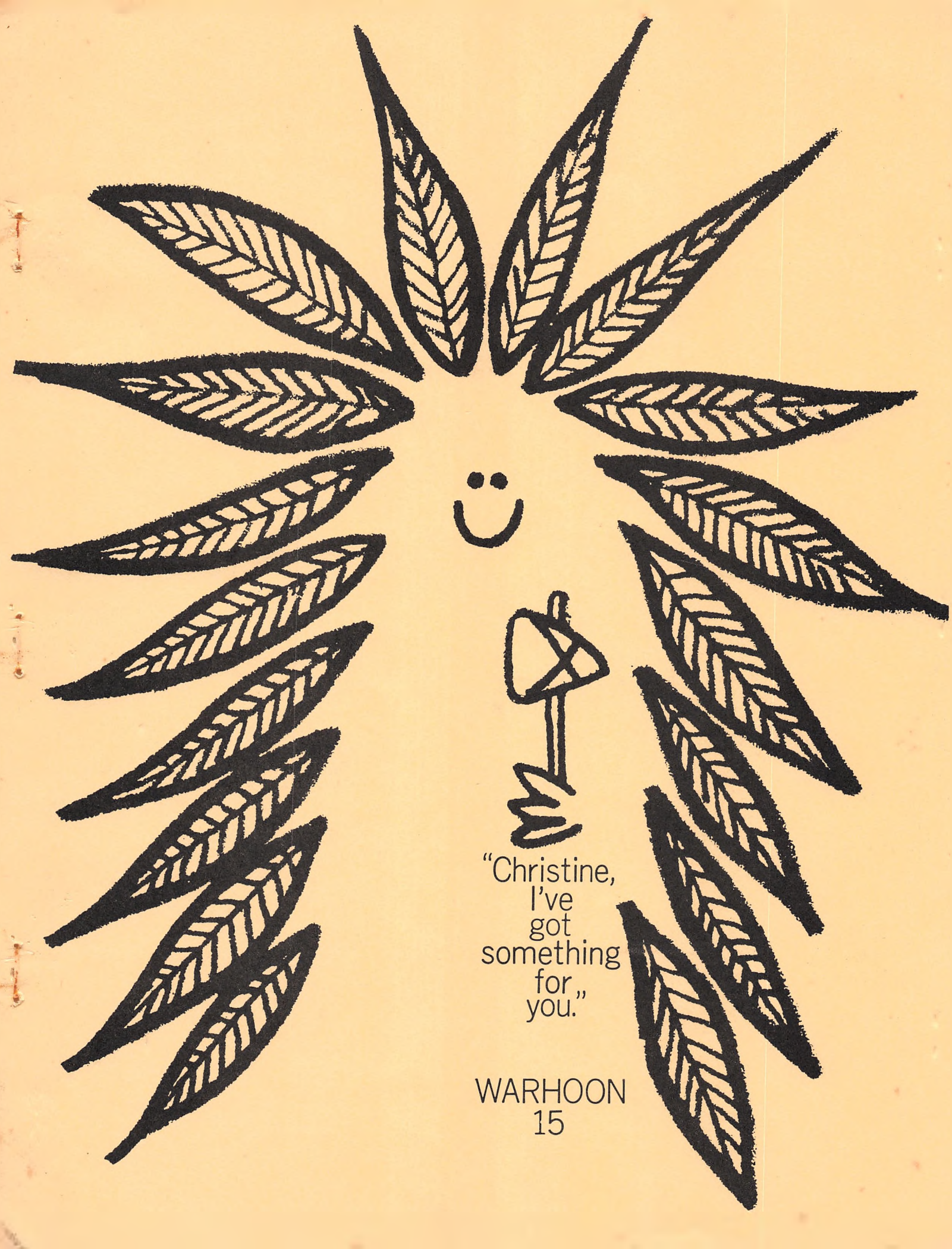
"Christine,
I've
got
something
for
you."

WARHOON

Warhoon, the quarterly of imaginative procrastination, is edited and published by Richard Bergeron at 110 Bank Street, New York City 14, New York. This is issue number 15, dated April 1962. It is produced with the expectation of being circulated in the 59th mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society and is available to contributors, writers of letters, in trade for your publication, or for 20¢ per copy or 5 issues for $1. All material is written by the editor, unless otherwise credited, and represents his opinions and viewpoints. Material that is credited expresses the opinions of the author. All letters will be considered for publication unless otherwise specified.

In its present condition Wrhn has the life expectancy of a pachyderm. The magazine has shown an ability to evolve and radical departures like the appearance of printed covers which so shook the world last year can be expected in the future. Predictions by editors on the longevity of their publications have often been followed by a closing of the editorial offices: fanhistory would indicate that this essay into the world of the occult is, at best, ill advised. But since that consideration hasn't governed these editorials in the past, there's no necessity for that particular mutation. As implied last issue, Wrhn has arrived at a degree of stabilization that makes the production of an issue if not child's play at least not a monk's labors either. The possibility that growing ease may mean growing monotony is fairly laid to rest by people like Jim Blish, Walt Willis, and Redd Boggs whose efforts have made the job so much easier (and so much livelier!). True, stenciling remains a chore, one which is at worst a minor bore at best a mechanical operation, but one which will be eliminated as soon as finances permit. When that happy day arrives and I can sit back and dictate these editorials (actually, I won't, how could this stuff be ironed out verbally?), I'll have achieved the state of producing a fanzine that can set about refuting, by practice, several of the thesis of "The Enchanted Duplicator" and a magazine containing the author of that work. In that nebulous day, Wrhn will be a fanzine that has completely skirted the Mountains of Intertia. Wrhn was long ago banded from Trufandom, of course, because I've never laid a finger on the button of the electric duplicator that produces it; much less on its enchanted mimeo crank. But if the picture of your editor completely cut off from all but the most essential exertion, idly composing mindless editorials, convinces you that Wrhn will never fold, you could possibly be wrong.

Wrhn is a spare time avocation and the conditions which will enable me to do less of the physical labor will probably mean less spare time in which to produce it. The magazine actually doesn't require a great deal of time now; but in the future my spare time is very likely to be more closely tailored to what it takes. This should work to give me a nervous breakdown because, while essential correspondence with contributors leaves a little time for letter writing, I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to handle more than that extra curricular activity in the future. This has been my biggest grief about Wrhn: that I've not been able to answer all your letters. Since the 10th issue the correspondence has steadily snowballed, as evidenced by the continually growing letter column, and my dark secret must out: I've only been able to acknowledge the smallest part of that income. If your letters weren't so worthwhile it might ease my conscience, but some of you are obviously putting as much effort into them as I put into a complete article. I feel something of a cheat when I can only answer a long missive from John Brunner with a brief air letter and a request for material. I try to express appreciation by including as many as space will allow in the letter column, but when a fine long letter by Larry McCombs is cut to shreds and others from Lowndes and Aldiss are butchered into articles (and they needed wonderous little butchering) the time has come for this apology.

I was pleased to read in a recent issue of CINDER, McCombs' opinion that most letters of comment"need no answer, and if I had tried to answer each one personally, I'd never have gotten the next issue of GAUL done." My position exactly! Or am I clutching at straws while I drown in a sea of unanswered letters?

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE HARP

If I had any delusions about what parts of this magazine you read first, I'd hesitate to comment on one of the columns in this very issue for fear you'd be even more mystified than usual over what I was writing about. But if my guess is correct you've already read "The Harp That Once Or Twice" and are wondering about that letter from Jacqueline Kennedy. It's true that I did receive a letter from that First Lady and while Walt's reminder that these neofen have to be encouraged is indisputable, I still felt that her letter was of too personal a nature to fling before your gazes. But I couldn't let it pass unnoticed and it was a good way of assuring those fans forced out of the letter column that they were in good company.

Speaking of encouraging neofans, it would be a good idea for some enterprising faned to prevail on Earl Kemp for the address of Chicon member #266 and begin some form of indoctrination. It might be interesting to see what Robert S Kennedy Jr thinks of fandom.

