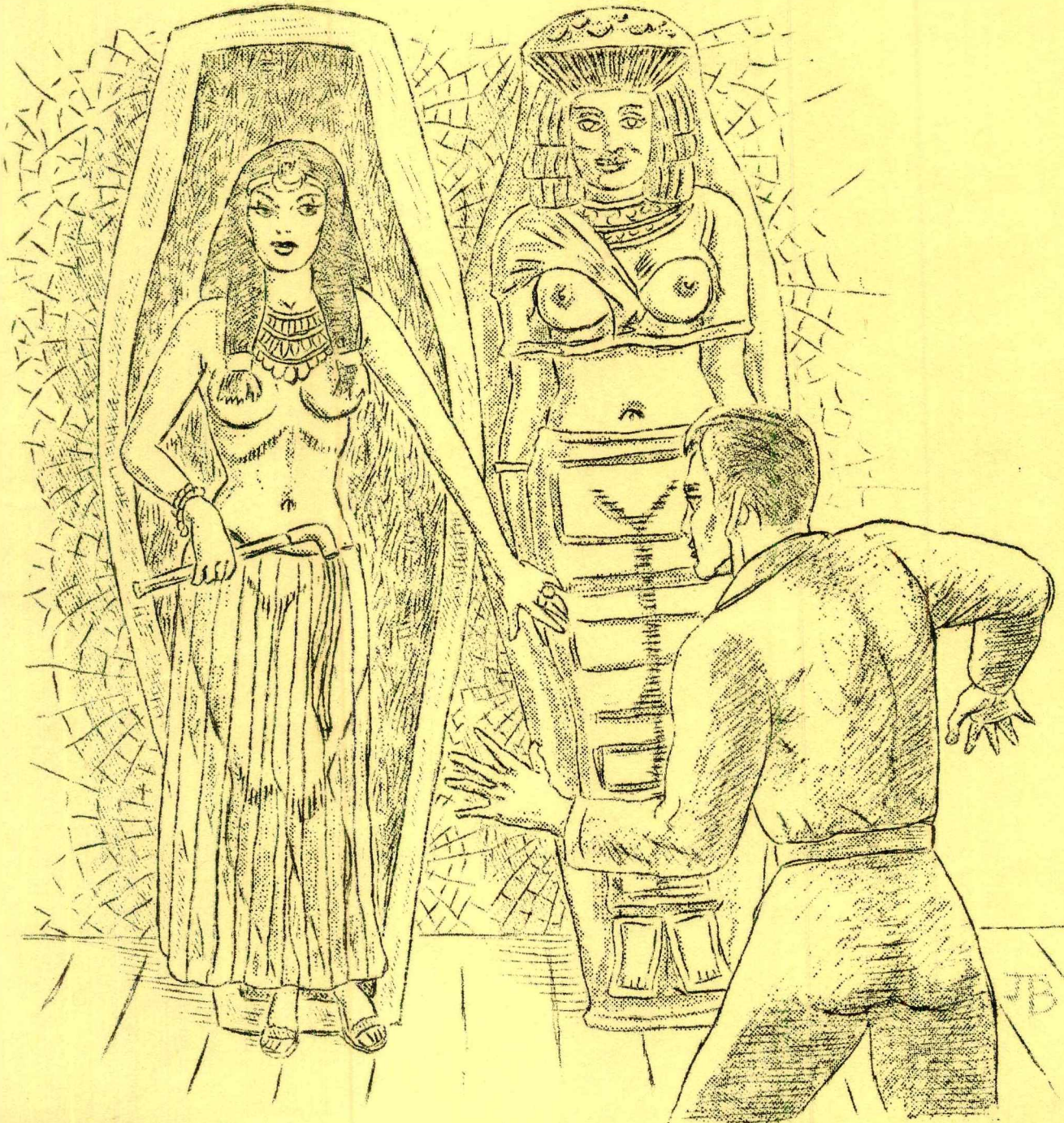


SI-FAN

NO. 2



october, 1960

Editors: Jerry Burge, Joe Christoff and Gerald Page ; Contributing editors: B.F. Wermers, Sture Sedolin; Associate editor: Ted Brooke; Published by Atlanta Fanzine Press. Copies may be had according to the schedule on page 3. No copies are given for either review or letters of comment. However, some are given for Services Rendered and for such mimeograph supplies as shading plates. A number of complimentary copies have been mailed out, as well. This will no doubt continue. All illustrations were stenciled by Hard-Working Jerry Burge, who did them without a mimeoscope, and spent as much as four hours on a single stencil. Apologies to Mike Deckinger: I just noticed that we left his by-line off "Future of Fantasy." This is unforgiveable on our part. Does anyone know where Fred Chappell is? FRED CHAPPELL! Where is he?? gwp

It was not without some sadness that I decided upon a title change for Si-Fan; for I felt that as a title for this fanzine, 'Si-Fan' did not quite express the policy. George Wells said that he had opened it expecting a sort of Amra for Fu Manchu fans. Si-Fan is dedicated to Rohmer, but material-wise only the cover drawing, title and an occasional article will deal with him. I thought the matter over and I reached a conclusion: Si-Fan would have to be replaced as a title. I phoned Jerry Burge and asked him to begin ghosting in the new title over the old, starting with the mailing wrapper. He was intrigued with the idea, cursed me for interrupting his stencil cutting and hung up, presumably to run off and do a primitive painting on the wall of his room.

I felt pleased with myself and wrote to a number of friends, telling them of the new title. I told others. They replied with a certain amount of astonishment. The idea was met with dislike. I was hurt; it wasn't that great an idea.

Finally, I asked a friend why.

He took me aside. "Jerry," he said, "While I agree that the new title describes the 'zine better than the old, I can't go along with it. Si-Fan is more familiar to your readers and they, after all, must be considered. Why disappoint them with a whim?"

"But it's not a whim--the new title describes the 'zine better."

"But that's not the argument. Don't you see? Can't you understand? Si-Fan has a certain value that can't be expressed in words. A sentimental value. Jerry, Si-Fan has acquired a certain meaning for your readers. Jerry, Si-Fan is loved."

I tugged my lower lip with my teeth. "But... 'Si-Fan' isn't adequate. I like the title, but this other one is so much better, despite its clumsiness that-- Well, I just have to get out from under that title and all it implies. I'm after a bigger readership."

He put his hand on my shoulder and looked me in the eye. "Jerry, is all that what you really want?"

It took me a moment to answer. "No," I said. "It isn't."

SO YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO more issues of Si-Fan and in them you will find material of an increasingly higher calibre, at least for a while yet; and I hope for as long as this thing lasts. I was not wholly pleased with Si-Fan 1 and I feel that this one is a lot lighter than I hoped for. Si-Fan 3 is shaping up a little light also, in subject matter, and will probably be out too soon to include any reaction articles to Mike Deckinger's article, or Burge's Opus 2. That's because this issue is a couple of weeks late, and the next one will have to be out early to miss the main force of the holliday rush. The deadline is about a week off. I have to start dummyping then, in

Si-Fan

order to set up the layout and type stencils. This policy has led to problems, particularly since it means we must have our artwork in a good while before we publish, or at the very least we must know the size requirements. Planning does not allow for much last minute inclusion of material, but planning has advantages which far outweigh the disadvantages, so it will continue; and we hope to get organized soon.

And in trying to get organized, I hope to get in touch with a humber of good artists who are willing to illuminate some articles for us. If you're any good at art, let us know and we'll make arrangements to have you illustrate something for us. Don't be shy. We need material illustrated, and we also need drawings for the cover (Please keep these on a theme from Rohmer) and table of contents (Preferably illustrations of scenes from some story.)

And why not some written material by you? Articles of interest to fans and collectors, fiction, (Although I have all I need for a year) humor or verse. We're bi-monthly, so we need a certain amount of material. We are very interested in controversial material and the slant does not have to be towards science fiction or fantasy --it can even be scientific, so long as it avoids the usual fanzine imitation of Popular Science. When we read scientific material we like to have fun and maybe do a little cogitating. But we don't care to be bored stiff. (When these come in, maybe I will change my title ...)

Now we come to the matter of Sax Rohmer. We are not, as I said, to Rohmer and Fu Manchu what Amra is to Howard and Conan. But we will accept material on them. The speed with which such material rushes to our hands is less than phenomenal. If you've been carefully collecting notes toward the writing of a masterpiece along these lines then rush to your typewriter and pound it out.

There are other writers too --like Vardis Fisher-- whom we hope to feature articles on at one time or another in our little span of life. Writers such as Huxley, Tolkien, Robert Graves, John Cowper Powys and others more familiar to the magazines -- maybe either Burge or I will write about them, but we'd like to see an article on anyone of them, from anybody. Why not from you?

But don't conclude that I'm limiting Si-Fan to bibliographic items. Anything goes. In fact, the only rigid requirement I'll make is that an article has to deserve being published. If you can write such an article--or story, or poem--write it for Si-Fan.

Next issue's Den of Iniquity reprint is by a writer most of you should know; from a 1948 Fapa fanzine devoted to him. Frankly, it excites me, but I'll not say more until next time. And speaking of the Den, we're having trouble finding material that isn't dated; we hope to avoid the tradition of reprinting an item as a literary curiosity--an early item by a now famous fan, or something with historical significance --which does limit us. Those things have their places, and I like to read them, but Si-Fan is too general for them. So if you come across an item while reading the first issue of the Comet or recall something from Planeteer which deserves reprinting, let me know.

Well now, we seem to be back to Si-Fan 2. This issue was put together for some 200 plus of you--including you--and the musilage was mostly grim and sweat. I hope you like it; future issues will be better, just as this one is an improvement over last. The price has been hiked to 20¢ per issue, 2 for 35¢. Send no more. If you are one of the ones who paid for this issue on the basis of the last, you may continue to subscribe at the old price. Contributor too, although for the most part you have other arrangements. Those of you who are receiving this complimentary will continue to do so, and I thank you for giving me a good motive for sending it. If you aren't certain why I'm sending this, ask me. See you next time.

--Jerry

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 This is Si-Fan 2, October, 1960.
 Reviewers please note: one free copy will be sent to anyone who
 requests one.

