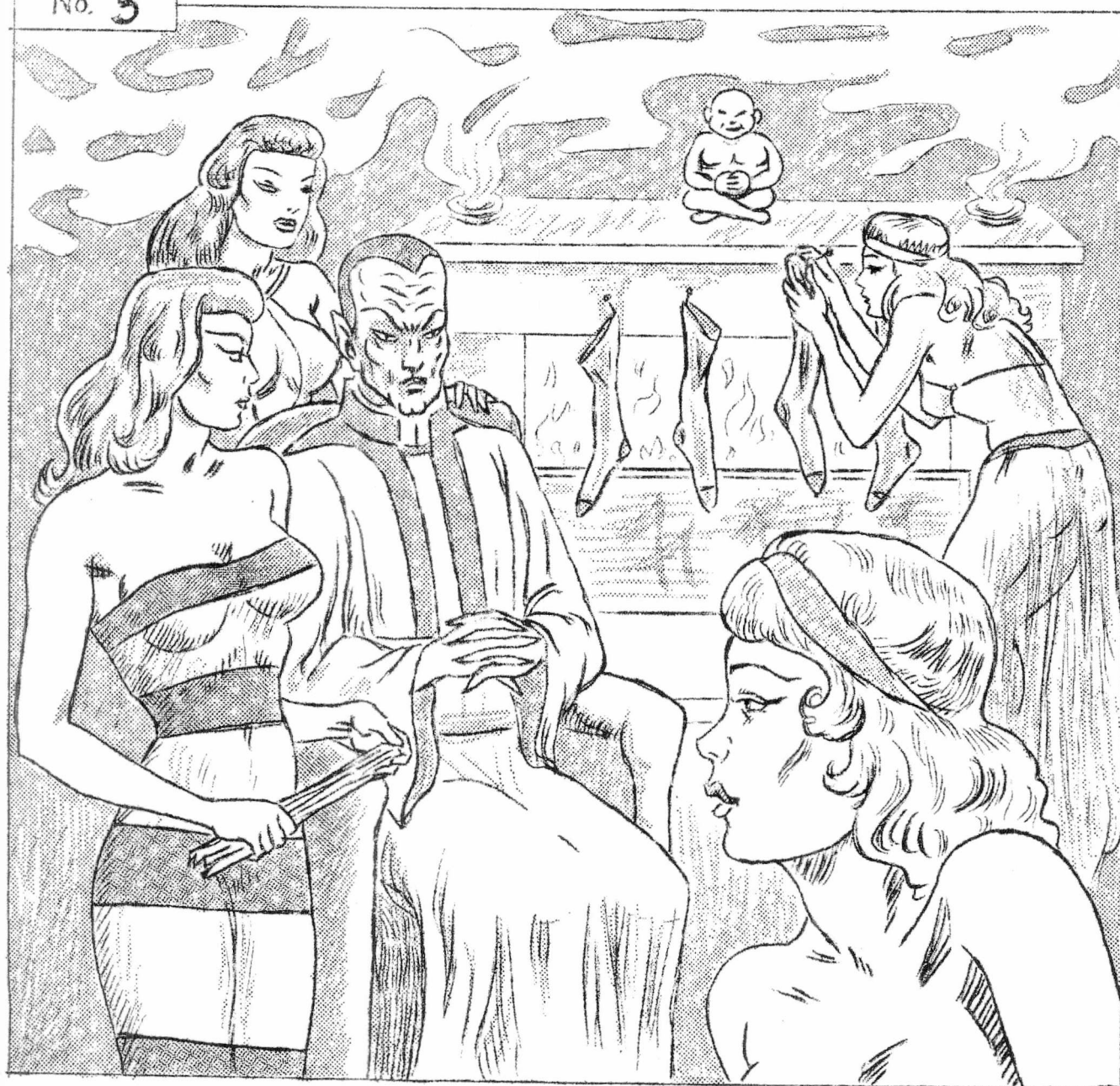


SI-FAN

No. 3



12-7A



Si-Fan; Volume One, Number Three, late December, 1960; edited by Jerry Burge, Joseph Christoff and Gerald Page, collectively known as Atlanta Fanzine Press. Si-Fan is issued with bi-monthly whimsy for 20¢ an issue. Please do not send more. Trades accepted; also various other things. Material is needed. Please send letters, mss, to Page.

PAGE'S PAGE

This issue was supposed to be out for Christmas...but it isn't. Perhaps it isn't New Years yet, so anyway I'll wish you the happiest of hollidays and a frolicsome first. Better late than never, I guess, but if they're too late, make a note on your callendar and use these wishes for next year. (After all, I might be late again, you know...)

I would like to clear up the confusion about who edits this and how, but so far those I've explained the system to just went blunt eyed (Like in Little Orphan Annie) and began giggling. But there are three of us More or less responsible for setting up the policy and perso ality of Si-Fan: Burge, Christoff and Page, alphabetically. But it falls upon the stooped, sweat-beaded shoulders of Page (ahem...) to execute the actual details of putting the thing together. You can always tell him, because he types with this typeface, large elite; Burge uses the Monster Pica which you can find between pages 9 and 16, and he cuts his column and occasionally, something else. He also must take bows for the cutting of drawings into the stencils. Christoff helps out in the morale, policy and production ends of this thing and runs around the country meeting fans just to get the feel of fandom so we can keep abreast.

If you care to, write an article, review or humor item for Si-Fan; or just happen to do something which is exceptionally good and send it to Si-Fan. Fiction must be exceptionally good, because what I have on hand will be some while in using. I prefer material slanted to collectors, although (witness this issue) I am not adverse to any type of article well handled. Note I said reviews, too. I mean of anything: Books, stories, magazines (specific issues or whole runs), specific writers, reviews tracing new trends, record reviews, films and tv. We don't have a regular review column unless Opus is it (and it isn't) so send something in; if it is good and I can use it, I will.

On the matter of art, I am in desperate need of people who can do artwork to order. As for randomly done work... well, it must either be very good or of a type that might logically fit an upcoming article; otherwise, I don't want to see it. I'm rejecting vast amounts of artwork and since the random stuff only fits the lettercol there is a limit to what I can take. Maggie Curtis, Robert E. Gilbert and a couple of others have that department sewed up as far as I'm concerned. I do need an artist to illustrate Bernie Wermers' NOTES OF A PULP COLLECTOR. I am in desparate need of an illustration for the next installment, Operator #5. I prefer scenes to portraits. We need a heading for it too. I'm also interested in seeing cartoons. So volunteer.

Next issue we plan to begin a column by Sture Sedolin tracing the history of Scandinavian fandom. Bo Stenfors (See page 20) is illustrating it. The cover will be by Dave Prosser; it's symbolic, Rohmerian (Of course) and our first photo offset cover. It's already printed, so barring catastrophe, it will show up.

The French Periodical, Les Premieres was founded with the purpose of providing a "comprehensive view of literature by living authors." To this aim, Regis Messac was asked by them to find the greatest living author of science fiction. This was durring the life-time of H.G. Wells, but Messac passed up many such renowned authors in favor of another author—David H. Keller, M.D. Les Premieres published "The Stenographer's Hands" (Jan., Feb. and Mar., 1932), "The Ivy War" (July to September, 1935), "Porquoi" (Feb. 1937), "The Flying Fool" (July and August, 1937) and they began serializinf "The Eternal Conflict" (July to October, 1939) before being forced to discontinue publication of the magazine at the outbreak of the Second World War. In addition, three of his stories appeared in book form under the title "La Guerre de Lierre" in 1936; and The Sign of the Burning Hart appeared in a French edition in 1939 — ten years before it

was published in America.

This was not the first time an American writer received recognition in France before his stature grew in the eyes of his countrymen, nor was it the last. Edgar Allan Poe and Henry Miller stand out as examples. It was not until the late '40's that Dr. Keller began to see much of his work published in book form here in America. In the space of a few years, *Life Everlasting* and other Tales of Science, Fantasy and Horror; *The Eternal Conflict*; *The Lady Dedides*; *The Sign of the Burning Hart* and *The Solitary Hunters and the Abyss* (which saw an Italian edition the next year--1949) were all published. Over the years a number of his stories have been listed in annual best short story collections. Almost simultaneously with the appearance of this issue of *Si-Fan*, *Amazing Stories* (in its January, 1961 issue) reprints Dr. Keller's "Unto us a Child is Born."

Dr. Keller's first science fiction story was published as far back as the February, 1928 issue of Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories*. It was "The Revolt of the Pedestrians" and marked the beginning of a professional literary career that has since seen published well over one-hundred sf fantasy and psychological stories and over 700 articles for leading medical journals and popular medical magazines. When Dr. Keller sold his first story, he was 48 years old, and by the time he reached the penacle of his recognition in the late forties, he had retired to his ancestral home in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Keller believes firmly that he writes best of what he knows. The key to his writing therefore is in his unusually long and full life.

He was born and educated in Philadelphia. For ten years he practiced medicine in Russell, Pennsylvania, a village of some 300 inhabitants. He became interested in psychiatry in 1915 and served in later years in various capacities in state institutions in Louisiana, Illinois, Tennessee and Pennsylvania. In 1917 he joined the Army Medical Reserve as a First Lieutenant and served with distinction until his retirement as a lieutenant colonel in 1945.