THE FIRST MATE

After weathering a number of hurricanes from the port side, the tramp steamer "The John Birch Society" was caught in a sudden squall and is now taking aboard dangerous amounts of water from its right side. If all goes well, observers from these pages may see its pennant (an American flag without strips -- the subversive color was taken out) vanish beneath the waves before the next issue goes to press.

Some of you may recall an article in Wrhn #12 in which I fired a volley at the Society in general and Robert Welch, its leader, in particular. At that time, a small boat entered the fray while the Society sailed majestically off into the distance. The boat left behind bore the initials GMC and contained a funny little woman armed only with a bow and a sheaf of arrows. Among the barbs this delaying action directed my was were such notable shafts as "The only thing it /the John Birch Society/ could possibly claim is that it serves as a focal point around which the Conservative elements of the political picture could rally", "Welch and the JBS are receiving the full anti-McCarthy treatment with all stops out. With McCarthy, such treatment was understandable because McCarthy was actually provoking rebuttal by his attacks and exposures. But in Welch's case there is no such provocation.", "It is understandable that the liberals should be unhappy to see the Right-wing voters moving toward an organized bloc", and "what threat are either Robert Welch's opinions or the John Birch Society to YOU,Richard?

While these arrows were being disengaged I lost track of the Society and it wasn't until leafing through the February 13th, 1962, issue of NATIONAL REVIEW that we found the steamer caught in the turbulence mentioned above. In an editorial article entitled "The Question of Robert Welch", we find two of GMC's contentions borne out: The Society does have something about which "the Conservative elements of the political picture" can rally and toward which they can move as "an organized bloc". NATIONAL REVIEW tells us that "conservative spokesmen whose credentials and sincerity are unassailable" are saying that "Robert Welch is damaging the cause of anti-Communism". Russell Kirk: Robert Welch "by silliness and injustice of utterance" has become "the kiss of death" for any conservative enterprise. Walter Judd: "judgment so flawed as to disqualify him from leadership of an effective anti-Communist movement." Barry Goldwater: "Welch should resign". NATIONAL REVIEW: "How can the...Society be an

effective political instrument while it is led by a man whose views on current affairs are...so far removed from common sense?" Senator John Tower, Republican of Texas,: "They have used bad judgment, minimizing serious threats and maximizing less serious ones," he said of the Birch leaders. The fogs of the ocean sometime create strange echoes. Out of the mists, I hear the following: The attack on Welch and the Society has been "with all stops out...but in Welch's case there is no such provocation." Indeed? I've always suspected that conservative leadership tended to act without provocation, but I doubt that Mrs Carr intended to confirm this suspicion.

If the John Birch Society is the expression of the beliefs and the leadership of Robert Welch and he claims that it is* and since he further declares that it's not a debating society and that anyone who disagrees with him is free to leave the club, criticisms of Mr Welch become comments on the Society as well. NATIONAL REVIEW maintains that the John Birch chapters can only be effective if "they dissipate the fog of confusion that issues from Mr. Welch's smoking typewriter" and, at this writing, the Society itself has not repudiated his leadership. Was that Mrs Carr asking William Buckley and Barry Goldwater, "What threat are either Robert Welch's opinions or the John Birch Society to YOU"?

NATIONAL REVIEW poses the ultimate moral question and answers it in the negative. I'll repeat it here for Gertrude Carr, gently rocking in her boat, "Can one endorse the efforts of a man who goes about bearing false witness?"

AT"YEAR MARIENBAD "LAST

A movie for telepaths just opened in New York.

Since I only read film reviews at a glance so as to pick up the vaguest consensus and as little as possible of the plot, I arrived at the theater showing "Last Year at Marienbad" with no inkling that this was a movie with which only a habitual telepath could feel at home. This latest film by Alain Resnais, the daring French director of "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" tedium, drew an incredible audience the night I went -- an observation supported by my lovely assistant, Shiela Green, the following evening. On the one hand were sable jackets and theatre gowns by Chanel accompanied by conservatively tailored escorts in their starched collars; on the other were some of the most ragged denizens of Greenwich Village with their beards and disheveled young women -- both ravished and ravishing. I fell somewhere between these two extremes, but managed not to hit either of them. This notation is quite irrelevant to the comments I want to record but bares mention as a bit of research on the vivid extremes attracted to the art houses and the more obscure examples of European movie making. The occasion also served as a barometer against which to measure the patience/understanding of both groups in the face of an overwhelming experience. "Last Year at Marienbad" contains the most startling uses of film technique since the addition of sound. I will hazard the guess that the only comparable experience in the world of literature would be found in "Ulysses" or "Finnegan's Wake". Initially an attempt to describe a completely new way of seeing dramatic content must fall back on comparison: "Last Year at Marienbad" presents the unsuspecting viewer with the same problems a transplanted artist of ancient Egypt might have when confronted with a meticulous perspective rendering.

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*"The men who join the John Birch Society during the next few months or few years are going to be doing so primarily because they believe in me and what I am doing and are willing to accept my leadership anyway." -- "The Blue Book"

When it was half over, I noticed spontaneous tension snapping, laughter, and comments springing up more heavily from one of the extremes mentioned above. Interestingly enough, it wasn't coming from the group whose women wore Egyptian makeup.

I did read enough of the reviews to see that most of them used the adjective "fantastic". Actually it is fantastic only in the sense that perspective as a new invention was fantastic or as movable type would be fantastic to the scribes of the middle ages. In point of fact, it is probably the most literal view of reality ever filmed. "Literal" and "reality" are the keys to its understanding: the reality of a situation for each of us is not merely that which we perceive, but also that which has gone before and that which might be. The reality of an object is not merely its presence but the influences it has had and may have in our lives. The physical reality, that to which everyone relates, is more the concern of science than art. But the expression of reality as felt rather than distilled is the province of art. A single example should suffice to illustrate this theory of reality: You are a father and your five year old child comes running into the room. This is the physical reality but the moment transcends that brief discription. You look up and there also flashs through your mind the time when the child tripped and struck his head on a similar occasion, and how much more pleasant the quiet of a desert island would be so you could finish that HYPHEN, is he coming in to bring you to supper?, what it'll be like when there are two of them in the house or a dozen other impressions, memories, possibilites. An artwork that depicted the action of the child and the father looking up would be two dimensional but if it also gave us some of the feeling of the artist it might be the work of a Degas or a Fellini. The workings of the mind are more familiar in literature though most are still tied to traditional narrative technique. I can think of few that depict the kaleidoscopic machinations of a mind or a group of minds -- rather than the movement of bodies through space. If the twentieth century mind is still largely unfamiliar with such total characterization on the printed page as it occurs, the eye is almost totally unfamiliar with it. A movie that showed the child running into the room would be a familiar scene to everyone, but a movie that showed the father looking up and the screen taken over by a kaleidoscope of his associations would be interpreted as madness (which the technique has sometimes been used to express) To take the example another step: a scene which gave a brief glimpse of the given situation and images of a warm protective Daddy filling the screen, dimly remembered pain, a rush of motion and the father's side of it, while overwhelming in it's characterization, would be as alien to today's movie-goers as perspective would be to our ancient Egyptian. The problem to surmount is the fact that the workings of other people's minds are as unknown to us as a Martian's love call. The "literal" rendition of "reality" in these terms is what makes "Last Year at Marienbad" an episode that would be on a rather primary level for telepaths, but the puzzle of the age to anyone who's still trying to make out the subtitles of "L'Avventura.