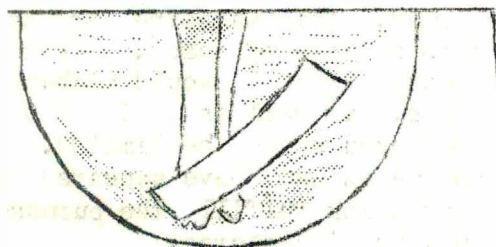
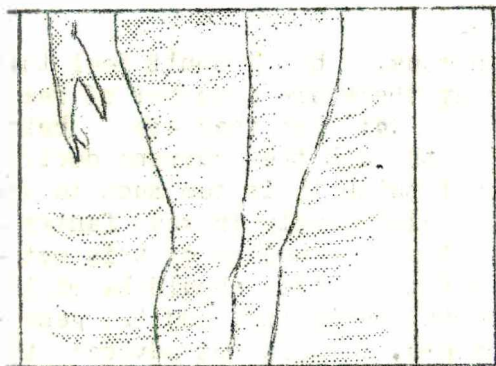


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Artwork:

R E Gilbert--p.22; Maggie Curtis--p.24
 Fred Chappell--pp.14,15,16,17;
 Burge--cover & pp.3,4,7,8,10,11,20



Mike Deckinger, noted as one of the most prolific of the young fanwriters, here pleads for a magazine devoted to publishing fantasy. But every now and then, as I read the current issue of such magazines as Galaxy or Astounding--Every now and then I wonder if we perhaps would not do well to voice a plea for a magazine devoted to science fiction?

THE FUTURE OF FANTASY

As the number of fantasy magazines slowly dwindles to nothingness-- the latest casualties being the Great American line: FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, FEAR and the American reprint edition of the British NEW WORLDS--it is becoming increasingly evident that either the total readership is decreasing in number, perhaps by conversion to other fields, or that the increased costs involved with every phase of editing and publishing have made it more difficult to publish good magazines. I tend to think that the latter conclusion is the more accurate of the two, for on the contrary, all indications are that the readers of science fiction have grown more numerous.

However, science fiction, no matter how bad things may look, will, I feel, always be available to the reader, if he is interested enough in it and astute enough to locate what he desires. Science fiction is gradually becoming a more accented form of literature, with stories of this genre appearing with more or less regularity in many slick and quality publications.

But fantasy is a different thing entirely. Readers tend to link these two terms together, considering science fic-

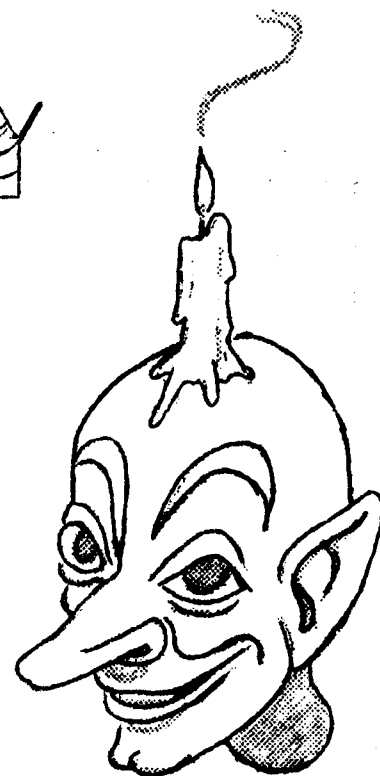


tion and fantasy to be synonymous, but I don't feel that they are. I am sure that today there are a number of readers of fantasy who feel as I do: That they are being deprived of it unnecessarily through the current decline of magazine fantasy. I don't think it is too much to ask for just one magazine devoted exclusively to good fantasy.

Reprints should not be against the policy of this mythical magazine, I suppose, but the policy should be rigid: The stories should be (1) worth reprinting, and (2) generally unavailable to most readers. I would not advocate the reprinting of a story that appeared in WEIRD TALES in 1952 no matter how good it was; for, chances are that most fantasy fans have, or have read, this magazine and the reprinted story would amount to a waste of space. On the other hand, the late and lamented UNKNOWN would probably be the best source for reprints, as well as WEIRD TALES before 1940 or 1935. The number used should be limited.

In recent months, two new magazines have appeared on the newsstands, which some may think fulfill the purpose of the needed fantasy magazine, but I disagree.

The first is SHOCK, a bi-monthly magazine published by



Winston Publications. While the first issue sports an unobtrusive cover by old E.C. artist John Severin, there are several good illustrations and a number of exceptional stories contained within. The only trouble is that 7 of the 13 stories are reprints; over fifty per cent of the contents. What's more, the reprints are stories like Sturgeon's "Bianca's Hands", Bradbury's "The Crowd", Jacob's "The Monkey's Paw"--fine stories certainly, but hardly the kind you'd present to the fantasy aficionado as the contents of a new magazine.

The other magazine, Feaf, is disqualified because it seems to be dead. But it featured stories of an inferior quality and certainly was not the ideal fantasy magazine.

But why fantasy? you may ask. Doesn't science fiction cover the field adequately?

To my way of thinking, no.

Fantasy is and always will be a separate and distinct entity from science fiction. A small borderline does exist between the two forms, but we are not concerned with that. Nor is there need here for a debate as to which form sired the other. Suffice it to say that a difference does exist and the need for a fantasy magazine exists, likewise.

The limits of fantasy are broad; it can even be fused skillfully with science fiction, as A. Merritt repeatedly proved with such masterpieces as "The Moon Pool," "Burn Witch, Burn," "Face in the Abyss" and "Seven Footprints to Satan." The latter, in fact, is noted for a third element, that of mundane adventure: it could very easily be regarded as merely an unusual adventure story bearing no fantasy element. Out of all Merritt's novels, "Seven Footprints to Satan" is the only one that retains shreds of plausibility. The others are definite denizens of never-never land.

Fantasy may also be a form unto itself, like Tolkien's magnificent "Fellowship of the Ring" trilogy.

However, whatever the form fantasy appears in, I think it's evident that there should be more. Many of the old masters are dead, but as they die, new ones are springing up to take their places. It would be hard to say who the top modern day fantasy writers are, but Ray Bradbury and Charles Beaumont, to name just two, certainly belong to that category. While it may be considered blasphemy to hint this, eventually the greatness of Lovecraft or Merritt may be eclipsed by others whose literary talents exceed that of the past masters.

Fantasy has been with us for many hundreds of years, through various forms. In 1923, Weird Tales appeared, under the editorship of Edwin Baird, who was shortly replaced by Farnsworth Wright, who died in 1940. Dorothy McIlwraith took over and edited the magazine until its death in 1954, just months after it had gone digest size. Through its thirty-one years of existence, Weird Tales was devoted almost exclusively to Weird and supernatural stories. There evolved the now famous stable of regulars, writers like Seabury Quinn, Arthur J. Burks, August Derleth, Allison V. Harding and, yes, the late H.P. Lovecraft. Only on occasion did WT experiment with deviations from its policy of supernatural fiction, with science fiction. (To give just one example, with Donald Wandrei's "Something From Above" in the December, 1930 issue, which had all the ingredients and incidents of a horror story, but was supplied with a very science fictional denouement.) Despite the fact that Leo Margulies bought the rights to the title not long ago, it has not reappeared, nor does it look as if it will.

Newsstand browsers in early 1947 were startled to find a new digest sized magazine bearing a specially coated cover and the title Avon Fantasy Reader. It was an all reprint issue, containing eight stories by such noted writers as Murray Leinster, August Derleth, William Hope Hodgson, A. Merritt, H. G. Wells, Clark Ashton Smith, H. Russell Wakefield and Lord Dunsany. As mentioned, the title of this new magazine was "Avon Fantasy Reader"--and it would have been nice if the editor, Donald Wollheim had abided by that title and considered it to be a statement of policy.

Unfortunately, he did not. The very first story in the Reader was Leinster's "Power Planet", first printed in 1931 in the June Amazing. It was an out-and-out science fiction story about an artificial planetoid known as the Power Planet, circling over a war-torn Earth. It was a good story, and hardly dated; every day it becomes less and less science fiction and more and more science fact. H.G.Wells' story, was "The Truth about Pyecraft," a borderline story about a man who undergoes a drastic loss of weight but not mass, and ends up floating about like a balloon. Smith's "The Vaults of Voh-Yombis" is another disputable case. In ancient Martian ruins, some explorers come across an unknown and horrible form of life that attaches itself to their heads and eats away their brains. Fantastic in nature, perhaps, but still science fiction. And that is the way future Readers went: No issue adhering strictly to the "fantasy" title.

Earlier, from March 1939 to October 1943, one of the most notable fantasy magazines of all times was published: Street and Smith's Unknown (Worlds), which in a relatively short span of time became one of the most popular magazines of its kind and whose loss is mourned by readers to this day. Since it was edited by John W. Campbell, jr. who also edited Astounding Science Fiction, many of the top authors of that period noted for clear, intelligent and well-thought-out science fiction for ASF turned their talents to ingenious and amusing fantasies for Unknown. Writers such as Theodore Sturgeon, Robert A. Heinlein and Anthony Boucher alternated frequently between both magazines.

But what of today?

Today, the best magazine for fantasy is The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, which, as the title indicates, publishes both types of fiction. F&SF is more of a quality or literary magazine than any other in the field and at times the stories published there have seemed more suited for The New Yorker or The Atlantic Monthly. Finding fantasy stories in the remaining two magazines of the "big three" is as unlikely as finding a conventional western in one of them.

I'm still hoping—and I don't think I'm alone in doing so—that there are enough readers of fantasy to influence the editors and publishers and demonstrate that such a magazine is wanted. And not a cheap, Fantastic type fantasy magazine, either; a good one, equal in quality to Unknown or Weird Tales and I can think of no examples more worth emulating. It can be done; I don't believe the reading public is content to keep their desires dormant beneath a shell of passivity.

I would like to see some enterprising publisher give a good fantasy magazine a try. I don't believe that I'm alone. But if it doesn't go over with the readers—if it is a total flop: then, I'd be willing to quit my yapping and believe that fantasy is dead and its former readers no longer care.

But somehow, I just don't think it is; I just don't think it is ...

