. Nourse  
Ballantine 24654 1974/5 \$1.50

This is an action/adventure juvenile, set in the 21st Century when health care, paid for by the government, has become such a burden that laws were enacted to sterilize anyone over five who has to go to the hospital with some major health problem. Also involved is the theory that keeping people alive through advanced medicine has caused the breeding of disease-prone people (ie, diabetics having children, due to the inven-

tion of insulin that allowed them to live to the age of parenthood). This gives rise to whole segments of the population that won't go to the hospital, and a flourishing underground of doctors and thieves who steal the medical equipment necessary to treat that segment of the population. Several problems emerge in the light of this situation -- people beyond child-rearing age not going for treatment, and the simplistic, heroic treatment of the doctors who sacrifice their time and endanger their careers treating the general public. The characterization is cardboard, and the background is only partially developed. Neither is the dualism implicit in the plot explored -- on one side the humanistic need for proper health care; on the other side the growing fear that treating those problems is having the unwanted side effect of interfering with natural selection and breeding a race of disease-prone, unhealthy individuals. Considering the fact that over half the population alive in the country today requires corrective lenses for eyesight problems, the questions raised are major. Unfortunately the author merely leaves them in the background, and what could have been a major novel questioning the basis of our medical experience is left at the level of adventure, a good time killer, but not the best I've read lately.

THE TRIUNE MAN by Richard Lupoff  
Putnam/Berkeley 1975 \$6.95 (from proofs)

This is one of those most annoying of novels, one that is half brilliant and half trash. Lupoff made his main mistake it seems to me in making this an sf novel, rather than a mainstream novel that he could have used as a vehicle to search out the meanings of madness -- one of his main themes -- by preventing the reader from knowing until the end whether the fantastic elements of the story were hallucinations or real. Instead he introduced sf elements to make the hallucinations plausible, thus destroying much of the novel's impact.

The plot line is fairly complex: it deals with an inmate of an insane asylum, one who is suffering from that rarest of all mental diseases, multiple personality (and it is much to Lupoff's credit that he recognizes this is a separate form of mental illness, not a form of schizophrenia as many of his contemporaries seem to believe). Three personalities are contained in one body: a cartoonist, who is easy-going and malleable; a right wing Nazi bigot; and an engineer. How these personalities arose is given much attention, and in fact is so logically thought out that they seem to be entirely plausible (another plus). It seems to me that the hero was incarcerated (a term too mild) in a concentration camp in Nazi Germany, and his sufferings therein gave rise, through desperation, to various personalities -- all attempts by his unconscious to escape somehow from the surrounding horror. I can only term this personality profile as brilliant -- and that is some praise coming from me, since I have a degree in psychology, and generally get a good laugh out of most authors' efforts in that direction. The writing varies considerably -- all is well worked out, all fits the theme that he is developing, but at times the juxtaposition of different styles completely destroys the mood he is trying to evolve. For example Lupoff moves from an extremely affecting passage telling about the hero's liberation by Allies from the death camp (he's a young child at the time) to an sf element that is so blatantly ridiculous it completely destroys the mood of the previous passage.

"When he woke up there was a strange man wearing a brown uniform sitting beside him. The man had been feeling the baby's chest. When the baby woke up and looked at him the man smiled and picked up a bowl of soup and began to feed the baby. He ate some soup, then looked around and saw a lot of men in uniforms he did not know. They had strange looks on their faces and some of them were crying. They had a big pot of soup and bowls and were feeding the children who were still alive."

I think that the simplicity, the emotional impact of the above passage, is staggering. It really hit me and that seems to me the most prominent aspect of effective



writing. But then Lupoff shifts, in the next paragraph, back to his sf elements, and they completely destroy the mood of the preceding paragraph: "In the place called Sravasti the Yakshis Nanda, Asoka and Kalinga watched the confrontation...."

Whap! We are zapped back out of the reality that Lupoff has worked so hard to create, back into the element of the fantastic. And the reality drifts away, loses its impact, becomes part of the fantasy...

Another element of the novel that really bugged me was Lupoff making the hero really on an alien planet, really in a position that he has to save the universe, making the elements reality, rather than keeping them the fantasies and hallucinations of a broken mind. Thus any message that he tries to get across about the evils of Nazism is lost, because the whole novel blends into fantasy, even the death camp scenes, making a light entertainment rather than a character study of the effect of man's hatred upon the mind of a trapped and abused child. Polansky did quite the opposite with his movie REPULSION, in which you don't know until the end which scenes are real and which are taken from the imagination of the heroine in her nervous breakdown. If Lupoff had attempted something similar, he could have produced an outstanding novel. The fantasy elements only weaken the existing novel. Close. Wait for the paperback.

NEW DIMENSIONS 5 edited by Robert Silverberg  
Harper 1975 \$7.95

The latest in this series of original story anthologies contains several good stories and some average ones, but does not contain anything really outstanding. This is a change for this collection -- there are no real long novelettes, only short pieces. Rather than examining each story I'll just touch on those I found better than average.

"Find the Lady" by Nicholas Fisky is the story of two gays who survive an alien invasion and its aftermath by giving interesting trinkets to their new alien masters. The story itself is sardonic in the extreme -- among other things they give the aliens as antiques is an old roll-top desk with bright shiny chrome legs. Eventually the aliens tire of this, and demand something different, and the gays play them old records on a wind-up Victrola. The aliens tire of this too, and at the story's end the gays sit only inches from death keeping the aliens distracted with sleight-of-hand card tricks. The story itself says something about survival and the essential indignity of man.