The note of timelessness on which "Last Year at Marienbad" begins is so successful that it's half over before you realize just where the actual story must have begun. The plot is probably the simplest ever put on film -- a man seduces a woman away from her husband -- and it's difficult for my creeking 20th century mind to imagine a more complicated story being attempted in the above methods. I prefer to see it as purely an example of cinematic technique: the insights into the mind never before filmed are of such importance that more than most superficial sociological messages would be redundant. In merely being itself it constitutes a powerful comment on life, but there are tantalizing clues that tend to make the critic feel it's only his slow perception that's preventing him from noticing an additional comment that Resnais may be making. Miss Elizabeth LeMay, for instance, has presented me with a detailed and compellingly persuasive theory that it retells, through symbolism,the Faust legend. While I am flustered and chartreuse at her engaging theory, I have a built-in bias against explanations that have great artists like Resnais and Fellini (sorry, Virginia),

who have so much to contribute by their own lights, indulging in such heavy borrowing for structure and theme. One can pick out the more obvious Freudian undertones here and there in the Resnais: the woman's initial failure to remember what happened last year in Marienbad is suppression through guilt as evidenced by her later imaginings that her husband will return and shoot her -- after he tells her he's going to the target gallery. Virginia Blish, who sees five times as much as I did in "La Dolce Vita", will doubtless find a dozen messages, but I found it little more than an tour de force for Resnais' bewitching concept.

The film is as fabulously composed as an Eisenstein. There are moments where the detachment tends to leave one floating in reverie, but it's always possible to slip to the other level of enjoyment and revel in the magnificent composition and excellent photography. The triangle is set in an endless, fantastic, baroque, hotel amid the glitter of a cosmopolitan clientele. The exploration of the affair between the man and the woman is the focal point of the film. In a movie meant to be seen by non-telepaths the involvement of the minds of a host of characters would create an indecipherable cacophony, thus when the camera hovers close enough (in proximity to the central characters) they fall silent in their animated poses like expensive, flawless maniquins -- though even here the techniques mirror the processes of the conscious memory: if you stop to think of the last party you were at, those groups and scenes glimpsed in other rooms at other tabels are recalled as tableaux for the most part. The camera seems to be in constant motion, caressing a statue, flowing down long halls, passing through corridors containing groups of people frozen in conversation...and everywhere the beauty of the composition and the richness of the photography. If I may depend on that suggestion of timelessness and abstraction to set the scene, I would like to illustrate a couple of the more breathtaking telepathic tricks before going on to my final criticis:.

The set is a dim but exquisite bar in which the guests of the hotel have been perfectly grouped. The lighting is dark and carved crystal sparkles. The man is telling the woman, repeating to her, of a time when he first came to her room last year. She protests, but listens in spite of herself. Suddenly, as brief as a 10th of a second, the screen goes white, and we see her in her blinding white room in a white dressing gown. The bar returns for a few seconds and the bedroom sears quickly on and off again. The tempo picks up and as it does the woman's expression changes to one of shock. As her memory returns the scene in the bar becomes the shorter of the images until it is flickering until we are last year in Marienbad in her memory.

In the scene when the woman imagines that her husband may return and shoot her, her thoughts couldn't have been more humanly portrayed. She imagines how she will look in death. The screen changes quickly five or six times and we see her in various positions until she decides on one in which she would like to be found. She lays there, beautifully presented in, of course, bloodless death.

"Last Year at Marienbad" is put together with such precision and painstaking attention to detail that it's difficult to think of it being anything but the product of slave labor. If I hadn't learned my lesson before, I'd find it easy to imagine this course of work on it: last year in Marienbad was filmed, then this year in Marienbad was filmed, and the prologue was done as a separate 'overture'. A sound track, partially dialogue, partially narration was created for each part. A tossed salad was made from the whole thing, and spliced into a movie. Only slight

editing was then necessary to create the most daring film of its time. This low-brow impression is thrown in free, it wouldn't be difficult to draw these conclusions from the film. Bits of scenes recur, some more than others. The scene in the bar appears several times; a different segment of the action being shown each time, scenes from the sculptured garden recur, gambling scenes come and go and the dialogue often has no relation to what is being shown on the screen. An incredible amount of detachment is necessary to relate the scene being watched to narration that described it 10 minutes ago and at the same time note the present dialogue or narration and store it away for a scene that may or may not appear later. I do not note this as a mark against the film, it's all part of the mental gymnastics of subjective reality.

Barring a society of mind-readers, the popularization of these techniques, if it ever occures, must take until at least the twenty-fifth century -- this film seems so far ahead of its time. That's why fans should love it.

PUTNAM'S WAR

It was a careless moment of relaxation and kindly feelings toward pro authors that Jim Blish's column on the writer and reader response caught me in on the day it arrived. His confesssion that out of a "readership of better than five million, accumulated over 22 years, I have only 56 letters from book readers" was so surprising and doleful that without thinking what it would entail I set pen to paper and offered to become the 57th by commenting on "The Star Dwellers". When the sun came up and forced a return to the dim dungeon where most of my fan activity is persued, I had time to realize that this rash offer would force me to read more science fiction in the next few months than I'd dnne in the previous few years. Any intelligible comments on "The Star Dwellers" would have to be made with "Starship Troopers" as part of the required background reading. But it turned out to be a happy commitment for in recent years I'd developed a rather jaundiced attitude toward fiction. I became depressingly aware that what I was reading was so fictional and came to prefer less passive escapes than fiction. As I say, it turned out to be a happy committment, for with these two books I found more enjoyment in science fiction than I've had in years -- but not because they were fiction: (a) both contain,brilliantly aggressive opinionating, and (b) the chore somewhat enlarged my enjoyment of Wrhn!

Readers who are stunned by the admission that your editor only recently read "Starship Troopers" can now be completely finished off by the confession that I've yet to read "Stranger in a Strange Land". If there is any necessity to protect myself from the charge of hypocrisy for publishing such a large amount of material outside my experience, the best defense would be to quote from those ever useful mailing comments of mine. In issue #12, I told John Berry that it wasn't necessary to be able to play Canasta in order to be able to enjoy his articles on the game "no more than it is necessary to have heard the music George Barnard Shaw criticised in the late 19th century or the plays he reviewed in the early 20th in order to derive enjoyment and education from his writings about these subjects...or no more than it is necessary to have read the science fiction William Atheling evaluated in order to learn a great deal about science fiction and the techniques of writing...good criticism is both instructive and informative and when practiced by an enjoyable writer may be more interesting than the subject under examination." This attitude is obviously still a part of me and is one that drew the comment from Mr Blish that "In starting 'The Issue at Hand' I specified that my aim was to make technical (not technological) criticisms of then-current s-f writing; and such criticism should be interesting and useful even to the reader who hasn't seen the specific works being analyzed. There is no egoboo quite so fine as a testimonial that -- at least for the testifier -- the piece did the job its author sent it into the world to do." But though it's possible to select material dealing with unfamiliar subjects and possible to see their worth

as comments on writing or life apart from the subjects at hand, it remains somewhat impersonal. Reading "Starship Troopers" was a strange experience: not only were Heinlein's fulminations driving at me, but it brought back submerged echos from "The Summer Soldier" and "The Harp That Once Or Twice" and a stunning realization of just what a tour de force "In Contrary Motion" was. The Lowndes article was pretty impressive when it arrived but reading the Heinlein clothed it with more sinew and flesh than I realized it had. A relevant comparison might be the difference between admiring a photograph of M. Monroe (we can learn something about life and love from just looking) but going to bed with the person is quite another revelation.

"In Contrary Motion" must surely be an author's complete wish fulfillment of the kind of attention he'd want his book to get. It certainly makes many of my thoughts on the two books redundant, states most of my inspirations on them better than I ever could and deals with a staggeringly impressive number of others. Lowndes has pre-empted and resolved to my satisfaction the best areas of the discussion -- no mean feat when you recall that he came on the scene when everyone seemed to think "Starship Troopers" and Robert Heinlein had bled dry. "The Summer Soldier"beckons fetchingly, but I'd rather not reopen that Pandora's box at this time.

