

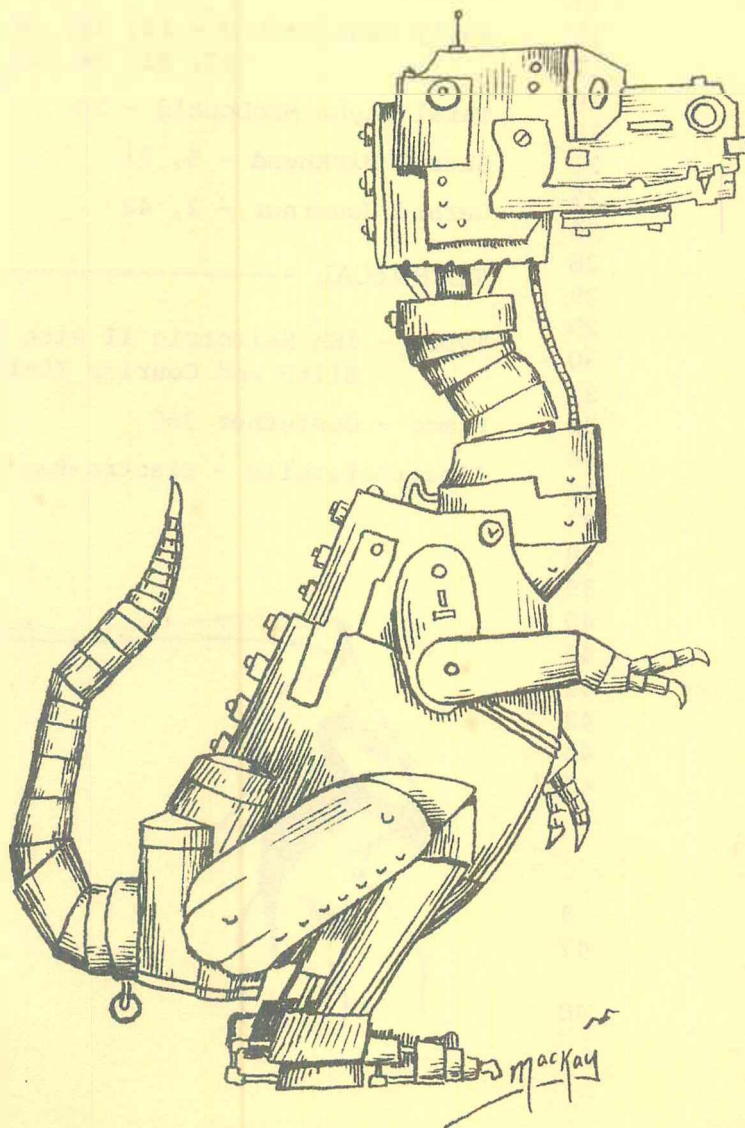




# Simulacrum 2A

## March 1976

### A letterzine



SIMULACRUM is edited and published approximately quarterly by Victoria Vayne, PO Box 156, Stn D, Toronto, Ontario M6P 3J8.

Copies of this issue and subsequent letter issues are available for the usual (art, articles, trades or LoCs) or for \$1.50. The next issue (#3) and subsequent genzine issues are available for the usual or \$2.50. I prefer the usual to subscriptions.

( ) If this space is X'd, I would like to hear from you in order to send you the next issue.

This is Vayne Effort Number Eleven, and is printed on the Vaynity Press. The electrostencils are by Mike Glicksohn and Victoria Vayne. Technical and production assistance is by the Derelicts, notably Bob Webber and Taral Wayne MacDonald.

Deadline for the next genzine issue is May 1, 1976 (SIM 3) and for the next letterzine is the time of MIDAMERICAN (SIM 3A).

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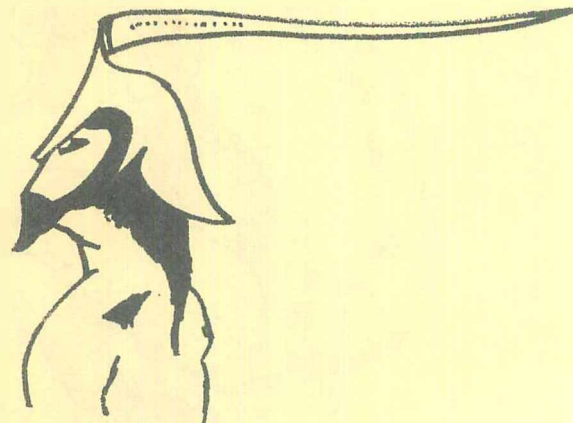
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# Non Sequitur

victoria wayne

SIMULACRUM is getting too bloody big. Most of the material for issue 3 is already on hand or promised, and I have a good idea of how many pages it will run to. Add to that the lettercolumn, a threatened forty pages, and that's without my own comments or filler art; and I was faced with the prospect of a 100-page issue next May. Add to that the prospect of a hike in postal fees come spring; and my inner voices told me, NO WAY.

During a conversation, Mike Glicksohn made the suggestion that for various reasons two smaller issues might be preferable to one large issue; and would also net more total response. (And egoboo is, after all, what we thrive on.) The outcome of this, then, is the zine you now hold in your hands, SIMULACRUM 2A, consisting entirely of letters in response to the previous issues. (There is precedent--Bill Bowers did this with OUTWORLDS.) SIMULACRUM 3, as planned, should come out in May on schedule, and will contain the genzine-type articles originally scheduled for that issue anyway, but probably no letters. Letters will continue to appear in number/letter designated issues, as many issues as the response warrants; and genzine issues will be designated by numbers only.

This is in some ways a departure for me. I had been pleased for a while about the way SIM was growing. It was a sign that the zine was healthy and thriving. But there comes a point of diminishing returns, and also a point of lack of capital. I was all set to cut the publishing schedule back to twice a year, and fill in the long gaps with a personalzine/minigenzine called NON SEQUITUR (which also goes through the apa MISHAP). Some of you will find a copy of NON SEQUITUR 3, the first such effort, with this issue. However, I was never very happy with NON SEQUITUR, the idea or the actuality, and now am only too happy to give it up in favour of a quarterly SIMULACRUM, two genzines and two letterzines, each year. Budget problems have not been the aggravation I was afraid they'd be, and I think I can safely say that I'll be well able to afford to publish SIMULACRUM.

SIMULACRUM, as of this issue, is no longer available for subscription, only for the usual. Trades, articles, art, letters, all are welcome. But you must respond to stay on the mailing list--in order to give I must take, and keeping my print run down is the only way I can manage to put the production quality I want into the zine within reasonable cost. Samples will be available for \$1.50 in North America and \$2.00 overseas (to cover extra postage), but after one sample you have to respond in order to get further issues. And although this issue is a gigantic lettercol, I still hope for LoCs, which, when I gather enough, will be formed into another giant lettercol. Some of the letters are not especially LoCs but just letters from fannish friends that I wanted to share. Do write! I don't promise answers to every letter, but you'll have a good chance of seeing print!

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# HOT RUBBER WHIPS

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Thank you for the copy of STIMULACRUM, which I received in a plain brown wrapper, as advertised. I hope you will pardon my use of your language, which is as yet not so good. My eyes are also not so good these days, therewith I am transcribing this essay via my bonne companion Simone, who is always a very great blessing in disguise.

You may well ask what is my thoughts about cons, feghoots, personalzines, and such matters. I have been unfamiliar with Simone about such things until now, I must confess. However, after some thought, I am able to offer the following comments.

I was especially puzzled at first on the matter of so much time and space devoted to detailed descriptions of everyday affairs, such as "the groups headed out down Bloor Street to the malted milk place, where prices were low and the guy knew us. Janet rejoined us after supper..." etcetera. Are these really serious persons, I mused, to spend so much energy on recounting such trivia? Is this perhaps a journal for cretins and other such unfortunates? Surely no sane person would have any interest for reading such doings.

However, I have the answer, which is written very plainly in my first novel of many years ago, namely *La Nausée*, which is translated in your language I believe as "Sickness" or perhaps "A Feeling of Soon Wanting to Vomit"--or perhaps that is not polite? I really should not have to explain all this, which is already written so plainly. Persons should pay more attention to what I have written. After all, I have won the Nobel Prize, so I am not one to take lightly. Of course they also gave to prize to that bastard Camus before they gave it to me, but I am a tolerant and forgiving man, so we won't go into that disgusting subject here.

The answer which I plainly give in "Sickness" is this: everyone wants to live their life as an adventure. But in order to be an adventure, there must be a story, with a beginning and a middle and an end. That is, there must be a story telling. But when one is living in everyday life, there is no story, but only one absurd thing after another, with no meaning--a whole series of accidents and interruptions. And of course one never knows what is about to happen; the end is not known. One must live, or tell a story, but for doing both at one time is not possible.

So I feel that you, my Victoria, and your amis, are attempting to inject into your lives a meaning, an adventure, through the recounting of your absurdities into adventures. This is very plain to anyone who is thinking deeply on the subject, and is not capable of refutation. This I feel is the meaning of all the feghoots, cons, smofs, poulandersons, cychauvins, fillos and such. A lot of absurd persons who feel a void creeping over their lives are engaged in a struggle for ontological reconstruction. Simone and the self have also at times felt this creeping void, which is not to be confused with creeping socialism, as I believe your Prime Minister Drapeau is alleged.

Therefore why is there so much conning of young persons in Fan Fairs and such these days? Much energy must be expended, but to what purpose? In other ages energy was to be expended in acting on the stage of the world. One could join in the story and change the plot if one chose. One could tell an adventure that was also a truth. Now there is no longer truth, but only conning in a void. I see that Simone is nodding her head, which is often agreeing with mine.

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J-P SARTRE

What you are doing, my vain Victoria, is a matter of choice, as I have always maintaining. Excuse me, but I feel my hold on your language is losing, as it is nowadays often difficult to keep the attention for a great time. A void is not something that one can avoid. Therefore you must choose, for you are choosing yourself. Perhaps it is a fact that you are bemoaning yourself too much over the sex. Simone is always writing over the sex and has become famous for the sex, but also she is practicing more than the self, which explains perhaps why she is yet also healthier than the self, and is likely to last longer in this world.

I have read to me by Simone recently a copy of *Newsweek* over the subject of science fiction. I was disagreeing with a number of points, since the man did not know much about the literature. (I have a Nobel Prize but they did not ask me to write the essay for *Newsweek*, which shows you the world is forgetting its great authors.) But this author was correct in seeing the *nausée* which is infecting the science fiction and the absurdities of the young people in this day and age. However, perhaps I am merely speaking as a wise old man. I see also in the folk-rock music of this day much decadence, much different from the healthy disgust of the Beatles of the 1960's and even the Stones whom I am admiring even though I do not appreciate the finer points of their *chansons*. Also in the fashions and many other manifestations, there is much evidence of trying to escape from the void. Everyone is turning to the past, to seek comfort which is forever escaping again into formlessness.

Eh bien, Simone is insisting I must be stopping. And I am looking forward to my warm chocolate which she will be making. That is what is good; to look forward. To warm chocolate and much else besides. That is not a con.

Au revoir, ma chérie--



JPS:sdb

cc: Maurice Merleau-Ponty



//The preceding came to me in an airmail envelope from Holland...and we all know what well-known fan currently resides in Holland. (To be sure I have relatives in Holland, but none of them have seen SIMULACRUM.) At any rate, I believe I know who sent that beautiful piece to me, and I'll let it stand on its own.

The remainder of the letters I will print in roughly chronological sequence, as each comments on several different aspects of SIM 2; and to sort them by topic while at the same time keeping them intact is impossible.//

MAE STRELKOV - CC 55, Jesus Maria - - - - - End of Sept, 1975  
Cordoba, Argentine

You are children of a new Era totally, where the hugeness of the Cosmos doesn't alarm you at all. It apparently frightens a majority of True Believers who moan in vain for the pre-Copernican "safe little Earth"! ((I've been re-reading the pitiful lament by Romano Guardini, *THE END OF THE MODERN WORLD*, which shows what pious folk feel about the new Cosmos astronomy reveals. "Man has no place in it." (Medieval man certainly hasn't.) It fills me with pity for this type of mind, yet I fear the outlook. What if they do manage to put the clock back for us all? It would really finish us off as a human race...))

It's that Medieval Man wanted to rule, be first next to God throughout the Universe, and couldn't stand feeling small...something that doesn't worry us at all. As I've written in my Trip Report about the Grand Canyon, I'd rather be a midget at the edge of a huge chasm than a giant at the edge of a tiny crack in the Earth, and I'm more at home looking out at our unimaginable vast Universe (probably also many-dimensional), than I ever could have been when "Faith" (in unreality and falsehood, what else?) ruled supreme. Did you know, not just Bruno got burned alive by the Church for believing the stars are suns with other worlds around them. Long before, in the 8th century a scholar in Bavaria was denounced to the Pope for teaching that there were men living in another world under another sun. When interrogated, he glibly explained he meant there might be folks living in the Antipodes and got away with it. He was Irish, by name Fergil!

I think we might phrase it, True Believers refuse to let their God grow, become so vast it's unimaginable what sort of a Creator there might be behind it all. They'd rather cheat, make the Truth vanish, and get back to "safe dogmas", defending same in contradictions to scientific findings, because it's always been pronounced that science must bend and give place to dogma when conflict arises. (If they could they'd still make it occur.)

Right now I'm researching the start of our Era, "where we went wrong?" That's the question I'm checking on carefully, and will probably devote the rest of my life to that, as much as my sources here (rather scanty yet) permit. I wish, for instance, I could learn more about a charming heretic named Pelagius back in Britain, put down by Rome's soldier, Germanus, for teaching that there's no Original Sin. (Augustine put him down scholastically, too.) Poor sin-wracked Augustine, glorying in his bygone guilt and sins, did more harm than anybody perhaps, to us all. He even scorned the idea of a merciful Limbo and insisted babies, unbaptized, deserved Eternal Hell and it somehow proved God's "goodness". This twisting of the concept of "good" has caused more evil done in Jesus' name than any heathen belief. About time we recognize it and become human--humane--as Jesus himself must desire, were he able to vote on it right now.

Okay, enough grouching. I'm still not over it, being sore at that type of mind



that accepts Eternal Hell as and "Act of Mercy" somehow, of their little old grandpoppa deity! (To find the like in fandom almost shocked me out of my senses, I confess. I never knew...)

//It's long been a belief of mine that Organized Religion--and the Catholic Church has to be the epitome--has always caused more harm than good. Look to the past, to Galileo for example, and look to the present, the birth control business for example. The Church is anti-progress and were it not for its repression of scientific advance throughout history, man might now be centuries ahead. On the other hand, man might also be centuries dead. Is progress always a good thing, and does the Church perhaps not do some good by impeding it? The merits of either view can be debated at some length, takers anyone?

I was brought up Catholic, I am now an agnostic leaning towards atheism. The absolute stupidity, anti-rationalistic, anti-commonsense, and merely ridiculously fantastic nature of Catholic dogma had a large role in driving me away, back when I was 17 or so. Not one thing that Catholicism holds, from "historic" beliefs to life philosophy (I admire Ayn Rand) jibes with my own views. I was merely captive in this sect by accident of family.

One Catholic scholar, Thomas Aquinas, presents a proof for the existence of God that is ridiculous in the extreme. Several proofs, actually, all similar. The syllogism goes something like this: Major Premise--there is some factor that exists that is common to all things. Minor premise--there is an exception to this rule. Conclusion--therefore God exists, and God is the exception. To illustrate, Aquinas argues that all motion has a cause, and there must be some motion that is the original, that has no cause. This motion is God, therefore God exists. The fallacy in this argument is self-evident. If this is the best the pro-God faction can come up with, atheism has a damn good case.

I don't think religion is necessarily a bad thing, for many people it is essential and for them a good thing. For me, I don't need it. But religion when misapplied as Mae points out in her letter, is a very bad thing indeed.//

JODIE OFFUTT - Funny Farm - - - - - Oct 3, 1975  
Haldeman, KY 40329

You know, I'm having trouble commenting on most of the contents of SIM 1 because I'm not sure about your intent. And I honestly have been thinking for a day or so. One part of my mind sayd that you are really down on sex and anything having to do with it while another voice in my head says that maybe everything you say is with tongue poked in cheek. I just don't know. In any case, you do seem to be overly preoccupied with the subject, even if the issue was deliberately intended to be about sex.

//SIM 1 was both dead serious and also tongue-in-cheek. Anti-Mush Woman was a joke, the bit about my luck with males was not. I was on a downer when I wrote it, though, so it looked worse than it was. But what this leads me to is an image that I'm trying to shed. SIMULACRUM is not a zine about sex, even though comments have been raging in the lettercol in #2 and are still raging in this issue. I'm through with being Anti-Mush Woman except as a joke. SIMULACRUM is a genzine, dammit, if readers want

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*to continue discussing it, fine. But I am trying to get away from it. I don't intend to talk of my sex life, or lack of it, in the pages of my zine anymore. I'll pretend I didn't hear the halleluias.//*

TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD - 1284 York Mills Road, Apt 410 - - - - - Oct, 1975  
Don Mills, Ontario M3A 1Z2

My first concern with SIMULACRUM 2 is the character of the editorial, Non Sequitur. It is obvious that your previous editorial gained for you a great deal of sympathy and comiseration. Having known you more personally that 100% of fandom I can only look at this response with some amusement and just a touch of resentment. It is in fannish vogue these days to be extremely personal in fanzines--to "let it all hang out". You are wearing a "pity me" sign and you are being very successful with it. I however, unlike most of fandom, am a very unsympathetic creature, devoid of compassion and empathy when I see something of this nature going on. There is a difference between writing about yourself, and bemoaning how cruelly the world as treated you. Fans like Sam Long and Mike Glicksohn have taken the time to point out to you that fate has not been unkind to the person of Victoria Wayne as Victoria van Asperen thinks it has. In fact, by comparison your fortune has been veritably decreed by the gods. If your upbringing was a little strict, and if your vive d'amour has been disappointing, I commend you to the greater misfortune suffered by people around you. This also has been pointed out by fans, notably Bruce Arthurs. Your trouble has been mostly a result of unusual sensitivity to the visicitudes of what you must admit was a pretty average and normal life. The problem is an emotional one, not one of the odds being loaded against you. I hope to see the tenor of Non Sequitur mature as you surmount the difficulties of your own personality.