Bishop's "Rogue Tomato" is about a man who wakes up one morning to find himself a planet-sized tomato orbiting around a soon-to-go-nova red giant. As satire the story starts out very humorously but the length tends to kill the humor after awhile, making the 2001 ending seem anticlimactic rather than amusing. His other story, "The Contributors to Plenum Four," also a takeoff, this time on introductory blurbs to collections, is more successful -- in this case because of its brevity. Bishop, I've noticed, doesn't yet seem to have learned when to quit, going on far longer than is necessary to get over the point of his story. Someone should point out to him that Clarke's "The Star" is only seven pages long...

"The Mothers' March on Ecstasy" is a typical Effinger story -- well written, but I somehow just don't get the point he is presumably trying to put across. A scientist is trying to deal with a wave of happiness that has swept the world -- but how he expects to do so by dissecting pretty girls is beyond me... Dorothy Gilbert's "A Selfy Drink, A Saffel Fragrance" is an interesting story about someone trying to interpret alien poetry, but the poetry itself isn't alien enough to really give the story the feeling it so strongly needs. Nonsense poetry like Carroll's "Jabberwock" is difficult to do, and the poetry in this story seems too forced to be completely believable.

"White Creatures" by Gregory Benford tells of a man who has devoted his life to the contact of alien intelligence, only to meet failure at every turning. He believes he has been captured by aliens and is being examined/dissected by them, while in reality he has suffered an attack and is on the operating table. This story I found to be the most satisfying in the collection -- examining as it does how man's beliefs can influence his perception of reality. I wonder how many people realize that we see in the world what we want to be true rather than what is true.

"Sail the Tides of Mourning" by Lupoff is the sequel to his powerful story in the last NEW DIMENSIONS, "After the Dreamtime." In that story Lupoff created a star-faring culture of spacemen whose ancestors were Australian aborigines and whose dark skins protect them from the dangers of space while fair-skinned people had to wear bulky suits. In that story there was a passenger rebellion during which a passenger (whose lives are considered a sacred trust) was killed by the sky hero Jiritzu. Jiritzu must face the consequences, be either grounded or sent alone into space on a voyage of discovery and death. He chooses to make a death voyage and die like other sky heroes -- in space. The use of language is this story's major drawback, using the term "sky heroes" rather than a true native word makes rather listless a story that could have been brilliant and definitive. The same applies to the other terminology in the story. And this story either lacked the original's impact, or failed to meet my expectations.

A better than average collection, but the eight dollar price tag is enough to advise waiting for the paperback.

THE NEW IMPROVED SUN, edited by Thomas Disch  
Harper & Row 1975 \$8.95

This anthology, composed of reprints and several original stories, has a theme of sf utopias. I have always been rather bored by the whole idea, most utopia fiction is nothing more than wish-fulfillment fantasy recorded in the most actionless form imaginable. Many of the stories collected here reinforced my opinion. Happily, several did not.

The collection's best story, John Sladek's "Heavens Below:Fifteen Utopias" comes from a man writing some of the best satire in sf in recent years. These short pieces are almost uniformly amusing, and some are downright hilarious.

"The People of Prashad," by James Keilty, is the exact opposite of the preceding story. It's extremely dull -- but it is one of the best worked-out stories I've ever read. Keilty created a society with incredible detail, including maps and a complete alphabet. A pity that his storytelling fails to approach his fertile imagination. "Settling the World" is another of M. John Harrison's long, dreary, almost pointless stories -- which strikes me as being quite a shame since he is one of the most accomplished stylists working in the sf field today. The exact opposite of the preceding story sees good storytelling techniques wasted on an ambiguous story line. Disch himself comes up with a short put-on essay about what should be done with all the free time we have on our hands these days. "Pyramids for Minnesota: A Serious Proposal." The book's most chilling story is Gene Wolfe's "The Hero As Werewolf" which captures all the horror and desperation found in the best of Ellison's recent stories -- but with simple prose and an intensively involving story line. It's a fine original story deserving of awards consideration.

The anthology also includes an extract from BF Skinner's WALDEN 2, Joanna Russ' novel THE FEMALE MAN, and ends up with a short quote from Wells' IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET. Several other stories are included but none struck me as particularly good. All in all I don't think that this collection is worth the nine dollar price -- wait for the paperback.



JON SINGER  
167 Vine Street  
Middletown, CT 06457

Lou Stathis' article on Riefenstahl stands up well to rereading. (I got the zine in which it first appeared in Apa Q). Mayhap you can convince him to take a look at Ernst Lub-

itsch's TO BE OR NOT TO BE.

Poor Alyson Abramowitz. We'd best not tell her that both Jerry Kaufman and Ron Bushyager are in reality puppets controlled by Ginjer Buchanan, the secret ruler of WPSFA in exile, who, with her friends (people like Genie DiModica and the dreaded John Douglas) helping her, is well on the way to becoming....aham!! Where was I?

The Grant Canfield on page 15 ('Vot is dese sheet?') is perfect. Hmmm... seem to me dat Laurie Task need to be taken to task (to trask?) for not remembering why Jerry Kaufman reminded you of Ron Bushyager. (Just because she wasn't there at the time is no excuse) it was Saturday night at Midwestcon, after the Banquet:

Kaufman: Glyer, I thought we were trading.  
Glyer: So did I...  
Singer: He did send you stuff, Jerry; it may not have arrived.  
...tell you what, I'll give you my STFR #1.  
Glicksohn: I bet you think Singer is being altruistic.  
Kaufman: No, but that reminds me: Mike, remember Ron Bushyager.  
Glyer: ?  
Bowers: Why'd you do that?  
Glicksohn: There's Bowers, asking dumb questions again.  
Kaufman: Seemed the fannish thing to do at the time.  
Glyer: ?  
Mike Wood: Quak.  
Singer: Left on, Mike! Let that be a lesson to you, Laurie Trask!! And you, Ben Indick, should go see "What's Up, Tiger Lily" before you give up on Woody Allen completely. I warn you, though, that you should only see it late at night. It is rather silly, and probably would not come off too well in the daytime.

