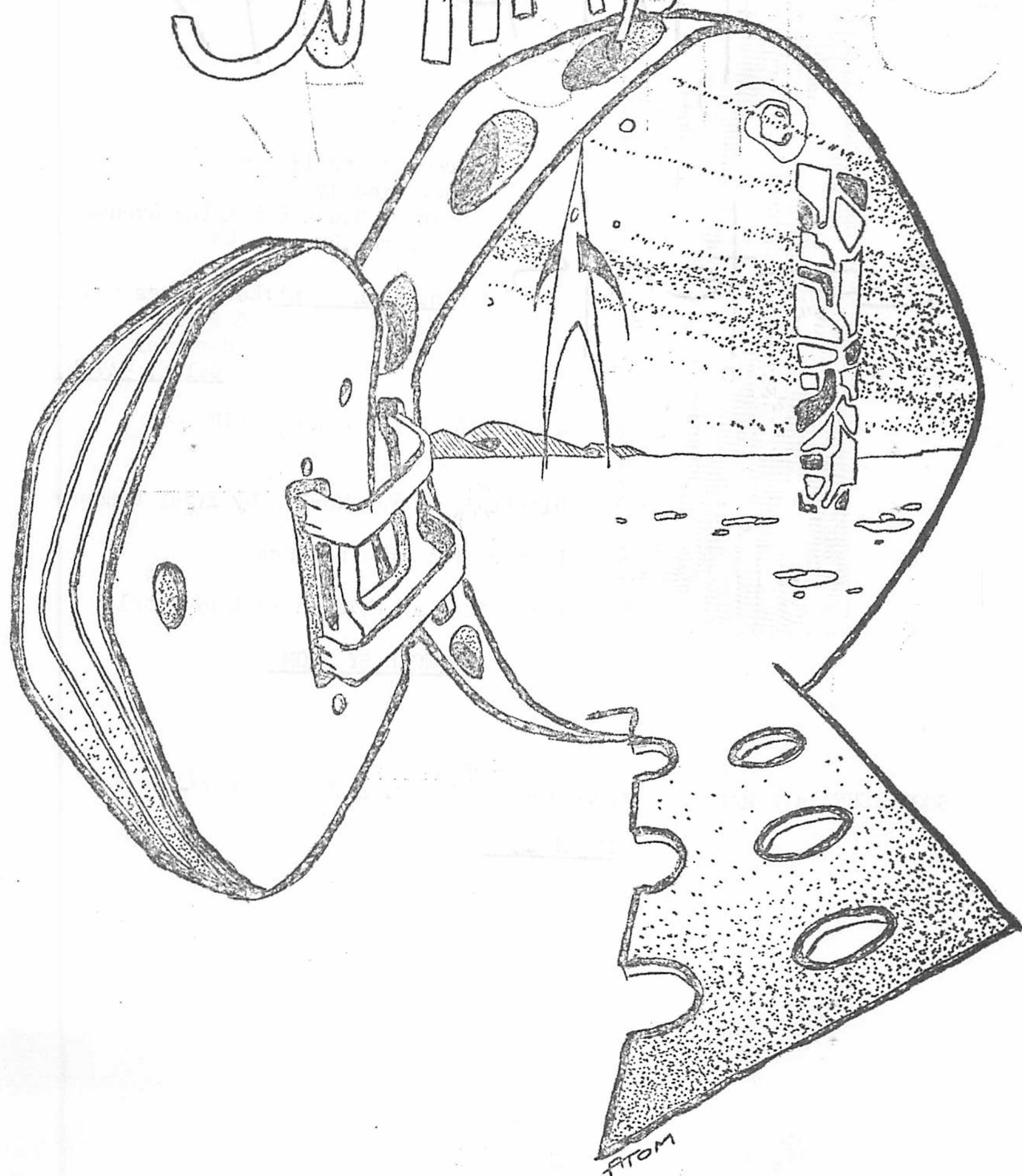


Supertank



SCOTTISHE

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Contents

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A MEMORIAL PAGE TO RON ELLIK

Nibblings at New Worlds by Ethel Lindsay

Letters from the Readers

Natterings on this 'n that by Ethel

ARTWORK BY ATOM

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MARCH 1968

In the death of Ron Ellik by one of those senseless accidents that always seem so unfair; fandom has been robbed of a universally popular fan. A young man at the height of his power, with a glowing future before him - this is always the hardest death to which we can reconcile ourselves.

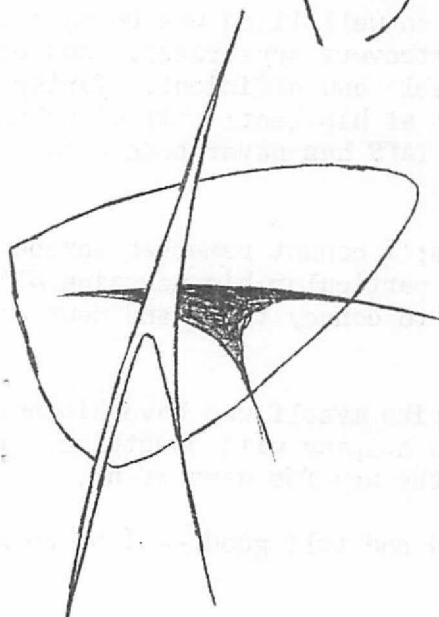
I think one of the reasons Ron was so well liked was because he had a basic seriousness beneath his happy extrovert appearance. Ron could seem so carefree -- and yet be so capable and efficient. During his time as TAFF Administrator he was seen at his best; full of bubbling enthusiasm and very practical ideas. TAFF has never been conducted so well before or since.