I've started off this LoC with a mean note as I guarantee many fans will be quick to point out. The purpose of chastising you for a well-written editorial is not to embarrass you nor to tell you what you should write. Throwing light on phoni-ness is one of *my* compulsions. It isn't you that's being phony, though, but fan-dom I think. Fandom like any mundane institution is susceptible to swings of fashion and at the moment writing with a highly personal content is almost a sure-fire formula to attention. It is a delusion and can hold back your writing. Positive feedback is sucker-bait.

That is the altruistic reason for the beginning of this LoC--the one my forebrain just rationalized together for the purpose of concealing the true selfish reasons that fester in the subconscious. I won't bother to explain why, but I compulsively point out defects. I like to understand why things happen, and I like other people to share that understanding. When I notice that something is being admired I want others to know also its faults. On the other hand, if something is deprecated I am quick to defend its virtues (if I see any). I haven't an adequate word to describe it (although I will one day make up one). There is a definite feeling of inbalance or incompleteness in these situations. This will explain to those of you who have noticed why I spend so much time in Art Shows criticizing the judges' choice.

One question in connection with the above before I get into less philosophical topics. From pg 52, your response to Glicksohn's letter of comment: "I still have abysmal luck with men". What additional man trouble have you had since last issue? You should try to be more careful about introducing accidental imagery into your prose. One would almost think that you had fallen in and out of love three times, consulted two computer dating services, been jilted by a gigolo, and lost on the

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Dating Game since last January. This isn't true, is it? If it is, then you have been leading a double life with some other Toronto fandom.

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I will not remark on the three con reports other than to mention the kindness with which FanFair was treated. In truth the con was abysmally run and narrowly avoided running aground on numerous shoals and reefs of personal animosity. As you well know. You were there and were subject to the pressures yourself.

Also, echoing the sentiments of the "Six Perverts", if treatments of Toronto fen continue to be cutesey-poo you are going to be vigorously defenestrated from your twelfth floor apartment someday by the aforementioned "Six Perverts". I protest being numbered as a pervert. I spend most of the time busy at the typewriter and looked to see what the fuss was about when the others burst into the room all excited about something. There is a time and a place for everything and although your apartment balcony was apparently the place, it was not the time for me to be thinking of my gonads. I went back to the typewriter remember. It was those other perverts who kept going out for another looksee.

A psychologist of the Freudian school would make copious notes from Dave Jenrette's Practical Guide to Male Anatomy, and wonder what he meant by it. A comedy writer would know just what he meant by it, and wonder where Dave made his notes from. The humour was sophomoric with the occasional genuine witticism, but I am kibbitzing in Art Shows again...I mean to say that I enjoyed it, but have to take a circuitous route lest I leave the impression that I didn't realize that it was also dumb. How's that for a mixed compliment, Dave? I assure you I know what I mean by it though...

"At the Bottom of my Garden". My word, good fan fiction. Remarkable! So you see, Tim C. Marion, that I do indeed read fanfic, when I have confidence in the editor's discrimination. When an editor has disappointed me in the past with a poor choice of fanfic I am not anxious to be disappointed again. I will probably stop reading fanfic in his zine. In most zines this is what has happened, but there are fanzines I trust, and the occasional fan writer whose name I trust. That fanfic I will read. (If I happen to feel like it.) The idea that professional fiction is so market-minded that experimental or select interest fiction cannot be found is the silliest I have heard since I resigned from OSFiC. If you really believe that how do you explain the popularity of writers such as Disch, Dozois, Effinger, Tiptree, Spinrad, Dick, Silverberg, Lafferty and Delany, not to mention a good many others? How do you explain the very eccentric *DHALGREN* for godsake, which is a Best Seller! SF happens to be one of the very few, perhaps only, popular literatures where the artificial barriers of marketability do not pertain. The only restriction, practically, is that the writing should be good, and even that doesn't always prevent work from being published. Do not judge the genre by the prozines alone. Although prozines generally present the worst face of science fiction, their quality is not very often surpassed by fan fiction. Superior fanfiction can almost always be sold. That is the premise for saying that "good stuff gets published".

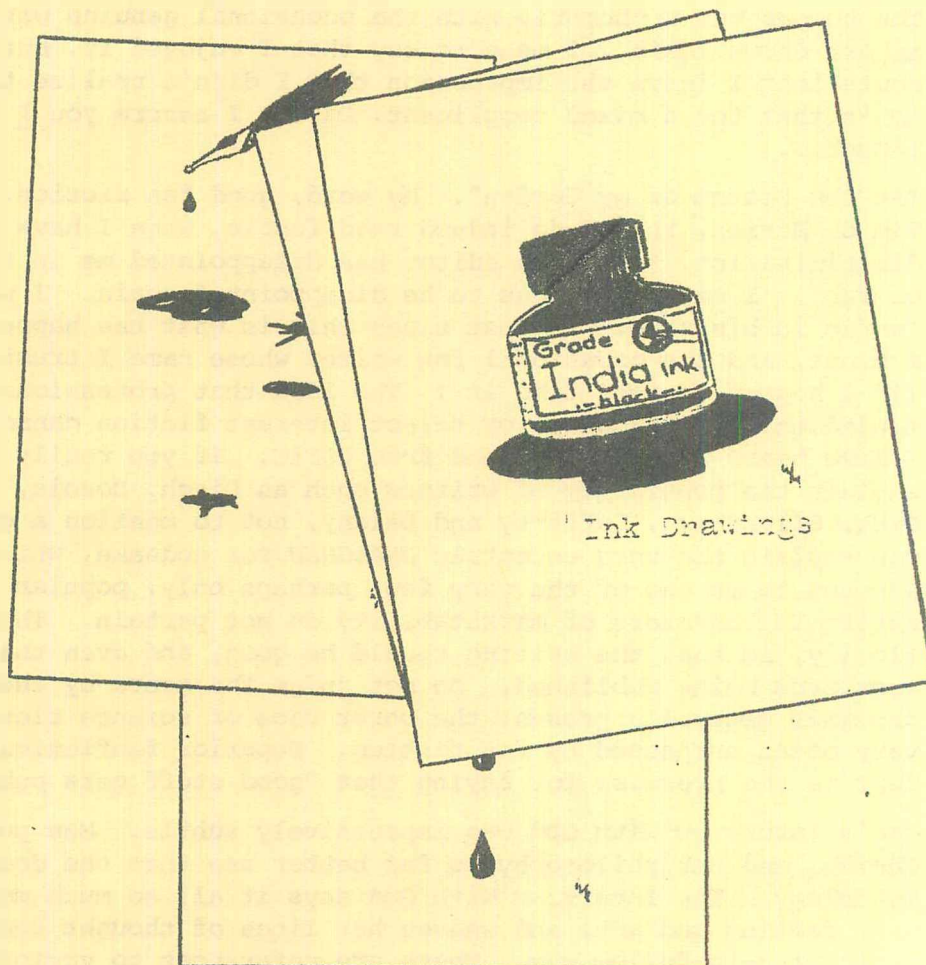
Mae's Interview With God was impressively subtle. Mae puts her knowledge of the Church, and her philosophy to far better use than she does in her articles on Mythology. The Interview With God says it all so much more elegantly, with more wit, feeling and art, and weaves her lines of thought together in a delightfully-satisfying-to-follow way. There are references to various philosophical doctrines, to outmoded ideas of God, to historical practices, to exotic theologies, and to Mae herself to catch. Interview With God is my choice for the best article in the

issue.

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As much as I admire Glicksohn for his taste (at times) and his patronage of fan-artists, when it comes to the understanding of my art Mike is pontificating and fatuous. He comments on a drawing of mine in SIM 1 referred to variously as "Sheryl Birkhead doing something naughty with her chief model" or "The Naughty Picture of Explicit Sex on Planet X". (I call it "Strange Playfellows" and think that's self-explanatory.) Only Mike feels fit to call attention to the straightness of the limbs as a fault. I drew the young girl's limbs stiff deliberately, as a tensing of her muscles, and partly for other subliminal reasons. This may or may not have been a mistake, and Mike's opinion is as good as anyone's here. I object to Mike's banter though. It straitjackets my work with a criticism that could only have been valid two years ago. Look at the signature. The date there says 1973. More than two years have passed since I took my pen from that drawing, and I don't feel too haughty to say I've improved since then. From similar comments I'd opine that Mike operates under outmoded prejudices but doesn't realize them as such. Until such time as Mike is willing to look at my work from within the proper frame work, instead of as a "cartoon", Mike is simply not qualified to discuss my art. He may only say whether he "likes" it or not. (Nothing personal Mike--artistic temperament and all that.)

Peter Roberts' comment on "Laidlye Worm of Spindleston Houghs" is interesting. No, of course "Strange Playfellows" has nothing to do with the story of a princess transformed into a worm, or its reverse. It's a thrillingly disgusting idea, though; I love it! Too bad I didn't think of it first, but then I've never read the story. It doesn't quite fit any of my private





mythologies anyway...

And no, I didn't screw up the questionnaire with the picture deliberately. Accident gets the credit; it makes more sense screwed up like that, following a twisted kind of logic.

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Christine McGowan: I'm afraid that the scientific viewpoint is inherently more correct than the religiously-inclined cosmology. The proper field for religion is Man's relationship to the universe and its relationship to Man. This may or may not posit a creator. Science studies the function of the universe and tries to explain, and, further, to predict its functioning. These are very loose definitions that anyone knowledgeable in philosophy can knock holes in if he wants, but it would be out of perversity more than useful objection. The scientific viewpoint is inherently more correct because it is a device designed to match models against the universe to see if they fit. That is the scientific viewpoint's specialty. The religious viewpoint can no more describe the universe than science can prove God. Your argument that Newton was superceded by Einstein is also specious. Newton's laws still obtain under certain conditions. His equations are restricted cases of Einstein's equations. Einstein will someday be refined, but will likely be no more "disproved" than Newton.

The body of science so far as it has been established, does not alter so much as grow.

On the more mundane level you direct our attention, I must contradict you again. I do not take science on faith. I understand how most things in my life operate, or will find out some day about the things I do not understand. I can follow the experiments, the logic, and often the simpler aspects of the math that proves the more esoteric studies of science in many cases also. If you don't choose to understand science that is your problem. Don't blame science for your self-imposed limitations.

*//As pointed out above, Anti-Mush Woman and the reputation for having an inordinate interest in sex are images I want to shed. I will speak no more in the pages of SIM about my love life. Taral is one of my first friends in fandom, and probably understands me and my motives better than anyone else I know--which is scary, since I can't conceal ulterior motives from him. In any event, the points he makes are well taken.*

*The astute reader may have noticed that my Real Name lurks within Taral's letter. The sympathetic reader will also understand why I dislike that name intensely and choose to use a pseudonym. Besides, one of my reasons for going under the name Vayne in fandom is that all my sickeningly boring mundane activity is carried on under the name van Asperen, and I like to completely separate that from what I consider fun and worthwhile in life. When I like myself, I am Victoria Vayne. And I neither like myself nor take pride in myself when carrying on mundane activity, i.e. work.//*

LARRY DOWNES - 21960 Avon - - - - - Nov 17, 1975  
Oak Park, MI 48237

I am glad that Anti-Mush Woman has modified her views, but really, I never seriously thought you meant them last issue. My view, after reading SIM 1 was that, hey, this is really funny and the Amazon-clad warrior goes off to fight the love she has been denied. Funny. Touching. Well-inspired. But honestly, I didn't (and still don't)

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think that you would have turned down any man on the sole basis of his being a man, which is why the letter-column was so surprising. The fact that here you are denying some of those statements gives me the impression that perhaps three or four months ago you truly were an anti-mush woman, which is indeed sad. Still, I have my doubts.

Doubtless you might well be the only fan to take a single at a con and keep it all to yourself, but that doesn't mean other fen don't want to do the same. I know I personally fantasize about the con where I can afford to get my very own single--sleep all by myself. Oh, sweet ecstasy. And why you do this I don't know--with me, it is a deep-rooted fear of sleeping with strangers around as well as a good deal of contempt for those fen who go to cons for the sole purpose of getting High, Drunk or Laid. Achh, what a waste! And while my personal view towards sex is that it is a simple biological function which can or cannot have emotional attachments, if you truly believe that it must only be done with somebody important, then by all means, don't allow yourself to be chided into doing it any other way. We all have our oddities--that's what sets us apart as individuals and giving up one's individuality in order to please somebody else is a waste.

GTA is full of shit, and misses what has always seemed to me the true purpose of dating--practice in sexual foreplay. If we look for, as GTA suggests, "meaningful relationships" while still in High School when most folk haven't reached any noticeable level of maturity (or if they have they insist on hiding it behind a more naive, less honest, adolescent shadow,) than what he is suggesting is premature maturity, and that would lead to more hang-ups than pregnancy, to go all the way in the other direction.

The FanFair reports were all enjoyable. Personally I enjoyed myself immensely at FanFair. There were, As Sam Long so aptly pointed out, some truly fine people at that convention who wouldn't allow minor and more-than-minor problems interfere with a Good Time, which I had. You did a fine job, and I applaud you. And while his speech may have seemed to be very off-the-cuff, that is very misleading, since I know that Cy Chauvin worked like hell, did at least several hundred revisions and totally changed his theme at least twice. Cy is not a public speaker; his ability to pull himself through so well at Fan Fair was truly a feat of great effort and work, and I applaud him too. Oh, yes, and you might as well add the unloved Chairman, MacDonald, to that list, too. (Honestly, I am being too gracious for words this night.)

I wondered whether or not you would tell the tale of the couple "copulating in the con suite". I was thrilled to see you did. Those two people, whoever they were, had an awful lot of gall to yell at Wayne for interrupting them, since they were performing their acts in an open place anyway and it was Wayne's room. Quite apparently, they wanted people to watch them, and I'm not surprised some enterprising fan didn't sell tickets and make a nice bit of money. Not that you or I would have attended, mind you, but there are those so inclined.

You showed more courage than I would have in regards to the "young pro". Personally, I am a secret prude, and were I placed in similar circumstances, I probably would have been terribly embarrassed. Besides, I thought someone once said to be a pro you have to have no dick. Or something like that.

*//FanFair is something I'm awfully glad is over with, even though political repercussions are still resonating here in Toronto. I don't think, though, that I will ever serve on a concommittee again, or not unless that committee were composed of types who see things similarly to me. As Taral Wayne*

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pointed out, the con was badly run. The committee was made up mostly of fringe-fen and political types; and it showed. The local club, OSFiC, also shows signs of falling into the hands of fringe-fen and politicals, and many of Toronto's trufen are not rejoining.//

RICH BARTUCCI - Box 369, KCCOM - - - - - Nov 20, 1975  
2105 Independence Ave  
Kansas City, MO 64124

I sit here at my typer, the reincarnation of H. L. Mencken (it snarls at chiropractors and Methodists) with SIMULACRUM 2 to my right and a Missouri blizzard incipienting to my left. Gad, but it's colder than Geis' heart out there!

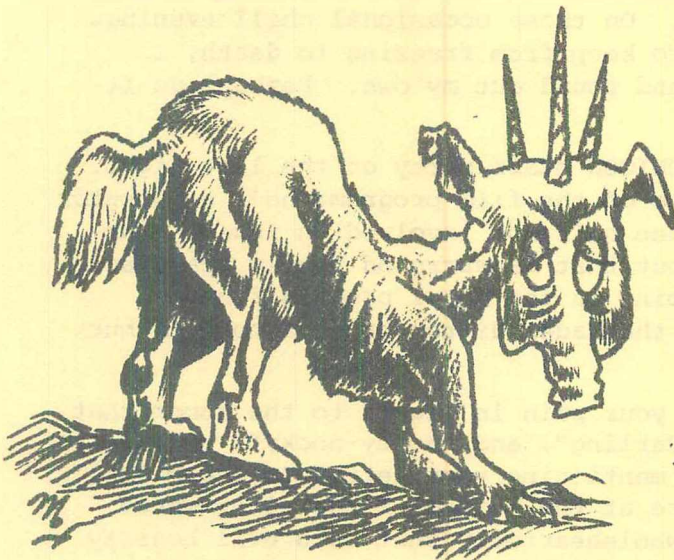
Your tale of the Six Perverts and the Foolish Maiden reminds me of my first feat of fanac, NOREASCON, where I saw skinny-dipping forms both male and female cavoring in the hotel pool. I recall one rather stoned gentlefan gazing glassily at the scene and mumbling "But only God can make a tree..." shortly before he passed out. Fun convention.

While the amount of critical review I've written could be transcribed in pico on the head of a pin, I must needs agree with Goodfan Chauvin's reason for writing such stuff; taking things apart to see how they succeed or fail is entertaining and stimulating. If one desires to write SF oneself (as I do), it can be educational as well. Where does Heinlein fail--and Ellison prevail? How could their glitches be avoided while preserving the goodies?

Straight critical review performs these functions, and, when well-written, such work is a thing of beauty and sand in the author's crankcase forever. Still, Goodfan Chauvin forgets one other, more illegitimate, form of criticism--the parody. When a writer grows bombastic, top-heavy, or one-sided, a lancet-like satire of his style can bust his bubble more effectively than any erudite comparison of his work with the syphilitic ramblings of Adolf (THE IRON DREAM) Hitler. Consider Harry Harrison's *BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO*, which rips off Heinlein's *STARSHIP TROOPERS* with facility and elan. The principal work was worthwhile--Heinlein's books always are--but it was one-sided, and Harrison jujitsu'd it happily.