"Starship Troopers" is a magnet for comment and it's all I can do to keep this article pointed in the general direction of Milford, but a few general remarks might be forgivable: As usual with a Heinlein it's filled with fascinating offhand references that are sometimes explained, sometimes not, but on this occasion I noted a sort of loose documentation as well that I'd not noticed previously, like Major Reid's instruction "Look up in the library the psychiatric report on brainwashed prisoners in the so-called 'Korean War,' circa 1950 -- the Mayer Report." I couldn't have been more surprised if Major Reid had also added "And you might check the mailings of the Spectator Amateur Press Society around 1961 for Sgt Rapp's edition." :: I also noticed a striking similarity in style to the fannish writings of FMBusby, of all people. :: At one point, I hoped for a debate between Reid and Duboies. Dubois says "Citizenship is an attitude, a state of mind, an emotional conviction that the whole is greater than the part...and that the part should be humbly proud to sacrifice itself that the whole may live." Major Reid expresses the social doctrine that "one unreleased prisoner is sufficient reason to start or resume a war". I could here express as ruthlessly as Dubois a situation that would bring those two philosophies into conflict, but I'm sure Heinlein doesn't need me to stack the deck against him. :: Lowndes claims that "Heinlein does not make it clear (even briefly) just how the revolution in attitude toward juvenile delinquency penetrated to the bottom of society" but I think, in one of those dazzelingly brief asides, that he implies how it did: along with his comments on the rearing of children/puppies Dubois mentioned "If a boy in our city had done anything half that bad...well, he and his father would have been flogged side by side." It can be assumed that legislation eliminated juvenile delinquency -- as expressed in "Starship Troopers" -- by providing punishment for adult delinquency; just another one of those glimpses that makes Heinlein's readers come fully awake with a jerk.

In "The Star Dwellers" James Blish has answers for many of Heinlein's propositions. Lowndes' three way argument has set most of them forth and additional cataloging would be pointless. However:

Inspite of their divergent philosophies, Blish has not, on the crucial question of war or peace, met Heinlein squarely on his ground. Both authors have fairly set up the situations so their conflicts are capably dealt with in the terms they advocate, but in the case of the Blish, with its avowed intent of acting as an "antidote, rebuttal or balance-weight", it is somewhat incumbant on him to demonstrate how diplomacy rather than violence was the answer to the type of aliens Heinlein

postulates. In the case of his fascinating "Angels" Blish constructs a case for diplomacy; young Jack Loftus conducts such a fine series of brilliantly reasoned diplomatic maneuvers that his believablity is strained almost to the breaking point (Heinlein's Rico remains human enough to make near fatal mistakes -- mistakes which if found in Loftus would have resulted in the destruction of the earth or some frenzied recouperative writing), but it's a case built up on its own terms: diplomacy or suicide are obviously the only answers in an encounter with aliens who can unleash the energy of suns, who are themselves invincible, who are not observably in competition with you, and who are already in telepathic contact with a member of their species on your home planet. Blish's demonstrations of diplomacy are so lovely that you almost don't realize that they are the only possible answer in "The Star Dwellers", but they fail to answer the basic postulates of Heinlein's plot (though Jim's arguments attempt to counter them): an enemy who is competing with you and will wipe you out and who has attacked your home planet. If Heinlein's Bugs can realize that their willingness to use nuclear weapons against an enemy equally armed implies suicide, the charge against "Starship Troopers" is that its war is the result of the failure of diplomacy -- if war can be averted through impressing the aggressor with the amount of damage his attack will bring upon himself. If however your aggressor is willing to risk suicide or is so alien he can't be reached by diplomacy (There is no contact with the queen caste of the Bugs, though earthmen have been captured and presumably drained of information regarding earth's nuclear capability.), Blish's answer is: "True. There's no way around that risk. But I will tell you both a state secret. This is a tes that we are going to have to pass. We are being watched /by the Galactic Confederation/to see whether or not we can pass it." What this means to me, in terms of intra-species warfare, is 'unilateral suicide is better than mutual suicide' but it doesn't comment on inter-species warfare: evidently there would be no earthmen around to receive the approbation of the Confederation if we earned it after an encounter with a ruthless species. If there is any self-interest in the queen cast of the Bugs the failure to reach it is Heinlein's failure of diplomacy, but it's a failure that can be cured simply by a few strokes of a blue pencil. Heinlein's addiction to the survival of the fittest indicates that he's deliberately postulating a contest between equal parts water and fire: the intransigeance of the Bugs forces earth into assuming the quenching powers of water (or its evaporative properties). In "The Star Dwellers" the fallibility of diplomacy is made clear when the space skiff bearing Langer, Earth's #1 diplomat, is rescued from its collision .fix on the Angels' Holy of Holies by the dues ex machina operations of Loftus. Loftus'initial hesitancy to use his radio in the vastness of the Coal Sack for fear of giving away the position of their base ship, indicates that Langer could have found a simpler means of attracting the attention of the Angels.

My copy of "The Star Dwellers" is heavily checkmarked, but to keep the length of this within reason: Blish's ingenious space skiff is as thrilling (and probably as unworkable) as Heinlein's suggestion of public floggings for delinquent children and parents. Langer explains, "We'll have to start with just the 'Ariadne's' present orbital velocity, and when we push off we'll seem to you to be leaving at a velocity of only feet per second. But you'll be astonished at how fast light-pressure alone would build up the acceleration in normal space." At first glance the inspiration is a magnificent one: in a vacuum light pressure should work as a driving force on any body outside a gravitational orbit and large enough to be hit by a significant area of it. Actually in a vacuum any force would be a significant one and if the postulate is valid anything not caught in a gravitational field should be swept to the dimest reaches of the universe. Further, an object should eventually be carried at the speed of light itself. These are the implications of Blish's theory. The only stone I can find handy for casting, and it's so heavy that I can bearly lift it, is that the light source isn't constant. Space is filled with the light of an unthinkable number of suns. This light is traveling in as many different directions and should cancel the force any one light source might have.

As the mention of the Meyer report indicates, Heinlein's book is casually but noticably documented. I don't recall much citing of sources in "The Star Dwellers", and effectively presented arguments don't need it, but my curiosity is aroused by this aside: Langer confides: The Galactic Confederation "have observer satellites in our system, put there sometime in our Neolithic Age, about ten thousand years ago. We got signals from one of them way back in 1935, but didn't recognize them for what they were." I hope Jim's rich imagination isn't the only justification for that statement.

Both books have a fault in common: each makes constant reference to the Old Times. It's to be expected that books of social comment set in the future have to either project a parallel society very similar to today's or constantly refer to the past. Both books use the latter device and when these expressions are sometimes found coming from the mouths of young characters a degree of credibility is sacrificed. Since we don't often meet teenagers, or even our contemporaries, constantly sprinkling their conversations with biting indictments of the political and social conventions of, say, 1850, it doesn't seem natural, though it's entertaining and instructive, to find such comments on the lips of the citizens of the future.

I'm glad that both books are billed as juveniles for I'd not have noticed it otherwise. They certainly seem no more juvenile than most of the science fiction I recall -- even as respected an example as Kuttner's "Fury" doesn't seem noticably more "adult" directed in its handling than either of these. And in most departments the forensic pyrotechnics put these books on a mental level a considerable cut above the Kuttner.

If I may start picking at the base of the great pyrimid with a toothpick, I should like to cavil at one of the 'givens' of Blish's system of foreign service: Jack, inquiring about the cadet training, asks, "Dad, is this a scholarship deal?" Mr Loftus replies, "No, the government regards it as a privilege and expects the parents of the cadet to pay the freight -- that is, the testing costs, transportation and so on -- just as we would for any first-class college. If you get through the first two years and are apprenticed to an operating officer, thereafter you're on the Federal payroll, just like your superior." I suppose it's my liberal training that mekes me rise at the suggestion of a system that's only open to those who are privileged enough to be able to afford it, but since Jack lives "with the nightmare that the first failure of the system -- and the last failure for Earth -- might be" him,it would seem that it should be more liberally open to all those desiring and talented enough to qualify. It doesn't ring true that the interests of earth should be entrusted to only those who can afford it.

I find the last two chapters in the book are heavily check-marked as its plot comes hurtling to a conclusion. Most of the marks are set beside those points where the screeching sounds come from as it makes rather abrupt and sharp turns (For example, was it necessary for the Angels to follow the "Ariadne" all the way back to earth and set in motion several paragraphs about communication difficulties, intents, etc? In the face of the Angels' sense of justice they could have been persuaded to wait beyond the orbit of Pluto, etc, etc, etc.) but I'm sure Jim is as aware of them as I and won't mind not seeing them here.