#

On a piece of paper, next to a neatly marked laundry expense and some items listed as stolen by a foot-loose houseboy, we find a crisp sentence which antedates by a half-century Galileo's discovery: "Il sole no se muove"—the sun doesn't move. And in the next sentence we read: "Three feet of fine leather are missing from my shelf." The writer? Leonardo da Vinci.

—Frederic Taubes

"Modern Art—Sweet or Sour"

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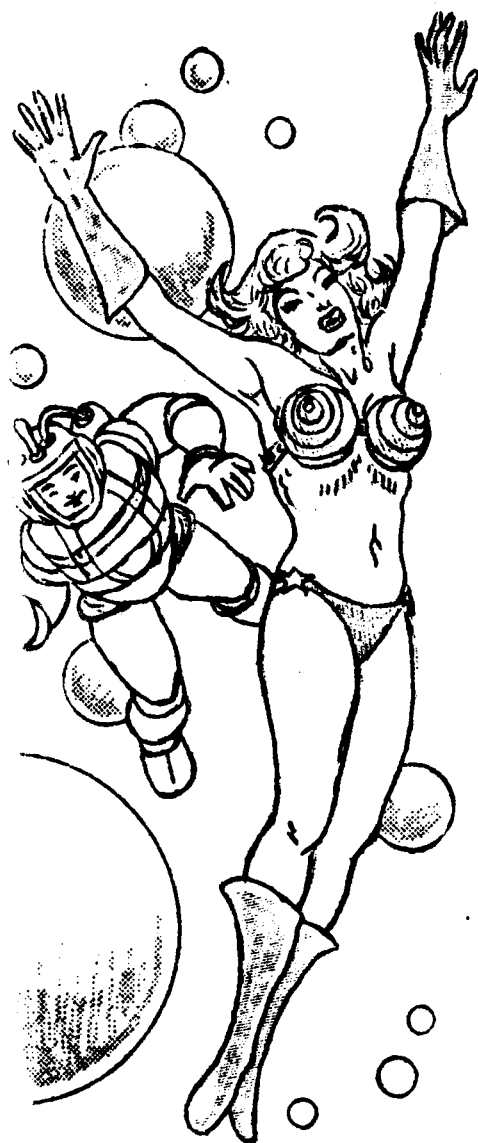
Following bit of verse by Wallace West appeared in the May--June--July 1955 issue of Hard E. Geis' Psychotic--the issue just before it became Science Fiction Review. It reprinted with the kind permission of Mr. West, whom we most humbly thank. gwp

TAKE IT AWA-A-AY

by WALLACE WEST

Members and dear BEMs of the E.S.F.A.,
I like to discuss my new plot.
Lawyers record every word that I say
I insist that talk plot I must not!

My last word of prose, whether better or worse,
Censored and twice copyrighted.
I've found me a loophole--I'll do it in verse
I'm sure that you'll all be delighted. (Applause)



I won't give any secret material
About how I struck oil on the Moon.
I'm saving all that for a twenty-part serial
That is coming, I hope, very soon.

I can't even mention my coming excursion
To the place where they soup up the stars.
And I'm dying to tell you the straightforward version
Of my red-headed bird-girl from Mars.

All that you will read of--but here's something nice
(If it won't cause undue apprehension.)
I've perfected a galaxy-shaking device:
My Dimension-Ascension invention.

As every fan knows, the dimensions are endless.
They are purple, transparent and green.
They are all shapes and sizes, both plastic and bendless
And many strange things in between.

My device uses ethero-matic transmission.
It shifts just by setting a bead.
It's powered by mental electronic fission,
And brings in whatever you need.

For example, you're lost out in space and need air:
Set the dial for LUNGS. Without fail
It will scan the dimensions for one that can bear
The stuff that you need to inhale!

I want no reward for this masterful feat,
Though the brainwork involved was no joke.
I did it for Berpey, through kindness of heart,
So his beautiful gals wouldn't choke.

—Wallace West

JERRY BURGE'S OPUS 2

In his excellent article on Edgar Rice Burroughs in the October, 1958, *Satellite*, Sam Moskowitz makes the interesting observation that while only a few of the Tarzan novels qualify as science fiction, "...the entire series is science fiction in spirit." In this column I'm going to talk about a writer who has written a series of novels about which a very similar remark might be made, although it would be hard to find a writer or a series more unlike ERB and the Tarzan books.

The writer is Vardis Fisher and the series is called collectively "The Testament of Man." It's not unlikely that you've never heard of either since, although Vardis Fisher is probably the finest mainstream writer currently practicing and he's been writing for more than thirty years, it's only in very recent years that he has begun to pick up a little fame and a reading public. This isn't too hard to understand in a field wherein craftsmanship and general excellence of work are more often than not deterrents to success.

The general unavailability of Fisher's books--until recently--was not due, however, to any conspiracy against him, but more probably rather to the fact that during his early writing years Fisher would not allow himself to be typed. In his own words (from *GCD OR CAESAR? The Writing of Fiction for Beginners - 1958*): "My first two novels led critics to think I might be an American Hardy, and hope was entertained that the Antelope hills would be my Wessex. I then shifted and with great gallantry my critics shifted with me; they now thought that my literary affinities were Zola, Frank Norris and Dreiser, none of whom I had read. I then shifted to fantasy in one book, to the 'psychological' novel in another, and next to the American historical novel; and weary with trying to classify me some of my critics abandoned me to what I have no doubt they regarded as perverse whims." Book readers, like Fisher's critics, like to know what to expect when they pick up a book by a certain writer. They are not particularly amused when a versatile author forces them to take pot luck.

With his four semi-autobiographical novels--the "Vridar Hunter" Tetralogy--Fisher did establish something of a reputation as a writer of stature. But it was not until very recently, with the publication of some of his novels in paperback form, that Fisher has succeeded in reaching a fairly wide audience. (And I have a suspicion that many

In these days when most writers can find success only in aping the maunderings of a critically accepted handful of literary apes, it is doubly refreshing to encounter a writer of true integrity. Such a writer is Vardis Fisher, author of the *Testament of Man*, and Burge's subject in this issue's column. (Correction: The title of Fisher's latest *Testament* novel should read "Orphans in Gethsemane." We apologize to Mr. Fisher and the reader--our only excuse is the price, \$10. GWP)

newsstand browsers who picked up Fisher's pbs because of their suggestive covers and blurbs were shocked by what they found inside.)

After completing his Tetralogy in 1936, Fisher began a series of fine historical novels about the American West, including such notable works as CHILDREN OF GOD, the story of the Mormon migration; CITY OF ILLUSION, relating the tale of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode, and THE MOTHERS, the story of the Donner Party. The meticulous research and powerful writing displayed in these books raises them several levels above the ordinary historical novel, and makes them well worth the reading even for people who (like me) detest "westerns." And in 1943, the first book in Fisher's magnificent "Testament of Man" series, DARKNESS AND THE DEEP, was published. Since then he has published about twenty books, roughly alternating between his western historicals and the "Testament." The twelfth and final novel of the Testament of Man, ORPHAN IN GETHSEMANE, was published early this year.

I've said this series might be called science fiction in spirit. Actually, the first five books are "prehistorics," science fiction in fact, and would therefore not be out of place in any science fiction collection. P. Schuyler Miller reviewed the first two, DARKNESS AND THE DEEP and THE GOLDEN ROOMS in Astounding (April, 1945) if anyone needs further justification.

In the Testament of Man, Fisher has traced man's development from his ultimate beginnings to the present. He has brought to this task an almost incredible capacity for research and a writing ability second to none. Each volume in the series portrays a critical moment in the progress of human culture (specifically, in the later books, of Mediterranean--"western"--culture, but by implication all human culture), beginning with the earliest creatures which might reasonably be considered members of the human race. It is said that Fisher read several thousand books in preparation for this series; a claim which does not seem exaggerated after a glance at the notes appended to the later volumes. Fisher has achieved continuity in these books by the intelligent use of recurrent themes, "forward-looking" endings, and, strangely, by portraying, in a general way, the same cast of characters in progressively more advanced situations. Many of the Testament characters may be found, more advanced culturally but basically similar in traits, in the "Vridar Hunter" books. The final volume of the series, ORPHAN IN GETHSEMANE, is a condensed version of the Vridar Hunter Tetralogy, revised in the light of the experience and new understanding Fisher gained in his long journey through the past.

DARKNESS AND THE DEEP opens with a long "Backdrop," in which Fisher sketches in the prehistory of Earth and indicates man's role against the perspective of six billion years of planetary change and evolution. This 15,000-word section is one of the most beautiful passages I have read anywhere. Nowhere else in English letters, as far as I am aware, are such mastery of language and complete control of material so evident. The author has not yielded to the temptation to treat his subject as mere necessary exposition; instead, Fisher has here achieved a marvelous wedding of scientific "fact" and poetic truth. A brief portion of his description of the new-born Earth will perhaps give you an idea:

Round and round its path went this world, our world, at first a white fire with a wake of flaming tongues; and then an irregular sphere of seething elements, slowly cooling

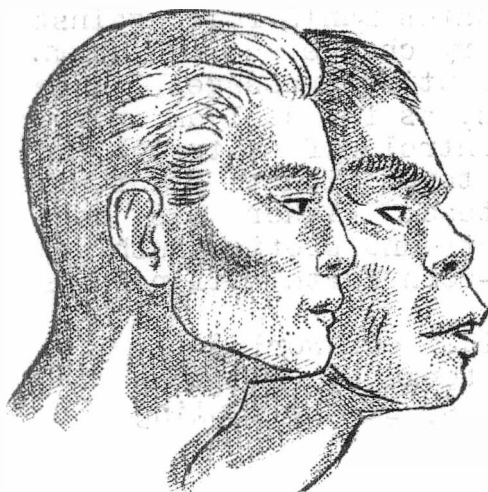
upon its journey and drawing its circumference closer to its heart. Like a rampant and distorted outlaw from chaos, it followed no charted course on the stellar ocean, but shortened its elliptic when yielding to the homeward pull of its sun, or lengthened it when, frenzied and wild and almost free, it sought to escape. For it was a delirious runaway upon the prairies of the infinite.