Shull outdoes himself again. (For that matter, I dug the Randy Bathurst FUNNIES too.)

I...can't believe Henri Chapdelaine's little piece. Let me do just a few small points.

(1) "All paleontologists agree today on the Hiatus, or the age when man disappeared from the face of the Earth." --What?!! This is preposterous on the face of it, (any statement that all scientists of any given kind agree about anything is highly suspect) but even setting that aside, I think that the statement is substantively false. While I am far from being a paleontologist myself, it happens that my father is a widely read sociologist (he even reads 'da stuff' like the rest of us) who has a definite professional interest, and he has never mentioned to me anything remotely resembling a hiatus in the record. I am going to ask him about it, just to be sure, but I don't think there has ever been a serious contention that there was any such gap... ((Heck, Jon, maybe he was just waiting until you were a little older and could handle such civilization-shattering suspicions...))

(2) "It is certain, therefore, that the deluge waters were, at places, over 5000 feet high!!" Indeed? And from what source did this water come? If you will grant me that over a period of, say, a month and a-half, no gross excess of water can be developed in any one place because of runoff (via rivers, etc.), and if you think about the fact that melting both polar caps would raise the level of the oceans a mere 200 feet, I think it becomes obvious that this is transparent bullshit.

(3) "...the Sahara became a desert between 8000 and 10,000 years BC... immediately after the flood." (my underscore) "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." No comment necessary.

(4) "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?" I am not quite sure what to make of this one. I understand that mammoths have been found frozen with buttercups intact in their stomachs (indicating that they froze extremely rapidly, which has not -- to my knowledge -- been explained. I think a quick call to Isaac Asimov is in order here. He says the following:

-- He also has heard of mammoths being frozen with buttercups in their stomachs, but has never seen a reference, and suspects strongly that all the mentions probably go back to one place which may or may not be accurate. (There is no question that mammoths have been found, I have seen the photographs. The question is whether they were quick-frozen. Isaac doubted that even liquid helium would quickfreeze anything that thick.)  
-- He also has never heard of any "hiatus" in the archeological record.  
-- He has a thesis that no one who was not brought up believing in the Bible finds any scientific support for it. (I can't remember the exact wording, but I believe I have the sense correct. I am sure there was more, though, than I have remembered.) ((I should hope so. Or else your grammar is wrong. There is tons of scientific support for events recorded in the Bible. Not all of them, obviously, but enough that it should hardly be dismissed out of hand that way.))

(5) "...Wright gives pictures of about /6/ different fossil finds and artifacts belonging to peoples who lived here before 7000 BC. Therefore the Indian is a latecomer, after the deluge. Howorth...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!"

My response to this is twofold. (1) If I remember correctly, the Bering Straits land bridge -- over which the proto-Indians entered this continent -- existed from about 40,000 or 30,000 years ago until about 25,000 or 20,000 years ago. The Indians, then, are hardly latecomers. Now as to the continent having sunk "at least" several hundred feet, the area of the continent is about 7,500,000 square miles. Underneath the continent is lots of nice gushy magma. Now where do you suppose THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION CUBIC MILES of magma went when the continent took a heavy squat? ...I can't handle any more of this.

Hal Davis' quote concerning the piece from the GITA which went through J. Robert Oppenheimer's mind when he saw the first A-bomb go off is pretty powerful. Hal Davis has all sorts of goodies like that which he occasionally lets out.



# CY CHAUVIN: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

It all began many years ago. At the time I knew Leah Zeldes and Larry Downes (two Detroit actifen) very well. For reasons unknown to me at the time, they invited me to visit Oak Park High School at the Wayne Third Foundation meeting (the local sf club, now long disbanded). "We're having a special celebration at school," Leah told me, smiling, "but that's all I can tell you." "You'll love it!" Larry said, and then told me about the pickles his mother was canning in preparation for Donn Brazier's visit to Detroit and Autoclave.

I set my alarm early, since I wanted to make sure I got to Oak Park on time. Larry and Leah had often pointed this school out to me -- it was a huge building, a sort of Yandro yellow at Nine Mile near Coolidge.

I noticed the names on the principal's office door when I entered.

Harry Warner, Principal  
Bob Tucker, Assistant Principal  
Hoy Ping Pong, Assistant Bob Tucker

I was really lost. (Could there be two Harry Warner's in the world? Two Bob Tuckers? Two Hoy...no.) I was even more lost when I saw a couple of guys wearing football uniforms walk by...toward another office that listed on its door:

Mike Gorra, Coach

Where the hell were Larry and Leah when I needed them? I began to walk down the school's main corridor.

Coming out of the door of one of the classrooms, I thought I heard a familiar voice. "...I hope to get across, if I can, that good artistic expression is a multiplex, vital, exultant thing, and well worth having. Beyond that, I'd like a few folk to understand what I'm saying....unlike Jeff Clark...and if the words I have choosen don't communicate what I intended to say, tough twinkies!" I looked in, saw the gold and black cape, the necklace with "Bitch" spelled in rhinestones, and ran quickly away before she spotted me. I wonder if Dave Gorman knew she was moonlighting?

In any case, this whole affair was becoming interesting.

Further down the corridor, I saw Larry and Leah at last, standing with a group of students who were listening to a rather hairy man with a morose

expression and sad eyes explaining something called "the enchanted calculator." I could never understand these math teachers, but they seemed fascinated by it all.