I was, ah, stimulated by Goodfan Jenrette's "Practical Guide to Male Anatomy". It spoke openly and honestly on a subject of vital importance, informing the reader in a concise and interesting manner. It was, however, not as complete as it might have been; I offer the following in the way of supplementation:

- 1) In males under the age of puberty, the erect position graded as A+ is fairly common, which is a terrible waste.
- 2) In certain documented cases of



surgical reconstruction, men who had lost their penes were provided with plastic surgery remedies consisting of a length of bone taken from one of the patient's ribs, some adipose tissue, and a skin graft. With a reconstructed urethra planted therein, these fortunate unfortunates found themselves the proud possessors of grade A+ erections that would never detumescere.

3) The corpus spongiosum is not the structure whose engorgement is responsible for erection; it is, rather, the structure that surrounds the spongy urethra on the underside of the organ. The two corpora cavernosa atop the corpus spongiosum are the dinguses which grow larger by imbibing the increased blood supply. Further, there are muscles involved in the erective processes, to wit, the ischio-cavernosus muscle surrounding the corpora cavernosa on either side and the bulbo-spongiosus, surrounding the bulbus penis and corpus spongiosum in the midline. Presumably, one might exercise these muscles daily to enable the penis to achieve grade A+ erections with greater consistency. Such exercises, however, also produce a fine lanugo or down on the palms of the hands and may be implicated in certain forms of blindness.

4) Nocturnal erections are the rule rather than the exception, and the average male may achieve such tumescent episodes even after potency is thought to be lost, sometimes to the point of two or three a night. As with prepubescent erections, this is a terrible waste.

5) The testicles are surrounded by a thin net of muscle fibres (the cremaster muscle) which responds to a light stroking of the medial thigh by drawing the testicles up against the abdomen. Such withdrawal is supposed to be a carryover of those neanderthal days when man trotted about in nature's attire, and is appropriately enough called the "high brush reflex".

6) In the anatomy laboratory, I have had the good fortune to see a number of negro specimens, at last concluding that the negro race was placed on the earth to frighten virgins.

In the continuing discussion of Mush, I find myself agreeing with Goodfan Smith of Chicago. In that I enjoy certain novels categorized as pornographic by the bluenoses among us, I must comment that few works which set out to be hump-n-bang books at the outset are really worth reading. On those occasional chill evenings when I require a dab of stimulating reading to keep from freezing to death, I generally trip over to H. L. Mencken, here, and pound out my own. Perhaps do-it-yourself porno is the wave of the future...

Norris, Norris--I must've met him at the DEMONICON staff party on the last night. No, that was Norrodnoglik, the demon in charge of the film program; he's a computer programmer down in the Corruption Division when he's not involved in fanac. Anyway, it was a Hell of a convention; I found out that *Sensurround* really means a willing succubus, and that, while skinny-dipping in the hotel pool is fine at worldcons or regionals, such desportments at the Hades Hilton produce nothing but soup.

Goodfan Vayne, I would gladly put you out of your pain in regard to the rumor that Missourians address one another as "dear", "darling", and "honey-nooky". Oh, we're an affectionate bunch, all right; I was just mentioning your letter to Sarah Sue, Jeff and Ken at the last KaCSFFS orgy (we were at the bottom of the pile, where the trufen tend to settle), and they agreed wholeheartedly that such evil hearsay should be scotched immediately. Makes us sound a little bit odd, wouldn't you think?

//Heinlein's books always worthwhile? What about IWFNE? TEFL?//

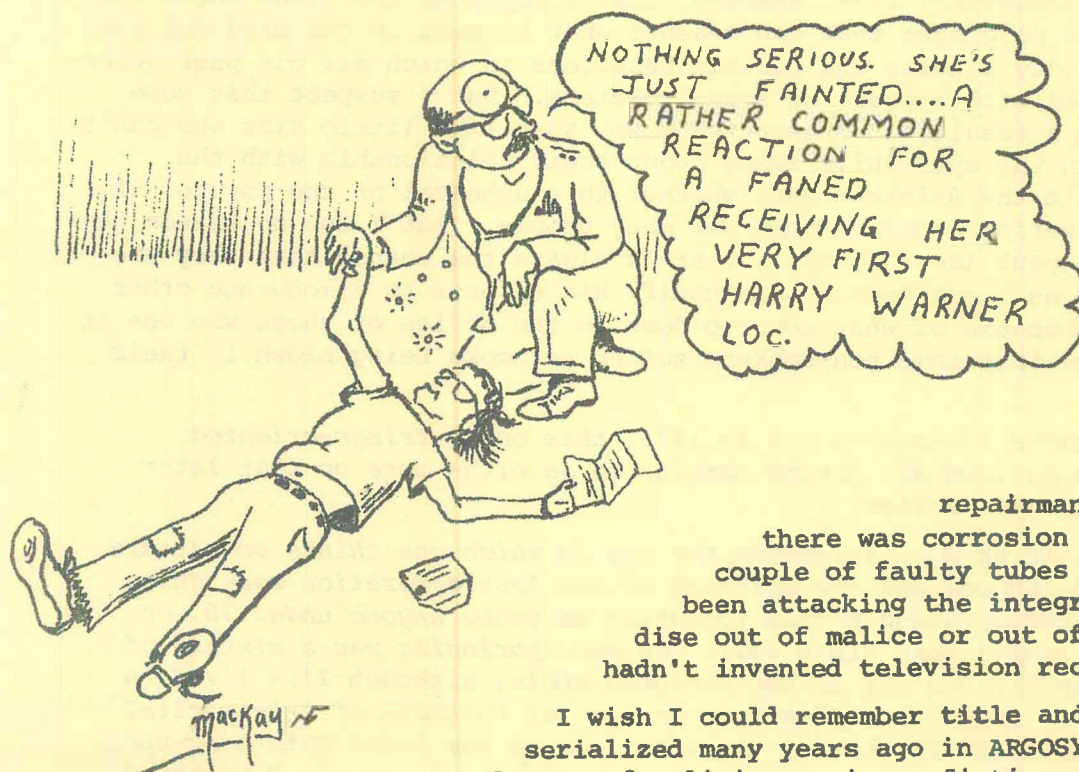


HARRY WARNER JR. - 423 Summit Avenue - - - - - Nov 21, 1975  
Hagerstown MD 24740

The FanFair reports were something like The Ring and the Book or Seventeen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird or sitting through an entire trial and hearing events described from many viewpoints. There's much less duplication than I would have expected for a comparatively small con which didn't have two or three different things happening most of the time. I have doubt about this notion that it'll be the last big con in Toronto for years to come, because it's obvious by now that unknown forces are at work in the universe which doom some fans in every major city to suffer all the hard work involved in putting on at least one con every year. Your own section had the additional advantage of helping me understand the geographical circumstances in Toronto fandom. I believe I could find my own way from one point of interest to another as a result of all the local travels you described.

The overreaction to criticism that Cy Chauvin cites in certain pros must have something to do with insecurity complexes which get triggered by unkind remarks. Some housewives work themselves into a terrible state if the husband spends a night out with the boys; most of these women aren't really afraid that some awful fate will befall their men but they're subconsciously afraid that they are losing their grip on the affection and support of the mate. Even the successful pro may have the suspicion that some day he will run out of plots or story ideas, that he won't be able to keep up with changing market standards, and he may interpret the reaction of one reviewer to one story as the beginning of the end for him as a successful writer, so he detonates with an ad hominem attack on the critic to wipe out as best he can this threat to his livelihood. Something went wrong with my television

set a couple of months ago, and when I called the firm where I bought it, they didn't tell me I shouldn't complain because I can't build a television set with my own hands; they accepted my belief that something was wrong, sent the repairman out, and sure enough, there was corrosion on the tuner and a couple of faulty tubes and I really hadn't been attacking the integrity of their merchandise out of malice or out of spite because I hadn't invented television receivers.



I wish I could remember title and author of a novel serialized many years ago in ARGOSY, to add it to the cluster of religious science fiction stories discussed by Don D'Amassa. "Seven Against the Stars" might have been the

title, and curiously, I can't remember seeing any mentions of it in all the many fanzine articles I've seen through the years about fantasy in that magazine. I can't even remember the theme as well as the mundane sections that involved lower class people in England in a style that seemed like first-rate Dickens. At the climax, as I remember it, God himself made a brief appearance on the scene. Mae Strelkov's two pages make a nice complement to Don's article. She must have worked like fury to condense her ideas into only two pages and to put them into such striking language. I don't dare let LoCs run over two pages apiece, while I'm so far behind on fanzine commenting, so I can't launch into the remarks on religion that her article has caused to bubble up.

The letter section was interesting, principally for the wild variety of reaction to your much-acclaimed material in the first SIMULACRUM. I liked particularly William Norris' remarks on violence. I just got done writing another LoC in which I defended violence from censorship proposals but I still find myself disliking it more and more as I grow old. I don't even slow down when I pass an auto wreck, and I haven't had a real argument with anyone for perhaps a year, as illustrations of how far I've gone. But what's wrong with baseball as a non-violent sport? There might be one intentional collision a game, the batter must be alert for beanballs, but it's still a far cry from the other big-audience sports today.

I hate to spoil your illusion, but you aren't the only fan who is celibate during cons. Matter of fact, I suspect that you have receded too far in your editorial this time from your original position, which has some strong things going for it. I'm convinced that all these centuries of lip-service to monogamy and to the concept that illicit sex is wrong have programmed something into the human psyche that doesn't go away when an individual today decides to behave in a liberated manner. The polygraph wouldn't work if something deep in the human mind didn't get excited when an individual lies, thereby causing physical reactions which can be measured. There's no gadget that can measure what happens in the mind and body when an individual today ignores the puritan behaviour in which all his past generations were instructed with respect to sexual matters. But I suspect that some people may suffer as a result, in unexpected ways, just like little kids who can't look their parents in the eyes while lying about their relationship with the cookie jar. I haven't the faintest idea whether this upheaval of the psyche, if it exists, can have serious consequences for many people. But I see no reason why you shouldn't uphold your ideas, because there's always the chance that they are the right ones, just as a non-smoker can justify his efforts to discourage other people from smoking because of what tobacco does to the bodies of those who use it and the bad reactions that some non-smokers suffer to smoke being blown in their faces.

*//Toronto is doomed to another con in 1976, this one a fringe-oriented con that trufen in town are having nothing to do with--more on that later in comment on another letter.*

*How one is brought up does influence the way in which one thinks on matters of morals in adulthood; and the opinions of the last generation were quite different from today's young people (counting as young anyone under 30, or in other words people born since WW2). My own upbringing was a mixture of Catholic and Baptist and was in the European style, although I've lived in Canada most of my life. But I've been brought up to think of extramarital sex as wrong, and grew up fearing the idea, and am now beset with hang-ups. If I had been raised in a more liberal, permissive environment, I might be less inhibited and more normal now--and if I grew up in some dystopia like*

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those mentioned in the SIM 2 editorial, I would consider it the norm and perhaps fit in quite nicely. Today's parents, who would be my own age, are still hung up and a bit guilty about freedom in sex, and will probably pass on this guilt to the next generation even though they may not want to; and it will be a long time before the guilt is entirely removed. On the other hand, public opinion takes violent swings in history, and we may have an era of excessive puritanism upon us yet.//

ROBERT J. WHITTAKER - PO Box 1148 - - - - - Nov 23, 1975  
Wilmington, Delaware 19899

Cy Chauvin shares my views as a critic/writer; I enjoy good writing but get annoyed by bad examples. I find it hard, very hard, not to get insulting when I review a piece of work which has disappointed me. It is quite easy to slip into the role of hoodlum when one criticises a book and the flaws stick out like gumdrops at an old time Beatles concert. I feel this is why, more than any other reason why, that some writers have deserted fandom--because of some unfeeling fan critic who chose to stick knives in the writer's gut rather than apply words to the writing he was supposed to be reviewing.

I think it should be recollected that Alfred Bester once went around the pole of Critic by avoiding bad books; in F&SF, he just simply refused to review books which he considered not worth reading. He had/has lots of friends in the field, and he kept them because he would avoid saying which book was lousy. Alfie Bester liked people and he wants them to like him. And as a critic, he carried on the tradition. I suppose this is a flaw which a number of fans have carried over--why be unkind to a book when you can say nice things about it?

It is a dreadful puzzle: are you going to be kind to a book, which might not be very good, simply because you want to stay on terms with its author, or are you going to be honest about it, and let the chips fall as they will?

I do not think critics hate creative people--but they really get annoyed when a writer like Heinlein--who has written truckloads of excellent material--goes into hibernation and comes out with *I WILL FEAR NO EVIL*. Or Delany and *DHALGREN*. I do not think the majority of bad books are reviewed--only the ones which get the noise, the ones which get-the-sales, the ones from the writers whom we-all-know-and-love, ones from writers we-are-watching, and the ones which surprize you by-being-good. I do not think 90% of the book reviews are negative--I would say it is about even; reviewers and readers seem to shy away from what is garbage knowingly--by testing a few lines from it at random, reading the blurb, and if it is a first novel from a total unknown, or if it has a rotten cover--and tend to stick with familiar writers, up and coming writers who have appeared in magazines, and books which get the publicity. It does seem to be unfair--but if you wish to sample all the writing from total unknowns, go right ahead and do so--you will not be able to read what is coming out which is acknowledged to be good.

I had an interesting conversation with God the other day. He came to me disguised as a rock, which had fallen from the heavens onto my head. After I woke up, the rock began talking to me. It told me that I was the divine messiah, and that I could walk on water. I told him these days anyone could walk on water. After the rock began to utter profane remarks about my disbelief I took him/it/whatever (?) and tossed him/it/whatever (?) down the garbage disposal. God makes funny noises when he is being ground up.

//Remarks on criticism can be extended to the realm of fanzine reviews--

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and I appreciate a negative review as much as a positive one, if it is the type of review I can take suggestions for improvement from. Kindness to a book or a story or a fanzine which is lousy may be more of a cruelty. As Taral mentioned in his letter, positive feedback is sucker bait.//

BUCK COULSON - Route 3 - - - - - Nov 24, 1975  
Hartford City, IN 47348

The "normal" teenager wants to make out as fast as possible, in order to "prove" him/herself. The normal teenager, in addition to being a jackass (a failing not restricted to teenagers) is also incredibly insecure (also a failing not restricted to teenagers). He/she has no real faith in his/her own convictions, and seeks peer approval. Conformity is a substitute for thinking. A huge percentage of mundanes never grow out of this phase (the fans of my acquaintance are far superior in this respect). Sex has been advertised as the ultimate proof of masculinity (and more recently, of femininity), so therefore...

Actually, I'm not at all sure that joining a church group would be all that much help. Churchgoers subscribe to a different conformity, which may solve the problem of sex but raises others. (We'll ignore the majority of church-goers, who are hypocrites about sex, and concentrate on the serious ones.)

I can give Chauvin another reason for becoming a reviewer--getting all those free books to read. (This of course has a very unpleasant drawback; pretty soon one has so many books stacked up for review that one feels guilty about reading something one purchased for enjoyment. The solicitor of free books for review has the obligation to review them, however dull many of them may be.) In general, I'll agree with "sharing my opinion". If a book is good, I like to tell my friends about it, and if it's bad I want to warn them about wasting their money. However, I have never tried "to convince the writer that there is something wrong with his book". Unless I happen to know him personally, I don't give a shit about the writer. I'm interested in the readers. (Besides, you can't convince the writer that there is anything wrong with his book, unless he's a very exceptional writer.)

I'd have liked to have D'Amassa include Del Rey's *THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT* in his religious stf. (I say Del Rey copped out on the





ending--but does anyone else say that? Not that disagreement would change my opinion, but I'm curious.)

Come now, Mike; lots of people see me more negatively than I see myself. Maybe your problem is that you admire insecure people? (Never mind; Mike's letters are a joy to quote out of context, but I really do understand what he's saying. Agreeing with it, of course, is something else again, but sometimes I even do that.)

Actually, fanfiction runs the gamut from Godawful to mediocre. The idea that amateur writing is ever going to be better than professional for any reason is as silly as saying amateur football, or singing, is better than professional, or that you can see better paintings at the exhibit of a Sunday afternoon art club than you can at a museum. The amateur may have ideas (damned few of them do, in fact) but he doesn't know how to express them.

*//I would guess that the teenagers I know at present aren't "normal", then, because I know a number of people who are in their late teens who have far more mature attitudes and outlooks that I would expect on the basis of age. As you point out, fans are superior in this respect, and the people I'm thinking of are fans. When I consider the typical teenager encountered when I was in high school, though, interested in silly dances and weird fashion and smoking behind adults' backs and sneaking off to the States on weekends to take advantage of the lower drinking age there, I would tend to agree with your label of "jackass", however. Conformity to me is an example of phoniness--to go to supposed grown-ups, take a look at the jerk who buys an expensive luxury car or a fakely sporty one just to make up for lacks in his character, or the women who have to follow the fashion, ugly as it may be, just to be "with it", or the "keep-up-with-the-Joneses" status-seeking mentality. Whatever it is that such people are trying to be, it is not "themselves".//*

JERRY POURNELLE - 12051 Laurel Terrace - - - - - Nov 24, 1975  
Studio City, CA 91604

I'm of mixed opinion regarding Hugo awards and fanzines: Are SFR, ALGOL, and OUT-WORLDS really fanzines within the meaning of the act? Of course OUTWORLDS isn't too hard to decide; it doesn't make money and appears to meet almost every test of a true amateur publication except its execution, which is quite "professional"--but that's what most quality zines strive for, isn't it? SFR, LOCUS and ALGOL, though--hmm. Ambiguity sets in. Also, their giant circulations--which shouldn't after all be arguments against them--do make it tough for the smaller operations to compete. Yet to condemn them for success seems rather petty. I suppose the best thing that could happen would be for the really giant operations to declare themselves voluntarily out of the running--yet, so long as they don't want to, even to wish that isn't right.

I do wish there were categories or something. Maybe a semi-pro fanzine award, which is restricted to those with a certain (and quite large) circulation and above, and whose publishers declare are amateur? Because it does make it tough on the "traditional" fanzine publishers with high quality, low circulation, efforts such as yours.