* * *

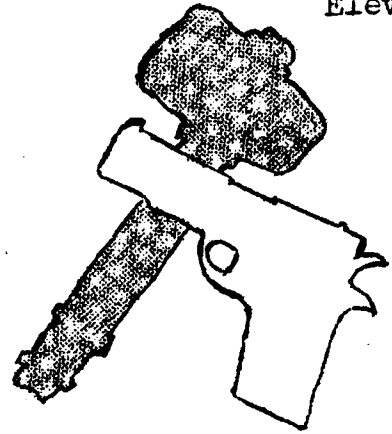
But all the while this headlong world was seeking the immutable laws that were to govern it; and with every turn of its body, with every cycle like a lone headlight in darkness round its solar path, it lost a little of its erratic waywardness and settled more securely to the harmonies running in its being. Because even from the moment of its explosive beginning, its waywardness was only apparent, only the flush of ecstasy in a new birth and a new morning. It was only the exuberance intrinsic in those universal laws that plant the seed of rose and nightingale in the astral fields of flame.

In those passages of the "Backdrop" dealing with the development of life there appears a theme which is to recur again and again throughout the series. The strong must fail and perish, for they are content with the status quo; the weak (not the "meek") will inherit the earth, for their frustrations will force them to strive to better their lot. The hero of DARKNESS AND THE DEEP is Wuh, a hairy, gorilla-like dawn man, who is driven out of his own family and joins another led by a stronger male. Barely tolerated by his adopted tribe and thwarted in his desires for women and for power, Wuh's frustrations drive him to make what were perhaps the two most important discoveries in mankind's career--the use of tools as weapons and the advantages of group cooperation.

In his ASF reviews, P. Schuyler Miller seems to be delighted with the first book, but feels that the series suffered "something of a setback" in THE GOLDEN ROOMS. I suspect that Miller's disappointment stems largely from a misconstrual of Fisher's purpose in these books. The "story" of the second book revolves about the clash between Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon man. The heroes on each side are analogs of Wuh: Harg, the Neanderthaler, who discovers the use of fire by spying on the Cro-Magnon men; and Gode, the Cro-Magnard, who begins to tame a wolf and conceives the idea of ghosts. Each of these men, like Wuh in the first book, is a genius, perhaps the greatest genius of his race and time. Each makes a discovery which disturbs the status quo and so carries man further along his path of evolution. "My complaint," Miller writes, "is that these three discoveries were certainly never crammed into the brief period represented by Mr. Fisher's book." One might with at least equal justice object to a writer attributing the automatic telegraph, the first practical electric light, the phonograph, the motion picture machine and the mimeograph to one 19th Century inventor. Miller also objects that



Fisher's Neanderthaler is "too little like a man, and the first Cro-Magnons too much so." But Fisher is not so much concerned with the mere facts as they were; he is seeking beneath the facts for whatever of truth they may contain. In this series, particularly in the later volumes, he has assembled an astonishing array of facts, but it is important that he has been able to present them with art and understanding, not as mere data, but as the truth (or, rather, some of the truths) about mankind.



In the next three books, INTIMATIONS OF EVE, ADAM AND THE SERPENT and THE DIVINE PASSION, we watch the rise of religion from the primitive mother veneration to a full-blown sun-mythos, complete with temple and high priest. In THE DIVINE PASSION, the names of the characters reach philological heights reminiscent of Cabell. Wuh, here, has become Rabi, the high priest. Perhaps he is also Yesha, the mad prophet, who would sacrifice himself for the sinful world.

In the sixth Testament novel, VALLEY OF VISION, Fisher straddles the uncertain line between history and prehistory with an account of the legendary--or mythical--King Solomon. This book, perhaps the most successful ever to deal with that period, received "killer" reviews in Time and The New Yorker (both are reprinted in full in GOD OR CAESAR?, Fisher's book for writers. The New Yorker review was succinct:

A macabre, but not diverting, blend of Bible history and sex, in which the central figure is supposed to be King Solomon. Mr. Fisher, who writes with a terrible appetite, goes very deeply into the matter of Solomon's wives. He also brings forth the fact that the famous king was much interested in sewers.

Fisher adds: "Since The New Yorker is supposed to be a very sophisticated journal I sent off a note congratulating the Editor on the sophistication of this anonymous review.")

THE ISLAND OF THE INNOCENT deals with the Mediterranean world in the time of the Maccabees. And the next four books, JESUS CAME AGAIN, A GOAT FOR AZAZEL, PEACE LIKE A RIVER (retitled THE PASSION WITHIN for the Pyramid reprint) and MY HOLY SATAN, recount the origins and rise to power of Christianity and paint an unlovely portrait of its influence on our culture. These books will be rather shocking fare for those who still preserve their childhood faith in religious myths. It is possibly for that reason that Fisher has merrily appended long sections of notes documenting the factual content of each book, thereby providing the faithful with a solid case of indigestion. The rise of Christianity is a story no prettier than the story of man's rise from the primal ooze--and much less inspiring. Vardis Fisher tells it here as it happened, innocent of the trappings of romance and myth.

The final novel of the series, ORPHAN IN GETHSEMANE, described somewhere above, brings the story up to date. In it, Fisher's principle purpose emerges at last. In a review of some of Fisher's books in the August 7 Baltimore American, reviewer Clark Kinnaird prints part of a letter in which Fisher says that he was brought to the writing of his

Testament series by

"A feeling that in my Vridar Hunter books I hadn't been able to look very deep: I had the same feeling about Thomas Wolfe's books, and all books like them. The more I thought about it the more obvious it seemed to me that we can't find the man in his childhood. He isn't there. He is in his entire past."

It might almost be said that Fisher's epic of man is a secondary effect. All this time he has been telling the story of one man--himself.

I suppose it has become fairly evident that I am sold on Fisher's books. But I wouldn't be a science fiction fan if I couldn't find something to quibble about. My one dissatisfaction lies not with the series as it stands, but with where and when it ends. Fisher has given us an almost miraculously successful picture of where we have been and where we are. Now I would like to see one or two additional volumes--perhaps companions, rather than specifically a continuation of the Testament--showing where he thinks we are going. Surely no writer--not even Wells or Huxley or Orwell--ever served an apprenticeship so intensive or so likely to be productive of a truthful (if, perhaps, not factually "accurate") novel of the future, as Fisher has in writing the Testament of Man.

Whether or not Fisher does this (and please don't misunderstand me--as far as I know he has never expressed any intention of doing so), the Testament of Man will remain a fine example of the application of the science fiction technique to mainstream literature. As such, I think the series (along with Fisher's unusual and penetrating book for writers--GOD OR CAESAR?) should be required reading for any writer who might be interested in advancing the cause of science fiction in literature.

Bibliography

I'm forced to confess myself completely baffled by the publishing histories of many of Fisher's books. But here is a rough list of the Testament of Man books and those of his other books available in paperback editions.

The Testament of Man
DARKNESS AND THE DEEP (P-50¢)
THE GOLDEN ROOMS (P-50¢)
INTIMATIONS OF EVE
ADAM AND THE SERPENT
THE DIVINE PASSION (P-50¢)
THE VALLEY OF VISION
THE ISLAND OF THE INNOCENT
JESUS CAME AGAIN
A GOAT FOR AZAZEL
PEACE LIKE A RIVER
(P-50¢--THE PASSION WITHIN)
MY HOLY SATAN (P-50¢)
ORPHAN OF GETHSEME

(Some of these books were originally published by Vanguard Press - the series has now been taken over by Alan Swallow which has published the entire series in a uniform edition)
(symbols: P--Pyramid Books edition, C--Pocket Books Cardinal edition)

GOD OR CAESAR: The Writing of
Fiction for Beginners
--The Caxton Printers, 1953
paperbacks
The Vridar Hunter Tetralogy
IN TRAGIC LIFE (C-35¢)
PASSIONS SPIN THE PLOT (C-35¢)
WE ARE BETRAYED (C-35¢)
NO VILLAIN NEED BE (C-35¢)
others
DARK BRIDWELL
(P-35¢--THE WILD ONES)
PEMMICAN (C-35¢)
THE MOTHERS (P-50¢)
TALE OF VALOR (C-50¢)
(These are all the Fisher paperbacks that I know about--if anyone knows of others, I would very much like to hear about them)

###

Response to the anthology idea in Opus 1 was considerably better than I'd expected. One or two lists would have pleased me no end. We received five or six, all very interesting. Clay Hamlin submitted his list several weeks before Si-Fan #1 appeared, which is less surprising to me than the strange similarity between his list and my own. The Shaver and Moore stories were not on my list only because I consider them fantasy. Clay says they're science fiction--so, though our tastes in fiction may be similar, it would appear that our ideas of what makes science fiction are very different.

CLAYTON HAMLIN'S ANTHOLOGY

the novel:

Conjure Wife

(Unknown: 4/'43)

Fritz Leiber

the stories:

Dear Devil

(OW: 5/'50)

Eric Frank Russell

Farewell to the Master

(ASF: 10/'40)

Harry Bates

Tale of the Red Dwarf

(FA: 5/'47)

Richard S Shaver

Doc Mellhorn and the Pearly Gates (SEP?: '38)

Stephen Vincent Benet

The Blue City

(WT?)

Frank Owen

Through the Dragon Glass

(FN: 9/'40)

Abraham Merritt

Compliments of the Author

(Unk: 10/'42)

Henry Kuttner

No Land of Nod

(TWS: 12/'52)

Sherwood Springer

A Logic Named Joe

(ASF: 5/'46)

Murray Leinster

Black God's Kiss

(WT: 10/'34)

C L Moore

The Search

(ASF: 1/'43)

A E Van Vogt

Twilight

(ASF: 11/'34)

John W Campbell

In Hiding

(ASF: 11/'48)

Wilmar Shiras

Revolt of the Devil Star

(Imagination: 1/'51)

Ross Rocklynne

A Martian Odyssey

(Wonder: 7/'34)

Stanley G Weinbaum

Call Him Demon

(TWS: Fall, '46)

Henry Kuttner & CL Moore

(Hey, Clay, you cheated! You've got sixteen short stories there.)

Space is too short this time, but starting in Opus 3 we'll include two lists per column for as long as you're willing to play. In case you missed Opus 1, the idea is to compile an imaginary anthology of your favorite science fiction or fantasy--or both--stories. No "themes" or other gimmicks allowed--we're interested in your favorite stories, not your anthological talents. You're permitted one novel and fifteen short stories.