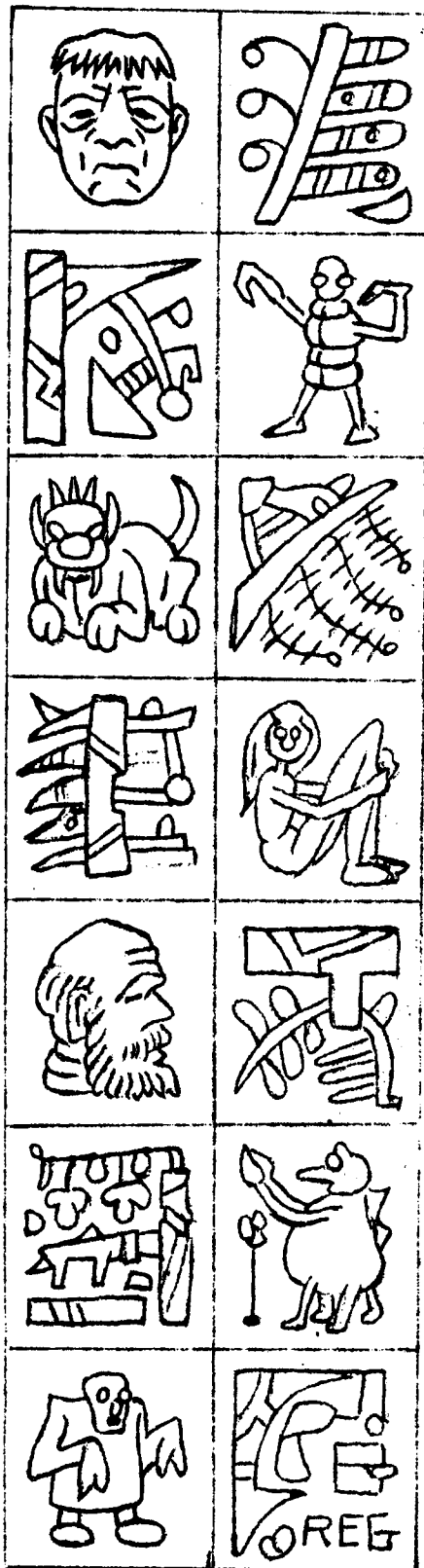
The wide variety of his work becomes evident if you read many of his yarns. The simplicity of his style and manner, the classicism of his structure and the directness of his approach cannot be missed, either, and have often served to baffle critics used to the complexities of imitative writers. It has been said that no writer has evaded the dictates of editorial policy as much as has Keller; many of his stories, although appearing in magazines with notoriously strict policies on science fiction (such as *Amazing* under Gernsback and Sloan) are science fiction only by courtesy. He has based each of his stories firmly upon his observances of mankind, and even during the periods when he has been forced to write out of financial necessity, he has stoutly maintained a solid integrity as a writer.

No one has ever been able to imitate the Keller style with its often poetic simplicity. Until he was six years old Keller could not speak English; the language he did speak was understood only by his sister who was eighteen months older than he. She died at the age of seven, leaving Keller without a means of verbal communication. The first day, he was sent back from school as being language deficient. His mother began efforts to teach him English. In three years he re-enrolled in public school; he had been taught English much as a foreigner is taught the language and it impressed upon him the value of simplicity both in choosing words and writing sentences.

While there can be no simple way to classify his tales except as "unique", it can be said that he falls into three main categories as a writer. These are "scientist", "Humanist" and psychologist."

The scientist in Keller is concerned with the Gernsback approach, or as close to it as Keller ever comes. Into this category fall such stories as "The Yeast Men", and "The Boneless Horror". These are centered around a development of science and its relationship to, and effect upon mankind.

The humanist is concerned with Man; with the relationship of man and woman, pri-



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artwork--

Cover by Burge ("Christmas with Fu Manchu")

Interiors by Robert Ernest Gilbert- 3, 21.

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Nancy Share- 22 (From M38 Mss Euro).

Andrew Jefferson Offutt- 24.

All headings and backcover lettering by Burge. The drawing on page 20 was cut into a Kores Frytype (Swedish) stencil by Bo Stenfors; all others cut on various American Tempo and Tower stencils by Burge. Burge typed Opus; Page typed the rest. Cartoon on page 24 mimeographed by Burge on an Antique Tower mimeograph. with much aid from Olde and Sinister Incantations. Next issue due by March, 1961.

GWP

marily, and is perhaps Keller's most recurrent facet; and the one most often overlapping into others. The most important role in the writing of Dr. Keller's longer works is the humanist; for he has always been an idealist. Never has he succumbed to an idealistic suicide in cynicism. In the forward to "Life Everlasting" he says:

"A real science fiction story should be written about the realities of life, concerning which all the readers are familiar. The most commonplace things of life can become the most wonderful if handled in the proper manner."

In a biographical essay on Keller prefacing *Life Everlasting and Other Tales of Science, Fantasy and Horror*, Sam Moskowitz points out that never has 'horror' predominated in any of Keller's long fiction.

In the psychologist, we have the 'professional' David H. Keller actively at work. His non-fiction---the bulk of his writing---comes under this heading. And certainly some of the finest of his short stories. Such stories as "The Thing in the Celler" (Which, I believe, was due to be reprinted in the issue of *Satellite* which never appeared.) and "A Piece of Linoleum" are fine examples of the compact and concise short story, and very good examples of the psychological Dr. Keller.

In a letter published in the March 1948 issue of Andy Lyon's *Fanzine*, *Fanomena*, Chad Oliver wrote of his impressions on meeting Dr. Keller: "Dr. Keller can tell a story like nobody else in the world. His deep voice captivates and enchants, and his eyes are bright under heavy brows. I think he hypnotized us all unintentionally."

That, I feel sums up Dr. Keller as a writer quite well. For after cataloging his themes and his philosophy, after labeling his motivations, something remains which cannot really be set neatly and rationally alongside everything else. He is nothing more or less than a born story teller. For years he wrote for nothing more than the pleasure and perhaps therapy of writing. Many stories and novels poured from his pen only to be bound in Morocco and placed in his bookcase. Many of them have never been published and perhaps never will. Certainly not within the Doctor's lifetime. It was only when he was faced with the need for money to put his daughters through college that he began selling. He took the stories and novels from his shelf and re-read them and made the necessary corrections---which sometimes did not amount to very much---and submitted them to the magazines. The editors were hooked. It has been said that T. O'Connor Sloan would have loved nothing more than to have reprinted the entire contents of Keller's bookcases, if only he could have explained the non-science fictional aspect of them to his readers.

Like Lovecraft, Keller has remained friendly to the amateur press and has never willingly refused a reasonable request from a fanzine editor. Much of his early work appears in amateur publications. The issue of *Fanomena* mentioned above was dedicated to him and contained stories and articles by him, as well as letters and articles by such editors and anthologists as Sam Moskowitz, Don Wollheim and August Derleth. The editor of *Fanomena*, Andy Lyon, wrote a very interesting appraisal of Dr. Keller entitled "En Garde, David Keller."

There were three stories in that fanzine by Dr. Keller and he has given us permission to reprint them. The first of them appears on the next page and the other two should appear soon.

Dr. Keller has now retired from the Army and from medicine. I do not believe that he still makes his semi-annual addresses to fan groups, nor, for that matter does any lecturing. He said that "The Abyss" would be his last novel.

But I wonder. As I said, Dr. Keller is a story teller. I wonder if he could stop writing. Perhaps his bookshelf today holds many more Morocco bound books than it did when he retired.

--Jerry Page

"INDEPENDENCE"

BY DAVID H KELLER M D

"Every man," said Jones to a few of us gathered around the fireplace, "Has a right to the free exercise of his own desires." We all laughed at him.

"No one can do as he wishes," replied Smithson, the lawyer, in a pompous manner. "It would result in anarchy. We are all bound by convention, law, taboos. Our conduct is predicated by our heredity, surroundings, education. No one is a free agent." He said it in such a way that no one could doubt him.

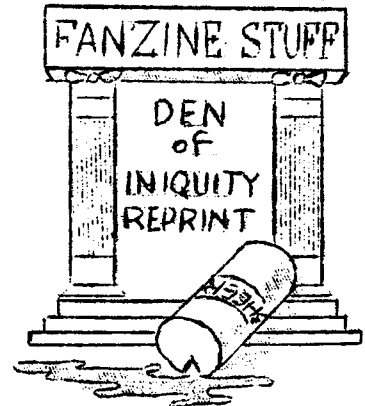
Jones laughed.

"I seem to have but few supporters. Nevertheless I am sure that I am right and recently have acted on a matter which nicely illustrates my idea. I am, as you know, about forty years old. For years I have wanted to write a book and illustrate it. I have definite ideas as to the subject matter of the book and the kind of illustrations. Not being either an author or an artist it was all very difficult. In addition I have the urge of my ancestors toward a purity of life and thought that I am sure now was more prudence than purity. In other words, the book and its illustrations were to be of a character not approved of by my ancestors.

"Of course my ancestors were all dead, but parts of them lived anew in me. Had I only had some Pagan blood in me, the entire task would have been less difficult, but my forebears were ministers, moral lawyers and college professors. Their blood in me rebelled at such an undertaking as I had planned. Yet I started in a small way. First a book had to be written and I had never written one of any kind. It was necessary to learn the mechanics, the technique of writing. It took me some years--you understand?--of correspondence courses and painful plodding, and while I was doing that, learning to write, it became the custom to prepare manuscripts on the typewriter and because I was sure I could not entrust my material to the average stenographer, I learned to use a corona.

"Of course there were interruptions. I had to live and ultimately support my family. At times a year or more would pass without having time to even think about the book. Then, too, the very fact of the wife and children bothered me. It was a question whether I, as a supposedly moral man with a family, should entertain such ideas, and still worse, to put them into actual existence.