"The Star Dwellers" is fast paced and well written. The most vivid chapters deal with the beautifully detailed Angels and "A Temple of Stars"is as exquisitely faceted as 10cc. of "The Face in the Abyss." If contemporary science fiction can measure of up to either of these "juveniles"perhaps I'm missing something by not reading more of it. Now, where did I put that copy of "Stranger in a Strange Land"?

THAT MAN AT GALAXY

If you haven't already read Mr Frederik Pohl's missive in this issue's letter column, I urge you to do so now, before you find yourself up to your neck in flame-throwers. Mr Pohl's conjecture that Wrhn may have decided not to run reviews of the prozines "on the grounds that it wouldn't be very interesting" and his final sally, "I'm afraid I think that decision is right...for both of us", was enough to turn the gas on. I have the match right here:

Mr Pohl confesses confusion at Jim Blish's continued aversion to reviews of non-fiction books -- "partly because he keeps changing his grounds for the aversion", but his puzzelment is as nothing compared to my wonderment at his letter. My problem is a difficulty in finding a consistent position in his varying pronouncements and I I'm forced to the unflattering conclusion that his opinions tend to change to fit the point he's trying to make. For instance:

He's afraid that Wrhn's hypothetical decision to ignore the prozines "is right... for both of us" but on the other hand, in the April 1962 issue of GALAXY, we see that he appreciates "hearing from all of you, you know. Galaxy doesn't run a letter column, but that doesn't mean that your letters aren't read -- and much appreciated. They furnish the only day-by day guide we have to help us make the magazine what you like best." Presumably from this we can infer that any comment on GALAXY you might have should be sent directly to the magazine,where it will be appreciated,rather than allowing it be be published in a fanzine where it must lose something in the translation.

The rest of that section of the GALAXY editorial is taken up with an amazing letter from a "lady from the state of Washington": "I am beginning to get angry; either publish the letter column (which is what we want)or kindly admit that it is your magazine and you don't give a hallow hoot what your readers want... There is a comparatively recent word in the English language that fits this situation: Boycott. This is a group action, but just in case you didn't know there is a group that just might be prepared to take this action... However... it's doubtful if enough readers could be persuaded to boycott to do any good; Galaxy is too good a magazine, and I'm afraid that backsliding would be rife." (Are Wally Webber's minutes of the Nameless Ones leaving something to be desired in the way of completeness?) Mr Pohl's crushing rejoiner to the above follows: "In a postscript to your letter you add: 'Bet most of your letters are on this subject. Embarrassing, what?' We're afraid you lose that bet; of all the letters Galaxy received on the last three or four issues, at least, there was exactly one letter asking for a letter column. Yours." Before this postscript business gets completely unwieldly, I should like to add another from Mr Pohl's letter in this issue: "The bulk of the letters we get fall into one of two categories: ..... or they say, 'You louse, call this a prozine, whyntya print more LETTERS?'" I would hope that GALAXY got more than 2 letters "on the last three or four issues".

The guess concerning Wrhn couldn't have been more wrong. In the past few months I've been trying to find a good qualified critic to handle the job of prozine critic for this magazine. The post is still open, even if Mr Pohl isn't interested, but it requires someone capable of detailed analytical criticism of style and content -- exhaustive examination of a serial or one or two novelettes per installment is of more value to the writers and the readers than brief readers' guide reviews (which are of almost no worth when they arrive three months late).

And please come equipped with consistent viewpoint and standards.

REFLECTIONS FROM A SILVER SCREEN

by VIRGINIA BLISH

"La Dolce Vita" is a coruscating masterpiece. It would be small-minded to expect of a masterpiece that it be tidy, but Pelion is piled on Ossa here.

Within the film, there is an unparalleled richness of themes, of which some are exploited to the hilt while some are barely touched on before they are transmuted or dropped. There is a prevalence of masks, a scarifying succession of mornings-after (seven in number -- like the hills of Rome?). There are landscapes and interiors: glimpses of the new Roman architecture and adroit use of magnificent ruins. There is even a multiplicity of messages, out of which it is impossible to be sure one has unraveled The Message.

Outside of the film, there are several complications for the conscientious reviewer. "La Dolce Vita" is wildly multi-lingual, but primarily Italian. In a number of places, the original French of some of the actors has been erased from the sound-track and Italian dubbed in, so that to even the most casual eye it appears to be out of sync. The film has been backed up by Bernard Shir-Cliff and Oscar DeLiso's excellent translation, published in 1961 by Ballantine Books. Through the generosity of Shir-Cliff I was also enabled to examine the shooting script in all its multiplicity of tongues and versions, and departures from the finished film. I would guess -- and it's a pretty educated guess -- that Fellini works by inspiration rather than by the book -- even where he wrote the book! All such variants are interesting, but none is crucial. The final layer of information obscuring meaning lies in the subtitles tacked on to the film as shown in America. One of these <u>is</u> crucial, and it is in error.

(Shir-Cliff and DeLisso in the Ballantine translation did not come to any very intelligible terms with Nico's few despairing remarks in heavily Swedish-accented German, but one unintelligibility the more here makes little difference. On the other hand, rendering the term 'la maquina' as the <u>car</u> is a lulu of a mis-reading. It imports into the ambiguous ending of the film a seeming reference to (at least) a friendship and (at most) a seduction which is not justified by the episode referred to, and it hazes over the import of Paola's all-important message. Her fingers make walking motions as she says, '"You, me, <u>la maquina</u>" but what she is doing is typing! It is Marcello's typewriter she invokes with the gestures and the words that he fails to grasp. It is a pity that these two otherwise first-rate translators fell into error here -- one wonders what they made of the ending's significance themselves!)

When the stunned viewer recovers somewhat from three hours of overwhelming impact and almost unrelenting visual delight, and comes to ask himself, What does it all mean? it is astonishing how difficult it is to discern and pin down what might have been the

film's intention. It has been called "a kind of parable of the emptiness and futility of our materialistic civilization," and a "mature moral vision." There is more to it than that.

Lacking an intention, "La Dolce Vita" would be nothing but a glittering circus. One examines the story for clues, marveling at the way in which a clearly established Don Juan melts into something and somebody else ; the bewildering fashion in which clearly struck notes turn out to mean something else altogether; and, above all, the astonishing sense of uplift and redemption that floats over a downbeat ending so viciously depraved and hopeless that it makes Kerouac's tea-parties seem like tea parties.

How does Fellini accomplish this? Although his eye for what is dramatic and theatrically compelling is second to none, and his particular hallmark (the explosive conjunction of disparates) leaves the viewer's aesthetic sense battered and bruised as much as thrilled, Fellini's agile, expert, exquisitely beautiful film does not have a straight story to tell. Three hours' worth is a pretty sizeable slice of life, but that is what it is. Dramatically, the film pays off only by implication. We are given some incidents leading up to a choice, the moments devoted to the choice itself (curiously underplayed, for reasons that took a long time to become obvious to me), and the incidents leading down from the choice to a low point. There the picture stops.

Fellini is a great manipulator of symbols, and within his medium, a painter-like person, rather than either a candid photographer or a cartoonist. He is a sculptor in flesh, a pageant-maker extraordinary, a choreographer. One thing he is not, is a philosopher.