Sorry the reviews were squeezed out this time. Thanks anyway to those editors who sent me fanzines. As I said before, this isn't a review column, but I will try to include a few reviews in Opus 3.

Richard Witter's new catalogue arrived while I was finishing up these last two stencils, and I am happy to note that Witter lists all of the Pyramid paperback editions of Vardis Fisher's Testament of Man series (5 50¢ pbs). A Good Man. His address, if you're interested is: F & SF Book Company, P.O.Box 415, Staten Island 2, New York. (The minimum order, by the way, is \$2.00.)

While we're in a free plug mood I suppose nobody will object if I remind you about THE IMMORTAL STORM.... Oh, you're getting tired of hearing about it, huh? Well, tell you what: if about 99 of you folks will each send \$5.00 for your copy to me at

1707 Piper Circle SE, Atlanta 16, Georgia,

I won't say another word about it.

-Jerry Burge

a pictorial composite of the life of
mike screwdriver

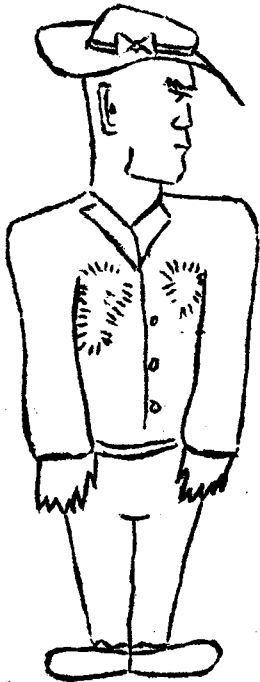
as told to
fred chappell

(Who also did the--well, the
--drawings ...)

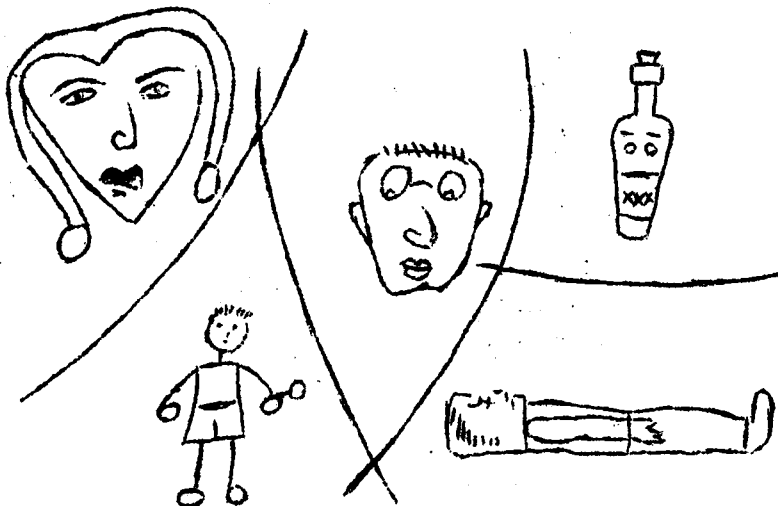


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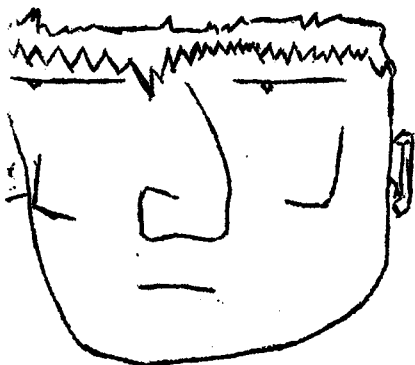
1. i look quite ordinary on the street. in fact, it's impossible to tell that i'm a private investigator



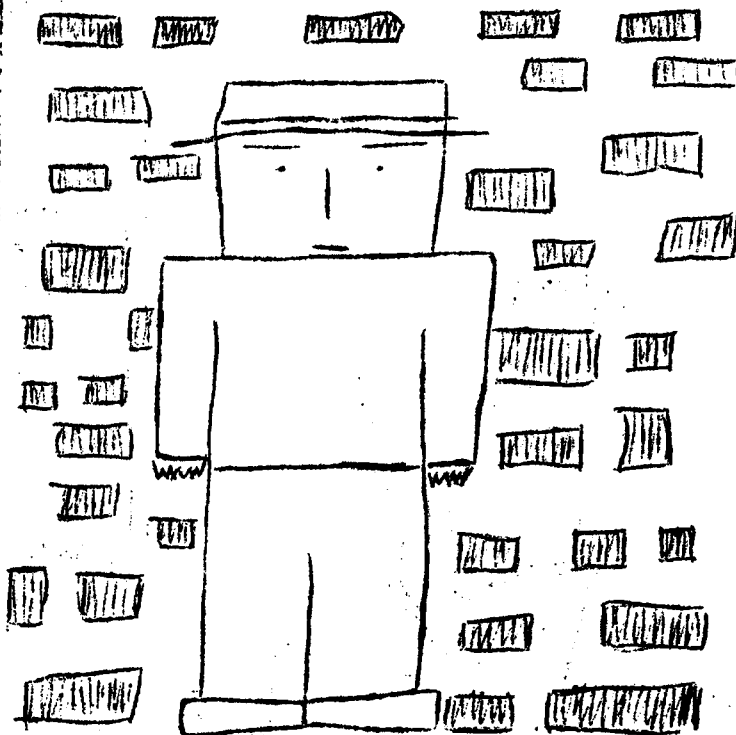
2. i am the past master of the art of disguising and necessarily so



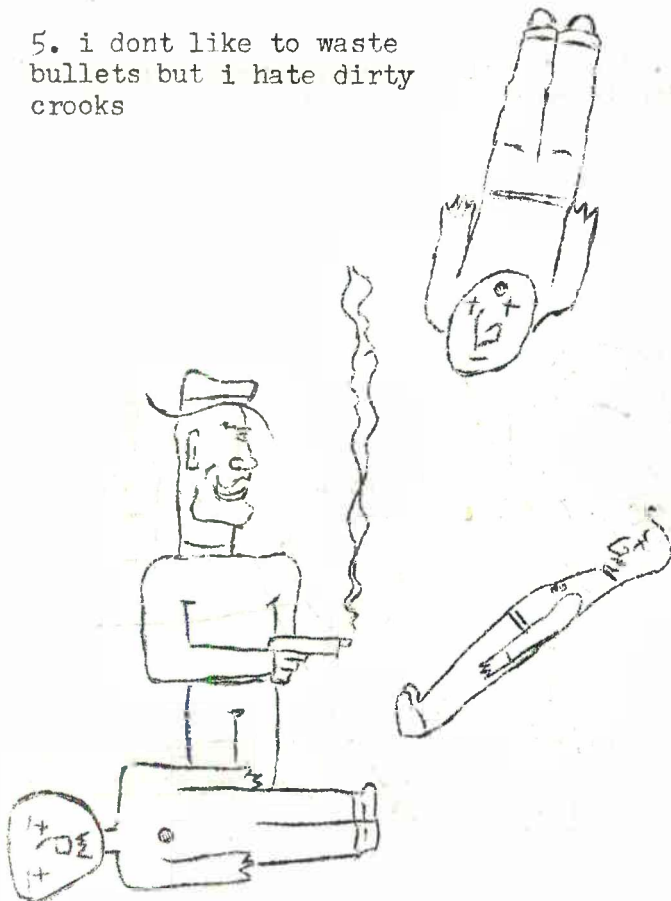
3. i have found from years of experience that a poker face is invaluable



4. i always try to look inconspicuous when i'm on a case



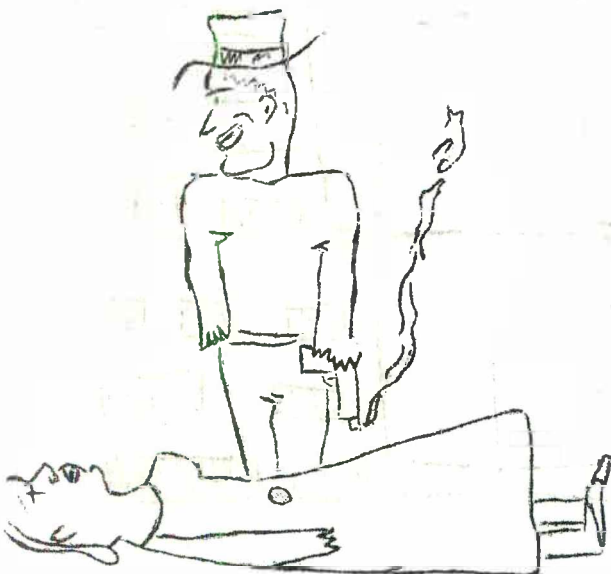
5. i dont like to waste
bullets but i hate dirty
crooks



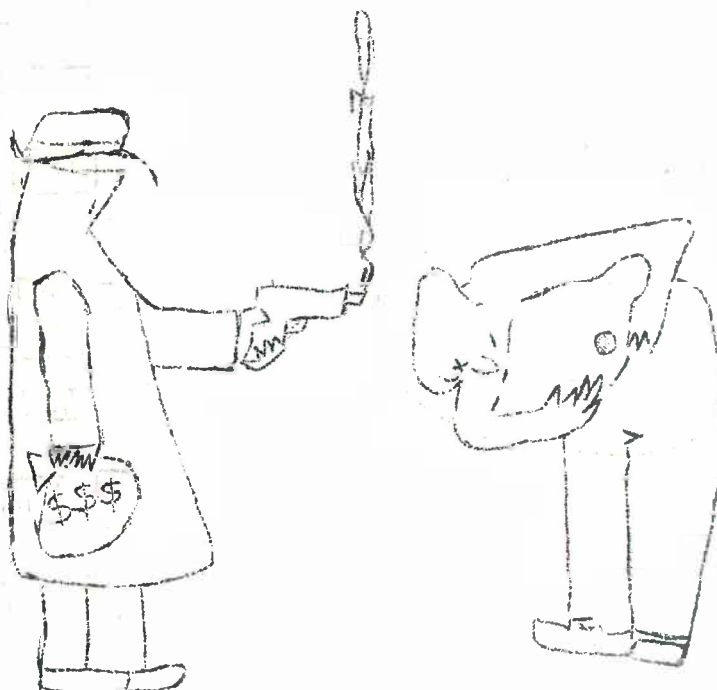
6. there are hardships too. sometimes you
louse up a picture and have to go on to
the next panel

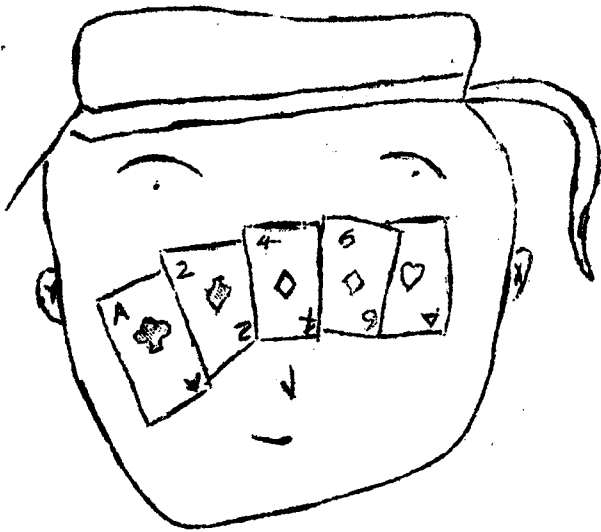


7. and there are also consolations--
I meet many beautiful women.