"In those early years I wrote chapter after chapter of the book only to burn them after they were written. I would write a chapter and feel perfectly satisfied with it and then my conscience would bother me and into the fire it would go. It took me twenty years to complete my first book and even that was burned. Finally the book was finished. A suitable title at once presented itself. No other name suited it as well as the one I first thought of, "The Passionate Lover." So, slowly, carefully, I copied it all on the Corona--just one copy--destroyed in this very fireplace the written manuscript, and finally had everything ready for the binder. I could not have it



bound in town; I could not be sure that the bookbinder could be trusted not to read it, so I took it to New York and had it bound by an Italian who did beautiful work but could not read English.

"I had it bound in two volumes. Between every two pages of manuscript was a blank page for my illustration. You see, up to the present time I had no pictures, it being necessary first to have the text to illustrate. Ultimately the two volumes were in my house, securely locked in a secret drawer of the old desk over there in the corner. The first part of my desire had been accomplished after some twenty years of endeavor."

"In other words," slowly spoke our minister, "after reaching the age of maturity, when youth gave you no excuse, you finally wrote an immoral book." All of us moved restlessly in our chairs. Jones seemed less disturbed than the rest of us as he continued.

"Exactly true. After twenty years of effort I had finally written an immoral book. It was wrong but beautiful, and certain pages were worthy of being classed with other similar books like Boccaccio's Decameron and the Bible."

At that the minister arose and in a silence, broken only by the crackling of the fire, left the house.

"I am sorry he misunderstood me," said Jones.

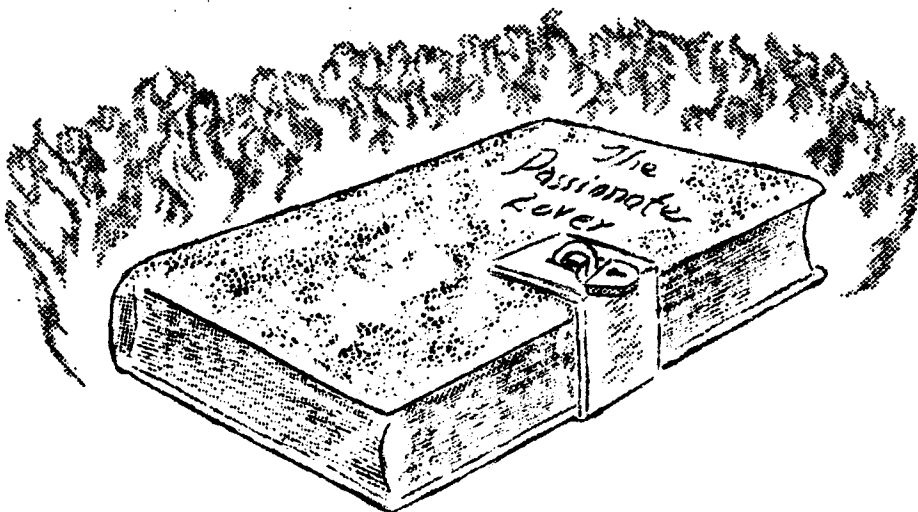
"All the ministry object to having certain things said about the greatest book in the world and then, too, that word 'immoral', is capable of so many shades of meaning. Well, to go on with my story. The next thing was the illustrations. These had to be purchased. They had to be artistic, of a size to fit the book, and above all to accurately illustrate the text. They were hard to find, and when

found, could not be sent to me by mail. I was too poor to go to Paris and Vienna and hunt for them, so many, in fact most of them were purchased by mail. This frequently was the cause of much duplication and constant dissatisfaction, and it also made it all very expensive." He paused, seemingly waiting for comment. No one spoke, so he continued.

"Slowly the illustrating of the two volumes progressed to completion. Six months ago it was finished. I say finished, though of course changes will be made from time to time in the illustrations as I find pictures more suitable to the text than those I have. To all purposes, however, the work is completed--begun twenty years ago."

The lawyer slowly arose from his chair, saying equally slowly, "I have lived in this village all my life and while I have observed such things in the degenerate and feeble-minded, this is the first time such a thing has developed in an apparently normal citizen who has always been outwardly respectable," and turning on his heel he left us.

The others, somewhat awkwardly, with distinct confusion, left at once, leaving



Jones still standing before the fire. I sat still half buried in one of his luxuriant leather wing chairs. Jones frowned. "There is something in this that I cannot understand. I thought they would be very interested in my story; to me it is interesting on account of the revolt from the bondage of modern culture, the effort to attain independence. Evidently they did not approve of the tale."

"Evidently not," I echoed. "They have families, social position. They hold offices of trust--in the rotary--in the church. To approve of such a book would jeopardize their future social standing."

After some more discussion along these lines I left him, still standing before the fireplace. I confess to some curiosity--even a desire to ask him to permit me to look over the books in question. He did not suggest it and naturally it was an impossibility to propose an inspection under the circumstances. So I left.

It was a few days before rumor did its work in our small town, but when once started, no time was lost in taking appropriate action. The church led, and a committee of elders headed by the pastor called on Jones. No one knows definitely what took place--that is no one except those present and they were rather loath to give details but it seems that Jones was given the choice between burning the books or leaving the church and he promptly handed his resignation to the pastor.

After that a bridge club ceased to invite him. He was a fair card player and always paid his losses but the women refused to meet him socially, and were equally determined that their husbands should not. In fact, the Woman's Club considered the passing of resolutions asking for his resignation from the School Board. Their idea was that a man who not only owned but created such vicious books could not be trusted with the morals of the young. Some of this acrimonious discussion crept into the local newspaper and immediately was copied in the yellow press of the great cities. Double paged illustrated articles appeared in the Sunday Supplements. These articles contained about 5% fact and the rest simply reportorial fancy. The picture of the District Attorney appeared as the champion of purity. Not knowing just what illustrations there were in the book, different papers reproduced examples of pornographic art so their readers could in the future identify such pictures and avoid them.

Through all this discussion Jones kept quiet. The district Judge seized the opportunity and solemnly charged the Grand Jury to investigate the "morals of certain of our supposedly eminently proper citizens." They knew very well what was needed and urged on by desire for fame they summoned Jones to appear before them.

I was present at that investigation. Jones was as usual quiet and self composed. This could not be said of any of the Grand Jury. Most of them did not have the vocabulary necessary to question Jones about his alleged immorality, and Jones was not disposed to help them. He told them in no uncertain language that it was none of their business; he even went so far as to say that the entire investigation was solely due to their purient curiosity. Assisted by the district Attorney, they dug up an old blue law and found a true bill against him. He was arrested and furnished his own bond.

By this time the matter was arousing the interest of the nation. Several times while Jones was addressing the Grand Jury he had used the word 'Independence' and this caught the fancy of many prominent personages who made their living as Senators and lawyers talking about it. He was heralded as the Champion of Liberty; strangers came by the dozen to see him and offer him help. As usual, however, he preserved a dignified silence--so much so that on the morning of the preliminary hearing, he was found dead in bed.

His will, found on the bedside table, made me his executor. In the course of settling the estate I came across the two volumes which had caused such a furor in our corner of the world. They were bound in half morocco with the title on both--"The Passionate Lover" by James Jones, Volumes I and II.

About that time a noted divine had announced his views concerning the Virgin Birth

and so occupied was everyone in the discussion that no one had time to be interested in a dead man and his fancies.

At first I thought of calling in some of the neighbors, the Judge, the Pastor and the District Attorney. It would, perhaps interest them to actually see the books. The more I considered it, the more repugnant it was to me. Jones was my friend and he was dead.

There should be no audience so I sat down and opened the books slowly and thoughtfully for here was the secret of the sin that had caused the early death of Jones, that had made his name a savory morsel in the mouths of our Puritans. There may have been a sin, but if it was a sin it was of imagination only, for as I came to the end of the second volume I realized that every page was blank--pure white, unsoiled by drop of ink or single picture.

No wonder Jones smiled at times.

--David H. Keller

#

COSMIC SCIENCE STORIES

a brief note

by Allen Baes

In 1950, the Popular Press Limited, of 16 Cockspur Street, London, published one issue of a magazine entitled Cosmic Science Stories. It was pulp sized and ran to 64 pages not counting the covers. Very few advertisements were used. The cover was an original illustration by D. McLaughlin and shows the usual scantily clad blonde clutched in the multi-talons of a bug-eyed monster, with the hero racing across the sand to save her from a fate worse than death. No price is listed on the cover. Inside, on the contents page we find the price listed as 9d., and suddenly discover that this is actually an English edition of the American Super Science Stories of September, 1949.

The five departments and features of the U.S. edition are omitted as are the two shortest stories, World of No Return by Bryce Walton and Star-Brother by Stanley Mullen. Small, clear, type is used and each story is complete and unabridged; the illustrations from the American edition are used as are the American blurbs.

The contents are:

Minion of Chaos by John D. MacDonald.

Minus Danger! by George O. Smith

The Metal Moon by Neil R. Jones

The Bride of Eternity by Margaret St. Clair

and, The Miniature by Peter Reed.

(The Metal Moon is one of the famous Professor Jameson and the Zoromes stories; this was probably the longest continually published of all science fiction series.)

All things considered this is one of the most impressive of the English Reprint editions of American magazines. It is quite scarce and some will tell you it doesn't exist, as I was told several times while trying to find it. Some English dealers list it occasionally and it is really worth looking for. Of course completists must obtain a copy for their files.