His style with words was inimitable; I cannot remember anyone who made me laugh so often as I read. In particular his newszine STARSPINKLE can stand as a shining example of how to convey facts and news and entertain at the same time.

He was a good friend to many fans like myself who have kindnesses to remember. I never knew him but he was helping with something, or giving help to someone. He smoothed the way for many of us.

I never thought of Ron but I smiled and felt good -- I am so glad that I knew him.

Nibblings



ethel
indsey

This time I'd like to nibble away at the subject of NEW WORLDS. One cannot start to consider this SF magazine without reflecting upon its editor-Mike Moorcock. I can remember Mike when he first came into fandom - just another fan attending the GLOBE on Thursday evenings. One night, he, Arthur Thomson and myself left together. We stopped in at the office where Mike was working as editor of TARZAN COMICS. I was intrigued to discover that Mike has as many fans as he could writing for this. Even then, Mike's instinct was to help a fan become a professional, if he possibly could. What stands out most in my mind about that evening was listening to Arthur expound to Mike the difference between a Truefan and an ordinary fan. Mike listened very seriously.

Mike has his feet firmly planted in fandom; but how much attention he pays to what we say, I do not know. I do know, however, that he once spent twenty minutes of his time at a GLOBE evening, trying to persuade me to see that what he was trying to do with NEW WORLDS was worthwhile. At the time, I was niggled by remarks from pro-Ballard fans intimating that I (and others like me) did not like Ballard's style because we were not intelligent enough to understand it. I can recall heatedly telling Mike that in that week I'd had my usual catholic reading range which reached from THE STORY OF O to THE

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BORROWERS... "and what greater range could you get than that!" I also threw a few authors' names at him starting with Gide and Proust on the lines of "if I can understand these...." I found Mike sympathetic to this and earnestly intent on assuring me that I ought to try what he had coming up in NEW WORLDS. As much because I felt it was kind of Mike to have listened to my hurled remarks as anything, I promised to read NW for six months.

The first hitch came in finding NW; I gather the distribution problem has been Mike's biggest bother. Certainly the last week in February of this year is the first time I have spotted it on sale at W.H.Smiths.

I waited until I had gathered up a few issues before I started to read in earnest and, I want to make it clear at the beginning, I was favourably impressed. Perhaps it was because I first read Thomas Disch's CONCENTRATION CAMP and found it told an absorbing story. After that I was more disposed to plow through the rest to see what other nuggets I might be missing by a casual glance that assumed all was a la Ballard.

The magazine looks well, the paper is good, I like the size and the production is lavish. The covers have been a startling mixture, some I quite liked; others I felt were a bit much. But if they are to catch the eye of the browser and non-SF reading public - the last one ought to do the trick. It has a crimson background with a picture of the Beatle's Guru inset in shocking-green. The issues I have are—July, Aug, Sept, Nov, 67 and Dec/Jan, Feb and Mar. '68. The earlier ones are headed—"Speculative Fiction" By Jan the heading reads "Fiction.Science.Art". The last issue has no heading at all. In other words - drop the SF title that may put off the customers..make the cover contemporary and psychedelic(whatever that may mean)and hope to haul in some more readers. Fair enough, Mike has really struggled hard to keep NW above water.

Let me get out of the way what I do not like. The articles on art and sculpture—there are plenty other magazines which deal with these subjects. I dislike the lack of even a small editorial. Only the last issue has something that might have come from the editor; although it mostly concentrates on the authors. It does make an editorial statement.."We've some excellent fiction for you this month, coupled with poetry, graphics, and features which, we hope, will complement one another to produce that particular synthesis of fiction, art and science that we are aiming for in New Worlds". At last something we can get hold of..it is very difficult to tell an editor whether you agree he is reaching his aim if he never says what it is.

The articles are a mixed batch; again one can get science articles in NEW SCIENCE if this is what one wants. I tell you freely I merely skimmed through them all, enough to tell me that they will interest SF readers who like to keep up with the latest. Budding authors would also find them good breeding grounds for ideas. The best article was by Langdon Jones on the subject of Mervyn Peake; there is also a trite article on McLuhan, and a mere nibble at the subject of E.M.S.H. The book reviews are all good and given generous amounts of space.

So now, at long last, we come to the fiction.

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Many stories are fascinated by the subject of LSD and its effects, an example being James Sallis' KAZOO, which interprets the effect of this drug, and the unreal world that it presents to the characters. The story assumes a world in which this is universal. However, the largest tackling of this subject comes from Brian Aldiss in a series of stories featuring the same characters and background. Aldiss presents a world in which there has been a war and in which the bombs that were dropped were filled with chemicals. He describes the atmosphere saturated with drugs that distort the perceptions..and writes about areas in which the polluted air is thicker than in others. Aldiss shares with other writers a tendency to have the characters both speak and think in very literary language. Michael Butterworth, for instance, has one character thinking -"Granular images blocked in the electric dark of my skull". That, if we are to believe the writer, is the thought from an astronaut.