By the way: your correspondent Doug Barbour, in addition to having an irritating habit of imposing his own variety of punctuation on readers and thus making his text a great deal harder to read, is just plain wrong about Mr. Heinlein. I assure you that not only can Robert imagine an intelligent woman, he lives with one of the most intelligent people (who happens to be a woman) I have ever met.

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As witness that she's smarter than either Robert or myself. Remind me to tell you sometime (or have Robert and Ginny relate it to you if you're at MIDAMERICON) about the Great Ice Storm in Colorado Springs, the subsequent Defeat and Despair of two perfectly competent engineers (Robert and myself) and the Shame of It All when Ginny found The Solution without even realizing that we two intellectual giants were Having a Problem.

I also suspect that Mr. Heinlein will be long remembered in American letters, whether genre or not; certainly had he not been writing in the 40's, science fiction wouldn't be the comparatively healthy field that it is now. In his day there might have been two or three people who could make a living writing SF full time; now there are perhaps two dozen (no, no more than that, although there are another hundred to hundred and fifty who realize a reasonable part of their income from writing SF). It's mostly due to him that the field expanded when and as it did; his POST stories went to about 8 million people (I think that was the circulation of the SatEvPOST in its heyday) as opposed to some 45,000 (the circulation of the biggest and only healthy SF magazine at that time)--and I for one am convinced that because so many people, including young adults, saw his stories, SF had an enormous expansion in popularity, making possible the big rise in number of SF works published--and making it possible for me to make a living at something as enjoyable as writing science fiction.

I've seen the Panshin's argument before, to wit that RAH can only create two kinds of male characters, one of whom is himself; but I've never been much impressed by it, whether reasoned with examples as done by the Panshins, or by fiat as done by Barbour. It's true enough that RAH tends to stay within a more limited range of characters than most writers, but that's because he is mostly impressed with competence; but ye gods, I envy his ability to create realistic spear carriers, as an example. The carping fellow passenger in some of his earlier space travel stories; the villainous woman in *PODKAYNE*; the Roman soldier in *HAVE SPACESUIT* (and goddammit, there are few paragraphs in all literature to equal, at least for me, the emotional impact of that old sergeant crying defiance at the gods!)--etc. and so on, for quite a long time if one cared to continue the exercise. True: his protagonists tend to be competent, and self-confident, and basically ethical; and what the hell is wrong with that?

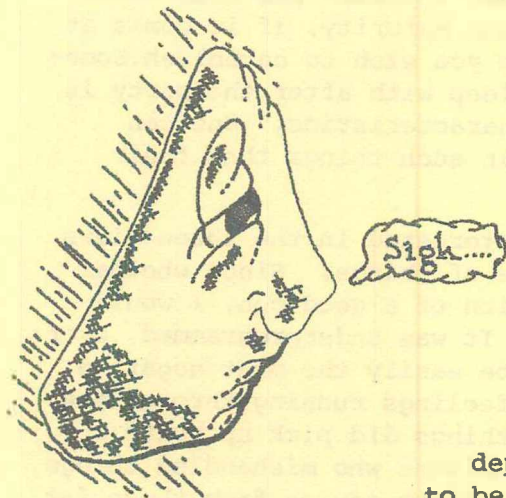
Incidentally, my wife, who has probably more exposure to teenage girls than most people, found Podkayne fascinating and quite realistic; I understand from fan literature that Poddy is usually thought of as the ultimate horror, especially to those who very strongly proclaim their devotion to feminist views. Now poor little Poddy appears in a book circa 1963, a dozen years ago, and indeed suffers from some of the cultural limitations of that time; she tends to indulge in feminine wiles as a means of Getting Her Way; and perhaps that's terrible; but as the father of a teenage boy I can tell you Poddy ain't unrealistic even in this enlightened Year of Grace 1975. You may not approve of young ladies who act that way, but some of 'em sure enough do--including some who have quite "masculine" career ambitions, i.e. not only hope to pursue, but fully expect to be accepted in, careers that 20 years ago would have been thought thoroughly closed to women.

As to how my wife, not being the mother of any girls, knows so much about them, she happens to be a teacher in a juvenile female detention school; a job I don't recommend to anyone without the patience and most other virtues of a saint.

You know, you can't win in this sex in SF game. In *MOTE IN GOD'S EYE*, Larry and I quite deliberately kept the mush to a minimum and left mush<sup>2</sup> to the reader's imagination (does she or doesn't she? only her confessor knows for sure) on the

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theory that it wasn't at all needed in the story; and of course we get review comments like "genital-less characters" and such. Yet why the devil should we have had our characters hop in the sack? Ah, say the reviewers, but you must; the times, they are a-changin' and Victorian prudishness (I swear to heaven no pun was intended; I swear it) will never ever gain any place in human affairs again. And I trot out my Restoration critical essays and laugh like anything...

At what point was explicit mush, mush<sup>2</sup>, mush<sup>3</sup>, or whatever needed in *MOTE*? I would have said the two mush scenes and the strong hint of mush<sup>2</sup> ("He was trying to protect my reputation. What if Uncle Ben had bust in here and we were...") etc. (only that too proves our depravity, doesn't it? That a character might not care to be caught in a compromising situation by her only living male relative...) were enough.

But had we pleased the reviewers who want genitals exposed at least once each five chapters, I make no doubt Anti-Mush Woman would have had much to say...

//About fanzines...most of the Hugo voters only see *ALGOL*, *SFR*, or *LOCUS*. And perhaps only half the readers of a 200-circulation zine bother to vote on the Hugos. Opinion on the FAAn awards varies, but I like the idea. The FAAns, to me, seem an analogue of the Nebula--awards voted on by the peer group, the very group in the best position to evaluate the quality of and work going into, a zine. I intend to nominate some low-circulation zines I find exceptional if I nominate for the Hugos at all this year, but I doubt it will do much good.

I've said all I want to about IWFNE in "Mush, Smush!" in *SIM* 1 last year, and I said quite a bit about Poddy in an even earlier article that now lies in appreciated obscurity (although I may update & resurrect it) so will refrain on saying any more bad things about Heinlein here. In spite of a few bad books, I do admire and like very much most of Heinlein's work. There's a lot of novels I haven't read yet, but when I have time I look forward to some good reads.

And I still don't care for unnecessary sex scenes in novels. I've acquired a copy of *MOTE*, finally finding it after numerous sellouts in local bookstores, and will make my own judgement as to the mush present therein...//

MIKE GLICKSOHN - 141 High Park Ave. - - - - - Nov 24, 1975  
Toronto, Ont. M6P 2S3

Have just read through the second fabulous issue of your neato fanzine *SOMEYOU-LIKEUM* and am moved to comment somewhat on same. It is odd to be writing a LoC that I can actually be assured will get delivered: if those fuckers in the post office knew their damn strike was probably going to cost me next year's FAAn award as Best Letterhack, I guess they'd get back on the job pretty damn quick, yessir, you bétcha!

Armstrong's guidelines seem pretty unrealistic, regardless of how sensible they might be. In our society, initial attraction to people is usually on the basis of physical appearance, perhaps after some degree of common interest has been established. And the ability to seek beyond that comes with maturity, if it comes at all. And it also depends on what sort of relationship you wish to establish. Someone who goes to a party looking for someone else to sleep with after the party is over is obviously going to look for purely physical characteristics. One can hardly expect teenagers to be any more sophisticated in such things than their parents, can one?

As a con fan, and an attendee of FanFair III, I was interested in the three views shown here, and surprised at the overall positive tone of things. Since whether or not I personally had a good time is not my definition of a good con, I would have to rate FanFair III as a pretty bad convention. It was underprogrammed, overpriced, and underorganized. The Friday night has to be easily the most negative time I've ever spent at a convention, with the worst feelings running through the hotel that I've ever experienced. Sam is right that things did pick up quite a bit after that, but it was really no thanks to the committee who mishandled things, mostly through inexperience and a perverse refusal to accept advice from those far better equipped to give good counsel that they were. So it goes: I'm glad Sam enjoyed himself and I hope others did too. I certainly did, because there were some very nice people there, but when you have fun *despite* the committee instead of because of it, then I have to rate the con a failure as a convention.

I'd ascribe the often negative reaction of writers to "critics" to Sturgeon's Law. The simple truth of the matter is that the great majority of fans who attempt to write what is laughingly called criticism are simply incompetent for the task. However there seems to be a belief in fandom that anyone who can read can write a review, and while this is undeniably true, it's also true that most of those "reviews" will be worthless. It's unfortunate that the more thoughtful and insightful critics in the fan press often get tarred with the brush meant for the talentless.

I've read a lot of incredibly inept "reviews" in fanzines and I can understand how a writer might feel were he exposed to some of these things. What I really do not understand is why any writer would *bother* refuting most of the rubbish written about his/her works. With the exception of a few of the "biggies" like ALGOL and SFR the importance of any fan review is minimal; and the ones that *do* have a certain status and possibly influence usually attract the critics who are best qualified for the job in the first place.

When a "major" reviewer is guilty of bad writing or thinking, though, then it becomes worthwhile to set matters straight, and the considered exchange of opinions on the subject of writing is one of the most interesting aspects of fanzine material. Too often, though, the reviewer in question is simply grinding some personal axe and the reviewee reacts against that with insults of his own and we end up with an often-fascinating and vitriolic clash of personalities that has little or nothing to do with criticism or with writing. (Unfortunately, Cy's contention that "nobody finds insults or arrogance fun" is hardly born out by fanzine evidence. Far too many people enjoy the sort of mudslinging that appears sometimes in OUTWORLDS or SFR.)

Is there any solution? I doubt it. As long as anyone with access to a writing instrument and some sort of duplicator can issue forth "reviews" of anything he or she has read, we're going to have a lot of inadequate articles posing as criticism. If every fan reviewer tried to follow Cy's suggestions for improving the

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quality of reviews, then things could not but improve considerably. But that would require fans to act in a mature and sensible fashion, and I doubt most of us would recognize fandom if that ever happened.

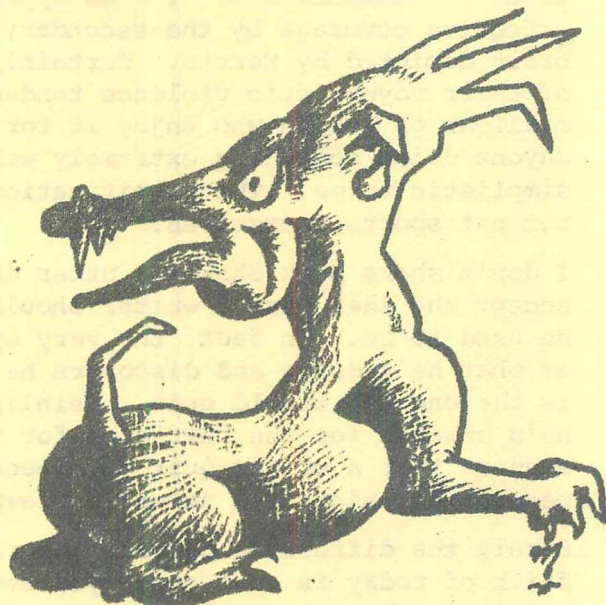
Dave Jenrette's primer is a superb piece of writing and I hope that he really plans to follow up with additional lessons. I learned a lot this time and could use a little more help. (I'm talking about the field of writing brilliant comic material for fanzines, of course: I knew all that other stuff because I read the walls of the school washrooms regularly.)

As always, I enjoyed Wayne's fanzine reviews (if he doesn't like long con reports I wonder how he'll review this issue of SIM?) but they really aren't likely to provoke comments. Particularly since many are on quite elderly fanzines by now. (I have not, am not and will not been or be a fanzine reviewer for KARASS and if someone is writing fanzine reviews under my name and publishing them in the copies of KARASS sent to Wayne I'd like to know about it.

Either Bruce Arthurs has a very large fridge or he's become a contortionist since I last met him. There's no way in the world I could ever crawl into my fridge, even if I took all the Scotch bottles out first. Perhaps I'll write an article called "Bruce Arthurs' Double Joints" which I can flog all over fandom for years and years to come, writing other articles about the difficulties of getting it published...

You say you can't "justify" explicit sex scenes in fiction because you consider sex to be a very private thing. Well, you've every right to your viewpoint, of course, but in keeping with your earlier-expressed philosophy of not imposing your views on others, it seems to me that the only "justification" needed is that the writers in question don't necessarily feel the same way you do. (I totally agree with Sheryl Smith--fanfare of trumpets, explosion of firecrackers, crowd shot of a hundred thousand people with expressions of stunned disbelief--in that only artistic criteria should be used in judging the inclusion of a sex scene in a book.) If your philosophy is out of step with that of the majority of current writers, I suppose you'll either have to learn to live with that or spend the rest of your science-fictional days rereading Asimov and Clement.

Excellent letter by William Norris and much of what he says is, unfortunately, true. Incidents of psychos slaughtering animals in a zoo seem to be on the increase (someone recently killed six big cats out west, and another man was given six months in jail for killing an elk: I'd have made it six years at the very least.) and the news is filled with depressing stories about the increase in mindless violence in our society. But I'm not quite willing to condemn spectator sports the way Norris



is. I watch football, quite regularly, and I know many other people who do and we watch it from the point of view of people who've played the sport or appreciate how it's played. I enjoy a well-caught pass, a good kickoff return, or the beauty of an O.J.Simpson run. I also appreciate good blocking, proper pass defence, and effective coverage by the secondary. And I don't consider myself the mindless ape-brain depicted by Norris. Certainly some people may watch sports as a sublimation of their voyeuristic violence tendencies, but to condemn sports as a whole and the millions of people who enjoy it for the same reason that it's pleasurable to watch anyone doing something extremely well that is not ethically revolting seems far too simplistic to me. The glorification or exploitation of violence in sports is wrong, but not sports themselves.

I don't share Mark Sharpe's utter distaste for Heinlein and I most certainly can't accept the idea that a writer should turn in his typewriter because he isn't what he used to be. In fact, the very opposite should be true: any writer who looks at what he's doing and discovers he's still doing what he did twenty years before is the one who should quit. Heinlein has changed, which is to his credit. Whether he's changed for the better or for the worse depends on your own tastes, but to suggest that a writer quit just because he's not writing the sort of thing you personally enjoy is a juvenile viewpoint of stunning inanity.

Surely the difference between the religious faith of medieval days and scientific faith of today is that nowadays, even if we personally don't understand how electricity works, we know that there are people who can explain it? And explain it with concrete empirical evidence, not just by saying "This is how it is and you'll just have to take my word for it." (The question of the accuracy of that explanation is an interesting one, though. Once you get down to the atomic level and start dealing with electrons and the like, then the comparison with religious faith is perhaps a lot closer. Still, I can understand evidence for the existence of electrons without knowing exactly how to best describe them while I've never heard any really convincing argument for the existence of a soul.)

Tim Marion makes an interesting point in observing that amateur publications could become the last source of good fiction but I think he's overstated the current situation. There remain sources of good SF outside the fan press, at least by my own standards, but his argument is certainly one of the more interesting rationales for fanfic I've heard. Even if it were true that fanzines could become sources of good fiction though, the fact is that right now they aren't. Most fanfic is crud, and to read it just in case in a few years it's the best around isn't sufficiently motivating for me right now. I'd rather appoint Tim as a committee of one to issue regular reports on fanfic and if and when we reach the point where even a third of it is worth looking at then all fandom will owe Tim a debt for the decades of wading through the mire he'll have undergone for us.

There's a certain charm to Elst's Reincarnation Theory of Typewriter Perversity which appeals to me. It may well explain how I often am fast asleep in tranquil serenity and awake to find this wicked machine has disposed of half a bottle of good scotch whiskey and sent out numerous pages of bizarre prose which will later get me into all sorts of trouble. From its nocturnal habits and a certain fondness for mixtures of gin and vermouth for breakfast, I intuit that this particular machine is the reincarnation of one William Claude Dukinfield...now if only it had his creativity...

A natural extension of the Weinsteinian Theory of General Irreverancy brings us to ponder the prior existences of that most perverse of inanimate objects, the mimeograph. If any device currently plaguing fankind could be thought of as being the



incarnation of an evil spirit, then surely the mimeo is the perfect candidate?

There is much of further interest in the lettercol, but unfortunately the prolonged lack of exposure to fanzines brought about by the mail strike has rendered me impotent in as far as witty and clever comments are concerned. I guess we'll have to rely on the imaginations of our American cousins, withered and stunted as they may be, to see us through this time of national crisis. Take it away, Yankees, and don't fumble the ball on your big chance. (Break a LoC...?)

//Ah, yes, FanFair. The trufen on the committee--few of us as we may be--agree it was pretty bad. But might I ask politely, Mike, why you have agreed to be a guest at a fringe con being held in Toronto this year which will probably suffer from the same faults from the trufan's viewpoint as did FanFair???

I don't have any comments on your comments, but I am hoping the writers of the original letters which Mike comments on might have something to say in return...?//

BRIAN EARL BROWN - 55521 Elder Road - - - - - Nov 29, 1975  
Mishawaka, IND 46544

It's strange to read Sam Long's con report 'cause as I read it I can hear Sam's faint, affected British accent echoing in my ear (or is it his impeccably precise accent?). I doubt that I ever will write up a FanFair III report of my own, but if I did it would reach much the same conclusions that Sam made. By the time of my third convention I had gotten out of the habit of attending convention programs and learned to avoid ConSuite parties (too loud, too crowded). A convention is good in my opinion when I get to meet old and new friends, and have long talks with them in pleasant surroundings. In that regard WINDYCON was a really outstanding con because of the number of people I got to talk to like that. FanFair was also like that, but I didn't get to talk to you all that much. But at least I didn't get any nightmares from the ride out to your apartment...