I decided not to disturb them, and picked up a copy of the school newspaper, FANAC, instead. The paper described in vague terms that a special teach-in would be going on all day, and listed some of the special classes:

ADVANCED TYPING: WATCH THAT SPELLING! Bill Breiding  
SPEECH 1: THE ART OF THE INSULT Harlan Ellison  
CHEMISTRY 202 Denis Quane  
ART 3: THE DEPICTION OF THE HUMAN FIGURE Brad Parks  
ADVANCED BIO: THE BLUE-EYED, SASKATCHAWAN PLAINS MOTH Dr Wood  
SEX EDUCATION Dick Geis

I looked through the newspaper, noticed a few want ads here and there (For Sale: The Gestetner Bill Bowers used to catapult himself to fame! Cheap. Contact M. Glicksohn), and the usual worldcon bids. The only one that seemed out of place was the one that ran, "For a Worldcon you'll adore/Vote Oak Park in '84!"

Then a voice boomed over the PA system. "There will be a special program in the auditorium in fifteen minutes. And remember: It's Sssssssmmmooth!" The auditorium was close by, so I decided to go in. A guy in a floppy cowboy hat was collecting 25¢ admission from students without IDs, but I paid and went in anyway. I figured it must be worth it; maybe it was the GoH speech. (I didn't know what to expect.)

Wow, it was crowded. Like Hugo award time at a worldcon. There was this one guy with a big long tail that kept running up and down the aisle making a commotion and flexing his tail back and forth like it was something special (say, prehensile?) Finally, he folded it and sat down.

I ran into Leah and Larry again in the auditorium. "Cy, where were you hiding?" Leah demanded. "We've been looking all over for you." "Yeah," said Larry. "You've been blending into the woodwork again, haven't you? Some cute wallflowers around here, huh?" and he nudged me.

"Oh, no. Not this routine again. Let's sit down."

We sat down. I noticed that there were lots of people around in rawhide Daniel Boone outfits, just like at Worldcons. Damn fringe-fans! And all those Trekkies displaced the jocks, greasers and hippies that used to fill high school auditoriums. I was just waiting for John Robinson to crawl out from under the table.

Miracle of miracles, he did, followed by Dave Romm, Wendy Lindboe, David Singer, and all the other sewer rats that live in Albany, NY. "It was the only way we could get in without paying," explained John. "You cheapos," Larry said. "Don't you know DUFF needs the money? Besides, you might let Bruce Coulson in with you, you fools."

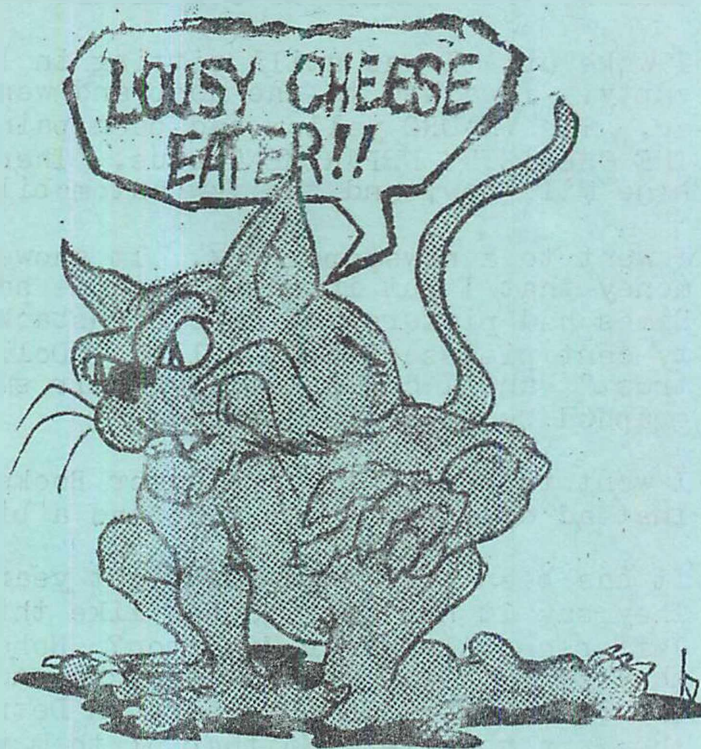
Fortunately, before that conversation could go any further, the loud-speaker boomed again. "Due to technical difficulties, our special program has been rescheduled for 2pm." Leah immediately motioned for me to get up; "I'm hungry," she said. "Why don't we go to the cafeteria and get something to eat instead of staying here? We can show you around some more, too."



So we got up and walked down the corridor. The cafeteria was bright and airy. I did notice that the vending machines clustered in the foyer had mimeo supplies in them instead of the usual pencils and pens.

"What can we get that's fannish?"

I asked Leah, when we approached the food counter. "Well, they have these," said Leah, and she pointed out some small dill pickles that had "compliments of TITLE" engraved on the side. There was a big pot of lime jello. There was a canister of bouncing potatoes, and you could hear them bouncing against the sides of the pot. "Here, I'm brave," said Larry, and he opened it up, and the potato bounced and hit Warren Johnson who was standing behind him. There were also giant HERBIE lollipops -- the hard-to-get cinnamon -- hecto jelly sandwiches, De Camp pork and beans, and a wide variety of other foods all displayed on the most elegant set of Thomas M. Disches I have ever seen. The cook was Sam Long, and he was using a paper-back titled "Cooking Out of This World."



We finished our snack, and then went past the library. "Hi, Roger," we said, "Long time no see." Sween explained, "Well, I've got most of the fanzine indexed, you see. Harry did have a lot, and Tucker almost as many, but we have computers now..." We walked through the library, glancing at the HYPHENS, the FOCAL POINTS, the WARHOONS, the SHAGGYS, and all the old greats from the past... I noticed the copies of LOCUS and KARASS set where the newspapers once had been, and replacing the foreign intellectual quarterlies were copies of SF COMMENTARY and CYPHER. ALGOL and OUTWORLDS seemed to have replaced all the artbooks, and instead of sheetmusic were pamphlets of filksongs.