In a way, Aldiss has the greater justification for the use of flowery language as all his characters are survivors of the "Acid Head War" who have been sprayed with the "Psycho-Chemical Aerosols". He certainly has an absorbing story to tell, which probably reads better if you can read it all at once, as I did. The main character, Charteris, imagines himself to be a prophet and, only at the end, briefly, recognises reality and realises that he had "godded himself because they had to have a god". All the same, Aldiss lapses into being specific when he has to help his plot along; and once you spot this you may eye the other use of language with some cynicism. For one passage that describes the sexual act, he has saved his frothiest language..."I teened tined without embarkration down that slitway my jolly tarjack yearning for the fretdom of this narrow finecoment swished-for incunceration ounspeaking O where noughtical men wisely feast ins silence"....it goes on for paragraphs! Nevertheless he can turn brisk and we get -"So he understood that the reports were true that Cass and Buddy pushed heroin".

The writers have all realised that to sell to Mike they must experiment with both form and style. Sometimes this comes off for me, sometimes it does not. I have to admit that experimentation could be very good for SF. A good deal is written in the present tense.."He walks, He goes". This is not particularly new; and I feel it is very restricting to the writer. With this comes a habit of presenting a story as if it were a film script. No doubt the reader is meant to use his imagination in place of the film screen that should go with the words. Or you could turn on the TV of course.

Naturally the use of symbolism has not been omitted; John Slade's MASTERTON AND THE CLERKS being a prime example. This story of a warehouse with a "Boss" at the top; full of clerks at work, strongly reminded me of something else I had read. It took a while to realise that only in the story of Gormengast were there more meaningless movements and actions so loaded with significance. Having recognised the source; I can say I did not find it as good as the original.

Oddly enough, coupled with the excessive use of imagery in all the writings, goes the overuse of that plain anglo-saxon word that begins with F. No doubt this is something we will have to live with till authors get over the novelty of seeing it in print. Having agreed that it is a word in great

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verbal use - one would like to see the dullness of its constant use in these stories removed.

There is a great deal of pessimism towards the future. An example could be Chas. Platt's THE CITY DWELLERS, in which we find the following... "The city's effect on the individual, involving him in a world of mechanical substitutes for real living until he had become absorbed into the lifelessness of his environment was important.... Economic and sociological factors, as well as propaganda, state-supported birth control with declining interest in life shown by the city dwellers all acted against the rising birth rate, reversing it...". "Mechanical substitutes" for "real life" seem to be a real bogey to some SF authors. I believe that some of them wouldn't recognise "real life" if it sat up and bit them in the leg! Yes, plenty of pessimism abounds - no writer foresees a happier or better world. Aldiss has an acid war; Platt has a city emptying and indulging in senseless riots as it goes; Disch has a government that would experiment with drugs upon its citizens; and in varying degrees all the writers foresee nothing but doom, decay, and decadence. Only one story has a 'happy' future. This is AN AGE by Aldiss. In this it is discovered that time really runs backwards; and we all grow back into the womb. Well - it might suit some folks, at that.

There is a fair amount of interest in the mistreatment and discrimination against negroes. It is hard, sometimes, to avoid sounding rather superior in one's liberality about this subject; and some of the writers do not, to me, avoid sounding as if they were conscious of how 'good' they were about this. It is the same sort of feeling that produces distaste at Platt's little sermon to the readers on the fact that, due to commercialisation, there is "always a bigger freak-out". His selection of comic strips, adverts, etc, cleverly illustrates his theme..but are SF readers the audience that needs this lecture?

The influence of Ballard on many of the shorter story writers is clearly seen. However you are given a clear signal on this by the use of those headed paragraphs which look so old-fashioned to me. Mind you, there isn't always a warning signal. There is one short story that finishes with the words - "They run" - written 15 times. This had no headed paragraphs to warn me off, which I thought was unfair.

The largest amount used of this headed paragraph lark comes from Lang Jones in his EYE OF THE LENS. This, we are told, is to consist of a group of stories; and there is a long explanation. Lang says "In literature we have for too long had the opportunity of seeing only works with a strong and rigid surface formation... Both music and painting have a steady tradition of development of techniques that has been lacking in literature..." Surely it isn't true that there has been no experimentation with the form and structure of writing? How long has Stein been dead? I can understand what Lang wants to do; and in this group no doubt he has a story to tell. Only he isn't telling it to me. I can't make head nor tail of it and what I do understand makes me shudder. If I can use that analogy of painting - it is like when I went to the Tate Gallery. I looked at a painting by Dali and at least he gave me something on which to use my imagination. I also looked at a painting by an artist who had covered his canvas with layers of

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black..and it left me without a notion of what he was thinking when he had painted it.