Your comment to Sheryl Smith, "whoever said the love interest was always needed in Shakespeare?" is going to bring a ton of shit down on ya (I think). I find it amusing to see that one of the biggest motivations of human behaviour is sex. It is at times an incredibly ludicrous act, frequently overestimated, yet peoples' whole lives are affected by how well they get on sexually. Some people even get depressed to the point of suicide. All this for an itch that we share with every other mammal? There are some stories, sadly enough, that you just can't eliminate sex--or romance--from, because "mush" is the driving motivation. One of the best handlings of mush I've ever come across (but my reading is rather limited) is in a book called THE WARRIORS OF DAWN. It's a DAW book, a first novel by a man named M.A.Foster. The first fifty pages goes through more stock scenes and lectures than I'd care to enumerate but past that the book begins to develop well and convincingly captures the feeling of the two characters being in love. I'm just an old cynic with a romantic streak in him. I groove on the stuff when it's well-done and long to savage all writers who can't do it right (like 99%).

//At least at WINDYCON you weren't captured to run off extra copies of the program book, the way we were at FanFair. Come back to Toronto and I'll show you some wild driving--I have a much peppier car now than poor old Siegfried the Flyin' Volksbug.

It might be worth my while to examine some books in which mush is handled well. There have been some and I've seen them, but the poor examples spoil

*it for the good ones.//*

DON D'AMMASSA - 19 Angell Drive - - - - - Nov 30, 1975  
East Providence, RI 02914

Editorial: One shouldn't allow one's own morals to be swayed just because one's friends don't share them. On the other hand, if a person is unhappy with his own moral code, it seems to me that one should re-evaluate one's own views. Not change them necessarily, but re-examine them and decide which beliefs have a good, strong basis, and which are conditioned or personal preference, and whether these latter should be kept for that reason alone.

*THIS PERFECT DAY* and *THE WORLD INSIDE* are hardly utopias, but if you are including dystopias, the ones that come immediately to mind are *TOMORROW AND TOMORROW* by Hunt Collins (Evan Hunter), *SEXUALIS* 95 by Jacques Sternberg, *MOOD INDIGO* by Boris Vian, and *THE JOY MAKERS* by James Gunn.

Cy Chauvin is excellent in his defence of criticism, although I think he misses one role of criticism. None of us can know the specialized bits and pieces of each book. I enjoy criticism which draws on a background that I don't have to show me a particular piece of writing in a new light.

I disagree with one point Cy makes also, although I think he may feel he and I aren't talking about the same thing. I believe that it is perfectly legitimate to write a piece discussing the political or philosophical views, as expressed in their writing, of authors. Whether or not this should be called a "review" is perhaps open to question. In some cases, the observations might well apply to the quality of the book as a work of art as well. For example, if I felt that the portrayal of women in Michael Coney's novels was warped by his personal prejudices, and that this made his female characters less believable, I think this is a legitimate, valid criticism of the novel.

*//If I held a view, and found that almost everyone of my acquaintance held an opposing view, I would be seriously disposed to question the validity of that belief, even if I felt it strongly, provided the opposing view was held by people whose opinions I respected. I hold different views than most people on religion, for example, but I don't respect the opinion of the masses. Most friends I do respect, hold views, if not similar, at least not 180° removed from my own. Thus I haven't felt the need to change those views. But most fans of my acquaintance here in Toronto hold views on authoritarianism and individual freedoms quite different from those I was brought up in--here I have had to question my own belief and the origins thereof; a matter of educating myself in the true extent of the problems arising from too much authority and too much eroding of freedoms. I still haven't arrived at a satisfying answer, and it is something I ought to devote time that I haven't got to. I can see their point, but it is difficult for me to change a way of thinking I have been brought up in for 90% of my life.//*

JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON - PO Box 89517 - - - - - Nov, 1975  
Zenith, WA 98188

I'd say that reviewers or critics *don't* serve that great a function. What one reviewer praises, another pans, and you can just never believe them. In the ERB or HPL fanzines, you're liable to see the most atrocious pastiche praised to the hilt, when these critics are simply doting on their own quirky preferences. And



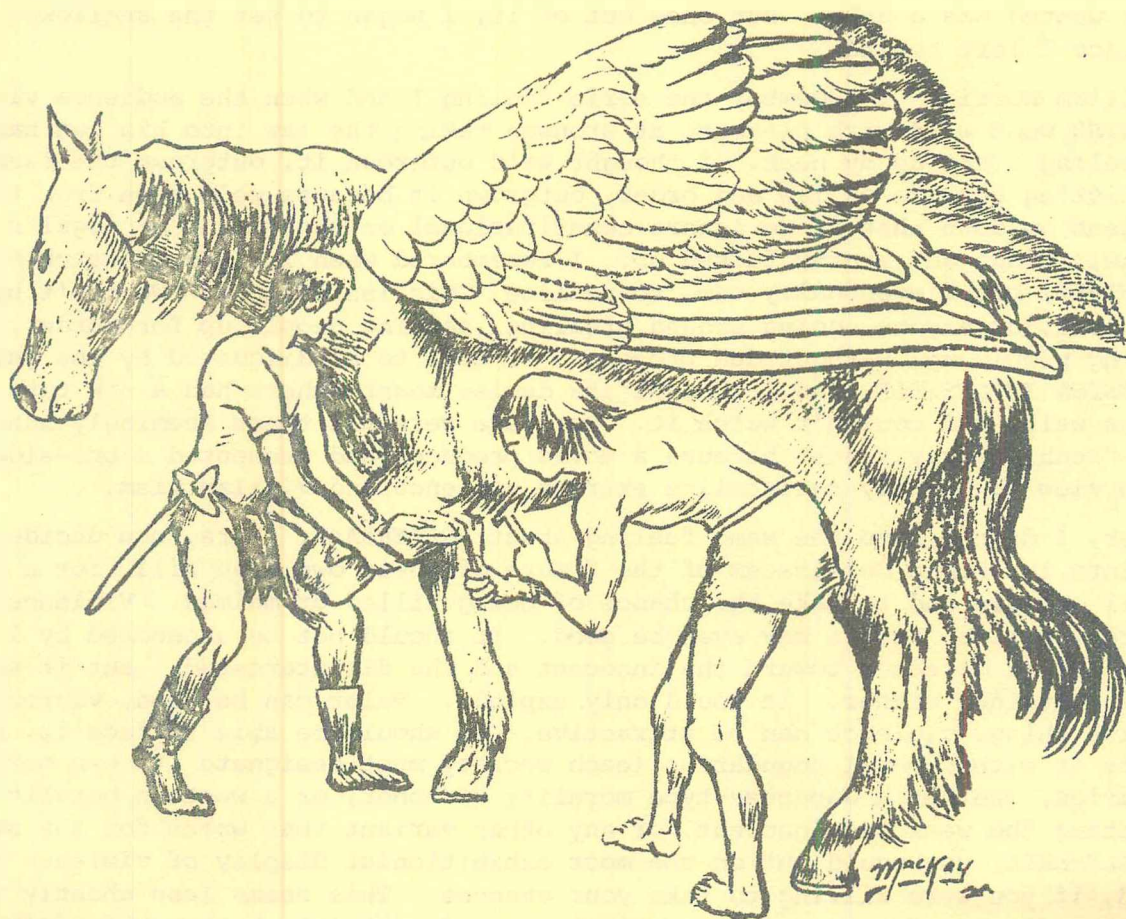
a truly fine, stimulating book is liable to be run into the ground (i.e. most of the major reviews of *THE FEMALE MAN*), in every major critical appraisal. If anyone listens intently to reviewers, they'll spend about the same amount of time on potboilers as they would have on their own, and miss just as many good books (and maybe more) as they would have otherwise.

My only enjoyment in reading reviews is in comparing critics' views with my own, or occasionally finding insights I'd not found on my own in positive appraisals and being made to go back and read again. As a "gauge" for what's good and bad, book reviews don't work at all.

The fun of doing reviews is in sharing my own ideas and biases and preferences and notions. But if I put anyone off to a book, even one I don't like, then I'm sorry, unless that person is awfully certain their likes and dislikes are the same as mine.

Yes, an inept book can be nitpicked and condemned objectively. But reviewers rarely deal with inept books, they ignore them, and rightly. They deal with the noticeable, the mediocre to the excellent, and apply only subjective judgement.

Cy's feeling that 90% of all book reviews must be negative because 90% of all books are crud is just stupid. Unless he's talking about reading and reviewing 100% of all books, which no one can do. And 90% of all books are not crud. I may only



like 10% of the books coming down, but they won't be the same 10% Cy enjoys.

The lettercol is extremely interesting, good comments, well edited. I could add to Stewart's quick statements on the crazy emphasis on physical appearance, on yours on fashion. There was a time, before I discovered the lesbian community and got to know some women really well, that I thought "beauty" was short skirts, perfect hair styles, and a professionally artistic make-up job. I mean, the movies, the ads in magazines, everything points to such things as being necessary to "beauty". And then I started noticing how some really homely women were getting whistles from men, because these homely gals were wearing short skirts, make-up and beauty-salon hair-styles, while some fabulous women were going unseen by men because they refused to be commercially fashionable. I started to realize I was not physically attracted to what I'd been brainwashed into thinking was "beautiful". A layer of make-up is not beautiful. Clothing you can't bend over in is not beautiful. Hair that doesn't blow free in the wind is not beautiful. It struck me hardest when I realized my own girlfriend was being mistaken repeatedly for a young boy. Damn, she was so beautiful, how could any fool mistake her for a boy? Because her face was free of greasy color, she was strong and athletic, and she swaggered in her blue jeans. Add some superficial fashion, and she'd be movie starlet material, but that's the problem: fashion is superficial, and it keeps people from seeing people.

I went through it. I was so damned fashionable it stunk. I even worked as a fashion model. I got out of it initially because I was attracting too many men, when what I wanted was a dyke. But once out of it, I began to see the shallowness of the place I left behind.

To William Norris: I remember the eerie feeling I had when the audience viewing *DEATHWISH* went wild with pleasure at Bronson taking the law into his own hands. The feeling crept up my neck. I thought we'd outgrown it, outgrown the fascination for existing outside of law and order, outgrown it because we'd seen from the president on down that if we ignore constitutional or just moral or legal rights and law, things get pretty fucked up. I remembered when I liked to watch *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE*, but I eventually came to realize "This isn't right. We can't have the government, or anyone, going around stealing, setting people up for murder, and screwing people up, without due process." I came to be disgusted by the philosophy of *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE*, and I thought its demise meant others had a new turn of mind as well, and couldn't watch it. But here were all these seemingly sane people going "Yeah, hooray," just because a movie producer had presented a one-sided enough view to vaguely rationalize extreme violence and vigilantism.

However, I didn't have the same feeling about *ROLLERBALL*. Here, men decided to step into the Roman Collisseum of the future of their own free will, for a chance to kill or main and to take the chance of being killed or maimed. Violence is a very real part of us, it may even be good. It should not be unchecked by law, it should not be directed toward the innocent and the disinterested. But it should not be contained either. It would only explode. Valor can be good, victory is a positive thing, violence can be attractive. We should be able to face it, and explore it within moral boundaries (each society must designate its own moral boundaries, whether a Japanese-type morality of honor, or a western morality of protecting the weak and innocent, or any other variant that works for the society). In *ROLLERBALL*, you could put on the most exhibitionist display of violence you wanted, if you were willing to take your chances. This seems less ghastly to me than shooting a polar bear from an airplane, and certainly better than enjoying anarchist slaughter as a participant or spectator.

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//As I said in an earlier remark, weird fashion is merely a form of phoniness. People should be themselves, and that includes not covering their faces with an inch of glop. As for myself, I refuse to use any make-up whatsoever, I refuse to spend money on fashionable clothes (preferring to turf funds into fanac instead), and I will not have my hair done up in strange styles. As I am I do not stand out in a crowd, but I have no idea what I'd look like if I were to go "all-out". I might look terrific, but then, I'd also feel phony and probably hate myself.//

KAREN KLINCK - 142 Snughaven Court - - - - - Nov, 1975  
Tonawanda, NY 14150

I object most thoroughly to Cy Chauvin's "Writer vs Reviewer". DON'T quote William Atheling Jr. to me. His one great claim to fame, probably because he either couldn't think of anything worthwhile to say, or because he was jealous of the fame Heinlein was getting, was to pan every last thing Heinlein ever wrote. Look gang, any review of SF is, by the nature of the beast, prejudiced in one way or another. Just because Ellison jumped down Cy's throat for "one review--at the time". I don't--and never will--consider Atheling/Blish a critic (Dog in the manger, yes; and I don't care if he is dead. That doesn't change the facts.) William Atheling Jr had a love affair going with James Blish. Either James Blish or William Atheling Jr screamed because Sam Moskowitz said something uncomplimentary about *CITIES IN FLIGHT*. I have never read anything critical by Russ, so I won't say anything. How could I? I might say that I haven't found anything decent among her fiction, out of what I've read so far, but that would merely be a critical opinion on my part, right? Incidentally, I found the reference to *CITIES: MORE ISSUES AT HAND*, of course. "Atheling" goes on to savagely attack everything that Moskowitz has ever done. The best reviewers are almost never writers, since, like Blish, they are far too much in love with their own works. Speaking of SF diamonds in the reviewing section, I'll take Reginald Bretnor's *SCIENCE FICTION: TODAY AND TOMORROW* over all; especially Anne McCaffrey's "Romance and Glamor in Science Fiction". (By now some of you may have gathered that this punched one of my buttons. Instant lecture, anyone?)

//I'm not familiar with the books cited here, so won't comment. Any of the readers...?//

MARK R. SHARPE - 2721 Black Knight Bv. - - - - - Dec 1, 1975  
Indianapolis, IND 46229

The editorial was...well, illuminating. I am a very touchy person. When I talk to people I have a habit of touching them to sort of let them know I care. It is very asexual. I too abhor casual sex, but for different reasons. I might go to bed with a girl if we just met if she and I like each other. However, just having sexual intercourse for intercourse's sake is like laying a prostitute and leaving without paying--the same results but with no emotions. Touching without really touching, I suppose. I think you missed a great deal by not sharing your room with another fan at WINDYCON. It would have cost less, obviously, and it is more fun. I roomed with two Indiana fen--both female--at RIVERCON last July and had a great time. I only came in the room to shower and shave, change clothes and pick up more money. I never slept in the room and only crawled into bed once--to eat some gawd awful hamburger that floated in grease. Just try going to a convention and rooming with another beautiful fan and see what I mean. No matter what, it will still be cheaper and unless you are one of these millionaire fen, the cheaper the better. Hey! I'm glad that FanFair came off well. Everyone I know who went said

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they had a great time--except one who came down with the worst cold in history. About ten local fans and I have decided to put on a convention, but capital is our main problem. How would you suggest we raise the \$1000?--and the grand is just for starters! Anyway, I hope to get up in Canada next year to attend a few cons--so I can say I'm an international traveller--and hope to get to come to FF4 if there will be one. Financing the trip will be the hardest part, but I'm writing a novel (another one) with a friend from Richmond Virginia and try to sell it to Laser Books as they are fairly easy to break into.

Let me correct the LoC I wrote. I hadn't read too much early Heinlein when I wrote the LoC. Since then I have read *THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS* and liked it a bit. I've also read a collection of his future histories from *THE PAST THROUGH TOMORROW* which was good. But I still maintain his last two novels sucked!

*//And this gives me an opening to mouth off a bit on the matter of cons in Toronto. If there is a FANFAIR IV, I can guarantee I will not be on the concommittee unless it is substantially different from the one that ran FANFAIR III. And I think I can speak for Taral Wayne MacDonald in this regard as well.*

*In any event, Toronto fandom always welcomes the visits of fans from elsewhere, but don,t expect a fannish convention here in the foreseeable future. There is something coming up in Toronto in October, ALPHA DRACONIS, billed and self-styled as "a combined film, horror, media, comics and sf convention". This alone speaks for itself. It will be held at one of the most expensive hotels in town, and features film and comics guests and the Dorsai Irregulars. They will charge \$10 at the door and make no bones over the fact that they expect to make a pile of money. My personal view of this is that were it held in another city, I would not go. It has too much fringe programming and fringe orientation. I may turn up at night parties, on the offchance some interesting people turn up, but I do not in the slightest recommend this one to the fannish or the faanish. Go to WINDYCON in Chicago instead, it's in the same month.*

*Fannish fans, fanzine fans, come to Toronto by all means--but let's all avoid FringeCon and have our own fannish doings instead!//*

SAM LONG - Box 4946 - - - - - Dec 4, 1975  
Patrick AFB, FLA 32925

I'm starting a movement to put \*Cy\* within asterisks, an analogy with \*sigh\*. His article was very good and informative, but I don't have any really good comments on it.

Dave Jenrette's article was most amusing. But though he mentions the philosopher Testicles, he neglected to mention that his contemporaries thought he was nuts, and that he was usually stoned (drunk, not cannabinated). It was his friend Epididymis who was really on the ball, philosophy-wise.

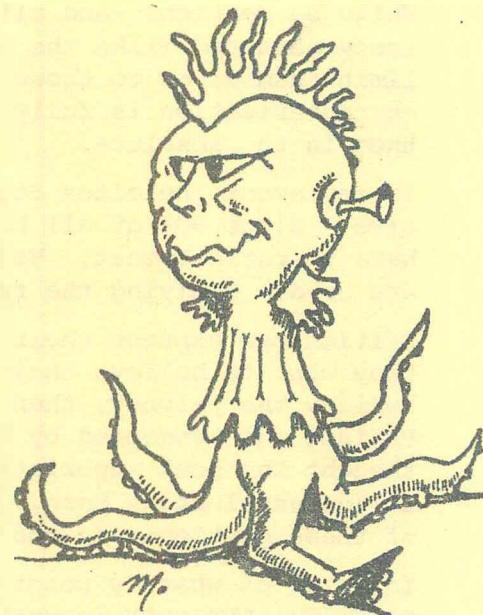
Onward to the LoCs. Will Norris: remember the gladiators of Rome? Gladiatorial combats, like orgies, were originally religious rites. I remember a funny article a number of years ago in *READER'S DIGEST* called "Freud, Football and the Marching Virgins", which, (tongue in cheek) gave a psychoreligious interpretation to the Great American Game of Football. ("Teams of priests try to take the egg of life across the last white line of winter, while worshippers are led in ritual chants by energetic preachers and priestesses, while during halftime, sacred bands make



music on the field and form themselves into holy images and letters while marching virgins strut before, twirling magical wands...")