"Roger, it's OK, but don't you think it's a bit much..." I said.

"All the libraries are going fan modern, Cy," he said. "Where have you been?"

We went back to the auditorium and slid back into our seats. We didn't even have to pay another quarter: Ted White recognized Leah. "Oh, I hope you had a better time at the last Worldcon than you did at your first..."

The lights in the auditorium dimmed, Larry pulled off his shirt, ~~He and Leah~~ and we watched closely as Linda Bushyager -- in green satin pants -- walked onto the stage with a stack of papers and began to explain the new Worldcon constitution. "And fourscore and seven years ago, we brought forth into this fandom, created in mimeo ink..." Larry

and his chair were restless. Suddenly something happened. Linda stood up, very still, as though carved from stencil cement. She cocked her head, and a little bird climbed out: "AND NOW" the bird's voice boomed, "FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT."

I woke up. I was still sitting in the chair, but the auditorium was empty. I walked to the door and went outside. The building looked older. The YANDRO yellow had been painted over with a sort of NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT blue. There were trolley cars running along Nine Mile now, and the few automobiles I saw were very small and silent.

I went to a newspaper box. It showed a copy of THE DETROIT KARASS. The money that I put into the machine had been transformed in my very pocket. Dimes had pictures of Hugo Gernsback, quarters of John W. Campbell, fifty cent pieces of Walt Willis. Dollar bills said, "In Gestetner we trust" and I could tell by their smell that the money had been mimeographed by a special method.

I went to the Little Professor Bookstore near Coolidge, then ran away. Instead of a pro's cap they had a big beanie.

It has been like this for eight years now. Nobody remembers the past. They say it has always been like this. Who's George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton? Nobody knows. (Adolf Hitler, however, they tell me was a well-known science fiction writer.) Larry now hosts the FANDOM MORNING NEWS here in Detroit. Leah is a stewardess aboard the Moon shuttle. Neither of them recognizes me.

It would have been unbearable, if I had not discovered -- almost hidden among the glossy copies of VERTEX, AMAZING EVENING POST and IF WORLDS OF MAYBE -- a small magazine simply called MUNDANE. It fired my enthusiasm like no other, and the want ad section has put me in touch with others like myself -- people who remember the World Before.

Oddly enough the magazine is edited by Barry Malzberg.

I am just getting into it all, going to mundane conventions, writing fiction about the past, exchanging old film clips. I have even started a small club at the local university, and have made good friends with a couple local "mundanes" (as we call ourselves) Patti Petercake and Marge Parmenter.

Tomorrow I am to visit their school.

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This article has been revised from Green Cheese #3, distributed through Mishap  
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DON KELLER  
3932½ Laurel Canyon Blvd.  
Studio City, CA

A few offhand remarks about the lettercol. First, to Steve Simmons. I quote you from Elwood's introduction to FUTURE CORRUPTION: concerning Carolyn Gloeckner's "Andrew," the homosexuality story: "It is, at once,

poignant and shocking -- you may not agree with the conclusion, but I do doubt that a more sincere, evocative story has been written on this subject in the science fiction genre." Now if that isn't fishing for compliments I don't know what is. And as I said in my review, it is a rather ordinary story.



I'm not sure I understand the statement that Keith Emerson's recent stuff has been pretty much straight rock. After all, on ELP's last studio album, two of the songs (whatever their arrangements) are classical or semiclassical pieces -- Parry's "Jerusalem" and "Tocata" from Ginastera's Second Piano Concerto. Plus the second movement of "Karn Evil 9" is a piano solo, and not very rock piano either. In fact, it resembles most closely what he was doing with Nice. Now, admittedly, I haven't heard that awfully much of Nice, but the piano stuff he was doing for them really bores me to death (which is my failing, not Emerson's). The only thing I really like is "America," which is no more 'classical' than his ELP stuff. I think we have a lack of communication and proper definition here. Perhaps Steve can clarify?

Being a Hall of Famer (or prospective member) does not have anything to do with being an announcer. Pee Wee Reese, reportedly one of the game's great shortstops (I never saw him play), was the single worst announcer I ever heard, so bad he made partner Curt Gowdy look good, an accomplishment amounting to a miracle. Reese's major problem was that he did not even speak decent English (I'll never forget him referring to "Brook Robison"). My brother and I used to get a real giggle out of his idiocies.

Your comment about music to me misunderstands my point. What I meant by saying that the symphony orchestra is 'past its prime,' is that it is an artistically played-out institution, a point you made yourself. Popularity, after all, has virtually nothing to do with whether something is good or not. Elton John may be more popular than Yes or ELP, but that doesn't mean his music is better. ((Sure it does. Don't put me in the position of tacitly accepting the elitist position, por favor.) What makes one highly technical and emotionless (the latter term I wouldn't apply to either Elton John or Yes, but that's another story) musical form better than another is...but this (and why you like Elton John better) is the subject of my article, so I will go no farther here. ((Do you realize you just cost me my FAAn award? How can I impress people with my brilliantly-edited lettercol when all you do is hand me the cigar-butt-end of a rhetorical debate? Aaarggggh!!))

---

MICHAEL T. SHOEMAKER  
2123 N. Early St.  
Alexandria VA 22302

I have nothing but utter contempt for Laurine White's comment on my article. I was attempting in that article to cut down to size the absurd, fanatical reverence which is given by fandom to Knight's

essay and a certain brand of criticism which is by any literary critical standards mediocre at best. I was attempting this as much as to defend Van Vogt. Knight's arguments are shot full of holes, and in the face of mindless reverence I'm going to be damned abusive in pointing them out. Now if Ms. White has any substantial comment to make on specific points in my article and with factual documentation I'll be glad to listen.