--Allen Baes

RAMBLINGS ON SPACE-TIME

EDITOR'S NOTE—When faced with trying to define his labels, man is fond of inventing new ones. The process of thought is rarely applied offhand to any of the staggering concepts we so dearly love to play with. The following is published simply to start something. GWP

*--- * ---*

Have you ever considered the meaning of infinity? Eternity?

You may have stumbled across these enigmas and done a little free thinking, but the majority of people have probably never seriously considered either of these words. There are more problems than the meaning of these two words—a multitude of questions to be sure. Such questions as the theory of our universe being contained in an atom of another; the possibility of time ending; the question of more than four dimensions; conflicting theories about the nature of the universe—does it end or go on forever? But we're back to those two words, aren't we?

I would like to discuss at some length, the two words we're back to: Infinity and Eternity.

First, I shall try to explain the word infinity. It means, with the best words I can think of to describe it, limitless or to be of such greatness as to be immeasurable. To sum the word up: it means boundless beyond the imagination.

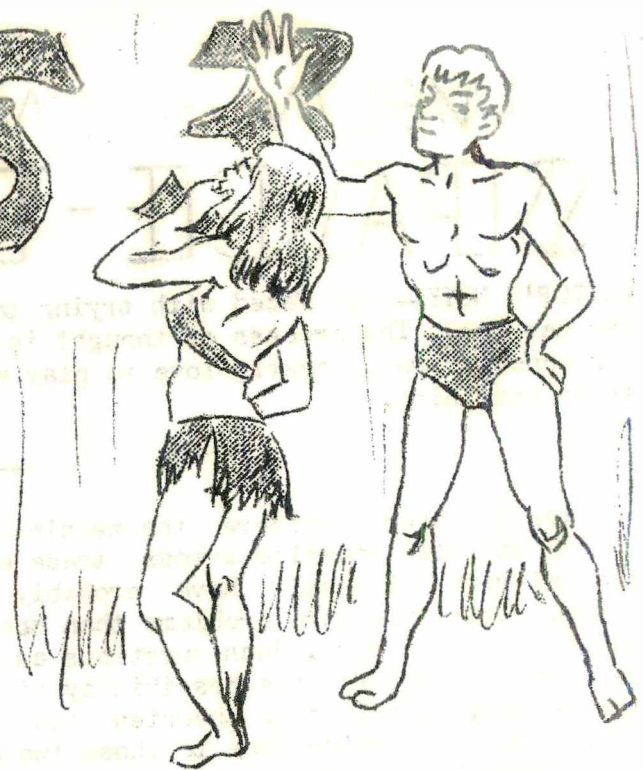
If infinity existed everywhere there would be no need for time, in the gross sense of the word. However, it is my opinion that infinity cannot exist everywhere; not on this world, any other world, or any phase of dimension or space. I did not say, however that infinity does not exist; for I do believe it exists. In only one way, however: I believe that infinity exists only within time... and that time cannot end; therefore, it is infinite. I realize that time, as we know it, will end someday, but that time, marked or unmarked, will last with infinity--forever. Thusly, since time is limitless, so is infinity and in one the other exists.

I would now like to delve into the word 'Eternity.' In the New Practical Standard Dictionary, Eternity is defined as, (1) infinite duration or existence (2) an endless or limitless time (3) immortality (4) that which is eternal or immortal. Eternity, infinity and immortality are all much the same and it will be difficult to distinguish among them.

Eternity, in simple terms, means something that is immortal. Now this does present problems. To be immortal is to be in a state or condition: This man is mortal... that man is immortal. Immortality, in the main, means some physical object enduring forever; throughout time. What endures throughout time but infinity and time itself? Now then, it is my firm opinion that all physical objects will someday cease to exist... completely... so what is left? Infinity and time-- The mortal objects--physical objects--have ceased to exist! This leads to the thesis that Eternity is not infinite. Infinity, I surmise, is "dependent" on Eternity for its existence. For I believe that pure infinity begins only when Eternity is not infinite. The whole paradox is very simple: Eternity ends when all physical things cease to exist--when there can be no finite boundaries--and infinity exists, beginning at this time, and lasts on, and on ...and on...

BY TED BROOKE

OPUS



This Opus was to have been devoted mainly to a dissertation on the "spirit of science fiction," a subject touched on but not defined in Opus 2. Alas, on page 177 of the December Analog, John Campbell has precisely expressed the whole thing in less than a paragraph, leaving me with nothing to say. Blast these psionic editors!

Oh well, I'm glad somebody has finally gotten around to saying this (and Analog does, I suppose, reach a few more people than Si-Fan). Let's hope a lot of sf writers (and editors) see this remark of Campbell's and understand it. Campbell has here stated--for the first time in print, to my knowledge--the single quality which makes science fiction unique and worthwhile and (deny it though you may) superior to all other literary forms.

This doesn't mean Opus 3 is now bereft of a subject. But the next three Opuses (er--Opera?) have been planned pretty definitely to grow out of this one, and now I'm befoozled about the whole thing. Whaddaya do now?

We could be timely for a change and have a look at some of the Things Fans Are Talking About. Who killed science fiction? f'rinstance. The amazing change in Amazing. Whether "Starship Soldier" is fascist propaganda or merely a horrible example of inept writing. Or whether "Transient" is a deep psychological novel or merely a horrible etc. In short, there are all sorts of topics for the columnist who's too lazy to search out a subject of his own. Except for Who Killed sf which may yet produce some worthwhile conclusions, the trouble with these timely subjects is that just about everything sayable has been said about them. All that remains is the uninspiring task of choosing sides.

Still, Opus is not above taking sides in a controversy, so let's be lazy for a while and play around with a couple of opinions.

The most striking thing about the controversies over the two novels is that there should be any controversy at all. "Starship Soldier," to judge from the F&SF version, is one of Heinlein's weaker novels. It consists of a series of lectures interspersed with episodes from the career of a young soldier in process of becoming an old soldier. There is no discernible plot, the episodes having evidently been chosen with no other thought than to demonstrate the clever gadgets the well-dressed soldier of the period will tote around. For their very ferocity, the repeated battles soon become ludicrous--you begin to

expect the red-and-blue figure of Superman to join the fray at any moment and deal properly with those naughty aliens.

The lectures make somewhat better reading. Here, Heinlein, speaking through one or another of his characters, builds up a case for turning government over to the veterans. In the course of the argument some cogent observations are made--along with some slippery elisions, always a writer's privilege. Heinlein seems to be saying that only a man who has gone through actual combat is capable of making important decisions in government. Well, considering that a highly intelligent man can gain more genuine experience in war in a few hours of reading about it than the average guy can get in a dozen years of combat, the argument seems rather specious--but such an objection would be picayune.

The meaning of a novel is not to be found in what the characters say. The meaning is to be found in what they do, in what the action demonstrates. In "Starship Soldier" Heinlein has shown us a world controlled by veterans. He has shown that world in a state of perpetual war. Just where is that controversy again?

"Transient" is in a different category entirely. To say the least. In this overlong document, Ward Moore has evidently attempted to construct a "psychological" fantasy novel. Why it showed up in a purportedly science fiction magazine is a mystery to puzzle future scholars--unless someone wants to haul off and ask Amazing's editors. Some fans regard "Transient" as an innovation, a new departure in science fiction. If so, it were a grievous thing. For, if it were so, it would put science fiction twenty years behind mainstream fiction. Such novels were not uncommon during the '30's when writers were "discovering" psychology. They lost their popularity during the war, when people no doubt had enough disturbances in real life.

My own feeling about "Transient" is that it is neither fantasy nor science fiction. Both of these types require a high order of logic; a tale in which anything can happen deserves a field of its own (I've thought of an excellent term for this field: "balderdash"). As a story "Transient" is again found wanting. No change occurs during the narrative, for better or worse. Since anything can happen, nothing really happens, and so the protagonist emerges completely unaffected. This would not be quite so bad if the story were well-written, but it is not. It is written in a dead prose consisting of an almost unrelieved series of point-blank statements. Even where the action demands it most urgently, Moore manfully resists any temptation to bring his writing to life:

...His feet slipped on the loose stone; it was like walking on marbles. He tried to run, to defeat the restlessness of the rock by speed. His ankle turned; pain and weakness fought each other; he became part of a plunging, toppling, sinking, downward slide, with gravel, debris and boulders crashing around him.

Perhaps this plodding writing style is intended to convey the mood of a nightmare. Certainly, while reading it, I found it an effort to keep my own eyes open.

About the best that can be said for "Transient" is that it is unremarkable. And psychological science fiction or fantasy novels are

not so rare that we must gratefully swallow anything that comes along. Without investigating my bookcases, I can think of several, most of them fantasies. Guy Endore's "Methinks the Lady," for example, or Weinbaum's "The Dark Other." Either of these may be regarded as fantasy or as straight psychological novels. Neither is particularly outstanding, especially in light of their authors' other works; but each is readable and meaningful. David H. Keller's 1946 novel, "The Abyss," is probably the most successful blend of psychology and science fiction yet achieved. The author is a man who understands both subjects intimately. "The Eternal Conflict," also by Dr. Keller, is a fantasy which restricts itself (though not too severely) to the symbology of sex, another of Dr. Keller's specialties. Richard S. Shaver's "The Dream Makers," in the July 1958 Fantastic, is remarkable for several reasons. It may be interpreted either as science fiction or as a psychological fantasy--or, if you prefer, as straight reporting. In contrast to "Transient," "The Dream Makers" is a very remarkable novel; it is well-constructed and excellently written; it possesses several depths of meaning, and, an important factor in any novel, it is fun to read. On the surface, "Dream Makers" is an evenly-paced "menace" story in the modern vein. Below this there flows an undercurrent of social criticism, amusing in itself and beautifully integrated into the action. And at still darker levels "Dream Makers" reveals a psychological insight which I believe is unmatched in the field--except possibly by Dr. Keller.