Darroll Pardoe: Drake (and Magellan, or rather his crew) sailed around the world, to be sure, but not nonstop. If the Americas had not been in the way, Columbus would have had to sail some 210° of longitude (along the 30th parallel, some 12600 minutes of arc or about 11000 nautical miles) to reach the Fabled East, or, more particularly, Japan. He was prepared to sail a long way, but not that far. Because he had used too small a value for the earth's circumference, he thought that the Indies were only about 3000 miles away or less--within the range of his ships. And so they were--but not the Indies he was looking for. And as it was, Columbus made a very fast passage on his first voyage west. It took him only some 30 days or so to reach the Bahamas. Even at that rate (some 100 miles a day), it'd have taken him nearly 4 months to reach Japan by sailing west from Spain, and ships of that time weren't up to such a voyage...since our minimum of four months could easily become a year or more, if the winds weren't blowing right. Columbus' later voyages took him much longer, but, knowing that there was something to sail to where he could reprovision and rewater, he could make allowances. Read Admiral Morison's excellent books on this subject.

Jim Allan's question: I refer him to Robert Graves' *THE WHITE GODDESS*, chapter 15. Hebrew myths were influenced by and/or originated in Babylonian myths, which had close connections with Greek, and later, Roman myth. In particular, Greek myth had strong ties with Egyptian and Canaanitish myth: see the myths of Adonis, the flight of the gods from Typhon, the myth of Perseus (who is said to have rescued Andromeda from a dragon near Joppa), the myth of Pygmalion, the myth of Cadmus, and Phoenix, and even the myth of Dionysus Sabazius, who is correctly and successfully identified by the Ancients with Yahweh Sabaoth. The Tyrian, and later Carthaginian, god Melkart, a sort of Hercules, has his parallel in Greek mythology as Melicertes, son of the sea-goddess Ino. There are strong similarities in all ancient Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern mythologies. Now Mars was indeed a rustic god before he became a war god, but he was well on his way to war-godhead before Greek influence in Rome was very great; and though Ares does not give many indications of rusticity, we may be sure that he was originally one such in his home in Thrace. Now Zeus was the oak-and-thunder god son of Rhea, whose name is generally given as meaning "earth", but whose name is also very similar to the Greek *rheos*, stream, which connects Her with water. In any case, she is The Goddess, mistress of land and sea, and of the moon. And oak&thunder gods are connected with rain, too, don't forget. Poseidon is Zeus' brother and is, or rather, became, a sea-god; but he is not completely differentiated from Zeus any more than Hera is from Aphrodite, the foam-born sea-goddess of love who married Ares. And we mustn't forget El, the thunder-aspect of Jehovah, and his son Joshua (Jesus) son of Miriam (the salt-sea), whose eponymous heroic predecessor was the son of Nun, i.e. fish. And did not Mar-duk fight (amorously, if truth were known) with



the sea-beast goddess Tiamat? So, in answer to his questions: The Hebrew creation myths were not influenced by Roman gods, but by Babylonian ones; however the corresponding Roman gods gave their names to days of the week via Greek influence in Hellenistic times, but the concepts were Babylonian (and the Jewish calendar still uses the Babylonian names for days). And just as the Greeks and later the Romans "translated" or transposed the Babylonian names into their own languages, so did the English with the Roman names, so that our day-names come from those gods of Germanic mythology which correspond in significant ways to the Roman ones. (Except Saturn, whom we took over bodily.) In 450 BC, Rome would indeed have been very little known in Greece, if at all, but Palestine would have been rather well-known, as would Persia (who ruled in the Middle East at that time) and its territories. And I've outlined above why Zeus/Jupiter would be associated with water (and, as lord of augury and omens, with birds) any why they were sons of sea-goddesses. Got all that?

And speaking of mush again, have you ever tried grits? "Gritses" are about as mushy a dish as you can find; you can tell a read redneck by the way he pronounces "grits" in three syllables or more: "ga-ri-yuts" or "gri-i-its".

*//Any of the addressees of those comments care to comment further. I feel at a distinct disadvantage amidst such esoteric doings...//*

WAYNE W. MARTIN - 4623 E. Inyo, Apt E - - - - - Dec 4, 1975  
Fresno, CA 93702

Cy's article was alright, but he again raises his head with the old cliché of Sturgeon's 90% bit. While he makes some valid points, his remark that critics love the truly creative people and that "90% of everything else" is what they hate, conveys the attitude that critics can automatically tell exactly what 10% is the master work.

While he mentions--and cites others as mentioning--some points that can be objectively measured (like the presence of a deus ex machina), these critics hardly limit themselves to those points. They grandly make statements as to whether a characterization is fully realized--blithely assuming that its realization to them is the absolute.

In any event, he cites Sturgeon's as the reason that 90% of all reviews are negative. Since 90% of all books (90% of everything) are garbage, the reviews would have to reflect that. Well, put simply it can be said that 90% of all reviews are crud. Applying the rule to itself, 90% of Sturgeon's law is crud.

Critics can express their feelings and opinions on a book and that's fine. If they want to believe their prattle is absolute, then let them. If others want to swallow the baloney, then let them. Most notable to me is the case of *DHALGREN*. Praised and condemned by highly respected critics. As I understand it, Sturgeon thought the book superlative. Harlan Ellison, in a review in the *L.A. TIMES* called it "an unrelenting bore...chapter after chapter of impenetrable prose." So, which of these gentlemen is the perceptive critic?

In spite of what Cy points to, reviews are still subjective judgements. For Sturgeon, *DHALGREN* is part of the 10%, for Ellison it's part of the 90%. While certain things like bad grammar and inaccuracies of fact can be pointed at and laughed about; for the main part, reviews show what one person got out of a book as opposed to what he/she wanted to get out of it. Reviews are fun and I enjoy them, but then I can enjoy the writer squawking back, too. One opinion against the other. Reviewers have their rights in expressing their opinions about books;



others have the right to express their opinions on the reviews.

William Norris hits the mark on the head in regards to hunting. It brings to mind a couple of similar items I've come across recently: in David Taggart's *WINDFALL PROPHECY* "Support your right to arm bears." In the local paper there was a similar caption on a picture depicting a bear standing with a shotgun in his paws. The most disgusting thing I've heard was related to me by Joe Walter. Up in the Fort Bragg area (I forget the precise city) a friend of his went into the community zoo. Somehow they let him in with a gun. He went to the deer cage and proceeded to put a bullet in a doe's head. I regret that Joe apparently approved of the stunt.

I prefer the ring sporting events--there two guys go in on equal ground and give each other what they deserve for going in. They get what they ask for.

Sam Long: You say yourself that Buddha has been deified by his followers "so the Buddha has become a god". On that basis, Buddhists most definitely are not atheists--Buddha himself was, but not the religion of Buddhism that has risen up from his teachings.

*//Reviews of fanzines, which at present are the only kind that affect me directly, reflect subjective opinions too--I've had my fanzine mentioned very favourably at times, and at other times in a quite negative light. I know what I like to do with it, I find it interesting to see what others think, and can even glean ideas from their opinions. The same thing should apply to a writer and his books. Unfortunately when someone whose opinion you value highly comes down hard on your effort, whatever it may be, it bruises the ego.//*

C. L. GRANT - 44 Center Grove Road, Apt H-21 - - - - - Dec 7, 1975  
Dover, NJ 07801

Addendum to Chauvin's article: critics supposedly perform an essential service to the reader: try this, you might like it; don't try this, it's a failure. It should provide the same service to the writer: this worked, this didn't. Unfortunately, all too often, the critic (pro and fan alike) decides that the author is easier game, probably because the critic's credentials aren't sufficient to provide constructive criticism of the material involved (as I say to my classes: it stinks is not constructive criticism.). However, what's worse, in my opinion, is the quickie review in which an anthology is being considered, the critic rakes or praises the worst or best and tosses aside the rest with a "not bad" "not good" "too intense" "too slight", and leaves it at that. Taking into consideration the time, space, etc. allotted to the reviewer, it seems to me that either a thorough job is done, or no job at all. The service to the reader is indeed performed, but the service to the writer is not. After all, how am I supposed to know whether or not my stories are being received (well, poorly, whatever) if I am included in the limbo story section? Slight? How? Character? Plot? What? A story of mine was tossed aside in *LOCUS* some time back with that "too intense" comment--meaning? Beats me. "Intense", like "inner-directed", "inward-looking", etc. is an easy word to toss into a review when you know you don't like it but can't exactly put your finger on it. Lousy reviewing is what it is. Chauvin is one of the best, as was Scuy Miller, and I have seldom seen either of them fall into that trap. I do hope, for the sake of the field and its improvement, that other would-be working reviewers take note of these two and emulate.

*//Reviews are in some ways like book reports--and much as one might like to, teachers will not allow one to hand in "this book sucks" as a report. The whole idea being to offer constructive comment in the first place...//*

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incredibly embarrassed afterward too).

Cy's article lacks one important distinction--that of the difference between a "critic" and a "reviewer" and there is a great difference between the two, despite many people's tendencies to use the two words (and their roots) interchangeably. A critic writes literary criticism based upon analysis and intended for someone who has already read the work in question. A reviewer does just that: review the work for someone who has not read it, giving his opinions, whether negative or positive, and his recommendations, sometimes giving his reasons for these recommendations. And this is probably where the confusion between "critique" and "review" come in, because sometimes it is difficult to tell the difference. However, there are some hints: A review may contain some--preferably not much--rehashing of the plot; a critique will not--the critic assumes you know it. A review is usually--not always--shorter and more informal than a critique; Buck Coulson is a definite example of a book reviewer. A review will say things like "pick up this book and see if you like it" or "don't buy this book" and will describe it in terms of "good" and "bad" and "mediocre". A critique will deal only with the work itself and won't use as many arbitrary adjectives. (Of course, I'm dealing with the ideal here; there are good and bad examples of both). The majority of what appears in fanzines are book reviews.

Cy quoted a lot of different views of criticism, but I'd like to offer my favorite (even if Sam Long does say it's "deliberately obscure"): "Works of art are of an infinite loneliness and with nothing to be so little reached as with criticism. Only love can grasp and hold and fairly judge them." ---Rainer

I also believe one should show one's true face to the world, but I don't see anything wrong with helping out a bit by covering up where nature added unnecessary extras or adding some things that nature was deficient in. Or wearing clothing that emphasizes your good points and de-emphasizes the bad. As long as you don't go overboard, this isn't dishonest. Fashion, true, is fickle, and probably not worth bothering with unless you happen to feel so inclined. But there's nothing wrong with trying to look pleasant. That's about as far as I go, personally. I could probably look a lot better than I do most of the time, if I were willing to bother, but as long as I'm not an eyesore (or as long as I've gone to whatever lengths I possibly can to look as least like an eyesore as possible for me), I don't care. I adhere to that poem I published in the last MISHAP. You know me well enough to have noticed that I seldom wear makeup and am rarely seen in anything other than blue jeans. (The outfit I wore to the FanFair banquet I have worn exactly twice in the two years I've owned it--and it took me six months of psyching myself into it for me to wear it there, plus some insistant roommates. And I would have taken it off in exchange for my jeans immediately after the banquet if it weren't for the fact there was a party going on in my room by the time I got there.) And what this all has to do with anything, I don't know...

*//Fannish hospitality...be it known that any fan known to me via fanzines or letters is quite welcome to visit me at my humble abode, and crash space here or elsewhere in Tronna slanshacks can generally be had...just phone, my number is (416) 766-4781.*

*I stand on my earlier remarks on appearance and fashion. As far as having to be coerced into a dressy outfit is concerned, I myself own a few dresses (\*ghasp\*) and have worn one of them exactly three times in the past two years--to job interviews. And then I changed to slacks in the car right away after leaving the interview, for the drive home. I once turned down an invitation since I'd have to wear a long dress and didn't want to buy one.//*

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WILL NORRIS - 1073 Shave Road - - - - - Dec 19, 1975  
Schenectady, NY 12303

To "Non Sequitur": I think the important thing is that the attitude should be "Each to his or her own as long as it does not hurt or demean." Thus a person's morality is that person's own responsibility. Your comments re the Armstrongs (HW & GT) are interesting enough. I've been getting such stuff from one of the bulwarks of Godfandom for several years now. (And I wouldn't have presumed to send you the material because heretofore I haven't known you at all well...tho I admit to having a hand in some material sent to Brad from the Albany State group.) As long as it's free...why not? Always provides an interesting filler material in a dull period.

But to the GTA theories regarding moral sexuality I ran across a group recently in my continued quest for the strange and extra-ordinary (crack-pots, independent thinkers, and other fringe people). It's called the Rene S. Guyon Society. In contrast to GTA, THE WONDERFUL WORLD TOMORROW, the Worldwide Church of God and company, the people who belong to the Rene S. Guyon Society believe firmly that the modern ills of juvenile delinquency, divorce, and sundry other crimes and shortcomings are directly related to the social repression (fostered to a great degree by the church and the hypocrisies so-named of St. Augustine) of childhood sexuality. They are busily working to change the penal codes of the nation, beginning in California, to reflect this belief. The changes would, as I understand them, allow children to have sexual relationships with anyone the child chooses as long as contraceptives are used. Hand in hand would be a liberalized contraceptives law and so on. If you want to find out more about them you can write them at RGS, 324 S. First Street, Alhambra, CA 91802, and send a SASE with 20¢ postage US.

It's a novel concept and one of the more likely to provoke highly emotional reactions than many others because it focuses on a topic many people are not ready to consider and takes a stand that most find highly objectionable. People are just now coming to accept that children are not sexual neuters until the age of 12-14 when "suddenly" they become adults, and even then are expected to go another 8-15 years without being concerned with that aspect of their lives. You know, it might be interesting to send a SASE or rather one with GTA's return address, marked "Personal and Confidential" to RGS for their introductory material...No, I somehow don't think it would be fair. We do not need another Inquisition, not even in sunny California, center of west coast sin.--//sigh/--

Chauvin's article was a good piece, although somewhat short I feel. It might have been titled "A Defence of Reviewers" and seemed relatively balanced in its development. He fails to add that some reviewers, like some writers, tend to go overboard in their zeal to produce a "worthwhile" review. While some critical study may be acceptable, it is after all only supposed to be a review. The overlap between reviewers and critics is, I think, greatly responsible for the "bad press" the reviewers get. --"sure give us your opinion and why you think that way, but save the in-depth analogies of freudian images and so on for someplace else."-- One of the reasons the English critics have such a low credibility rating is because a few of their number have engaged in criticizing and studying on the basis of presumption and prejudice..

The problem with D'Ammassa's article is it is too short. I am also surprised that neither Clarke's "The Star" nor *SOLDIER ASK NOT* by Gordon Dickson were mentioned. I would like to see Don do an expanded version of this in a little more depth. I was especially interested in his short enticing comment in which *DUNE* was mentioned (naturally). "Predominantly Christian"? Well, with the qualification of the



"superstructure" I suppose so. One thing, has anybody done a good study of the elements Herbert incorporates into his novel, with attention to customs, names, language, and so on? I am interested in the parallels to the Judaic-Arabic backgrounds, especially because I have had several people with Judaic &c backgrounds or familiarity with those heritages, languages &c comment on the similarities and adaptations that Herbert apparently has made.

On the solidarity thing...I agree to a certain point that I do not want the ant-hill situation. I think Mae means by "Whole" is equivalent to a concept of racial maturity--not so much unity. In other words a "wholeness" of spirit and so on, where each person is free to be and become and to do as he or she will--and without any thought of infringing upon another. Sort of an anarchic utopia. At least this is how I view her meaning. Humanity is, after all, still in its infancy.

I think you should consider running selective poems, and not just in the locolumn --but then maybe I'm prejudiced. No, I have not seen *ROLLERBALL* and I doubt very much that I will take the time or money. I do not feel the desire to see what sport MAY be like in the future. It's bad enough now. Incidentally, I read where the producer has been approached by sports producers for the rights to rollerball. They are thinking of actually putting it on!!! The report indicated the movie producer who owns the rights was outraged because he was trying to portray the abuses etc. of sport and the direction it is going in the future. Next time you think about the movie, remember that sports producers have already indicated an interest in actually putting rollerball into play. Sickening...yes?

*//I find the world imagined by the RGS to be sickening--not because of the idea of children engaging in sex, but because of the total meaninglessness of all that sex. I stand by my original view--sex should be a meaningful experience, or should not be indulged in at all--as far as I myself am concerned. A person in the late teens may well be mature enough to know his own mind and form meaningful relationships; but young teenagers are usually simply not mature enough. Sex among such as these would be totally meaningless. This is also my objection to societies such as that portrayed in THE DISPOSSESSED. I personally simply could not bear living in a society in which one was expected to comply sexually with anyone who was interested, merely because that was the social norm. And this is the type of society the RGS would be leading us to. I might as well face it, I am a monogamous beast by nature.//*

ALAN L. BOSTICK - 1201 S.E. Walnut Ave, Apt 88 - - - - - Jan 2, 1976  
Tustin, CA 92680

Alas, since I did not see SIM 1, I have no concrete idea of what you said in your editorial, although I can perceive from the lettercol that it must have been pretty fuggheaded. Your moderation of your stand ("I cannot rightly condemn 'mush' for other people...") sounded fairly sane, though. My own stand on sex, or "mush" as you so quaintly put it, is this: Sex, like every other facet of human existence, should be used only where a) it is necessary for the development of the plot, or b) its use would help provide a realistic background for the story. Any use outside of these circumstances makes a story bad not because it is "obscene" or "pornographic" but only because it is poor writing.

Dave Jenrette's Practical Guide to Male Anatomy was amusing. In response to his observation that the external male genitalia often resemble a certain U.S. President, I must say, Why do you think they called that President "Tricky Dick?"