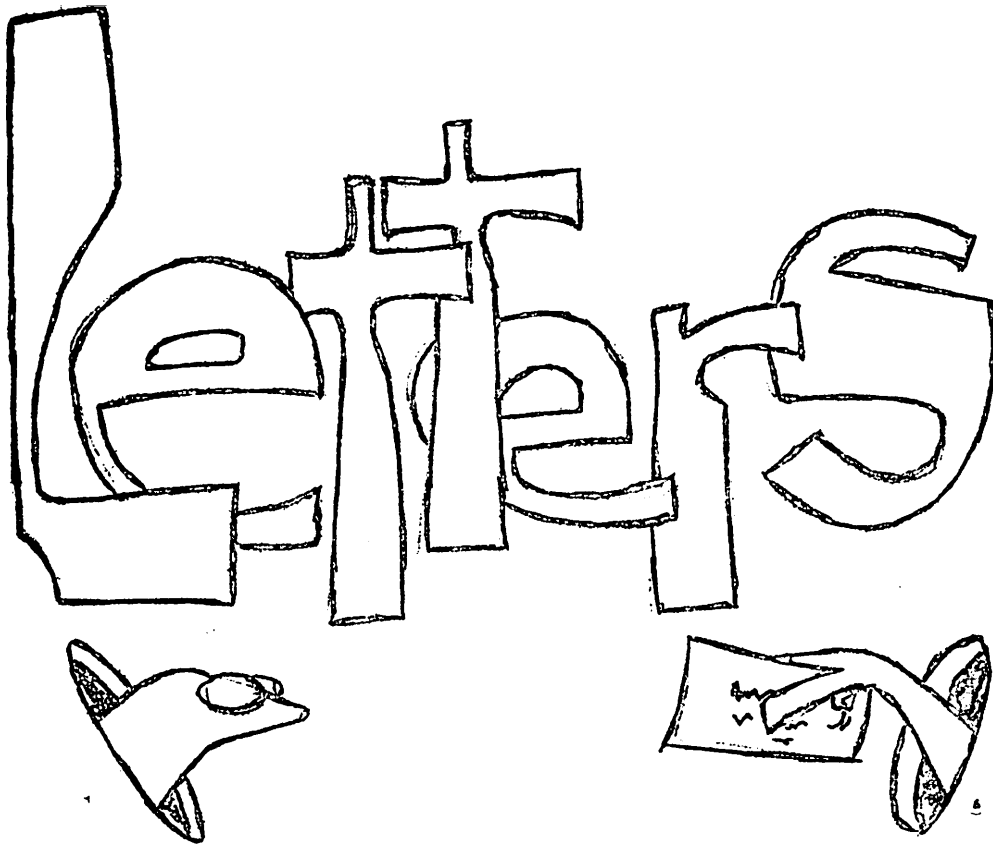
CAMP CONCENTRATION by Thomas Disch is the best of the fiction. This tells the story of Louis Sacchetti, a poet, who is forcibly taken to Camp Archimedes where he discovers the inmates are volunteers for experimentation with a new drug. He is told that he is to be their observer and chronicler.. The idea of the drug is rather clever--"Pallidine, derived from the Spirochaeta Pallida, the causative agent of syphilis. The drug produces a two-fold effect: it heightens the intellectual power exponentially and produces a series of increasingly acute sicknesses, beginning with boils, chancres, dizziness, and nausea, and climaxing inexorably in death within nine months of its injection. There is no cure." The idea is clever because, in fact, syphilis does eventually affect the brain; and Disch's explanation of the new drug sounds at least possible. The increase of intelligence to superman level has never had a more plausible-sounding explanation in an SF story.

Such is the morality of the times forseen by this story that the experiment can come under the heading of "weapon research." The suspense of what will happen next is well thought out--and I really did look forward to reading the next issue after a cliffhanging episode finishes with Sacchetti discovering that he had also been infected by the drug. The next discovery is that the disease is communicable and that it has got outside the walls of the camp. The final denouement comes as a surprise which I'll leave to the readers to discover for themselves..it is the type of plot that justifies re-reading the story in the light of the ending. . One had to admit that NEW WORLDS is probably the only SF magazine that would have published this story.

The other serial that interests me is called BUG JACK BARRON by Norman Spinrad. This is not yet concluded, I think I'll wait till the next SCOT to comment upon it. I am eagerly awaiting the next instalment. As you can see, from this statement, NEW WORLDS has got me hooked!

Having decided that I will continue to buy NW, I also decided that I could serve the magazine best by buying it from Smiths, rather than by taking out a subscription. Demand at the booksellers is obviously what NEW WORLDS needs most. I recommend you to do the same.

Ethel Lindsay.