The story-line, in so far as it exists, observes a working newspaperman who is emphatically not dissatisfied until a friend gently reproves him for not making as much of himself as he might. It follows him through a brief, almost momentary, attempt to write his very best; his vocation is not proof against distraction. He returns to his accustomed haunts and job, although still devoted to his new aim, one assumes. His friend and mentor commits suicide, which leaves the newspaperman in a state of shock. Volitionless, by turns frightened and bitter, he leaves honest reportage for the tainted career of the publicist. Once on the butter-slide, there is no way but down; he is not only borne along helplessly, he has turned mean and juiceless. It seems to me that where a strong man could have cleaved to his vision, Fellini's protagonist does not have a vision -- yet. It seems to me, further, that, however talented, a man cannot become an artist through an act of will. Among tours de force, it is a most towering achievement if Fellini meant us to imagine the next step for ourselves, and I strongly suggest that he did. If the orgy at Fregena was not the end of Marcello's career, but only the low point -- if the destruction of a man is the making of an artist, and this is how this writer was fledged, through this suffering -- Fellini has not troubled to show his lost soul redeemed. What he <u>has</u> done is to cap this virtual descent into hell with an inscrutably innocent smile -- a happy ending, by God, and a triumph of understatement.

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There is no substitute for seeing this film (and no sane reason for wishing to avoid the experience, either) but I have had to wrestle with the two possible attitudes: one addresses oneself to an audience which might be moved to see "La Dolce Vita" as a result of praises sung or one does an essay primarily for those who have seen it and have their own fascinating opinions to pit against one's indiscretions. There is no choice, really. These are primarily remarks in the lobby, and meaningless to the person who was not lucky enough to make the scene. The inevitable précis is simply a device for juggling so large and unwieldy a work of art, and will yield again and again to inspection and introspection.

I have heard isolated complaints that the picture is too long. Anyone conditioned by and wanting more of the ninety-minute Hollywood epic or the full-length half-hour TV drama will become pretty antsy trying to sit through this film. Anyone looking for a decorous tour of Rome, a reverent expositinn of its grandeur, will not find it here. On the other hand, the comment, "This is not a country's culture," which I heard from an intelligent viewer, strikes me as a little bit fractious -- like rejecting zabaglione for not being zucchini. "La Dolce Vita" never meant to be either culture or squash; it succeeds effortlessly at being a rich draught of a life I'd gladly live; when I want a travelogue or a documentary I'll look elsewhere.

If "La Dolce Vita" were primarily a re-telling of the Don Juan legend, then the visit of Marcello's father to Rome should have been excised as one of those ingratiating episodes in a recalled period of one's life which do not go to the artistic point. To the structure of a tautly balanced portrait of Juan (who does not require a functioning father) it would be as extraneous as a snapshot glued to a mirror. It is not illuminating, not sufficiently, to know that his father, a traveling wine merchant, was away from home so much when he was a boy that Marcello does not really feel he knows him, and to know that he remembers his mother as having wept a good deal, so long as we think of Marcello as a Juan-figure. Once we know that his womanizing is not, after all, his problem (and we cannot know this until the twelfth episode) we are forced to look at it in a different light.

One of the strongest themes in the film is the failure to communicate. A possible but less prosecuted and less defensible theme, open to argument, is that innocence is punished alike with corruption. The chief argument against this proposition as being one advanced by Fellini is that so few of the corrupt are in the course of the film in any way punished; however, when what seems like punishment is meted out, it is singularly all-inclusive.

Thus, when Marcello's father comes to Rome on business, they sample the night life (in an un-chic but charming haunt of the father's youth). Away from home, he has always been a good fellow and a lively one. He plays the gay dog this one night too many and suffers what is, apparently, a heart attack. The night club girl with whom the father over-exerts himself is as enchanting a friend and former bedmate of Marcello's as one could wish for. Fanny cannot possibly have been meant to symbolize evil, but rather the innocent means of self-indulgence. The father, very much alive and desirous of living, reveals how perilously close death is -- especially for him who drinks hearty, eats too much spaghetti, and makes unhallowed love. (Let me iterate that Fellini is neither novelist nor philosopher; some of his tender is just barely legal while some is not only not brilliant because uncirculated and virtually uncirculatable but has instead been in circulation so long that it has lost all its mint-marks and definition. It would surely have been some eighth but equally capital offense to attempt originality while engaged in the act of exemplifying the original seven: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth!) One cannot believe that the father deserves this reminder of impending dissolution, or that Fanny, who has the French talent for taking as generously as for giving, deserves to feel that she has harmed her friend's father and lost a valuable contact to boot; against the Sodom and Gomorrah background of Rome, Marcello's "dank jungle," his father is a peculiarly uncorrupted provincial and Fanny a real trouper. Well, if it is meant to be interpreted as punishment, the father is indeed bested by the high life, in being struck down in the pursuit of pleasure; the incident is then dramatically useful in that father and son are still unable to communicate when the party's over and intimations of mortality are no longer to be evaded -- beyond an embarassed and speechless concern.

If the Don Juan theme is merely embroidery, while the failure to communicate is paramount, the father's visit to Rome, rather than being a purposeless and ramshackle addition to the structure, is one of the high points. If the search for the father by the son is a primary theme, then this scene is if not central at least secondary within the overall scheme; Marcello's visit to Steiner's apartment is the true homecoming to his spiritual father, of course.

Marcello and his father are far from alone in being unable to cross the barrier that time and relative sophistication and the cripplingly familial relationship have erected between them. Maddalena, at the moment she confesses love and proposes marriage, has retreated through the castle maze into her private hell. Abetted by the tease and cheat of a whispering gallery where Marcello -- ravished though he may be by her proposition -- cannot lay hands on her, she talks one game and plays another. Stimulated by the invocation of the words "love" and "marriage" she prematurely but expertly cuckolds him on the spot, while he stumbles grotesquely about the corridors, calling her name. Even more markedly, Sylvia is totally unable to communicate with Marcello, other than as a high-prowed ship that sails past him; capable of only a few phrases in her language -- she, of course, does not know many in any, or need to -- he nonetheless confesses the most whole-hearted love for her that he feels for anyone in the film, and with the completest inutility. She is not even listening. She would rather howl with the dogs of the countryside than respond to his tentative adoration. These three: the father, Maddalena, Sylvia, are only instances of failure to communicate which could be multiplied indefinitely. How much of what he says to Emma falls on deaf ears? How ineffectively has Steiner communicated her terror and despair? Whatever plea for help was Nico making when she spoke in "Esquimaux"?

The sub-theme balancing everyone's inability to span the human gulf is simple: only by direct sexual contact can the failure to communicate be surmounted -- as in the whore's apartment where Marcello comes directly home to Maddalena where she actually lives; as in the passage at arms with Jane, where lust rather than love serves to link him again to life after the unfaithful Maddalena's betrayal; as in the almost farcically funny quarrel with Emma, the two screaming at each other at cross purposes to the point where they separate "forever" or at least until dawn when they come back together for a roll in their happy hay. In actuality, it can be assumed that the quarrel ended their liaison. One last lovely reconciliation got in under the wire before Marcello was ejected from that relatively happy phase of his existence. The phone call as surely killed off an easy out like Emma as it announced the difficult exit Steiner had chosen from the good life he had urged upon Marcello, and ordered Marcello out of Eden.

Reconciliation and phone call announcing Steiner's suicide constitute the sixth important dawn scene in the film. The others, in order, are:

Having spent the night with Maddalena, Marcello speeds home to find Emma, dying

Having spent the night wandering about Rome with Sylvia, he returns her to her hotel and is beaten by her 'fiance' Robert (splendidly played by Lex Barker.)

Having spent all night covering the Terni fake miracle, Marcello stays to report on the aftermath (including the death of one supplicant.)

Having spent the night roistering together and apart, Rubini senior minimizes his heart attack while Rubini junior fails to find what to say, and the father departs for home.

Having spent the night at Bassano di Sutria and Marcello having made love with Jane, the party-goers return from the old villa at dawn to encounter the principessa going to early Mass. Son and grandsons fall obediently in behind her, leaving the rest in over-dress and fancy-dress, rather stranded.

Phone-call and news of Steiner's suicide.

Having spent the night attempting an orgy at Fregena, at dawn the whole group strolls (and dances) down to the beach to inspect the monster.