*//The point is, I think, that anything at all that is not necessary to the plot should be eliminated. This at least is the old school of writing--that in a short story everything should mean something. In a novel there is more flexibility. Sex in novels is a special case though--I know that very often it is just put there for sensationalism, to make the work sell to the unwashed hordes, and it is this type of inclusion I protest against. Bestsellers are aimed at the masses, are usually godawful, have plenty of sex, and will be totally forgotten in a matter of years.//*

ERIC LINDSAY - 6 Hillcrest Ave - - - - - Jan 3, 1976  
Faulconbridge, NSW 2776  
Australia

On anti-mush I think you folded too fast. Why shouldn't a person put forward a view that differs from that of the majority. If a bunch of SF authors, every movie director in creation, and every advertising agency in the land can all tell us that casual sex should be brought out in the open, then why can't you--especially in your own fanzine--take a contrary view? I find that while in theory I do not disapprove of casual sex, of any variety, in practice I tend to ignore what might be called "opportunities", to use your term. At cons, I normally book a twin room, partly because it offers the chance of sharing costs and partly because it leaves room for holding parties. On a couple of times I've shared said rooms with females, without seeing the necessity of chasing them, and this is even more of a wasted opportunity than having a single room as you mention. Of course, there is a double standard in the view the community takes of behaviour towards the opposite sex. Was it Kate Millett who said that when a woman says no to a man it is interpreted as meaning maybe, and leaving him the option of continuing to press his suit? For a single man the community opinion is that he should, as a matter of course, chase girls, and if spending time with one, he obviously has only one intention, in which he is applauded (unless caught by said females parents or husband of course--it's really more of a triple standard) covertly if not outright. For a man to decide attempting more than friendship would be pointless (by reason of differing personalities) is simply not done, in wider society--anyone who does must be queer, or something. Which reminds me of something that may be of use to womens libbers attempting to bring over to men the feeling of being a sex object--something that probably doesn't come out too well in words alone, except to perceptive people. For a woman to wolf whistle at a man doesn't work too well--too easy for even the unimaginative to wake up to the reasons for it. However if a heterosexual male is propositioned by another male just watch the overreaction.

I loved Mae's tongue-in-cheek line about priests being celibates and thus not a cause of the population problem, when we all know how they oppose birth control in poor countries. But considering the current political situation in Argentina, I don't wonder that Mae isn't willing to be too outspoken.

And Bruce Arthurs' casual approach to the question of an active sex life is probably not all that foreign to fans in general (at least to judge by various comments elsewhere), being only a part of life, and not all that large a part at that.

I enjoyed *TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE* however, and don't recall being offended by sex scenes in novels, not even in Dick Geis' novels, and found *FLESH GORDON* exceedingly funny (while some people from work who saw it were offended.)

*//Oh, well, I guess I'm not typical, but I would not enjoy or appreciate being chased by a man unless it was someone I could see myself chasing in return. I don't remember my sources, probably some guidebook to successful*



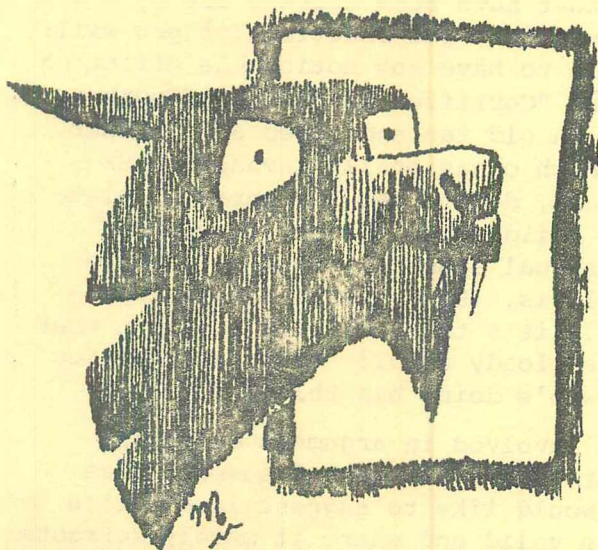
dating for teenagers, but I got the impression that excessive chasing, both male chasing female and female chasing male, tended to be a turn-off. This is quite different from what you see in movies or read in popular books. I have also been told that the best thing to do is just let things go naturally, be friends without hang-ups, and if something develops, fine, and if it doesn't, no loss--you're still friends. This I tend to agree with.//

JOHN J. ALDERSON - Havelock Vic 3465 - - - - - Jan, 1976  
Australia

I read Don D'Amassa's article "Varieties of Religious SF" with some interest, and some disappointment. I am still wondering if he's even chosen the right categories into which to divide the subject. Religion is such an all-pervading subject that almost anything can be termed an act of worship and John's advice to Christians to "flee from idols" is as relevant now as then. It is not that we are not religious today, it's that we've chosen such rotten little gods to worship. This is the point I believe Don has missed, the essential purpose of religion as the means whereby he seeks salvation for his soul. Now what he means by "salvation" and what he means by "soul" are obviously matters of different interpretation.

Religious fiction divides immediately into categories. *Cosmological* stories which seek to explain origins, eg such stories that Adam and Eve were ship-wrecked aliens or somesuch. *Doctrinal* stories in which by means of a story a certain doctrine is brought out. One of the greatest such stories is the short story "Jonah" on the Old Testament, whilst C.S. Lewis' stories come into this category. The third category would be *personal salvation* stories, for example "The Prodigal Son" and modernly, Bester's *THE STARS MY DESTINATION*.

I found Mae Strelkov's article rather empty and disappointing. Lucian in "Some Awkward Questions for Zeus" did it infinitely better 2000 years ago. I am reminded of Shelley the poet, demanding that if there were a God that He should strike him dead, a presumption apparently treated with the contempt it deserved. (Shelley did not live to a ripe old age in any case so whether God eventually heard his prayer or not I can hardly venture to say.)



I must confess to being an extreme sceptic myself. I admit to having my faith which unashamedly I cannot prove but which I "know" to be true. Whilst I accept that, I cannot accept the faith of Christine McGowan, for instance in Relativity being true. It could be I admit, though I am convinced that Einstein's explanation and mathematics are dubious because they are illogical. I do not criticize Christine for believing, it's just that I am prepared to question even the most fundamental of beliefs.

Cy Chauvin misses one aspect of a reviewer that is current here. A reviewer believes that he could have written the book better

if he had only bothered to try. As a reviewer of many hundreds of books I have not considered it my job to give my opinion of the book though I have been accused of doing so, and possibly rightly. But if so, whose opinion is the reviewer supposed to give, that of the author of the book, of the publisher thereof, of the publisher of the journal in which the review appears, or that of the reader of the review. Well how silly can you get in these things I ask you. My object in reviewing is to give an objective idea of what the book is. This does not preclude criticism. It would be most wrong to condemn a book because the reviewer disagreed with the politics expressed therein, unless those politics spoilt the book's impartiality. But to examine a particular theme, such as for instance an author's politics, requires, not a book review, but an essay or an article. There is grave danger in this because the author shows his own partiality and if that is wanting he stands self-condemned.

*//As I already mentioned, I have no great overwhelming faiths myself. I accept laws of science, but not on faith so much as on reasonable evidence. I have just read a short article debunking astrology, and this is something I out-and-out disbelieve in, regarding it as complete nonsense. There is no evidence in its favour at all. The same can be said for superstition, although a lot of people do believe in such crap. Now most religious belief I regard as superstition, a little more elaborate maybe and a little more detailedly thought out, but in the long run just as ridiculous as the belief that a broken mirror brings seven years bad luck. With one difference--I do recognize the psychological value of religious belief for many people. Maybe I should also recognize the psychological value of superstition and astrology, but religion at least has the comfort of having public respectability. On the other hand, considering my views of the opinions of the masses, "public respectability" should not matter a shit to me.//*

ERIC BENTCLIFFE - 17 Riverside Crescent- - - - - Jan 6, 1976  
Holmes Chapel, Ches.  
England

Now, I'm not interested in the slightest in getting involved in any sexist arguments, but there are one or two ideas/thoughts that have been sparked off by SIM 2 that I'd like to dally with. My own personal reaction, gut reaction (if you will) to the sex in SF is that most of it is too facile to have any noticeable effect on my loins. I am, I would mention, a card-carrying "Certified Sex Fiend" (Courtesy of Chuck Harris and 7th Fandom...) but I'm also an old fan and tired and whether it be wisdom or senile decay, the instant-sex which occasionally invades an SF story does little for me. It's all too casual and, dare I use the phrase, "platonic". As I recall it...half the fun is in the build-up to the act (sometimes more than half the fun unless you're a trained sexual athlete), whether you are doing it or reading about it; and for me it still is. Sex without pleasant preliminaries is like the first issue of a fanzine...it's theoretically possible that it will be wonderful, but it's more likely to be bloody awful! And that reaction is usually because you don't "know" the person who's doing his thing, too.

But, like I said, I'm not interested in getting involved in argument on sexist topics...I don't expect everyone to share my attitudes, although I suspect that more do than will admit. However, one thing I would like to suggest is a little extrapolation of how when and where sex in SF is valid and where it merely detracts from the story. First off we have to decide whether a particular story is SF or fantasy...now if it's the latter, anything obviously goes...you can have sex in any



shape or form because pregnancy can only take place if you fuck widdershins.'

I haven't referred to pregnancy before. Sorry. Let's talk about that for a moment. The principal reason why sex in fact and fiction can be casual (hedonistic) is the current existence of an effective oral contraceptive; current or future existence of the Pill. If the pill is not available, and the possibility of pregnancy present, the whole attitude towards sex on the part of the female-person changes. I'll agree that there's a small minority of women who have always been "happy to oblige" uncaring as to how many children they brought up on social security, but consider the percentage to be small enough to be ignored. (It's my article, I'm setting the guidelines...) Following from that...I will now make the profound statement that any story featuring casual sex set either in the pre-pill era, (male contraceptives never wholly reassured the female that she could get away with it...she might have enemies, with pins!) or in any future era which logically supposes that it doesn't exist--i.e. post apocalypse stories in which all except "legendary" knowledge has been lost--is illegitimate.

Note, please, friend, I am talking about casual sex. Any story which uses sex as part of a romance (sorry, but there's no other word that fits the bill even if it is almost a cliché) whether it be in past, present, or future fiction is perfectly legitimate. In my opinion.

Sex with a humanoid (or a plain old hairy BEM if your tastes run that way) or android, or resident of some pueple planet, must, logically, be also admitted to the category of legitimate. Providing cross-fertilization is unlikely, that is. If some stud thinks he can go space-tripping just to create a race of super-beings that's neither good science fiction or legitimate!

With reference to stories already written by those authors who haven't had the benefit of my guidelines to casual sex in SF...I think that Joe Haldeman in his Future War stories handled sex as well as anyone has so far in an SF series. Much of it was what I've already described as instant-sex, but it was a legitimate and integral part of the stories. Heinlein, on the other hand, is desperately inept in his use of sex/love/romance and whilst I must, by my own criteria, allow that the sex in *GLORY ROAD* was legitimate; that in his other recent novels has been pure titillation and definitely illegitimate!

As to the future...well, now that I've written out these guidelines (which, I'm quite sure will be supplemented by other SIMULACRUM readers) SF writers will know where they are at. Obviously, there are a lot of stories featuring sex yet to be written, and taking these present permissive times as a jump (!) off point I'd like to see a few dealing with extrapolation from this era. For instance, it's obvious even to me that in the next decade there is going to be a tremendous demand for Crutches, and Jock-Straps. The health services of the non-catholic nations are going to be overwhelmed by the demand for hernia operations, and it is quite possible that some entirely new form of treatment will have to be developed to counter excessive use of Vibrators. Plastic Surgeons may also have fresh demands made upon them. I'd like to see those authors who set out to treat sex seriously in their novels of the future take these factors into account.

I'm quite sure that sex will be used more to sell science fiction than it has in the past, and I suspect that book titles are going to reflect this trend. Possibly John Brunner could revive some of Doc Smith's characters and write *GAY LENS MAN*. Hal Clement may write of how the Mesklinians do it, quite flatly...my mind boggles, and I'd better terminate this letter/article before I get too involved.

//Comments and suggestions from any of the readers?//

ROB JACKSON - 21 Lyndhurst Road - - - - - Jan 7, 1976  
 Benton, Newcastle upon Tyne  
 NE12 9NT, England

The letters on sex, both in SF and out of it, made fascinating reading, even if a little voyeuristic in places.

Simply put, one's conclusion might be this: that sexual drive, sublimated or not, is such an important part of humankind's emotional motivation that sometimes it gets in the way when we don't want it to. Life would be much simpler if we were like rabbits, who think about it for a couple of seconds ~~than~~ stop: "This won't take long, darling, did it?"

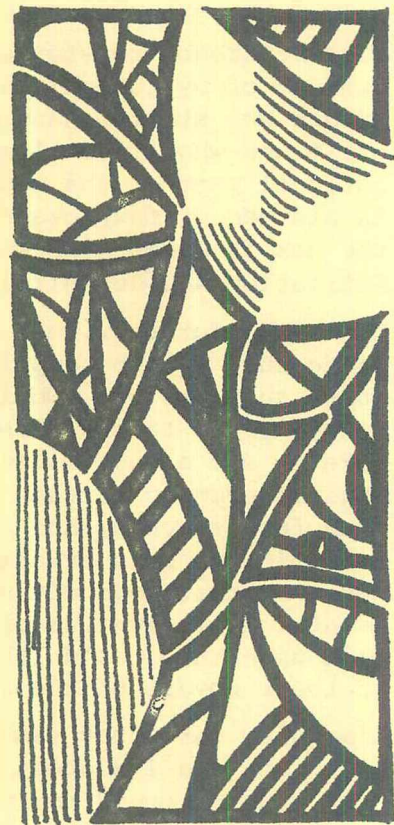
(That little lot could almost have come out of the notebooks of Lazarus Long. Help --I'm a crusty old philosopher at 25!)

*//I often think life would be simpler if there were no such thing as sex at all--an idea for which I get jumped on promptly by the pro-mush faction. But think--no brooding over unrequited cases, no jealousies, and the possibility of relating easily to any person as a person and not as a sex object. But I don't say this "ex cathedra"--as events and circumstances may yet make me change my mind.//*

BEN P. INDICK - 428 Sagamore Avenue - - - - - Jan 21, 1976  
 Teaneck, NJ 07666

The FanFair reports were very nice, and it sounds like it was as good as the Fantasy Con in Providence I enjoyed so much. I agree with Sam Long about Ontario's marvelous museum. We visited it with our kids maybe four years ago. My wife had been having an eye problem ("floaters" bothering her vision, little bits of tissue which break off and float in the eye "humours", liquids. The body usually breaks them down.) An oculist had suggested she could eliminate them with micro-lasers. Well, the museum gave an exhibition of what lasers could do destructively, and it was the last she ever wanted to have to do with the things. Also, she has never mentioned the floaters again. Great place.

Cy Chauvin, on the Reasons and Needs for Critics, writes excellently. I will admit that I sometimes say a newspaper's Theatre Critic is yesterday's Copy Boy, but, as Cy says, everyone likes to talk about what he has seen or read. In some cases, as, again, Theatre, it may give a critic too much power (a bad TIMES review can kill a play; a good one MAY help it.) In books, there are other factors, and I doubt that bad criticism can kill a book, or that rave criticism can make it a best seller. Viz the popular novels of any given year; frequently they are treated to sneers. And the latest Will Durant history, given a sneering treatment by professional historian J.C. Plumb, is nevertheless a genuine best-seller--at \$17.50 a copy!!! (I dote on the





Durants; I have just picked up the new one. Ahem, at 40% off...I mean, that's STILL ten plus smackers...)

Dave Jenrette, the old sex fiend (in YOUR zine?????????????) really turns out a funny piece--and I laughed out loud at the final footnote. I am reminded that in Israel, barren women often pray at the tomb of Rachel, a fertile lady who died in her final childbirth. (There were some Hasids praying too when I was there; they were young and I don't know why they were there. Maybe they were walking by, and Hasids will never pass up a chance to pray. I was told there is a tomb in the north of the country where on a certain holiday (Lag b'omer) people who have not been able to conceive will gather in thousands, and copulate in the open! They are not sex fiends and would on any other occasion be very private about it. My wife says if she had to depend on that, we would never have had any children. To which her friend adds "It's bad enough to have to do it in private." Her husband laughed... uneasily...

Alan Stewart's "Fantoddity" is a delight. How nice to see the word "fairy" used properly, lightly and elegantly.

I recently gave a long bombing letter from Mae Strelkov to our store clerk, a very nice young fellow of PR extraction. Mae was blasting the Church in Argentina for its repressive tactics, as she so often does, and he tells me his wife was shocked when she read it. Maybe she'll think a bit however, about things...Mae is a unique lady. I regretted missing her when she had to rush back home to help her ailing hubby. It's good to read her whimsical piece here.

*//Reaction to the article has been mixed, but I'm pleased to mention at this stage that Dave Jenrette's part II will indeed be in SIMULACRUM 3, and that more is to follow. Some people don't find them funny, but I enjoy the articles--my mind leans that way, I get a kick out of the occasional bit of sexology or scatology--and in SIMULACRUM I print what I like.//*

STU GILSON - 745 Townsend Avenue - - - - - Feb 9, 1976  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2V5

Cy Chauvin's article contained several sensible points which deserve a closer examination in some future piece. I was dismayed to learn of the negative attitude many writers apparently have towards reviewers; in my opinion, the book review has always played a necessary and important role in influencing trends in fiction. To a certain degree, writers should be conscious of public reaction to their writing (both in an artistic and economic sense); they should not, however, feel unnecessarily sensitive to criticism. As a matter of fact, writers in many cases might even stand to gain something by following, or at least considering, the advice of others. It is, of course, the prerogative of the writer to listen or completely disregard criticism; as an example, Abraham Merritt made a point of writing to please himself instead of the critics, and therefore enjoyed artistic freedom. Writers should not, however, deny the value of constructive criticism as a means towards self-improvement, even if such criticism discourages sales of their books. For, in the long run, all writers stand to gain.