But no doubt "Transient" will cop the next Hugo, and our magazines will be inundated with even more inept imitations.

Haven't yet said anything about Amazing Stories or Who Killed SF--or have I?--but I promised to look over some fanzines this Opus and to include two anthologies. The anthologies are still coming in faster than we can handle 'em--which is just the way we like it--but I doubt if you'd put up with more than two per issue. Here are a couple for you to mull during the solstice:

DONALD FRANSON'S ANTHOLOGY--"The Early Thirties"
the novel:

Paradise and Iron

Miles J Breuer

ASQ: Sum '30

the stories:

The Arrhenius Horror

P Schuyler Miller

Amz: 9/'31

Element 87

Ralph Linn

Amz: 6/'30

Martian Guns

Stanley D Bell

WS: 1/'32

A Martian Odyssey

Stanley G Weinbaum

WS: 7/'34

A Matter of Size

Harry Bates

ASF: 4/'34

Old Faithful

Raymond Z Gallun

ASF: 12/'34

Out Around Rigel

Robert H Wilson

ASF: 12/'31

Piracy Preferred

John W Campbell, Jr

Amz: 6/'30

Planet of the Double Sun

Neil R Jones

Amz: 2/'32

The Power Planet

Murray Leinster

Amz: 6/'31

The Prince of Liars

L Taylor Hanson

Amz: 10/'30

The Pygmy Planet

Jack Williamson

ASF: 2/'32

Salvage in Space

Jack Williamson

ASF: 3/'33

Tumithak of the Corridors

Charles R Tanner

Amz: 1/'32

Via the Time Accelerator

Frank J Bridge

Amz: 1/'31

Don adds a paragraph worth appending here: "I would like also to

see an anthology, or rather a collection, of early Jack Williamson, from 'The Metal Man' to 'After World's End,' but unmodernized. He was one of my favorite authors, little appreciated except for 'The Legion of Space.' I consider 'The Stone From the Green Star' a superior novel, and 'The Alien Intelligence' which I read for the first time many years later, almost as good. Too bad that Williamson tapered off, apparently taking the critics who panned his work as 'action only' seriously. Actually, his writing style was far more interesting than most current writers, and he had creative ability. Not a repetitive 'hack' like Hamilton (another one of my early favorites). Both authors had (or have, if they'd come back) the sense of wonder which many lack."

Many? There's a writer around who's still got it?

MICHAEL PADGETT'S ANTHOLOGY

the novel:

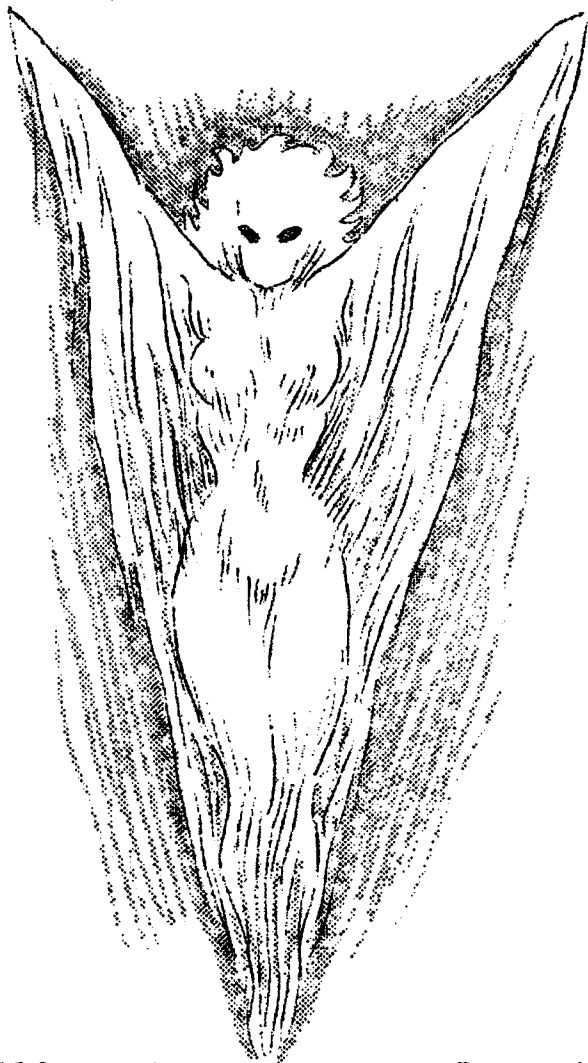
The Contest for the Planets	John W. Campbell, Jr	Amz: 1/2/3/'35
the stories:		
The Secret of Sutter's Lake	Don Wilcox	Amz: 1/'47
Hate	Rog Phillips	Amz: 1/'48
Strictly From Mars	Robert Bloch	Amz: 2/'48
No Land of Nod	Sherwood Springer	TWS: 12/'52
Panic Button	Eric Frank Russell	ASF: 11/'59
History Lesson	Arthur C Clarke	SS: 5/'49
The Colour out of Space	H P Lovecraft	Amz: 9/'27
The Weapon	Fredric Brown	ASF: 4/'51
Island of White Mice	David H Keller	Amz: 2/'35
The Stars are the Styx	Theodore Sturgeon	Gxy: 10/'50
The Fireman	Ray Bradbury	Gxy: 2/'51
Beyond Bedlam	Wyman Guin	Gxy: 8/'51
The Travelling Couch	Henry Slesar	Amz: 8/'59
Party of the Two Parts	William Tenn	Gxy: 8/'54
Lulu	Clifford D Simak	Gxy: 6/'57

Which leaves a little room for fanzines, after all.

THE MONDAY EVENING GHOST #6 & #7: Bob Jennings, 3819 Chambers Drive, Nashville 11, Tennessee. Six-weekly. 15¢ per copy; 12 for \$1.50. Mimeographed. 24 pages.

The Ghost was one of the first--if not the first--of the spate of new fanzines devoted to discussing science fiction. Whether Bob Jennings is merely a young man seeking new thrills or a minion of the sinister ser-con Ed Wood, I have no certain knowledge; but certainly his publication is dangerous. Doubly dangerous in that it spreads the insidious seeds of ser-conism while masquerading in the semblance--even to the innocuous title--of an ordinary fannish fanzine. The crude format, the clumsy writing, even the botched spellings we so love and cherish are here twisted to the sly purposes of ser-con propaganda.

One of the more interesting features of the Ghost is the series of five articles on magazine personality which began in #6. Bob seems to be writing these as they are published and one wonders faintly how he decided that five instalments would cover the subject precisely. Seems hardly human. It's difficult to comment on the series thus far since nothing particularly controversial has come up and any omissions might be taken care of in the next three articles. It's a strange subject



when you think about it. It's easy to think of a number of magazines which had or have a high personality quotient and of many others, very similar in makeup and content, which lacked personality for no obvious reason. To pick the closest examples I can think of, Wollheim's Fantasy Reader had a distinct personality from the first issue, yet his Science Fiction Reader, which differed only minutely from Fantasy Reader, seemed to have only a faint one. It would be difficult to say just what gave AFR its smooth and likeable personality. There were no readers columns. The editorials--if such they were--merely discussed the stories in the current issue in much the manner of a dust-jacket blurb. There were no illustrations. The secret of AFR's personality must be found in the tastefully selected stories, the informative and mood-setting blurbs and the gorgeous covers (anybody know who the AFR cover artists were, by the way?). ASFR had all the same ingredients, but no real personality resulted. Maybe Bob can explain it.

Peggy Cook's article on stf poetry in #6 seems to have started a mild controversy. Art Rapp, in a rejoinder in #7, seems to say that stf poetry is impossible, or at least incredibly difficult: "...when the reader of a poem is called upon to share the poet's reaction to scenes or events that exist only in the mind of the poet, there is a double barrier to communication...." Anybody out there seen Xanadu, lately? Or Poe's City in the Sea? Or the Gramboolian Plain? The example Art appends is hardly science fiction. Except for the title, "Letter from Lunar Station," I'd never have suspected any connection. Besides, home-sickness, as Peggy Cook pointed out in her article, is too obvious. Seems to me that instead of taking the easy way out--by means of rhymeless verse, blank verse and banal subject matter--the poet is one man who should meet challenges head on. Communication is his business. Where barriers to communication exist, he'll either overcome them or start scanning the want-ads. Some good stf poetry has been written, much of it by Stanton A. Coblenz and Lilith Lorraine. I have one issue of Lilith Lorraine's "little" magazine, Different, which contains some pretty good (and some very bad) stf poetry. There has been quite a bit of good poetry in fanzines over the years, for that matter, but most of it is rather thoroughly buried under the other kind.

(You may have noticed that somewhere above I started writing "stf" instead of "sf." Just read a letter from Art Rapp in Ciln #3 dealing

with this subject. He's right. The abbreviation for science fiction is stf. Let's leave "sf" to Andy Offutt, Heinlein, and Judy Merrill, hm?

PARSECTION #1 & #2: George C. Willick, 306 Broadway, Madison, Indiana. Six-weekly. 8 issues for \$1.00. Multilithed. 20 pages.

Another one. No figagh here. Not even any fiawol. Just discussions of stf and the like. Lynn Hickman does the printing for Parsection and so every page is clear and readable as you'd expect.