Another catalogue which is extremely illuminating is that of Don Juan's women. It is interesting and pointed that Woman One (Emma) is held off-stage, while he is shown covering his night-club beat. Emma is preceded into the camera eye by Woman Two, Maddalena. This is a strikingly beautiful figure of wealthy discontent, masked. Her dark glasses conceal a bruise from some unexplained encounter. She leaves, having been stood up (by the clod who socked her? it is never explained), and picks up a rather good-natured whore, who lends Marcello and Maddalena her bed for the night. Fellini's smashing use of juxtaposition is nowhere more effective than in the scene where Marcello tries to reach Maddalena by phone from the hospital. He has rushed Emma to the hospital to have her stomach pumped, alternately kissing her tenderly and threatening that the next time he will just let her die. Her life just barely saved, she lies moaning on the table, near death for love; after kissing her and promising to love her, he tries to phone Maddalena. She lies fully dressed on her luxurious bed, and the phone rings on, unanswered; she is near death for love, too. Woman Three is played by Anita Ekberg, whose American accent is not the most convincing ever heard, but whose American style bosom obviously dictated the choice. To the Roman jungle comes an inarticulate but exquisite animal, an animated breast fetish, a child of nature, a creature of mad impulse and total fascination. Marcello falls, for the first time whole-heartedly in love -- and never gets to first base. Ekberg, incidentally, whom no one had ever suspected of being an actress, acquits herself magnificently, and covers Fellini and herself with honors. Emma has offered possessive desire, ineffectually, during the Sylvia episode; she comes along on the expedition to Terni, and makes like the little wife to his great distress, forcing hard-boiled egg and banana on him and commanding him, "Eat!" Thereafter, at the Steiners' party, Emma also is captured by their example of the good life, but, being shallow and somewhat dishonest, she most loses Marcello when she most urges marriage and the good life on him. Marcello subsequently takes off for the country with his typewriter. The waitress makes herself an unconscionable nuisance, but is also a lovely innocent. Marcello, easily turned aside from work by beauty, (but accurate in his observation as always) remarks that she is like a craven angel on an Umbrian church. She is not Woman Four, however. She is Paola, the one and only Virgin in the film. Derailed, Marcello phones Emma, whose face reveals her triumph, and we are left to believe that creativity has been pretty completely done in. The next episode, back on the Via Veneto, which is to say, back to journalism, involves the visit of Marcello's father to Rome. Fanny is one of presumbably many prior Women. It is important to understand that Marcello is a decent man. He has been searching indefatigably for love, romantic love; he responds whereever he finds it. He loves, however, with his own kind of fidelity, returning to his women as they come by again in the round of things, dropping them only when they bore him, dog-faithful to none, Marcello-faithful to them all. Fanny, like Nico, is not available to him this particular time around. Again taking off from the Via Veneto, the actual appearance of Woman Four is somewhat fragmented. For a moment it seems to be the unspeakably lovely Nico, in such exquisite proportion that Sylvia in retrospect almost seems deformed. But Nico is only an echo; Maddalena is at the party but she too is only an echo; and Marcello is still looking for her, troubled and aroused, when he is taken for a night's ride by a woman with a witch's lock in her hair, a fine figure, and a racy conversational style. She is also encumbered, as he discovers at dawn, to his visible disconfiture, by a grown son. The significance is a little tortuous here. Perhaps, immediately on the heels of seeing his stranger-father tottering from remembered invincibility into a state requiring pity, he is plunged into making love to a stranger-mother -- not, to be sure, his; but not, either, for the first time, a woman he loves? The important thing is that Woman Four, Jane, is an unsatisfactory surrogate for love. The scene reverts to Woman One. Marcello and Emma have a wild and funny and seemingly final quarrel in which he rejects utterly her love and the noose she tempts him with, abandoning her on the highway. At dawn he returns in a cloud of dust -- love is his weakness, after all -- but their lovemaking is not a resumption of their affair. Emma

will not be seen again, after the phone call that awakens him out of his drowse on her breast, in his own home. In the final portion of the film, although there are a number of women at the party, and Lisa lays claim to him at the end, no one present is his love; Nadia, the primary Woman in the scene, belongs -- or does not belong -- to two other men altogether, and is more beautiful and more wretched than anyone else present, with the exception, perhaps, of Marcello, whose physical beauty has begun to indicate evil rather than good.

It is possible that "La Dolce Vita" is a film about a religious question. I tend to think that it is not, although much internal evidence can be ranked against my assumption. For instance, Don Juan (if such he is) does not need to be dragged down to hell by an outraged father; he has found the way there himself, via the path of least resistance, and at Fregena is clearly being scourged by the demon self. Furthermore, Fellini goes out of his way to suggest that it is the time, again, of the cities of the plain, and that total destruction impends. He may be saying, through Steiner, that a truly decent man cannot but choose self-destruction while there is yet time to make a choice, rather than condone so much evil. One reason I particularly enjoy this film is because I am a product of my times and my culture. I am, indeed, in favor of decadence that is a protest against the senseless mortification of the flesh (and I suspect that Fellini is, too.) I believe that there is comedy inherent in all tragedy -- and the converse. The bewildering, even frightening, world depicted, in which men and women have lost their faith and their simplicity, is the world of choice for me. I agree (though not so emphatically!) with Steiner that a world which hovers on the verge of armageddon is carrying things too far. But unvirtue and unbelief did not made the Bomb. I am unwilling to believe that Fellini is preaching that we should return to bourgeois virtues or to churchly asceticism; neither will haul us one inch backward from the lip of the abyss. The prevalence of church-based background may arise simply from the fact that the film was made in Italy, and the dependence on Catholic definitions of good and evil, along with the invoking of Catholic images, may be an easy Italian religiosity, rather than religiousness. Certainly no one who watched the religious fakery and profiteering of the Miracle at Terni could come away feeling that Mother Church remains strong and incorruptible in the face of corruption and decadence! Fellini is not only Catholic in all likelihood, but -- great artist though he is -- very probably is not a truly deep thinker. He seizes the moment and renders it magnificently, but he does not preach. The new realism does not lend itself to sermonizing, in any event.

Why then does "La Dolce Vita" open and close with a monstrum, a prodigy, an ominous portent? To begin with, Jesus in effigy swoops over Rome slung from a helicopter, outlined in flight against ancient ruins, their joint shadow climbing (in mechanical Ascension!) the windowless white wall of a bleakly modern structure -- a miracle that rather outdoes walking on the waters. Midway, the film pivots on an encounter of spiritual Father and Son in a cathedral. At the close, an anomalous, almost amorphous, no-color sea-beast is hauled dead to the shore by chanting fishermen to be a nine-minute wonder for party-goers -- signifying perhaps that, whatever the question is, it has no answer other than the ability of the flesh to endure? That if God is our Father, yet the Sea, subtle and salt, is our Mother? Who knows? Not, I think, Fellini; but he knows, instinctively, enough of the answer to cap this prodigy with the brief descent of our Umbrian angel to reassure us that there is always something more. Fellini, gratefully, does not preach on any of the great religious questions; he does, however, in his role of film-maker, serve as a kind of priest. He says, simply, "Come with me and I will show you a mystery."

"Wrong" though much of the sweet life is, considered in the nowadays flickering light cast by the standard virtues, how languouously complex and sensuously beautiful it is, all the same. If some of its practitioners find la vita catastrophically empty, the lack is in them -- vide Steiner, Maddalena, Marcello himself -- not in the rich diversity of Life.

Fellini does not mean us to think that Marcello's father is hurrying home to repent having played the fool; it is merely that he must go to ground and lick his wounds a while before he can re-engage with a life that makes him happy. He does not, surely, mean us to think that Steiner was right, any more than he means us to think that he was wrong; on the contrary, Steiner is the dilettante who withdraws so far from life that he loses the ability to go on living. And, at the end of the film, Marcello has not opted for evil or given up, although he has plumbed his own depths. When he recovers from this seventh and near-shattering hangover, he may well have found himself. If not-- no matter how many players crap out, the game of life goes on.