Richard Labonte: "Your comment about the opening of stately homes to the public, made me think of Hampstead House, which is one I visited while I was in England last summer. It seems a shame that such a beautiful house has to be turned into a tourist trap in order to pay its way. Now, I'm glad I saw it, and I suppose it's for the best that what beauty these houses have be allowed to pay for itself; but I felt guilty, even as I oohed and aashed at the great dining-room, and the portraits lining the staircase, and the library and all, because I felt I was trespassing... I read about the telephone operators who started the "I'm Backing Britain" campaign by volunteering to work half an hour overtime. They seem to have started something which is good for the spirit of the country. With my total ignorance of economics, I can't understand why the unions are so bothered by the fact that people are willing to work a bit harder than nothing. It seems to me that the union exists for the worker's own good; the worker doesn't exist because of the union. In the back of my mind I have this little seed of resentment about unions; I dislike the thought that I'll be practically forced into a union if I get a job which requires it when I finish school. And I resent the British unions crying because their workers are willing, for a change, to do something for nothing. Are they afraid management is going to put something over on the employee?"

***It was typists who started that campaign..the firm is just across the road from the Eye Hospital where I worked. The notion that working for an unpaid half-hour was a new idea--struck the nursing staff as rather hilarious. A young typist doing a not very hard job is a different kettle of fish from a married man with a family to support working at a

heavy factory job. As to your resentment of unions. Unions, you know are not an abstract thing..they are made up of workers. Pressure to join will come from your fellow-workers. Why not read about the history of unions? Find out what conditions were like for the workers before they came into being. You may then feel differently about them.***

Harry Warner: "The cover last issue makes me feel like a man of the world, because I understand this one, involving as it does Russia. This is much better than being provincial or ignorant enough to puzzle over the cover about '45...All these people are arguing over minority groups and their ghettos, but nobody seems concerned over the gradual creation of new ghettos over here. The hippies or whatever the favoured name for them happens to be just now are gradually segregating in certain parts of a few cities. What's going to happen if these people maintain their behaviour patterns for a generation or two? If they're causing so much indignation among the Rotarians today, what kind of treatment will they suffer around the end of the century, if they find themselves unable to emerge from a self-created ghetto?...Your remark about the quick appearance of bells for the public after the Beatles started to wear bells causes me to wonder how much coordination exists between entertainers such as these and the whole commercial establishment. I can't imagine that the bells appeared on sale in response to requests from the kids who wanted to wear them; there must have been some sort of conspiracy to get them ready in advance and put them on sale after just a decent interval of a few days. I remember when the Beatles made their first appearance in the country, I was struck by the inundation of Beatle merchandise that soon flooded the stores. There couldn't have been time to place orders on the basis of the Beatles' new popularity; there must have been an effort to promote the Beatles via merchandise, besides the promotion of merchandise via the Beatles."
 Shame on you! Knowing more about Russia than you do about Scotland! I always thought that there were firms that specialised in jumping on whatever band wagon was rolling...bells one week...buttons the next, like. Take the military uniform fashion. This started by some kids buying fancy military jackets from second-hand stores..next thing they are being sold at inflated prices in all the bigger stores. Cloaks are another that came from the second-hand stores into the pop market. Fashion has been coming from the bottom up over here ever since the Teddy Boys that Rick was enquiring about.

Robert Coulson: "Tribal cultures are important, says Ian Peters, and we should cherish them as we would a rare plant. Trouble is, they are not rare plants, and his argument works out to a plea for keeping several thousand human beings in ignorance and poverty. Deliberate destruction is wrong, but the tribes are doomed anyway, because, despite what he thinks about it, there is a steady drain of younger tribesmen who prefer the evils of civilisation. Spiritual freedom is all very well, but very few people prefer it to material comfort. Those who do, of course, should be allowed to live as they choose—within reason; the American Indian cannot live as a roaming hunter because there isn't all that much land or game left. Providing some work and income will do the tribes a lot more good than cherishing their spirits—of course, we aren't doing that, either, but it's what we should be doing."

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Ann Chamberlain: "...that piece of poetry with which you finished off last issue speaks so well for books but rather depreciates friends. I never had a book that could reach down into its pocket and fish me out some friendly green with which I could fill the gnawing hole in my tummy:.... whocaras, if I am out of reading matter I can often remember beautiful things I HAVE read, which will stimulate imagination enough that I can write something in response. Books are very self-contained too, but they are meant for anyone or everyone....Some people get hung up on reading biographies. I've just read.. "Constant discovered, to his intense fury, that Madame de Staël was having an affair with a guardsman far younger than himself, and a stupid guardsman at that. He complained to a friend that the man had no conversation. Perhaps, the friend suggested, 'speech is not his language.'"

Oh dear no, I wouldn't depreciate friends, I appreciate all mine very much. I think, however, that the poem meant to point out how unchanging is the pleasure from a book. Friends are, after all, human, they cannot be perfect. Even the very best of friends can hurt—we are none of us perfect. But a book can be perfect.