The first issue contains a "Symposium on SF" by Dean McLaughlin, Gordon R. Dickson, H. L. Gold and Lynn Hickman. These four attempt to answer the question "What do you think can or should be done to help SF in any of its aspects?" McLaughlin thinks the magazines should try advertizing in the paperbacks--not a bad idea when you think about it. Dickson thinks nothing can be done--which is a bad idea when you think about it. Gold insists that nothing is wrong in the field. Hickman is sure that something is wrong in the field, but he doubts that a fan can do more than go through the newsstands seeing that the magazines are properly displayed. A noble thought. Since it's in such fine shape there is no need, of course, to do this sort of thing for Galaxy. Gold might think you doubt him.

Par #2 is devoted entirely to reactions to the Symposium. This is very interesting and amusing--even informative in spots. No clear consensus seems to emerge except that most fans apparently suspect that stf is not now at its all-time highest mark. Dunno why anybody'd think that. Why, just drop in any newsstand and glance around--better look a little closer...over there in that dusty corner. See 'em? Those drab little brown and grey things....

It's easy to see that two fanzines per column is about all I can handle; which makes me feel bad about the other dozen I received from trusting faneds. Well, although I'd like to continue getting your fanzines, my invitation to send copies for review had best be withdrawn. There's too much other stuff to talk about in Opus and so I can't honestly guarantee a review. Sorry.

This should have appeared in The Southern Fan but it just missed the deadline. Si-Fan's readers may have more money, anyway:

Ann Chamberlain can supply rubber stamps with "Southern Fandom Group" or similar lettering plus your name and address for \$4.40. She says these stamps cost \$5.00 ordinarily, so it sounds like a pretty good bargain to me. That's

Ann Chamberlain, 2440 W Pico Blvd, Los Angeles 6, California.

Last issue I said I'd stop talking about THE IMMORTAL STORM if just 99 of you would order a copy. Maybe it was a slow month or something, but not quite 99 responded. In fact, two of you responded. Now, one expects to find more than two tru-fans among the readers of a fine fanzine like Si-Fan. Maybe I neglected to mention something vital like the twelve pages of photos or the 16-page index or the Paul dust-jacket. Did I forget to mention those things? Does it matter? The price is still only \$5.00, anyway. A regular \$5.00 deal. Bargain?

I'm also peddling ancient copies of Cosmag/SFDigest and Asfo if any collectors are still with us. The supply is dwindling pleasantly. May raise the price on these if you're not careful.

Jerry Burge, 1707 Piper Circle SE, Atlanta 16, Georgia

To be read while listening to "A Night on Bald Mountain..."

OF DARK AND MERRY DEMONS

BY ALAN BURNS

"I hope when I die I go down below--all the best and most interesting people are there." Whether or not we agree with this, we can't help a sneaking feeling that it must be awfully dull up above, and anyway I personally don't function too well in rarefied atmospheres; I've been a chemist most of my adult life and thick and sulphurous vapours after it would come as nothing new. Now it's considered awfully immoral to write a homily on the virtues of evil, but quite frankly I have been much more nauseated by "Golden Stories for Good Children" than I have by the homosexuality and malpractices as related in the "Satyricon" of Petronius Arbiter or the "Four Hundred Days of Sodom" by the Marquis de Sade; nor, I think would Balzac's "Contes Drolatiques" be considered the best of reading for those who make a fetish of being good, but it is much more readable than 'Christian Novels.'

But this claims to be a homily on evil, confined rather unfortunately within the limits of what is considered decent by the postal authorities. Decency is that which conforms to the mores. It is considered indecent for a man to go strolling down Main Street in his underpants, and yet some whistleworthy piece of Cheesecake can stroll along a promenade in a bikini from which not half a dozen postage-stamp-sized pieces could be cut and not be considered anything out of the ordinary. This is considered very puzzling to those who strive to be good; for those who are evil minded the matter is considered in its true light, namely that the girl is ripe for her proper function of ensuring that the race does not die out, and the man in his underpants, contingent upon his being of sound mind, is merely suffering from the heat of the day, and when cooled off will resume his pants and continue about his affairs in a normal manner.

The very essence of evil is normality. I mean you are with a bunch of the boys in the bar, and when you are all pleasantly liquored up, a packet of a certain kind of postcard is produced and handed round. If you say suddenly that they are all committing the two deadly sins of gluttony and lechery, it is ten to one that if they are red-blooded people, you will find yourself cast into the street, miles away from a church. You are in fact behaving abnormally. I recall once we had a Bible-pusher in our laboratory staff and one day I and the others were discussing the more interesting details of a rape and seduction case in the local news when this character came in and demanded that we cease behaving evilly and devote ourselves to good works. We explained to him that the people concerned in the case were the minister of a church and one of the female members of his choir ...

It is said somewhere that the devil has all the best tunes. All right then, why listen to bad music when there is good to be had? Jazz is aimed at the promotion of lecherous and libidinous thoughts; the word itself means— Well, we know what it means; and jazz, if played well, is good to listen to, especially when sprawled on the floor with an armful of woman who drinks the same brand of beer as you. Of course it's thoroughly evil, because she happens to be someone else's wife and of course you are the sort of person with the sensible—but evil—view that a slice off a cut loaf is never missed, and you are both thoroughly enjoying yourselves with the comforting thought that any embarrassment following from the evening's entertainment will be assured to a home and a name.



Therefore it can be argued without fear of contradiction that evil is aimed at race continuation, whereas certain religious sects who frown upon natural processes rapidly die out. Quite a number of religious sects however are sensibly not above making the fast buck at someone's expense, like our English High Church whose investments in aluminum shares went soaring, following a takeover bid, and business, the accruing of filthy lucre, is in essence evil, with Old Satan thoughtfully preparing a bed of coals for the tycoon.

Representations of demons almost invariably portray them as having either ridiculous faces which no-one would believe were real, or merry faces as they encourage debauchery in all its forms. Now, debauchery, if my etymological knowledge serves me aright, comes from the French verb 'deboucher', which means to uncork, that is to say, a general uncorking of evil and depraved spirits from which no amount of religious or moral discourses can free mankind. Saints and angels on the other hand are rarely represented as smiling; rather, they would seem to be meditating constantly on the sins of Man. Now if good is triumphant—why are they sad? Sadness is defeat; smiles and happiness are marks of victory. Can it be that evil is triumphant? Well, it would seem that way ...

Now I have no intention of inciting fandom to renounce good and embrace evil—not that certain people I could think of would need much inciting. But what I do suggest is that fandom weighs these matters cannily and does a bit of rethinking. For after all, if fandom doesn't encourage free thoughts, that is, loose thoughts (And the double entendre is intentional) what will?

See you at Nick's place, and don't forget to polish hoofs and tail barbs—

--Alan Burns

This issue is delayed by this column; a delightful problem, but a problem nonetheless. I didn't get so many letters as I did last time, but on the whole, those I got were better and just fraught with commentary. The problem: where to put them all. It isn't solved yet, not by a longshot. I guess we'll try experimenting with this column in future issues, so be forewarned.

FLOYD ZWICKY--In your editorial you mentioned that you wanted controversial material. It is my feeling that this is the only material that can make a fanzine interesting. Get the fans going on a subject where there is plenty of room for differences of opinion and you get life in the thing.

If Mike D. did nothing else, he helped to clarify the difference between SF and fantasy. We know a story is not always clearly classifiable, but many of them are, and far too many people don't seem to know the difference. This is illustrated by two recent books by Sarban, "The Sound of His Horn," which might be called SF in the area of social science, and then in his newest one, "The Doll Maker". About the latter, the New York Times says, according to the blurb, "...This short horror novel reaches a haunting intensity. Some may call it black poetry; some off-beat science fiction; some a plain marrow-chiller ..." Very strange--the story seems to me to be pure fantasy in the best Lovecraft tradition. Don't the critics know fantasy when they see it, just as they don't seem to be able to recognize SF?

... In my copy of "The Brothers Karamzov", there is a foreword by Manuel Komroff, in which he says,

"In a letter to a friend he writes: 'The chief problem dealt with throughout this particular work is the very one which has, my whole life long, tormented my conscious and subconscious being: The question of the existence of God.' What if God does not exist? Then for Dostoyevsky the world is nothing but a 'vaudeville of devils' and 'all things are lawful' even crime."

In the first place, this is a little peculiar, in view of the fact that Dostoyevsky's own life was considerably less than saintly. But his main concern was doubtless the one shared by many people before him and since--Does life have meaning? And purpose? But to my mind this philosophy is wholly wrong and it is this opinion that may be controversial.

It is tacitly accepted by the unquestioning faithful that religion is responsible for morals, that without the ethical teachings of the church this world would be morally chaotic. This is a difficult point to argue, since all people have some sort



of religion and all religions have some sort of ethical teachings. However, it is clear enough that all religions are not alike, though their moral teachings are more or less alike, according to the society involved. And so you could possibly get into the thorny question of whether or not there is an absolute morality. For example, Christianity teaches monogamy and Islam polygamy. Can it be demonstrated that either of these positions is absolutely right or wrong?

But the question that concerns me is whether our lives would be more or less moral if we had no religion at all. This would depend upon whether or not we are moral for fear of eternal damnation, as the churches teach. I think this position is wrong for more than one reason. One is that there are many confessed atheists and many whose atheistic leanings are not admitted. The records do not show that these people get into more trouble than church members do. Also, among those who appear to be loyal members of religious groups there are many who are not convinced, but who are preserving outward appearances. This group doesn't seem to be outstandingly bad. In other words, it does not appear that nominal members of organized religious groups are more moral in their lives than those outside of such groups. Furthermore, this appears to be true in any part of the world and in any of the major or minor religions. We might even go so far as to say, with Bertrand Russell, that more evil has come from within the church than from without it. For the purpose of this letter, we won't.