I'll concede the point to D'Amassa on my example of THE TWO TOWERS, but I think my argument still stands on the basis of the economic factor I pointed out and the critical reception of THE GODS THEMSELVES which I also mentioned. As for subjectivity in my piece, I think it is almost non-existent, as I cite very specific facts as substantiation of what I say.

The real meat of this letter concerns the abysmal musical ignorance that abounds in your lettercolumn. Steve Simmons apparently thinks that jazz or rock musicians were the inventors of improvisation, which really dates back to early Baroque. The fact invalidates the contention of his paragraph. The problem does not exist in theory, only in execution. So who says it is easy. True art never is. Now if he wants to tell me that attempts to date of a classical-rock fusion have been unsuccessful that's one thing, but to say it is impossible is absurd. The lack of success is merely a

result of mediocre musicianship or of Simmons' unsophisticated musical ear.

Don Keller suffers to an even greater extent from this same vast generalizing in theoretical terms (as witness his first sentence). Don asks if he is wrong about the symphony orchestra. The answer is emphatically YES, though I'm very dubious about the defense that you make, Mike. The symphony orchestra is whatever the composer wants it to be. It is like the artist's palette. Saying the Symphony is past its prime is like saying the spectrum of colors is past its prime because it has been around too long. Even if symphonic music were composed entirely with a uniform orchestration there is still room for infinite variety, limited only by the composer's sensibility and imagination. In my opinion, matters of sonority and orchestration are the most fruitful areas for new developments in music. The way has been pointed out by Stravinsky in *Le Sacre, Orpheus, History of a Soldier*, etc; by Prokofiev in his *Quintet...*; by Webern in *Six Pieces Op. 6...* and by many others. But the possibilities have barely been tapped.

Keller puts his finger on the problem, probably, when he says most rock musicians are not good orchestrators. Orchestration is not an easy task. One can not just arbitrarily decide "Well, let's give this theme to this instrument, and have these others um-pah-pahing in the background," and expect the result to be satisfactory, let alone great. A prerequisite to great orchestration is thorough knowledge of the technical possibilities of your instruments as well as having their sounds and combined sounds well in mind.

I would disagree with Keller that sophistication has anything to do with form. For the most part I would equate sophistication with complexity, although this can be misleading, as complexity which obscures can be bad and simplicity which clarifies can be good. But if one is going to say anything meaningful in a discussion of music one must talk about specific technical matters, and the question of complexity is something one can discuss technically. Jazz, for the most part, is more complex than rock. Its rhythms are more complicated, it contains true contrapuntal writing, and it makes more expressive use of dynamics and tempo. Classical music in turn is even more complex in each of these areas as well as having a wider variety of instruments available for more complex variations and combinations of tone color. Keller briefly mentions the development of themes, yet development seems to be a concept mostly alien to rock fans (as well as jazz fans), and it seems to be the greatest barrier to rock fans' appreciation of classical music. I find this the biggest chasm between the genres. Whereas classical music flows continuously and has variety within unity, rock proceeds by spurts, from one short piece to another. The concept of development demands great attention and patience for full appreciation, but one can appreciate the melody and regularity of rhythm in rock with little attention and patience.

((The technical comparisons of the various forms are nothing I'm prepared to get into, but the fact remains that an orchestra is primarily for live performance, and for non-electric instruments -- therefore it takes little advantage of studio technology and production. I would submit that the kind of doctoring evident in the Beatles' "A Day In The Life," for example, shows a whole other area of rock's use of counterpoint -- ersatz as it may be -- and another area of complexity in 'orchestration' if not in composition. ...And I'm sure you'll let me know if I'm speaking through my chapeau...))

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HALF PAST HUMAN, and THE GODWHALE by T. J. Bass

Dallantine 1975

Reviewed by Don Ayres

I'm not sure that Huxley started the whole thing with *BRAVE NEW WORLD*; I wouldn't be surprised to find out that others preceded him in his story of a controlled state, but he carried it to a detailed perfection in that work -- so detailed that everybody since can hardly help seeming to rework the same ground. Enter T. J. Bass, with his idea of



of a vast underground computerized complex called the Hive. Conditions on planet Earth are so bad that every available inch of tillable land must be utilized to support the existing humanity -- four toed Nebishes, mostly clones... Oh, there's a handful of wild renegades -- Five-toes -- that the Hive (Earth Society) continues to hunt down both for sport and because they raid the crops ES needs so desperately. Aside from the hunters, only the agromechs are given the opportunity to roam the fields, but it's just as well, since the unprotected skin of the Hive-dwellers is incapable of withstanding direct sunlight.

This is the basic setting for both novels, THE GODWHALE appearing to occur slightly later in time. The protagonist -- if such a word is applicable -- of HALF PAST HUMAN is a Hive citizen named Moses Eppendorff, who doesn't appear until page 41 and half-a-dozen other important figures have been introduced and dominated the story, despite the fact that the bulk of the novel will be concerned with Moses. And the name is Significant, even if Bass does cover up for it pretty well until the Exodus.

Despite some bits of awkward writing, especially early in the novel, Bass manages the difficult feat of juggling his protagonists so that their periodic meetings seem credible -- since they number almost a dozen, it's no small task. The annoying part is that certain of them are off-stage for such long periods that you begin to wonder why Bass bothered to spend the time with them in the beginning. Moses' entrance, for example, is so much en passant that his impending domination of the book is by no means apparent. At a practical level, this leaves the burden of sorting out the characters and keeping them straight in the readers' minds. A smaller cast would definitely seem in order.