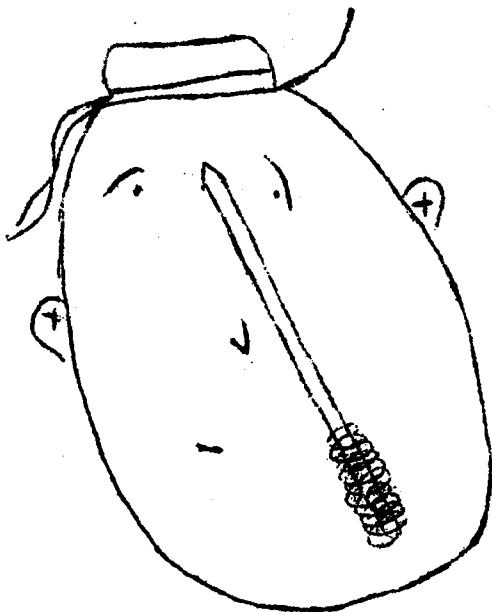
8. but private investigating is not very
profitable and i have to supplement it
with another vocation.



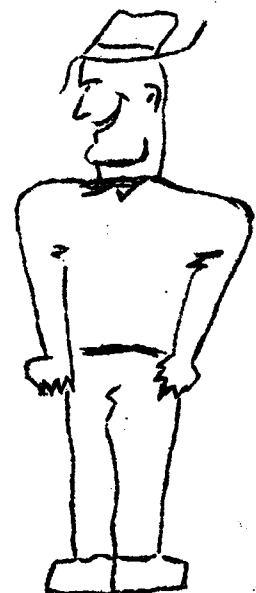
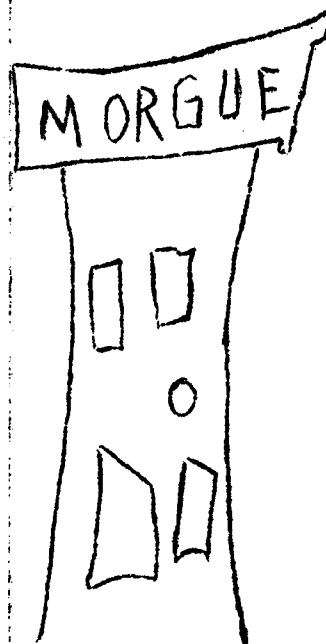


9. of course, i have more than one poker face.

10. on some cases it is best to enlist the aid of the local police.



12. and after a hard days work i like to go to some place that offers relaxation and entertainment.



the end

NOTES OF A PULP COLLECTOR

B F WEARMERS

G-8 and his Battle Aces: a CHECKLIST of the novels

1933

Oct. The Bat Staffel
Nov. Purple Aces
Dec. Ace of the White Death

1934

Jan. The Midnight Eagle
Feb. The Vampire Staffel
Mar. The Skeleton Patrol
Apr. Squadron of Corpses
May The Invisible Staffel
Jun. The Dynamite Squadron
Jul. The Dragon Patrol
Aug. The Hurricane Patrol
Sep. The Panther Squadron
Oct. The Spider Staffel
Nov. The Mad Dog Squadron
Dec. The Blizzard Staffel

1935

Jan. The X-Ray Eye
Feb. The Squadron of the Scorpion
Mar. The Death Monsters
Apr. The Cave Man Patrol
May The Gorilla Staffel
Jun. The Sword Staffel
Jul. Wings of the Juggernaut
Aug. The Headless Staffel
Sep. Staffel of Beasts
Oct. Claws of the Sky Monster
Nov. Staffel of Invisible Men
Dec. Staffel of Floating Heads

1936

Jan. The Blood-Bat Staffel
Feb. Skeletons of the Black Cross
Mar. The Patrol of the Dead
Apr. Scourge of the Sky Beast
May The Wings of Satan
Jun. Patrol of the Cloud Crusher
Jul. Curse of the Sky Wolves
Aug. Vultures of the Purple Death
Sep. Wings of Invisible Doom
Oct. Skies of Yellow Death
Nov. Death Rides the Ceiling
Dec. Patrol of the Mad

1937

Jan. Scourge of the Steel Mask
Feb. Patrol of the Murder Masters
Mar. Fangs of the Sky Leopards
Apr. Vultures of the White Death
May. Flight of the Dragon

1937 (cont.)

Jun. Flight from the Grave
Jul. Patrol of the Purple Clan
Aug. Vengeance of the Vikings
Sep. Flight of the Green Assassin
Oct. The Hand of Steel
Nov. The Flight of the Hell Hawks
Dec. The Drome of the Damned

1938

Jan. Satan Paints the Sky
Feb. Wings for the Dead
Mar. Patrol of the Phantom
Apr. The Black Aces of Doom
May The Flames of Hell
Jun. Patrol of the Iron Hand
Jul. Fangs of the Serpent
Aug. Aces of the Damned
Sep. Patrol of the Sky Vulture
Oct. The Condor Rides with Death
Nov. The Flying Coffins of the Damned
Dec. The Bloody Wings of the Vampire

1939

Jan. Raiders of the Silent Death
Feb. The Sky Serpent Flies Again
Mar. The Black Wings of the Raven
Apr. Death Rides the Last Patrol
May Three Fly with Satan
Jun. Flight of the Death Battalion
Jul. Wings of the Black Terror
Aug. Patrol of the Iron Scourge
Sep. Wings of the White Death
Oct. The Black Buzzard Flies to Hell
Nov. Red Fangs of the Sky Emperor
Dec. The Falcon Flies with the Damned

1940

Jan. Sky-Guns for the Murder Master
Feb. White Wings for the Dead
Mar. Sky Coffins for Satan
Apr. Wings of the Dragon Lord
May The Green Scourge of the Sky Raiders
Jun. Red Wings for the Death Patrol
Jul. The Damned will Fly Again
Aug. Death Rides the Midnight Patrol
Sep. Bloody Wings for a Sky Hawk
Oct. Red Skies for the Squadrons of Satan

G-8 Checklist concluded

1940 (cont.)

Nov. Here Flies the Hawk of Hell
 Dec. Squadron of the Damned

1941

Jan. Death to the Hawks of War
 Feb. Horde of the Wingless Death
 Mar. Raiders of the Red Death
 Apr. Wings of the Doomed
 Jun. Fangs of the Winged Cobra
 Aug. Death is My Destiny
 Oct. Squadron of the Flying Dead
 Dec. Horde of the Black Eagle

1942

Feb. The Death Divers
 Apr. Raiders of the Death Patrol

1942 (cont.)

Jun. The Mark of the Vulture
 Aug. The Death Master's Last Patrol
 Oct. Wings of the Grey Phantom
 Dec. The Squadron of Death Flies
 High

1943

Feb. Patrol to End the World
 Apr. Wings of the Hawks of Death
 Jun. Scourge of the Sky Monster
 Aug. Winged Beasts of Death
 Oct. Bombs from the Murder Wolves
 Dec. The Wings of the Iron Claw

1944

Feb. The Devil's Sky Trap
 Apr. Wings of the Death Monster
 Jun. Wings of the Death Tigers

-B.F.Wermers

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THE RETURN
 a brief story by
 Ted Brooke

On one bright August morning a stranger came to my house and introduced himself to me as Mr. Charles Hallack. He was a shy, quiet man, who wore horn-rimmed glasses which seemed to totally enclose his small eyes. He said that he wanted to talk with me about my husband. I then invited him to come inside, and he gratefully accepted my invitation. Once inside, he related to me that my husband had saved him from drowning in Stone River, which flows along the outskirts of the city, yesterday. I was completely astounded at his statement and inquired further of him.

Mr. Hallack then told me that after he was rescued, he had tried to pay my husband for his worthy deed, but that he would not accept payment. He said he demanded that my husband take the wet, crumpled bills which he held in his hand, but that he still refused. Mr. Hallack then inquired of him where he lived so that he might later contact him. Mr. Hallack said my husband gave him an address, which is the exact address of this house.

I stared at Mr. Hallack with an expression of incredulity and asked if there were any witnesses to the event. He replied that there were several dozen people who observed it, and that among them were a banker, a policeman, and a leading businessman. At this, I was totally shocked and knew not what to say next.

When he observed my expression, Mr. Hallack asked if there was anything wrong. I then saw his expression of complete disbelief as I told him that my husband had died nearly two months ago--when he had drowned in Stone River.

-Ted Brooke

DONALD A. WOLLHEIM--Thanks for sending Si-Fan. Much liked, and it struck me for once as being a typical fanzine, unlike many startling variations I have seen lately ... And if that remark puzzles you I won't elucidate ... Suddenly, remembering Lee Hoffman from the South, it occurs to me that Jerry is as ambiguous a monicker as Lee ... could that be a pic of the editor on the cover? ... Your article on anthos interesting, though I don't agree with muchly (--c/o Ace Books, New York)

No, the remark doesn't puzzle me ... It's very obviously a sly insult. ... As for Lee Hoffman, Burge and I discussed this very carefully, and decided that since she'd already pulled the trick once that we would forego the temptation and be

15 year old Chinese twin brothers, instead. ... Burge's article on anthos was not intended as a presentation of great art; merely as a statement of what he has most enjoyed reading other than Burroughs, and within the limitations he outlined. I seem to recall that you once gave Weinbaum's "The New Adam" a pretty grim review, and that was Burge's novel. And, it is one of the few items on his list which he does happen to consider Great Art. Matter of fact, he told me that he originally intended Opus 1 to be about "The New Adam", drawing upon your review as a source of ... inspiration? How do you put that without setting yourself up for something? As a basis? At any rate, he couldn't get the thing to read right, so he tore it up. Oh well-- Perhaps later ...