Roy Tackott: "I am wants me to elaborate my view on total integration of the Indian. We are a greatly mixed people. We have here representatives of almost every culture the world has produced and for the most part we have mixed together fairly well. There still are some rather large lumps in the melting pot but given time I think we can work them out. But to a large degree the various ethnic groups, while blending into the overall mass of society, have retained much of their old cultures. Every city which contains ethnic groups apart from the WASP mass finds these groups have formed clubs or whatever to preserve the old ways. Folk culture, if you will. There are Greek clubs and German clubs and Polish clubs and assorted loose associations of almost anything else you can think of. These people all accept the "American way of life" (whatever that may be) and at the same time maintain their historical traditions. Including even the Indians in the east. I think the best thing we could do for the Indian is close the reservation and get him into the pot with the rest of us. The closed society of the reservation is self defeating. We have here in Albuquerque for instance, various Indian "colonies". The people hold jobs and watch tv and shop in the supermarkets and all the rest and once a month or so hold a meeting to participate in various ceremonials and handle whatever business there is that pertains to the tribe. It works for some and it could work for all. No, I can see no reason for maintaining tribal societies. Are we to leave the Navajos on the reservation, the Bushmen to scratch for food in the Kalahari and an assortment of other primitive or semi-primitive people outside the mainstream of 20th century culture because they are quaint and traditional? Pfu! One world, Ian, with one great overall culture--- and plenty of room for all sorts of subcultures. Lest anyone say that I advocate the spreading of the American way of life throughout the world let me say that I really don't. But what I do advocate is spreading the 20th century throughout the world. Millions starve in India because of tradition. Tradition, who needs it?"

Ian Peters: "It seems I have done John Boardman an injustice by dubbing him a reactionary. I am willing to accept Wee Ethel's opinion that we have much in common and I can assure John there is nothing personal in

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our disagreement. I do take exception to Robert Coulson's innuendos about my concern with improving countries other than my own (Englishman indeed!). As it happens I am making myself rather unpopular in some of the circles in which I move, Socialist, Humanist, etc. by my outspoken defence of the US especially over Viet Nam. I may not be too happy about some of their methods, mistakes, etc. but I certainly support their presence and aims. As for improving my own country: I have spent much time, energy and money working for abortion law reform; I am active in the local Human Rights Committee, dealing mainly with discrimination, sexual, racial etc. I am an active Humanist with all that implies. On this latter point I notice that Ethel fails to appreciate the Humanist attitude to religion: it is incumbent upon me as an atheist to protect the religious freedom of others. This is not altruism, it is self-protection. Ritual and taboo can be survival factors hence blanket condemnation would be absurd.

Now, back to John: I notice his latest argument is *reductio ad absurdum* -desperation or heavy-handed sarcasm? A little study of the clan system will soon reveal its dissimilarities with the feudal system. I would also question the truth of Sid Birchby's opinion, in his very interesting article, that: "All the Stuarts were bad for the country". Read a life of Charles II discarding the denigration heaped on him by the Victorian/Christian historians and you will find one of our ablest monarchs. I doubt that the Indians left on the reservations after 3 or 4 generations are second-raters; not everyone will rush to join the materialistic rat-race that seems to me the Great American Dream, an arrogant assumption responsible for much anti-Americanism. Certainly no man should be "less or more than a full citizen because of his colour"; I would also add "or because of his religion or unbelief or his desire to associate in groups within society". As Archie says, an unintegrated minority is an anathema, as witness our own gipsies. The television of torture? John must have been reading too much S-F. It appears my efforts to explain the Indian attitude to pain have puzzled both Ethel and John but it is flogging a dead horse to persist. No-one decries brutality more than I do but I find the present attitude of British people to pain somewhat repellent; they reach for the analgesic at the first little twinge: they prefer to have their animals killed rather than "see them suffer". Pain is a fact of life so it seems strange to try to abolish it completely; of course, death, birth, indeed reality itself all are tending to be lost, so much artificiality exists between man and nature. The hallucinogens were first used by Indians to "make medicine". I notice a trend today towards exploration of self by these very methods. Self-privation and torture were simply tools and have been used by many people besides Indians e.g. Christian ascetics, Yogis.

John's "parallel" with the Norse invaders etc is pretty silly. I am in most cases when discussing Indians discussing pretty recent times. The last survivors of the battle on the Little Big Horn died in my life-time. Present day injustices maintain the historic crimes. The Indian situation is a running sore on the already pockmarked face of American justice. Anyway, Wee Ethel is right: far too many fans use fandom as a substitute for doing something about society, as another means of opting out".

***How would you like it if every time I wrote your name I wrote "tall Ian"? So I'm wee..big deal! I'll never enter into your thoughts about pain..to me that is a very definite 'thing' to be combated as fiercely as death itself. As far as I am concerned the only good thing about pain is that one can never

Letters 5

remember what it felt like afterwards. It has been said.. "It is more in our power to soften ills than is commonly believed. Strictly speaking there is but one evil - acute pain- all other complaints are considerably diminished by time."***

Archie Mercer: "The "Indian"(American variety) argument seems -- stop me if I'm wrong - to have gone almost if not exactly as far as it can without beginning to pall. I would indeed be interested to see Ian write an article comparing Redskins and Highland tribalism though. I've just been reading John Myers Myers's "The Death of the Bravos", describing how the American West was taken over by the white man. He writes from a point of view not so much anti-Redskin as simply appearing to overlook the fact that American Indians should have had any particular ancestral rights. However he does say: "The Indians, be it noted, had always waged war on women and children, red as well as white." And this seems indeed to be the case, at any rate with many tribes. Can Ian draw a Scottish parallel there, I'm given to wonder?"