Well then, if the churches don't keep us moral, what does? I mean, of course, what keeps us from utter amorality, from the free guidance of our passions, from thievery and personal strife? There is a human dignity, usually unexpressed and totally unconnected with religious moral teaching that makes it beneath our humanity to act in certain mean ways. Let us remember that, with all our faults, we are the highest form of creation we know of, and consciously or unconsciously we act to maintain that dignity. Was the old term "Noblesse Oblige" a matter of religion? Not at all; it was a code of honor required to uphold social position. And that expression, coined by the British, "The White Man's Burden", was that a duty impressed upon the empire by the church? I don't think so; I think it was another recognition of the duty of a higher form of life toward a lower, using these terms in the sense of education and relative civilization.

It would not at all be hard to build a whole new ethical system around this reasoning. For example, thou shall not steal, not because the practice is frowned upon by a diety in the existence of whom not everybody agrees, but for the practical reason that you will almost certainly be discovered and you will suffer for it. Further, if you keep it up you will live a very uncomfortable life. The former prohibition is one that cannot be proven, but the latter can. If we might put the thing on a slightly higher level, we can explain to our young that humans like to life in a gregarious society and that they will probably like our system too, but that such a society cannot be maintained unless certain minimum rules are made and enforced. The logic of the religious position is not demonstrable at all. The wicked do not necessarily suffer and the good do not necessarily prosper, and it is a shame to allow a youngster to wait for twenty years or so to find this out and to discover also that he has been lied to as a child. (—1602 Fifth Ave., Rockfort, Ill.)

*****The flexibility of religion, and the tendency on the part of religious leaders to uphold the law so long as it does not definitely restrict them tend to demonstrate that religion merely accepts the morals offered it by the society. Check Medieval morals with current ones and then check the religious position on those morals. In the current racial strife, Billy Graham, who is not restricted by southern law comes out against trespassing to change unfair laws. Martin Luther King, however, who is restricted, comes out in favor of trespassing. Yet both are Protestant ministers with similar tenets—reacting to a society's morals from their viewpoint. Therefore? GWP



~ Sue Lyon ~

HARRY WARNER, JR.--The nude on the third page is nice, but I apparently don't know as much about women as I thought I did: I know what the bar in the middle hides but I'll swear, I can't think what was necessary to be concealed by the lower bar and the little floating label lower down.

Mike... seems to be nearly as anxious as I am to see a new fantasy publication on the newsstands. But I fear that this isn't the era for fantasy publications: it's the fact era and most persons prefer realist fiction, and if not realist, stories that are based on history with science fiction surviving only because it might come true. There are a few errors of fact in this article, the most serious of which concerns Farnsworth Wright, who did not die but got fired in 1940, and lived for some years after the unhappy occasion. (Which may not have been 1940; my hazy memory puts it a year or two later.)

(Opus 2) reminds me that I've wanted for some time to read more by Fisher. I've gone through only three of his books: the first two in the Vridar Hunter series and The Golden Rooms, finding the former much more interesting than the latter. It's not altogether my fault; a town the size of Hagerstown is not an ideal place for locating specific titles of paperbacks, and for the past couple of years I've been without a good, reliable mail order source. Fisher isn't quite as fine a writer as this article implies, but he's certainly neglected unduly in the general literary world.

I'll bet your letter column means One Damned Thing After Another. In the interests of accuracy, Lee Hoffman didn't pull a trick about her sex; she never claimed to be a boy at any time. About cussing, I like the comment that I encountered recently in the introduction to the Caine Mutiny. Wouk says he omitted almost all the swearing, because it's nothing but a kind of punctuation in Navy conversation.

The cartoon feature was very good, so are most of the illustrations, and you've undoubtedly heard from many other constituents by now about the way you ran the lines too far into the margins. It's hard to read without pulling loose the staples, even in the areas where the ink took proper hold. (--423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland.)

*****We're sending you an unexpurgated copy of the last issue's table of contents drawing in a plain manilla wrapper. If you have any more questions, send us \$5.00 and Burge will send you a full page of written notes, with bibliography. Better hurry! There's a time limit.

I think the bit about Wright's death was my fault; but I still stick to it. I've misplaced my source of information and may have remembered wrong, but I'm fairly sure... At least he is referred to as "The late Farnsworth Wright" in the November, 1940 Amazing. Didn't he own Weird Tales?

Anyone know for sure, either way?

On the Navy remark: Jim Belcher is now in the Air Force...

GWP

REDD BOGGS--I'm glad you're not changing the title of Si-Fan. It is a short, effective and original fanzine title, even though I didn't realize right away that it had anything to do with Sax Rohmer. (Benighted!)

The artwork was slightly better than average, especially Burge's work. It's always nice to see artwork that really illustrates the text and isn't just something tossed in to fill up space or something.

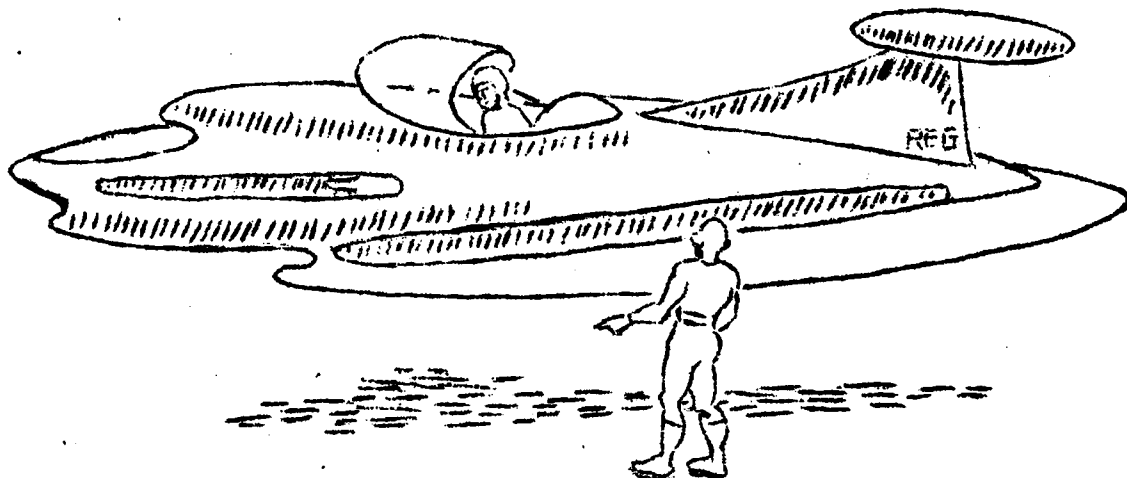
I suppose everybody would like to see a revival of the old Unknown, which was surprisingly popular with fans during the whole of its career, but that's unlikely, considering the evolution of the editor and publisher thereof since 1943. And I didn't see much enthusiasm for Beyond or Fantasy Magazine. I rather enjoyed them myself, but I'll admit that my tastes run largely to science fiction and I awaited the publication date of Astounding far more impatiently than I did that of Unknown in those wonderful days when Campbell was editing both with enthusiasm and pleasure.

Jerry Burge's "Opus 2": the long, well documented article on Vardis Fisher was excellent and certainly welcome. I know very little about Fisher's novels, but I found Burge's analysis of them very interesting and even persuasive. I started to read one of Fisher's "Testament of Man" novels maybe eight or ten years ago but was put off by something or other and never finished the book. I've never felt like trying again, but on Jerry's recommendation maybe I'll take a chance on Darkness and the Deep or The Golden Rooms if I see the paperback editions for sale at Shinder's.

It's mildly croggling to see Vardis Fisher referred to as "Probably the finest mainstream writer currently practicing"; that takes in quite a lot of territory! It's pretty easy to name one who sometimes writes in much the same corner of the lot that Fisher prefers and, I'll hazard a guess, is a much more accomplished writer to boot: Robert Graves.

Fred Chappell's "Mike Screwdriver" was pretty funny, especially the loused-up panel.

I'm glad to have the checklist of G-8 and his battle Aces. I have a modest collection of these brilliant works, and had some idea of writing up G-8 for Grue's "The Fallen Mighty" department if somebody didn't beat me to it. Just from looking through this list, though, I'm not too sure which issues I've got. "Sky Coffins for Satan" sounds familiar, but most of the titles from 1936 on are so similar to each other that it's hard to differentiate between them. And those previous to 1936 are pretty similar to each other, too, being named for the various flying groups that opposed G-8. I wonder how G-8 readers would have responded to a novel with a one-word abstract-noun title such as Campbell prefers: Mutability, say, or Godhead, or Transfers.



It appears that you got the pagination fouled up in the last section of the magazine. My eye caught the reference in Dick Shultz' letter to Retrograde, bottom of page 22, "Retrograde, a zine with a definite person-" and as I discovered that the next page did not contain the remainder of this sentence I was staggered. I tottered over and collapsed on the bed for a coupla hours. Later I discovered the remainder of the sentence a couple pages hence, and recovered rapidly. I don't think I'll suffer too many ill effects from this experience outside of a nervous twitch and a few gray hairs.