NICK SHULTZ--Well, now, it was quite a surprise to find Si-Fan 1 clogging my mail box. Really tho, I don't understand why this should be so. The surprise, I mean. After all, I seem to be on every crudzine mailing list in fandom.

You think I kid you? I kind you not. For some reason all young/new faneds unerringly pull my name from the fmz lettercols as a potential letter-hack and contributor of a high order. And so these poorly mimeoed goshwowboyohboy-I'm-gonna-revolutionize-fandom creations continue to seep into my mail-box. But do the G*O*O*D fanzines? Those I have to request.

Can there be a plot against me?

At any rate, Si-Fan 1 reads and looks like a member of the breed. Sloppy mimeo work (Have you printed before?) idiotic cartooning and art (Tho you had some good pieces within) combined with a surprisingly effective format and layout.

The material was definitely spotty, good interspersed with poor, mediocre and depressing articles and messages. The editorial policy seems to be missing, in that you don't know what you like best, yet. Once you acquire that, one can pick up your zine and know whether humor, cogitative thot, art, poetry, slavish "critiquing" (Actually mere reviewing) or imitations of the pro or little magazines, social criticism or a vaguely neoish ish-mosh will be found within those pages. I refer to emphasis of course.

Strangely enough, a little thinking on the aforementioned Editorial Policies produces the conclusion that the successful fanzines are those with a definite editorial policy and these policies can be broken up into a number of semantic catch-words applicable and pertinent to the fmz and the editor's policy. Retrograde, a zine with a definite person-



CAVEAT KEASLER,
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THE SOUTH,
AN UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIAL
and SWAMPERINGS.

M BELCHER--(8-12-60)--Dunno how come I rated an issue, other than my outstanding art, writing and--good looks--abilities (Or maybe my ambiguous spelling) but many thanks. I found the repro to be pretty good, with a few pages unreadable, but at least no ink blurs were visible. As you can guess, I'm building you up for a let-down. You had a few things I didn't like at all. I'll try to explain why--

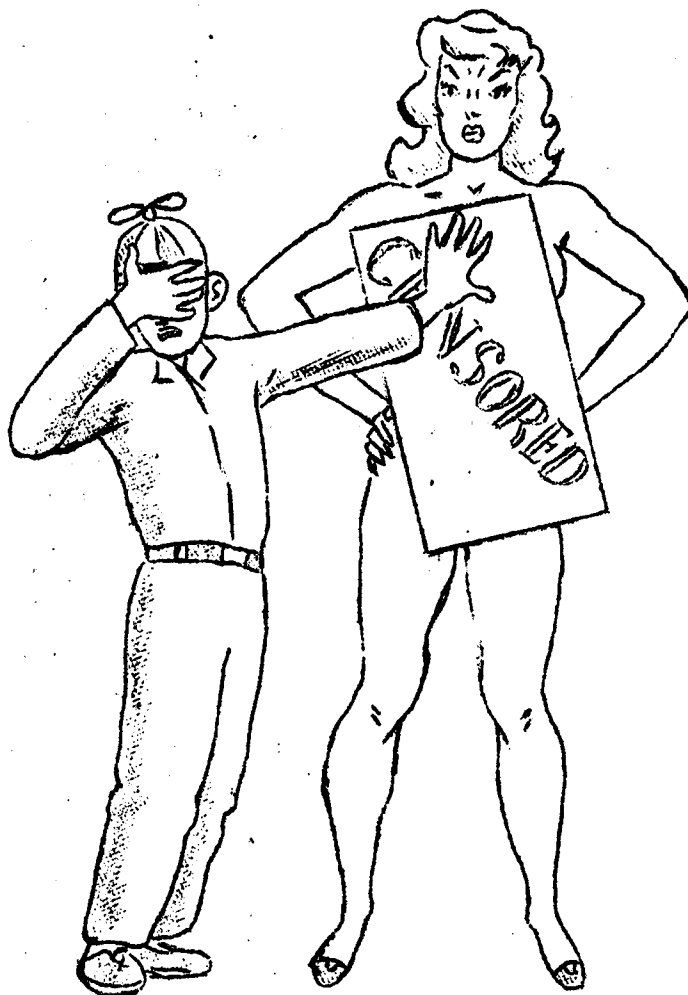
I beleive any magazine, no matter the nature, can succeed (And should succeed) on the quality of the material. I beleive you will agree with me on this. However, there are other ways to succeed, such as printing many unnecessary pictures of scantily clad girls and excessively obscene language. I realize that a certain amount of swearing was necessary in "Charon's Boathouse", in order to typify the characters. However, this missusage of the language is unnecessary beyond such as this; and it takes much away from the story.

In a story about a prostitute, we wouldn't want a picture of a grey-haired grandmother. However, unless the intended nature of your magazine was different than I suspect, there was no need for such a large number of pornographic or near pornographic pictures. These appeal to coarse, base persons; not to the clean-minded youth of tomorrow. Would you rather have plenty of these coarse readers who don't care about anything but these pictures or a group of loyal readers? Think that over a while---you aren't being judged on material quality but on the same stuff available in any burlesque house.

8--20--60)--The excessive obscene language referred to was the rather large usage of swearing in your 'zine where the use of other language would have been far more effective; not to mention (more) pleasant on the ears (Or eyeballs as the case may be.) There were places I noticed where vulgarity was used, not 'to be' descriptive or add effectiveness to a story but apparently for the sole admirable (?) purpose of being vulgar. Maybe it wasn't meant that way, but that was the way it sounded to me.

What do I mean by obscenity? Well, when the use of swearing is carried beyond giving effectiveness to a story, it becomes unnecessary and is insulting to the reader--one is, in a way, assuming that he enjoys swearing--it is no longer effective, it is vulgar, just as standing (and) swearing at anyone is vulgar.

--Let me ask you this: How would you like me to send you a fanzine with every fifth word in it a word you wouldn't call your wife/mother/girl/sweetheart, as the case may be? I would guess you wouldn't



like it. By the same token (Although this was an enlarged example) a large amount of swearing in your 'zine doesn't exactly hit the spot.

The picture (accompanying the review of) Sphere is an example of obscenity. Your cover girl could just as easily been wearing a kimono (Whoops!) as panties, halter and that sheer bathtowel draped to her knees. Obscenity is obscenity to me when it violates common decency, modesty and sense. There was no need for the cover girl to be dressed in that fashion, nor for the nude previously mentioned. The only reason for such a cover (That I can think of) was that you wanted to attract attention by showing everyone how vulgar girls can be. Perhaps you had something else in mind; if so, I couldn't see it.

If you wish to know why I say the nude is indecent, it is this: the only difference between a nude and a naked woman is that one is regarded as art, the other indecent. I can't see that either pic was necessary for any reason.

What I have to say boils down to this:

(1) Do you intend to run an indecent 'zine?

(2) Do you have any regard for other people who see this stuff and wonder why anyone would care to read it?.

If the answer to the first question is "yes" then I feel very sorry for you. If it is "no" then why all the nudes? If the answer to the second question is "yes" then why do you insult (your readers) by running such stuff? If it is "no"--then you care little or nothing for your readers and hence, the stuff is to be expected and you ... pitied.

I rather doubt you shall have kind words for me after this, but nevertheless, that's my opinion. I have nothing against you as an individual, however. Everybody happy? So-kay, I hope now that I have explained what I meant without severely hurting your feelings--that wasn't my purpose.

Back at the swearing pitch--I think a lot of kids (and adults) swear because they are within themselves trying to rebel against authority. I have often thought (Although I get fired up too) it might be fun to tape record the swearing of persistent (Ugh!) swearers and make them listen to themselves a while.

(Burge) rolls his owns! I never thought I'd ever hear of any (other) person in fandom that did! I don't always, but often--it's cheaper. Personally I never could light a pipe (Though I always wanted to smoke one). I prefer Prince Albert and Wheat-Straw papers for roll-your-owns. (I often have difficulty getting strong enough cigarettes due to the large number of filter-tip brands available.)

I'm glad to hear (some upcoming) Opus columns will discuss art. That's one subject I hold a great interest in.

I guess ... I'm a neofan. By the way, if I asked who in Sam's Hill, Sam Moskowitz is, you'd flip, huh?--Maybe I better not. Forget it.

Nope, if you asked me who Sam Moskowitz is, I wouldn't flip. Sam's reaction is a totally different matter. Let's forget the whole thing while we still can. As for unkind thoughts, nope, I have an undue amount of respect for anyone who can state such a case without resorting to personalities. I was surprised, yes, but you did give me some credit. I may be a perverter of innocent youth, but I have my ideals...!

Unfortunately for both your argument and my feelings, the rest of the readership did judge Si-Fan 1 on material quality. I think that there is no other way to judge it; for I don't agree with your point of view.

When Ray Palmer was faced with objections such as yours, he had an answer I liked: what possible objection can you find to a nude unless the nude is ugly? For, unless you find the human body ugly and immoral in itself, where is your argument? As for swearing-- Just because my ancestors used to believe that to say a thing was to make it so? For that is where the objection to "damning" came from: an outdated superstition that's in its death throes. No less silly is the delegating of sex to a perverted station in the gutter. Sorry, Jim, but your argument just doesn't sound reasonable or logical. You aren't arguing 'decency'--you're arguing your point-of-view against mine.

ality is a zine devoted to intelligent critiquing of stf, fandom and occasionally the real or mundane world. A zine devoted to intelligent criticism, in fact. Hyphen, on the other hand is definitely devoted to humor. As is Innuendo, Cry and a number of others.