I agree with you that the argument has gone as far as it can go; and unless Ian comes up with that article(I'd like to see it too...)I guess I will draw it to a close in this column. One point..a sub-committee of the American Senate is to open hearings upon the present-day living of the Indian soon, chairman is to be Robert Kennedy. Ought to be lively and I'd be obliged to any US fans who could supply me with cuttings on the subject; as I doubt it will get much space here.

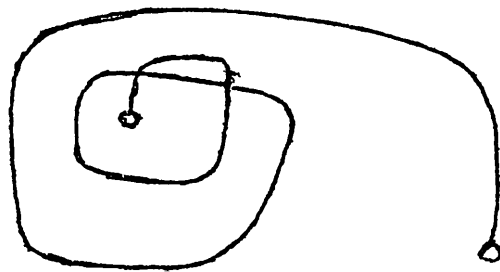
John D. Berry: "Why have you stopped putting the addresses in your letter column? I consider this a silly policy, and a downright mortal sin when I'm desperately searching through mimeographed pages for addresses. Please include addresses. Howinhell can a letter column be a place for fannish contact without them?" ***I'm very sorry that your letter came in too late for me to mend my ways this time; but I will next issue. I guess I was just being lazy..and also I give all the addresses in HAVER; and thought that it might make up for the lack in SCOT. Mind you, I do have trouble with the addresses of US fans..as they switch addresses at the drop of a hat..and never, ever, notify. So one has to try to watch out for them in SF Weekly and remember to change the cards. Naturally, someone gets missed out..I have just noticed that you have changed your address..and so probably missed the SCOT 26 that I sent to you. Goodness knows how many zines get lost in this way." End of letter column and many thanks to all who wrote..and shame on you Sid Birchby! Ethel.

Here is space to fill and I have just been reading about the new proposals from the Post Office. There is the threat that paper rate will be done away with altogether. Moan, moan, as it is my stamp bill is enormous -for apart from SCOT and HAVER..there are the letters. Why is it always my hobby they have to pick upon?

Anyway - each month I seem to get more hard up - and I guess it is about time to prune my mailing list again. To get another SCOT you must either sub or write a letter of comment..and I have to make these remarks to everyone. To those of you who do either sub or comment--many thanks I really do appreciate it and you make it worthwhile to continue;

Ethel

hatterings



.....On Going to the Con....Soon we will be off to another convention - the Mancon 111. My first con was the Mancon in 1954; what a lot of water has gone under the bridge since then! For one thing; our numbers have increased every year so that convention committees must first start to look for a hotel that will hold about 200 attendees. Another change from the days of the SuperMancon is the steady increase of foreign attenders. By now we see familiar faces coming from Germany such as Tom Schueck and Heinrich Arenz. They will both be with us again this year. We are now beginning to have more contact with Italian fandom too, thanks mainly to Gian Cossato who seems to commute between Italy and London. Of course this sort of contact can bring its shocks! At the Globe this month I sat beside Gian and heard Jean Muggoch ask him how was Venice when he left there. He replied "Very foggy!". We haven't had a fog in London all winter - wet and miserable days, yes, foggy days, no. When the word 'Venice' has been in the habit of conjuring up mixed thoughts of Romeo, gondoliers, and sunny squares...it's a bit thick to have to replace these images with - fog. Still; no doubt all this infusion of fans from Europe will do staid old British fandom some good. We shall also have some American guests this year. I see that Dave and Ruth Kyle are still faithful to us. Coming also is Steve Stiles the TAFF delegate; and Don Wollheim from ACE Books. Steve is well known for the very fine artwork he has produced in various fanzines. He is very excited about two things right now..one winning TAFF and the other the chance to illustrate for "Dr Strange" in Marvel Comics. Don will be staying in London for a few days before the con. He has been chosen as

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Guest of Honour at the coming Lunacon in New York. Don hopes to go on a book-shop tour around Oxford whilst he is here. Last time he left no book-shop unturned in the London area; and had to buy an extra carrying-case to hold all his purchases. You can see although the man is nice he is confused--he's supposed to be selling books - not buying 'em!

.....On Margery Allingham....In issue 40 of SCOT I wrote an article about this author. She has since died in June 1966. She left a book unfinished called CARGO OF EAGLES. Her husband, Youngman Carter (also a writer) has now finished and published it. I saw Carter recently, giving an interview on TV. He said that they had always fully discussed his wife's books and that she had draughted the whole plot so that it was only a matter of filling in the details. Carter said that his wife's whole family were writers; that she had been brought up to think this was the only way to make a living. Allingham had started by writing fairly routine thrillers; and then progressed to more penetrating characterisations. Latterly she had been returning to writing a "good old thriller for fun". It is possible to see this; TIGER IN THE SMOKE and HIDE MY EYES were certainly more studies of the criminal mind than mere thrillers. After these came more 'ordinary' thrillers; but these were lifted out of the common rut by her increased power of characterisation. This last book -CARGO OF EAGLES - shows all her command of plot and detail; yet the characters are curiously flat. Carter says the whole book was well discussed by them both - but I feel it lacks something of the genuine Allingham flavour. However, by buying this I discovered that there had been another book which I had missed. This has now just come out in Penguin and is called THE MIND READERS. I can highly recommend the unusual treatment she gives to this theme. You can't really call it SF; the approach is that of the thriller writer. Because of this approach there is a freshness you will enjoy. She does not blink at the idea of mind-reading becoming a reality. Amusingly enough her first reaction is that it will do away with the growing practise of bugging.