The plot moves along well as long as you keep your scorecard handy, and is quite suitably convoluted to keep your interest from waning. Enough attention has been paid to the background to make the squalor of life in the Hive and the long rows of faceless nebishes disgustingly present. Where Bass really excels are the many moments when some sort of medical description is appropriate. He discusses anatomical and physiological scenes with such disarming casualness that the reader swallows it easily in spite of the technical jargon involved. The facility with which Bass handles these situations and the accuracy of same leads me to believe that he has at the least had advanced medical training.

Aldous Huxley, in his society, had two misfits to deal with: one who was not successfully conditioned and dominates the first part of the book, and one who is not conditioned at all by the society and is the subject of the second part. Bass has both in abundance. The Hive is a bit more advanced, in that it prevents puberty in its citizens.

In fact, most of the problems the Hive has with its citizens (if we ignore the suicides) seems to be with the ones who are sexually normal, all of whom seem to come popping up at the same time. Since the Hive reproduces most of its members by cloning anyway, the logical thing to do would be to leave the inhabitants pre-pubescent. The chances of becoming inbred are already hazardously great. If you choose that argument against it, all the genetics is handled by the biologists at the cloning stations when it comes right down to it.

The shortages of food, of equipment, of professional skilled workers all relate directly to the population. The obvious thing to do is to lower it, but that's something the Hive apparently can't do. The answer is provided in THE GODWHALE, where we learn that cutting back the population output from the clones would result in the diminution of services and trained personnel. (This, of course, is rubbish, unless Bass is prepared to demonstrate that learned activities are inherited genetically.)

Like its predecessor, THE GODWHALE juggles a host of characters around quite success-

fully, including ARNOLD, a special clone designed to hunt out the marine-dwelling Benthics who raid the Hive's gardens; and Ode and Drum, who've reached the retirement age, 50, and suddenly are forced either to go to work in the sewers or be placed in temporary suspension until more food is available.

Ode and Drum are the specific items of interest here, for they demonstrate most forcefully the major problem with Bass' characters. They are, when introduced, such recluses that they are unable to get three votes each to keep them from going into temporary suspension. One had been a musician, the other a chess grandmaster (both consistent occupations in a starvation-plagued community where the reader receives not the slightest glimpse of such recreations in the gray, moving masses). They go into the sewer-cleaning business rather than be suspended and they are shortly (figuratively) given new bionic parts and special rations and elevated into command positions; Ode becoming the captain of the harvester "Rorqual Maru" and Drum placed in charge of the ARNOLD project after the Benthics wound Ode. Obviously Drum's background makes him the ideal choice for the position, as it will also later make him the choice for Chairman of the Committee....

I know quite well that there are any number of individuals who can function well at a diverse number of occupations, but Bass' characters have this disturbing habit of casually assuming reins of command without having shown a predisposition for rule and from which they periodically regress to thumb-sucking imbecility before taking command once more. And all the while, all the nebishes around them show nothing but the befuddlement and zombie-like behavior of the workers in Lang's METROPOLIS.

As much as I believe that the majority of the population in our own day does everything it can to be sure that somebody else makes the decisions, I find this continuous gray-faced mass which suddenly springs to life when one of its number allies himself to the story's protagonists incongruous. Particularly when the rest remain walking hunks of meat. Ultimately, of course, only the corpses remain loyal to the Hive; everybody who assumes human characteristics is fighting it. Strange.

Let me assure you, however, that Bass rarely lets these incongruities disturb the pace of the story. It is only afterward that one begins to see certain of the societal concepts wilting. Indeed I thought of few of these until I began the review. And THE GODWHALE is particularly disquieting in this respect; the elapsed time of the story covers a couple of generations, which does give the characters ample time to change, but not the reader, for the elapsed time is handled so superficially.

A writer can profit from the novels, especially the medical atmosphere, but a writer can learn something from everything he reads if he puts his mind to it. Given a choice I'd suggest HALF PAST HUMAN as a more interesting and better constructed book, though neither impressed me as front-line -- or even second -- work. But I note that I read each in two sittings, which says something for them.

---

STEVE MILLER  
115 Willow Bend Dr., Apt. 3-A  
Owings Mills, MD 21117

Look, let's start with the problem of "what should we collect first?" Given a librarian interested in old books, or rare books, the budget will be sent off in lots of little envelopes to the specialists

who sell Lovecraft originals at high prices. Given a Librarian interested in magazine history, you'll end up with partial collections of the pulp zines -- material that will be extremely hard to use for classes. If you try to support an ongoing science fiction course at a university that means you are buying recent books, so you get a standing order that brings in a few good books and lots of junk. Of course, there are other problems. Science departments can't understand why you would waste



money on purchasing SF when some obscure journal of physical chemistry that two professors in twelve years will read needs to be bought.

The point is that an entire library must make up its mind to collect and understand sf before anything really worthwhile can happen -- at least without a grant. If the reference department turns down your request for Tuck or Torsin, not to mention the SFBR Index, you're not operating at the proper level. If there is any sniping from within the library you are going to have lots of problems.

At UBMC there are collections to make the mouth water -- fanzines dating back to the 30s, complete runs of FUTURIA FANTASIA and SPACEWAYS, Zelazny manuscripts, AMAZING from number 1, etc. Much of the material in the hardback section is only second rate, however, due to the hope that someday somebody will donate a lot of hardbacks, just as someone donated a lot of paperbacks and pulps. The hardback reprints come in if they are part of a standing order, and do not if they aren't. Students and faculty can ask for books, but that doesn't mean that the books will come in. For example, when I started at UMBC in May 1974 I ordered about one hundred books that I felt were very urgently needed. Eight months later many of the order forms were returned to me -- they'd been misplaced somewhere in the ordering procedure and were out of date. After I ordered them again, some of the books arrived in as little time as 16 weeks. Others had not arrived when I left the job in October 1975. The problem is not simply that UMBC is that bad, it's that University Libraries are that complicated! If a Curator, Librarian or specialist is not given a totally free hand, no amount of advice will more than dent that academic wall -- and that's when the person in question agrees with you and wants to help. Otherwise your advice is ignored or buried in the circular file.