You can take many zines and dissect them in this manner. But you eventually come up against zines like Twig, A bas and Triode. Here we must admit that the personality of the editor is very much in presence but to what direction it is directed will apparently vary from issue to issue.

But one fact remains. Once a fmz acquires a distinct personality it becomes a good one. As long as it remains an undirected force, it will never be numbered among the great. How many times have you noticed complaints in a zine's letter column about lack of editorial personality, when the editorial and the other fan-ed inspired comments may exceed in length many times, that of other fmz with a definite editorial presence? Many times, I am sure. But once purpose comes to a zine, personality positively emanates from the printed pages.

All this is leading up to a statement. Until you shine in every page of Si-Fan, it will remain just another fanzine, sometimes having an interesting, nay, good issue. Which come to think of it is one good reason why so few young fan-eds become great. They can't give their products personality until they acquire one really and totally their own.

Mayhaps interesting speculation, but it will not accomplish anything, so let me launch into a detailed examination of Si-Fan 1.

First off, as I said the repro is very poor. Pages 12 and 13 were almost totally unreadable. The format was straightforward and the layout neat. At least you didn't subscribe to any of this 'continued on page umpteen' jazz. In other words, the continuity was excellent. The art was usually well balanced (for) which I beleive Jerry Burge should be thanked.

Burge's art is easily the consistently best in the zine, though he could use a little more practice... I think. Kill Cascio if he refuses to leave. Oh, what lousy work. Doesn't he know anything about proportions and perspective? If anything, he's worse than I am. Or is he from some colony of mutants, all of whose forearms are twice as long as their upper arms? And that "horrifying" monster...! How eichee can you get?

As far as written material goes, an attitude of "Oh look at us, aren't we cute?" seems to pervade the whole zine. A typical first issue attitude, so don't let it get you. It comes from trying too hard to be humorous or critical.

The little vignette in your editorial is a perfect example of the above. The latter art was much more interesting than the short-short.

As far as fiction in fanzines goes, I'm not against it, but it must be good to gain my approval. Personally, I think a lot of authors, (would-be and actual) are missing a bet by not experimenting in various forms of fantasy and outre fiction for fanzine publication. Not much is not salable, though it may be good, because of its theme. And the fmz audience should be such that it would be a natural sounding board for an author's "different" works. Unfortunately, Moore's "Transient" has proven that we wouldn't naturally welcome such pieces. I, for one, didn't like "Transient". Could it be that I don't have Broad Mental Horizons.

At any rate "Charons Boathouse" (No "" between "n" and "s") didn't ride down my literary gullet any too well. But that's no surprise, for neither does half the prozine fiction coming out these days. The writer just didn't "phase" with me, ye might say.

What, pray tell, will be the purpose of a regional group such as Dixie Fandom? Beyond hooting for a large membership and a world-con? I've always thought that Worldcons were put on by local city-suburbs groups instead of regional societies. Not that it matters. It'll probably go the way of all flesh after three years or so.

The Asfo cover is so cruddy it has a weird sort of beauty all its own.

Burge, in Opus 1 (I presume you already know that this was the name of one of Keasler's pubs) wasn't too bad.

I don't think us faans are that bad (He must have been talking to Bob Jennings. What if's mit all you people, don't you beleive we read or discuss the stuff? It's all lies, we do discuss stf!) Are we?



My favorites?

Novel: Lest Darkness Fall, de Camp (Unk. Dec, 1939)

Shorts:

Nightfall, Asimov ASF (Sept., 1941)

The Compleat Werewolf (Boucher, Unk. Apr., 1942)

The Star, Clarke; Infinity, first issue.

The Cold Equations, ASF (Leinster?)

The Fruit at the Bottom, Bradbury.

Plus X, ASF, Russell.

Meet the Professor TWS ('47) Kuttner.

Thunder and Roses ASF (Nov. 1947, Sturgeon)

The Gnarly Man, de Camp, Unk., June 1939.

Escape (Joseph Gilbert and Fred W. Fisher, ASF Apr. '43?)

Mindworm, Kornbluth, Worlds Beyond, December, 1950.

Plus a Leiber, a Sturgeon, a C.L. Moore and another Kornbluth short, all of whose titles I don't happen remember at the moment.

Any help? You'll notice I like both sf and fantasy, preferably of a light kind. If novelettes were allowed, "The Indigestible Triton," "Soldiers of the Black Goat," "Conjure

life " and about ten more would have been snapped on without a second thought.

Can you guess what my "golden era of sf" is?

So who reads SFTimes? (19159 Helen, Detroit 34, Michigan.)

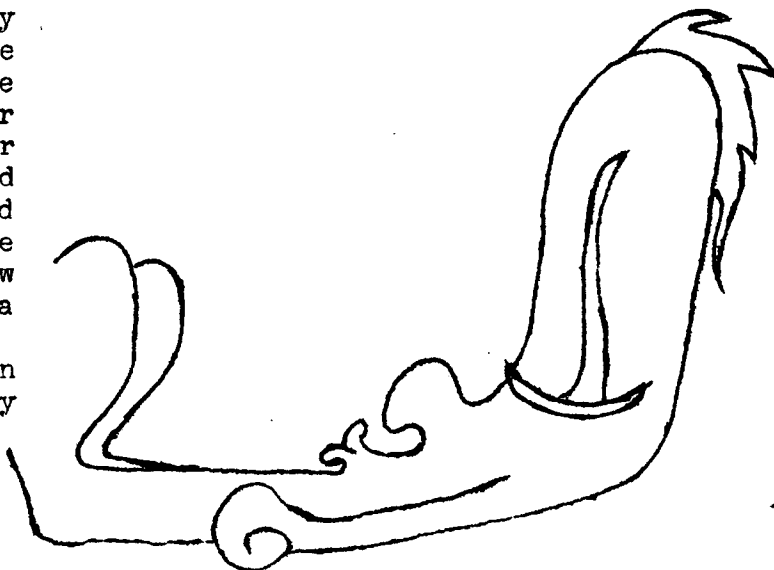
So--all right. If I decide to feature 'Slavish critiques', I'll ask you for an article. Taurasi reads SF Times.

OY TACKETT-- The thought occurs that I've had Si-Fan 1 sitting here for a couple of weeks now and haven't gotten a letter off to you about it. I thank you for the first issue. Right fine cover there.

Wermer's item on G-8 and the Spider was interesting but too short. I think he could have expanded on both quite a bit. I was never an avid G-8 fan but did read the Spider frequently. I seem to recall that his adversaries became progressively rougher and the Spider's exploits more and more hectic. I don't recall the last several issues as I was overseas at the time and missed the ending of the series. The war, it seems, with the attendant shortages of paper and all meant the death of many pulps.

The Spider was notable for the fact that it was a series in which action carried over from one issue to the next rather than being a series of more-or-less unconnected stories revolving around the same characters. If Wentworth was put out of action by a bullet near the end of the June issue he was still out of action in the beginning of the July issue. Also, life became increasingly more hazardous for him as Kirkpatrick had him pegged as the Spider. Others seem to have been close to the truth for as the series progressed throughout the years it became increasingly more difficult for Wentworth to assume his disguise. In the early years he could leisurely make up as the Spider at home or while cruising in his car whereas in later episodes he was forced to resort to a mask in order to speed the change from Wentworth to the Spider to avoid detection. I wonder how well a Spider anthology would sell as a paperback?

The Loire is the longest river in France. (412 Elderberry Dr., Laurel Bay N.C.)



The Spider, also, was unique to some extent in that he was a vivid, ~~real~~ four-dimensional character; he had fears, doubts, hopes. He was faced with great, seemingly insurmountable odds and they scared him. Most pulp series featured a strong willed, faceless, hero who was a mere *deux ex machina* for the plot. They relied on the lesser characters to fuse interest into the stories. Captain Future is a good example; Curt Newton is just another superman, indistinguishable from a hoard of such supermen, romping around in the perhaps more mundane fantasies of other pulp series at the time. Grag, Otho and Simon Wright, on the other hand, were endowed with all sorts of interesting characteristics not becoming to a hero of Captain Future's stature. They stand out in time and space; they're real to the reader. Curt Newton is merely a symbol of an idealism that is fast disappearing from our society.

Those who liked the Spider might look up the British series of novels, featuring The Baron and by-lined "Anthony Morton"----- a pen-name for John Creasey, creator of Inspector West, Dr. Palfrey, the Toff and Department Z ... not to mention Gideon of Scotland Yard under the name 'J.J. Marric'. A handful of Baron books were published by Lippincott in America, during the forties and the Baron was called in the titles 'Blue Mask'...! Tho not in the stories. There are some definite reminders of the Spider in the series, particularly in matters of construction. It's still going strong in Great Britain, much to the consternation of mystery critics. It's almost as good as the Spider; worth looking up, but definitely.

The Spider novels were too long for more than one to be in a paperback book at a time; but the idea is interesting. Donald A. Wollheim, boy paperback editor---what say you?

All of which brings us to some closing remarks. I had promised you that the title of this column would be "Shrapnel," which it is not. If you managed to hear Don Ford's Illustrated Slide Lecture at Pittcon, you know the source of ODTAA, and to show Mr. Ford I'm grateful I'm sending him the next few issues of Si-Fan. Maybe that'll teach him to go around spouting British Service Station Esoterica.

I should mention the South Fandom Press Alliance--the Southern Fandom Group apa. It's under the guidance of Bill Plott (Box 654, Opelika, Alabama) and those of you who want to join should contact him for details. While nothing is really official yet, it seems probable that non-SFGers can join as well. I suggest that if you intend to join, you had better contact Bill now. If you live in any Southern State and want to join SFG, details may be had from Bob Farnham, 506 2nd Ave., Dalton, Georgia. Since Bob's health prevents him from earning a salary, you can probably speed matters up by providing your own postage and envelope. All you need be is an interested sfan. We promise you: NO join-anything-deadwood in SFG. It's an excellent way of making contacts and avoiding gafia. It's for newcomers and old-timers, alike. I think you'll have fun with it.

Well, again, I urge you to write and of course send in a contribution. I know what I want, but you might be able to do something else, better; so much better that I'd ignore my policy. So just send something in. Preferably, something you'd be proud of. The next Si-Fan should be out in early December in time for the Christmas Rush.

Now then, let me hear from you.

Si-Fan---
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Insidious
fanzine

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