.....On buying books....Buying books is a lovely thing to do; but that is not enough for me. I want also to buy the book at less than the shop price. I hunt around among the paperbacks - an invention that was meant for folks like me. Not content with their cheapness I hunt among the second-hand pbs. Of course, another justification for pb buying is that they take up so much less space; an important consideration when you do not have much space and yet want to see your books all around you. I buy only special books in hard-cover for these reasons. Second-hand book-shops are my favourite kind of shop; if I can find a wanted book there I am a happy woman. My idea of hell would be to come out of a shop after buying a new book and see it on sale elsewhere at second hand price.

.....On poetry in fanzines....There is a lot of poetry in fanzines and a lot of it is very poor. Yet every now and then I come across one I really do like; and when I am moved to say so they usually turn out to be humorous. The fanzine ODD, No 18 had a poem called EVE which attracted my attention. The theme was that "Garden Eve" had been innocent and that after leaving the "Garden she had become aware of sin..and that men still dreamed of "Garden Eve". I thought it well done but not as good as one I had cut out of a newspaper awhile ago. I went off hunting for it and would

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like to quote it to you.

EVE TO HER DAUGHTERS...

It was not I who began it.
Turned out into draughty caves,
hungry so often, having to work for our bread,
hearing the children whining,
I was nevertheless not unhappy.
Where Adam went I was fairly contented to go.
I adapted myself to the punishment: it was my life.

But Adam, you know...!
He kept brooding over the insult,
over the trick They had played on us, over the scolding.
He had discovered a flaw in himself
and he had to make up for it.
Outside Eden the earth was imperfect,
the seasons changed, the game was fleet-footed,
he had to work for our living, and he didn't like it.
He even complained of my cooking
(it was hard to compete with Heaven).

So he set to work.
The earth must be made a new Eden
with central heating, domesticated animals,
mechanical harvesters, combustion engines,
escalators, refrigerators,
and modern means of communication
and multiplied opportunities for safe investment
and higher education for Abel and Cain
and the rest of the family.
You can see how his pride had been hurt.

In the process he had to unravel everything,
because he believed that mechanism
was the whole secret--he was always mechanical-minded
He got to the very inside of the whole machine
exclaiming as he went, So this is how it works!

And now that I know how it works, why I must have invented it.
As for God and the Other, they cannot be demonstrated,
and what cannot be demonstrated
doesn't exist.
You see, he had always been jealous.

Yes, he got to the centre
where nothing at all can be demonstrated.
And clearly he doesn't exist; but he refuses
to accept the conclusion.
You see, he was always an egotist.

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It was warmer than this in the cave;
there was none of this fall-out.
I would suggest, for the sake of the children,
that it's time you took over.

But you are my daughters, you inherit my own faults of character;
you are submissive, following Adam
even beyond existence.
Faults of character have their own logic
and it always works out.
I observed this with Abel and Cain.

Perhaps the whole elaborate fable
right from the beginning
is meant to demonstrate this; perhaps it's the whole secret.
Perhaps nothing exists but our faults?

But it's useless to make
such a suggestion to Adam
He has turned himself into God,
who is faultless, and doesn't exist.

Judith Wright

.....On Judith Wright....I cut this poem of hers out of a newspaper; and of course I have no right to reproduce it. I hope I don't get sued! But the different approach to the idea of EVE by two women (the ODD poem was written by Joyce Fisher) interested me. Anyway, I like to share my reading enjoyment. Judith Wright is an Australian and this poem was taken from a slim volume of her verse called THE OTHER HALF (Angus & Robertson, 1988) She has been acclaimed as one of Australia's greatest writers.

.....On FAPA....I received the Fantasy Amateur this week and discovered that I am now number five on the waiting list for FAPA. I was talked into putting my name on this by Phyllis Economou in 1963. Let's see now...that's only five years for me to get into spitting distance. Which is just about what Phyllis promised me. I was all set to sue her if I got in any sooner! FAPA is the oldest of the apas and once in it; folks rarely leave. At one time there was a great deal of talk about oold fans going into FAPA to hibernate. That's where they are still sneaking off to, I guess, as I run my eye down the membership rota. One odd thing though..all the members are now either US or Canadian fans; on the membership waiting list I am the only one from Britain and there are two from Sweden, one from Germany and one from Australia. Time was when there were quite a few British fans as members of FAPA. It is not as if Britain had as many apas as does the US. There is only FADS and OMPA over here. OMPA has been struggling along with mailings well overdue for quite some time. This is because, basically, we cannot get anyone to take over the editor's work. At the moment a German fan is holding this post. I can't blame anyone not wanting to take the post on, of course. Of all the posts I've held in fandom..I found the editorship of OMPA the most frustrating and the most unrewarding. Yet FAPA seems to be able to keep the same officials for quite long periods. Oh well, I suppose it isn't really any odder than anything else in this odd world of ours.

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