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((THE following remarks are Don Keller's reply to Michael Bishop's letter of comment on page 24)): Well, this is the latest in a long series of my wording things wrong in SCIENTIFRICTION. I would have thought that it was clear from context that my non-excitement was not a lessening of my enjoyment of the story. As CS Lewis points out, the good reader should be receptive to 'the spirit in which it was writ', and since "The Samauri and the Willows" was so steeped in the philosophy of the samauri that...well, Japanese in general and samauri in particular are taught not to get excited in the normal sense of that term, so I felt the same way: serene, quietly joyful, but not (emotionally) excited. I suppose that is where I went wrong; I have to say that intellectually (in appreciation of story shape and structure and wholeness) I was excited; but it is not an intentionally exciting story in the same sense that (say) "On the Street of the Serpents" or A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE are in parts. As I said, I think "The Samauri and the Willows" is one of your two finest stories; and I don't think there are many people more excited than I am at the prospect of each new Michael Bishop story, OK? -- Donald G. Keller.

---

DAVE ROWE  
8 Park Drive  
Wickford, Essex, UK.

No doubt you've received other letters saying the same but...the cast of Monty Python did not come from "I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again." John Cleese is the only member of both casts. As ISIRTA, which

apparently had a strong following in Britain in its day (including the time one band had it on at one end of the con hall whilst the GoH gave her speech at the other) is probably the last of the great British radio shows, it's worthwhile noting its history and the way it affected TV humor -- ultimately resulting in MPFC.

Every year the Cambridge University Footlights Dramatic Club 'put on' the end of term "Footlight Reviews" (This, and its rival Oxford group have produced such names as Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller of "Beyond the Fringe" fame).

1963's was "Cambridge Circus," and was so successful that it went to London, then toured New Zealand(!) and ended up on Broadway. In the meantime they'd recorded an experimental series for BBC, "I'm Sorry, I'll Read That Again." When they returned it became a full-time job and ran until '69 (maybe '70) -- on several occasions the BBC planned to close it but its following was too strong. It even made a reappearance in '73 -- but for one series only. The cast was Tim Brooke-Taylor, John Cleese, Graeme Garden, David Hatch, Jo Kendall and Bill Oddie. In 1967 "At Last The 1948 Show" appeared on ITV (cast: Tim Brooke-Taylor, John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Marty Friedman and Aimi MacDonald). The scripts were more towards MP, but lacked the visuals. At the same time "Do Not Adjust Your Sets" appeared in the Childrens slot which was pretty much the same sort of sketches without the swearing -- the cast included Eric Idle, (and Michael Palin?) and The Bonzo Dog Band and was produced by Humphrey Barclay who did ISIRTA. In fact there were several attempts to make a telly version of ISIRTA again, including "Twice a Fortnight" and "Broaden Your Mind" before Python came along.

ISIRTA was far superior to Python, it had incredible scripts, not only of First Class quality (with something like 6 MAs working on it it damn well ought to) but also because of its laugh-a-line humor which tends to accumulate like a runaway snowball. Strangely enough the best visual son of ISIRTA has been the one to break away from the short sketch framework, "The Goodies" boosted by Graeme Garden and Bill Oddie's deceptively 'simple' scripts... ((As you said in your letter later, the first few "Goodies" weren't so hot. I've seen only one, and it was so bad I turned it off fifteen minutes after it started. It was worse than the most cliched American variety show skits, which is going some. I'll have to take your word that it improved. But I strongly disagree that "I'm Sorry, I'll Read That Again" was "far superior" to Monty Python. The radio show was much wittier than the usual situation comedy, and punned unashamedly, but its roots were much the same as a lot of 1940s American radio comedy shows. Funnier, but not nearly as different as Monty Python, nor as bawdy, as surreal, in short, no where near as good. ISIRTA provoked laughter -- but at its best Monty Python boggles the mind.))

PAULA SMITH  
507 Locust St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Mike Glycer? Oh, yes, that tall, tanned, masculine fellow at Confusion. Good looking, too. And generous, gave me a copy of his zine. All that great-hearted chap desired was a loc. Ah-yahp. Loc. Scientifricition. Right then. Uh-huh. Mmm. --Boy, that three-toed slob wouldn't give a freebie to his aged wrinkled grammaw.

ther since my step-father's name is Chapdelaine, not mine!

PERRY CHAPDELAINE  
Rt. 4 Box 137  
Franklin, TN 37064

Your Henri Chapdelaine article shows me a man of no guts, namely, you! You

published the most lucid, least controversial piece, namely the geologic evidence in support of Noah and his flood. Why not the parthenogenesis piece? THAT's where the real controversy is! (I would not be ashamed to admit to relationship of genetic nature with Henri, but alas! I believe it would be about as close as between you and me. Actually it is much fur-

Space does not permit me to excerpt more letters, nor are there that many more. So let us bow our WAHFs and list these worthy folks: George Flynn, Laura Trask (who asks "Is slightly warm wine from Mike Glicksohn better than none at all?"), George Fergus, Sam Long, Sheryl Birkhead, Rich Bartucci (whose LoC I intend to quote next issue), and Dave Locke (whose polemicaloc will serve as prolog to Keller's piece in PREHENSILE -- the one alluded to in the editorial). And yes, Raoul, there seems to be a PREHENSILE. Stay tuned to this mailbox for further information.

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