If every writer believed whole-heartedly in what he/she wrote, then Theodore Sturgeon would qualify as a homosexual, owing to a particular book he wrote in the Fifties that sympathetically examined homosexuality. If writers were to limit the themes of their work to what they personally believed, then the degree to which they could speculate would be minimized indeed; and in sf, uninhibited speculation is an

essential part of the literature.

I don't think that reviewers should necessarily strive towards an "objective" appraisal of any given book; subjective, from-the-gut criticism is vital if the public is to identify with the reviewer. Obviously we don't agree with the judgement of many reviewers, and so the only way to find a reviewer in whom we can place our trust is to shop around for one with similar tastes and predilections. And this is rendered possible only with the reviewer being homest, totally subjective with the public and him/herself. I agree that arrogance accomplishes nothing, but then again, if a reviewer's reaction to a book is a violent one, it should not be repressed.

Rather than comment specifically on the religiously geared articles contained in the zines you sent, allow me to ramble on about my personal beliefs. I've always found it difficult to classify myself as far as my religious convictions are concerned. I certainly don't deny the existence of a creator, but I am skeptical of religious interpretations; ritualistic, structured theology (and Christianity especially) has always impressed me as terribly near-sighted and limited. Obviously, the adherents to any organized faith must confine their beliefs to the restrictions imposed by the very nature of that faith...theirs is not so much an individual interpretation of god arrived at independently, as it is a blind acceptance of an ideal. If different religious sects and denominations are allowed the freedom of making their own valid interpretations of the creator, then certainly individuals should have the right to choose under a similar freedom. Different people come to understand (or disprove the existence of) god in different ways, be it through self sacrifice, suffering, music, art or whatever. And I am embarked on a search myself for understanding; I am not convinced one way or the other whether or not a god truly exists (I'm too much of an iconoclast to decide yet...perhaps when I mellow in old age), yet I do suspect the name "god" has been chosen merely as a symbol for a larger consciousness, that consciousness which is the unified spirit of man, or "spiritus mundi" if you prefer. Then again, perhaps (and very likely) the answer lies in death...perhaps only then are we capable of absolute knowledge and thus a complete realization of "god"...

*//Religion fascinates me, and I would be interested in hearing similar statements of personal beliefs from whoever might be willing to share these. My own opinions on religion are, as I expressed earlier, that it is a psychological aid to people who cannot accept the coldness and aloofness, as it were, of the universe on its own. Religion offers a solace to the fear of death, a solution satisfying to many people for the hows and whys of consciousness and the mind and even the miracle of life, an incentive for "correct" behaviour, and more. I consider organized religion a great evil, but private beliefs can be a very good thing. On the other hand, I don't like to mess around with changing the religious beliefs of others--what one holds as true should be arrived at on one's own. I like to listen to and discuss and compare beliefs. I am an agnostic, and many people I know are too. Although I cannot prove the nonexistence of God, I can argue against it on the premise that the universe and natural laws operate on a principle of maximum simplicity or a sort of cosmic laziness, and that there are no redundancies in the universe. Since the natural operation of things does not appear to require the presence of a creator or guiding force, there probably isn't one. There may well be creatures superior to man in the cosmos, but those aren't God and that is just sidestepping the question.*

*But I would be interested in hearing from fans as to their beliefs--on the existence of god, on the concept of souls, on death and afterlife, on free*



will, on the good or bad of organized religion. It would be interesting to compare, and if reader response warrants it, I may present a forum in a future letterzine SIMULACRUM. (And if you think this is a bad, or boring idea, please let me know that too.)//

D. GARY GRADY - 3309 Spruill Ave. Apt 5 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Feb 13, 1976  
Charleston, SC 29405

Non-Sequitur would make an apt title, not for your editorial, but for your response to Don D'Amassa's letter on page 57. Of course sex is a private thing. So are many deep emotions. So is dying of cancer. So is crying alone. Now what in hell has that got to do with writing? It is the very essence of fine literature to deal with private things. Indeed, ONLY fiction can adequately deal with very private matters and the associated feelings.

On another level, let's take a look at pornography for a moment. Pant, pant. No, seriously. Porn can be good or bad. I saw a couple of highly-rated phuck phlicks in NYC a couple of weeks back and was bored--er--flaccid. I have seen others which have been quite arousing. Therefore there is some talent involved in producing good porn. I'll readily grant that this contains no appeal to "higher" things if you consider sex merely a rather base drive. On the other hand, hunger is even more basic than sex. If cooking is an art to be respected, so is the production of pornography. (And don't tell me that the difference is that sex involves love and porn deletes that. Much good porn does involve love--and sex without love may or may not be an evil--it depends on your outlook.)

//The point about fiction dealing with private things is well-taken--and there is nothing wrong with dealing with sex. But I've said it before and I'll say it again--I don't see why a detailed, moment-by-moment description of a fuck is necessary unless it is in something actually classed as porn. After all, authors don't usually describe a character eating a meal in such detail. Explicit and detailed sex is intended to be arousing, and as such has no place outside of porn. I still say, let the porn be available to those who want it, but let it be labelled as such. Yes, I'll agree there is such a thing as good porn--a good writer can bring artistry even to a detailed scene of purple passion--but it should still be labelled.//

TERRY WHITTIER - 3809 Meramonte Way - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Feb 26, 1976  
N. Highlands, CA 95660

I have to admit that doing a zine offset is a bit less work. However, I still have to collate and staple myself. And, of course, everything else. The only thing I don't do myself is the physical cranking of the mimeo machine. However, I must admit, too, that putting out a mimeo effort is slightly more effort (work).

What puzzles me is why is there a subconscious correlation between the amount of work a person, an editor, puts into his publication and the degree of fannishness he has? Somehow, there seems to exist in the back of my mind that the harder it is to produce a zine, the more prestigious and fannish it is. IS it right for one person to boast of his difficulty in getting out his particular effort of editorial expertise, thereby proving to the fannish community that he is higher on some scale of importance and prestige? IS Andy Porter a shmuck of shmucks in the world of fandom, while Mike Bracken is a martyr and celebrity, a saint?

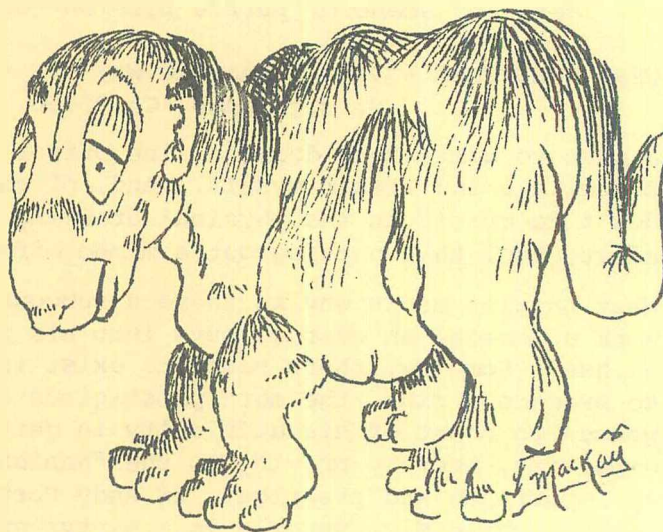
But that does not pertain to either you or me. Your point was that the higher amount of work that you have to do in putting out a mimeo zine puts you closer to it than

me with my offset repro. I think. Was that what you meant to say? If so, we might be getting into another fannisher-than-thou thing.

But what is more important? That you have a better typer than I, or that you have better contributors than I? No. What's important is whether we are enjoying what we're doing. What rewards we are deriving from the production of our zines. The troubles, the triumphs, the accomplishments are important only to ourselves within the framework of our individual egos. I put out ALTAIR because I get a kick out of communicating with fans and because I like producing something that looks nice. So what it all boils down to is that I do it for myself. Because I like it.

And as for the method of repro...just because it isn't quite as much work as some other methods doesn't mean that I'm not as involved in what I'm doing as someone else. And even if I was more or less involved, what difference does it make? Am I here on this earth to constantly compare myself to others? No. If I was, I'd probably be pretty damn unhappy right now. There's always going to be someone who can do something better than I can. And if that something is what I love doing best, I'm sure going to be unhappy. So chuck it. Chuck the whole world. Do what you want most, and forget the others.

//I don't think the amount of work really reflects the degree of fannishness; what I feel is that the closer you get to the entirety of the work on a zine, the more that zine is solely your product. Offset repro often looks much better than mimeo, and impresses readers more in the attractiveness of the issue, but it is less work. And less involvement. And there are degrees of mimeo-effort--my own Gestetner 360 runs quite happily by itself, and requires only slipsheeting and de-slipsheeting during the course of printing--the crank is turned electrically. Taral's 66 on the other hand has to be cranked by hand and inked by hand--and slipsheeted/~~deslip~~-sheeted. More work and effort is involved there, and if he can get an appearance equivalent to that obtainable with the 360 on the 66, it is a comparatively greater achievement. So, offset aside, even here one might bring in the question of effort=fannishness. What it boils down to for me, is that I like the feeling of having done it all myself, and this I simply wouldn't have with offset repro. Part of the challenge of making a zine is getting the best possible repro out of a mimeo and electrostenciller. To others this aspect isn't as important. There is room in fandom for both entirely home-brewed efforts and for the professionally printed, professional-looking ones.//





AS OF THIS DATE, MARCH 8 1976, IAHF...(in approximately chronological sequence)

Sheryl Birkhead (who also visited in person in November and provided me with a nice conversation and a couple of games of bowling along with Mike); Ned Brooks; Henry Bitman; Dick Patten; Frank Balazs; Bill Breiding (where is the rumoured letter-zine based on response to STARFIRE 6? Never got one...); Terry Whittier (earlier letter than the one excerpted here); Gil Gaier; Michael Carlson (who offered to do a regular column, first of which will appear in SIMULACRUM 3); Wayne Hooks (several times--he also sent some reviews and an article which will appear in SIM 3 or 4); Randy Bathurst (who sent a Christmas card and promised me some artwork); Gerard Houarner (who sent some art); Jake Thomson (who sent some Peghoots); Brian Earl Brown (many times--first a LoC and then back and forth natterings--he wanted some hints for using his new Gestetner); Lee Carson; Stuart Gilson (several times--he's collecting Canadian sf material, especially zines--Canadian faneds take notice--and asked for copies of SIMULACRUM; and later on sent art--the cover of SIMULACRUM 3); Mike Bracken (twice); Bob Webber; Ken Josenhans; Leah Zeldes (to thank me for the long weekend she spent here; also she sent a nice warm pair of walking socks for my frequent loooooong footfests); Larry Downes (for the same reason; also from him a big box of chocolate for Chocolate Lady at CONFUSION); Peter Gill; Tim C. Marion (who also sent a logo); Barry R. Hunter (who would like to get SIM in the future); Jackie Franke (who I talked to also, at CONFUSION); Sam Long (thanking me for a LoC); Randy Reichardt (several times--there's a small possibility he may turn into a Tronnafan); Don Fortier; Mae Strelkov (an interesting letter about religion and some other matters which I may reprint in part in the next issue); Will Norris (a loooooong letter containing many engrossing things which I have yet to take the time to answer properly, and which I hope to use in the next SIM); John Robinson (a weird letter suggesting a recorded-message fannish information service); Jerry Kaufman; Rich Bartucci (several times: he sent a parody for a future SIM and inquired about electrostencils, and now we are just corresponding); Ben Indick (along with a fascinating Israel trip report and an article for SIM 4, the doomsday issue); Jodie Offutt; David "Shep" Kirkbride (over in England; who sent a whole big pile of lovely artwork); Al Fitzpatrick; Cy Chauvin (to let me know what time he was arriving on a Toronto visit, also some other letters and a faanish take-off for the next SIM); Alexis Gilliland (with some artwork); Grant Canfield (also with artwork); Bruce D. Arthurs (about a reprint from SIMULACRUM for the FANTHOLOGY); Dave Jenrette (with the next installment in the Golden Guide to Sex, plus some drawings); Laurine White (who wanted a copy of SIMULACRUM--and is on the list for the next one); Graham R. Poole (who asked for an article for SPI); Ed Connor (who sent a puzzle for the next issue of SIM); Eric Mayer (who would like to receive SIM); James Shull (who sent some lovely artwork and a logo).

Thanks to all the nice people who wrote and/or contributed...it's for people like you that SIMULACRUM exists. I hope to hear from lots of you again--there likely won't be a lettercol in SIMULACRUM 3, but, money permitting, SIM 3A will follow soon afterwards and as many of you as I can squeeze in will have your say there.

And now, with this page typed up on stencil, I will file all the letters and start a new pile consisting of everything that comes in between now and the next such list. Nearly 100 letters came to PO Box 156 between November last year when I completed SIM 2 and today; also over 100 fanzines. For approximately 100 letter-receiving days, I averaged two pieces of mail per day--although mail tended to arrive rather bunched up--some days nothing came in and other days I would unlock the box to find it crammed full of six-seven letters and zines. I don't get as much mail as Mike Glicksohn, to be sure, but I think I do okay. I manage to keep

up with things. And I enjoy getting mail.

FANZINES RECEIVED AS OF MARCH 8, 1976 since the last listing in SIM 2...

ALGOL 25; ALTAIR 2; ALVEGA 2; ASHWING 18; AVENGING AARDVARK'S AERIE 5,6; AWRY 10; AY CHINGAR! 3; BOOWATT 1,2,3,4; BROWNIAN MOTION 5; CHANGELING 1; DFCFR 7; DILEMMA 10; DON-O-SAUR 43,44; DYNATRON 64; EFFEN ESSEF 2; EGG 10; THE E-STARIAN EXPLORER 3; ETERNITY ROAD 3; THE FANNISH FOUR GO TO THE SEASIDE; FANZINE FANATIQUE 13,14,15; FARRAGO 1; FREE HUMANITY SOCIETY DRAFT PROPOSALS; GAFIA GAZETTE 1; GEGENSCHWEIN 23,25; GOBLIN'S GROTTO 2; GODLESS 11; GREAT EXPECTATIONS; GRIMLING BOSCH 4; GUNPUTTY 1; GUYING GYRE 4; HEADS WILL ROLL 1; IBID 12; INFERNO 9,10; IT COMES IN THE MAIL 18,19; JANUS 2; KARASS 18,19; KNIGHTS 13,14; KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE 2,3; KOSMIC CITY KAPERS 6; KYBEN 13; MALFUNCTION 8; MAYA 9; MOEBIUS TRIP SF ECHO 23/24; MOTA 12,14; MYTHOLOGIES 7; NEW DIRECTIONS 24; NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT 14; ORODRUIN 46; OUTWORLDS 26,27; PANTEKHNIKON 0,1; PARENTHESIS 9,10; PERSONAL NOTES 1,2,3,4,5,6; PHOSPHENE 3; PNEUMATRAMICROSCOPICSILICAL-VACAOCONIOSIS 1; REQUIEM 7,8; RUNE 45; SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW 15; SCIENTIFRICTION 3,4; SCOTTISHE 70; SHADOW OF THE MONOLITH 48,49,50,51,52,53; SOOTLI 1; SOUTH OF THE MOON 11; THE SPANG BLAH III-4; SPI 4; STARLING 29,31; STULTICIAE LAUS 3,4; STYXZINE 1; TABEBUIAN 24/25,26; TANDSTIKKERZEITUNG 9; THANGORODRIM 23,24,25,26; TINAUP 1; TITLE 47,48; TREPONEMA PALLIDUM 6,7; TRIODE 22; UGLY DUCKLING 2/3; UNIVERSE SF REVIEW 5; VERT 1; WILD FENNEL 11; WINDING NUMBERS 1,2; THE WITCH AND THE CHAMELEON 4; XENIUM 2.5; LE ZOMBIE 67.

Many thanks to all...

Toronto is pretty active fanzine-wise at the moment: all the Derelicts are pubbing or will be soon. Besides SIMULACRUM there is Patrick Hayden's forthcoming and altered THANGORODRIM (206 St George St, #910, Toronto); Phil Paine's CALCIUM LIGHT NIGHTS (inadvertently omitted in the list above) (same address as Patrick); Bob Webber's PANTEKHNIKON (20 Graydon Hall Drive, #204, Don Mills, Ont.); Bob Wilson's SOOTLI (94 Avenue Rd, Toronto) and Janet Small's BEHIND THE RABBIT (same address as Bob Wilson); and last but not least, Taral Wayne MacDonald's DELTA PSI, now a definite prospect after a long wait (1284 York Mills Rd, #410, Don Mills, Ont.) The Derelicts provide seven out of ten zines I know of in Toronto, the remaining three being Mike Glicksohn's XENIUM, Henry Argasinski's PAPERCHIPS and the OSFiC newsletter NIT WIT. (And close by, THE WITCH AND THE CHAMELEON over in Hamilton, Amanda Bankier, 2 Paisley Ave S, #6, Hamilton.)

As for me, I've just been hit by yet another budget cut. I lost my job, and am presently unemployed--and the future of SIMULACRUM, or at least the future of a regular SIMULACRUM, hangs in the balance. I'm selling off some of my stuff, will move to a cheaper apartment, and will take temporary secretarial assignments prior to setting up my own business as a secretarial service. Hopefully SIMULACRUM 3 will come out before MIDAMERICON, but perhaps not as soon as May. But it WILL come out, somehow. I also hope to keep my car and continue going to cons--see you at MARCON, BALITCON, AUTOCLAVE, and MIDWESTCON before the worldcon.

Also, I am out of copies of SIMULACRUM 2 only (still have plenty of #1) and will offer a credit of a future issue of SIMULACRUM added on to what you're due to anyone who returns to me copies of SIM 2 in good condition. Owing to my monetary problems and other matters, SIM will once again be for sale--at \$2.50 per copy for number 3 and all genzine issues, \$1.50 for letterzine issues. I still however, prefer the usual. I don't expect many subs, and the zine is still a labour of love.

-----March 8, 1976



(a) 11. 10)

(b) 11. 10)

(c) 11. 10)