Jim Belcher's letter was astonishing. If he's so easily shocked, I'm afraid life must be one long parade of indecency to him. Where can he escape? Rushing out of the street, where he has heard construction workers conversing, he enters an art gallery and finds it jammed full of nudes by Renoir and scultered nudes by Rodin. Hiding his eyes, he hurries home, and finds his small daughter playing with paper dolls in the living room, cutting out dresses for a long-legged doll dressed only in bra and step-ins. Jim plunges into his den, locks the door, and sits down to a book. My God, it's Lady Chatterley's Lover. Tearing it up and burning it page by page in his ashtray, he picks up Si-Fan, and Jerry Burge's Rohmer cover confronts his croggling eyes. Let's draw a curtain over the scene as Belcher starts to froth and tear his hair. (—2209 Highland Pl., NE, Minneapolis 21, Minn.)

****Beyond and Fantasy Magazine seem to have been lost in the crowd. Also, as



has been said before, you can't 'slick-up fantasy and expect it to sell to the adult fantasy fan, anymore than the modernday mystery fan digs the Gothic. ## If you'll note, I mentioned Graves in my editorial; both Jerry Burge and I have read him with pleasure. But he tends to try too hard; his writing often gets in the way of his story—he isn't as able a writer as Fisher, because he can't constrain himself as well. Furthermore as good as Graves is, Fisher is more fun.

GWP

BOB TUCKER—I haven't read Vardis Fisher, and I realize that it is my loss. I read the reviews of his books over a period of years but nothing in the reviews fired my imagination and made me want to read him—until Opus 2. Of course that was the fault of the various reviewers I think; they must have been a dreary lot. But Jerry's article was so compelling that I now want to makeup for lost time.

I trust you'll print any further information on his paperbacks available. (—Box 702 Bloomington, Ill.)

*****I don't particularly care for the idea of printing letters which are so complimentary, but in this case, I hope you'll forgive me. This letter caught me off guard. But if I weren't the editor of Si-Fan, I'd have been tempted, and sorely, to say the same thing. And I've read Fisher...

GWP

DONALD A. WOLLHEIM --(Nov. 8, 1960)--Si-Fan 2 on hand, and it manages to be interesting even if you cut the margins a trifle too narrow. I was disappointed of course to find out that you were not the fair lady on the cover of Si-Fan 1. Would have made a big improvement over twin Chinese brothers.

Weinbaum's "New Adam" was a very immature attempt at a superman novel, and I personally doubt that Weinbaum would have wanted it published in the form in which he left it. Read a few more mature superman novels, "Odd John" for one, and SGW's work simply doesn't measure up.

"The Spider", "G-8", "Doc Savage", etc. are all specimens of a bygone period in the now bygone world of pulp magazines. They belong to a different age and time--and I agree with you that they were darned good in their time. Heroes at least one could respect (Along with Captain Future) for some sort of ideals and integrity. There are such series today, but they appear in paperbacks and they are just about confined to one type--an unidealistic detective a la Mike Hammer, replete with sex and sadism, and certainly without any really admirable qualities. "Shell Scott", "Honey West", etc. Good reading, to judge from sales, but still... As to whether someday one could take an old Spider novel and do it as a paperback book, somehow I don't think it will happen. The mental and social climate of publishing has changed, and not for the better (and I say so, who am up to my neck in it.)

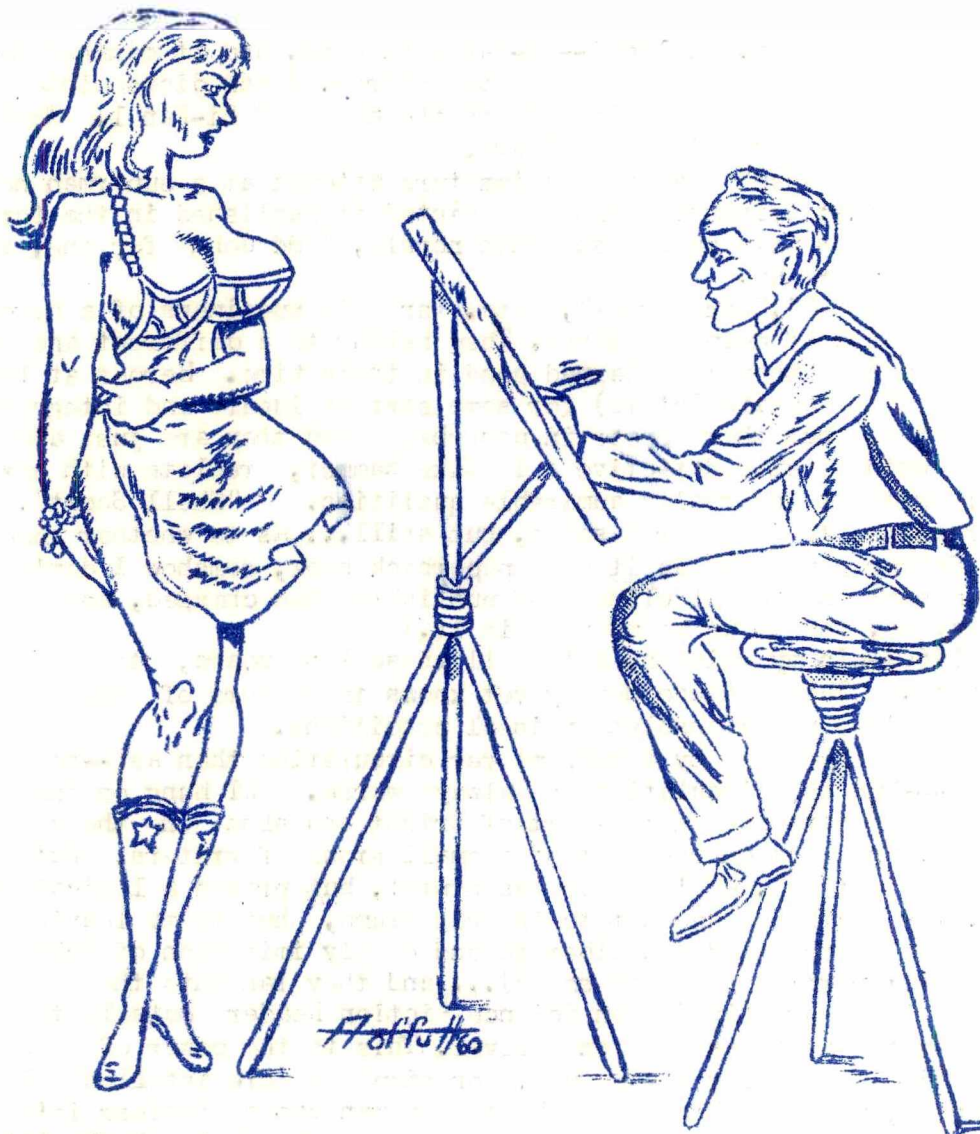
--(Nov. 15, 1960)--In my opinion, after all these long years, the idea of the superman is the bunk. This because nobody yet knows the powers of the common man as he would be when raised under absolutely ideal conditions.

Unknown was killed off by a much poorer circulation than Asf--that and paper rationing later--but the circulation was always worse. WT hung on only through low rates, personal fanaticism on the part of Wright and also on the part of its last owner, Delaney, and love on the part of a small group of writers. But its sales figures were always pitiful. AFR's price was brutal, but proved a logical shadow of what was to come. Its death was due not to the Big Slump, but to my leaving Avon -- after which the Powers there tried a deliberate and costly imitation of F&SF (Spending money they had never permitted AFR to spend)... and they ran into the Big Slump. (From the very start the short lived Avon Science Fiction Reader outsold the Fantasy Reader, even though the contents were on a level. This is the power of sf over fantasy.)

*****Was Odd John really a superman, or simply a more intellectual human being? I agree, we don't know what the common man can do (Unless it's to avoid ideal conditions.) but as for the idea of a superman being bunk, 'tis a simple matter of prejudice. We don't know that either. In science fiction, though the superman is important; for the hero of the science fiction story is mankind, and, excepting for such standby gimmicks as Other Races and racial suicide (Now a big fad) sf must draw upon conflict between Man and Nature-- here primarily Man and evolution (The Man versus himself gambit is a good one to employ here, too, but it would take great skill.) But so long as Mankind is the hero of science fiction every theme that throws him into perspective must be explored in every way possible. ### Despite being lower than Asf, I feel that Unknown's circulation would not have caused it to fold had there not been paper rationing. ###

I'd like to add a remark to my answer to Harry Warner's letter above: Lee Hoffman was well aware of the fact that she was beleived to be a boy. Witness the fact that a number of fans were in on the joke before the Nolacon and did not spill anything. This includes the Atlanta Science Fiction Organization... Ian MacCauley visited LeeH and sent a card back to the Club about what a swell fellow LeeH was, carefully underling the word "he" each time it was used. Ian had the sort of subtle sense of humor that reminds me of a dynamite blast.

I still have letters but no room. This is a sorry state. I don't see any solution, though; I can't increase the size of the zine. But write anyway! GWP



"YOU'RE SURE THIS 'SI-FAN' HAS A MILLION CIRCULATION, MR. BURGE?"

A number of people ask me questions, such as How do I get to the Expressway? or What time is it? or Well, what have you done now? But, with the possible exception of this last one, most often I'm asked Why am I receiving Si-Fan. Well, if you know why you are receiving Si-Fan, you can consider this thing finished because there's obviously no need for you to find out. Those of you who are in suspense can satisfy yourselves by reading below. I hope this makes you feel better.

You receive this as A contributor; trade; For comment as a sample: Complimentary subscription; Cause I like you; Cause I feel guilty.

You can receive future issues by Subbing; Contributing; Trading; Commenting.

You will receive more Si-Fans.

This is the last issue you will receive unless you act quickly.

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