It would be possible to think that Fellini's message (like Thomas Mann's, like Herman Melville's, is that knowledge itself is corruption, except for Paola's smile. I am content that I have unriddled Fellini's meaning ;it is no secret that some parts of the film are autobiographical, and one may reasonalby expect that the former newspaperman may well go on to write a great book, or perhaps, even make a great film. Marcello will redeem himself, Don Juan having become, if not Everyman (as for a while he was in danger of doing), Man.

For those who cannot make the intuitive leap to redemption on the small springboard of Paola's smile, I offer a garland of messages.

One of the audience suggests that the Sodom and Gomorrah theme may carry out ineluctably to the end. The reversal of sex in the actor is not even puzzling, considering the heavy emphasis on homosexuality in the party immediately preceding. Marcello peering across the cove at Paola, looking back, specifically back to the crucial moment of choice which he has not lived up to, becomes (like Lot's wife) a pillar of salt. If that was Fellini's intention, The Message is: The End. However:

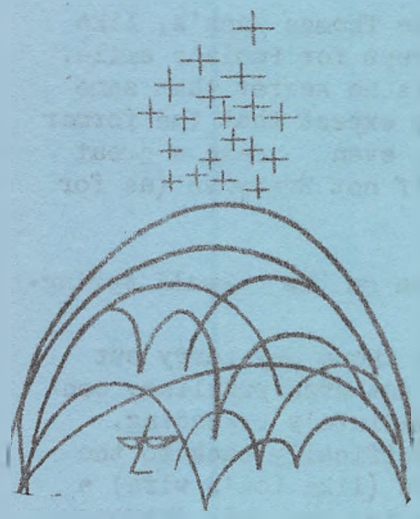
Marianna, the old woman attending at the Field of the Miracle, says: "Your Italy is a land of old cults, rich in forces natural and supernatural. There is no one who doesn't feel the influence in some way. For the rest, who looks for God finds him."

Steiner says to Emma (so startlingly unprovoked and on such short acquaintance that his speech takes on an oracular quality): "The day you understand that you love Marcello more than he does himself you will be happy." (The sub-title erroneously rendered this speech as "love Marcello more than yourself", and even in this garbled form it was still so striking that I knew I had heard a tonic chord; whichever way was right, the way I heard it or the way I read it, it was the crux of the question of love, and possibly true either way.) Man is not fit for love until he has learned to love himself, and this is one of the profoundest things Fellini has to give us.

The principe padre of Bassano di Sutria says: "It is truly melancholy to see this state of things." He speaks of the disrepair of his castle, and perhaps as well of his crumbling world. (It is interesting to observe the departure from American practice, here, as well as from the writerly dictum that every gun must go off. The prince says, in more detail: "Qule délabrement. Cette voute ... Ici il faudrait un soutien, ça une poutre. Il faudrait ... Ah, GuGiulio, tu sais, c'est vraiment une tristesse de voir cet état de choses." One waits for the rotted bridge to collapse under the merry-makers, or for the sagging floor to collapse, in vain. It is sufficient for Fellini, and -- at least, the second time through -- for the American viewer, to know that the castle crumbles only ineluctuably, not dramatically.)

Marcello says, so prettily that one suspects it is probably quoted (from Gide, perhaps?): "Dans le jardin de nos instincts allons cueillir de quoi guérir." ("In the (herb-)garden of our instincts let us pluck what may make us whole.")

Steiner, in the cathedral, says: "Je suis ici un petit peu chez moi." It is fascinating -- although I am sure it is wrong -- to draw a kind of strained parallel with the life of Christ in Marcello's career. The figure of Christ the Workingman at the inception may be symbolic of Marcello the newspaperman. If so, he is a Christ manqué, and the whole line deliriously inverts itself very rapidly -- too Huysmanesque a notion for Fellini. Yet: imagine that Marcello is called to the ministry by Steiner. In contrast to Steiner who says he feels rather as if he were at home in his own house in the cathedral, Marcello is visibly ill at ease from the moment that Steiner leads him up to the organ loft, saying, "As you see, the father does not have any fear of the devil. On the contrary, he even allows me to play the organ." He is jesting, of course; but it is just thinkable that Steiner, who is unable to sustain his serenity in the little heaven he has created for himself at the center of this mad universe, has in this speech identified himself as a kind of limping devil -- or even an anti-God. Well, Marcello gives up carpentering for Christing, is very easily diverted from his aim (by an errant angel) and proceeds, discovering that his Lord, his Father, has forsaken him and abdicated responsibility, to crucify himself -- not by assuming the burden of sin, but by trying to encompass all the obvious sins of man. The conceit hangs from Steiner's identification of himself as the devil and Marcello's deliberate degradation after losing his mad, bad father. It is surely a false trail, and if present at all, unintentional; but fun to think about.



At another point, well along on the butter-slide, Marcello proposes a toast to "the annulment of Nadia's marriage, the annulment of her husband, the annulment of everything." It is still a world of infinite choice. Marcello had been making a good living as a yellow journalist. Briefly having observed the good life Steiner had made for himself, Marcello turns from chronicling the high life of the Via Veneto to a half-hearted attempt at creative writing. After Steiner's suicide, he capitualates, choosing this time the soft life. Perhaps because he is aware of what he could have been and what he has given up, he does not live the good- sweet-soft life of Rome and environs with the impeccable style of the aristocrats among whom he has moved, but with ugly and destructive violence. The final party, at Fregena, is truly decadent; where preceding parties and pub-crawls have been luxurious, self-indulgent, and conspicuously wasteful, they have all taken place in an atmosphere of pleasure-seeking and mutual trust. Terrible things have intervened. Now suddenly the man in the saddle is sadistically lashing the beast as if he hopes it may fall dead.

The passage begins with a drag race on a narrow mountain road by what appeared to my dazzled eyes to be all new all white convertibles. Difficulty in opening the chateau gates is easily solved: the lead car simply drives through them. They have come to have a party and it does not faze them that the owner is not there. Marcello heaves a rock through one of the enormous windows and they force entry, making free of the chateau's resources. Half of those present are phonies, some are desperate and desperately drunk, like Marcello; some are extroverts, some inverts -- and the general atmosphere is one of hatred and cruelty. Nadia's celebration of her annulment by a swift and feverish strip-tease is perhaps the simplest and least hateful thing that occurs. Her simple-minded and admirable exhibitionism might have changed the tone of the party, except that she is put off stride by the inopportune arrival of Riccardo, owner of the chateau. He is also that husband she has just shed.

He is angry but urbane. He can afford it, as someone points out. But his hospitality has been abused. There is a kind of undercover rivalry between him and Marcello as to who is the host -- Marcello, in a way and for a while, through sheer

effrontery continues to run things. He proposes to arrange a multi-sexual orgy, which, lacking spontaneity, fizzles like a damp firecracker. He nibbles at homosexuality ineffectually; what operates here is not the strong hand of censorship, but the limitations of character. Marcello is vitiated and incapable of much more than talk. He is reduced to brutally mistreating a poor plump peasant-pheasant -- riding her like a donkey and affixing feathers to her dampened skin, and there is no love here, not even sick or inverted love. He beats her, mistreats her, and makes her sick. This is no longer the liberty of a free spirit; this is the license of the buffoon. Riccardo eases them all out the door at that time which he had originally specified for them to clear out.

Absolving themselves of concern or responsibility, all these dead heads stare at the monster from the depths and chatter a little before wandering back to their cars and the city. Across the cove, the girl Paola beckons to Marcello. She reminds him, by gestures, of the day he retired to the country to write. Through the roar of the surf and his dissipated attention, he cannot hear her; indeed he does not seem to recognize her. He waves a sheepish goodbye, shrugs, indicating his own impotence in the circumstances, and walks away. Is this so certainly the end of Marcello? One recovers from even the most monumental of hangovers. Having lived through that party, he has very possibly come to terms with his tragedy. He had certainly come a long way from the light-hearted attitude with which he and Paparazzo, an irreverent pair of irresponsibles, attending the Jesus party, flew through the air with the greatest of ease. Marcello may yet, some day, be able to say, "Come with me and I will show you a mystery."

--Virginia Blish

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WHY JONNY CAN'T BE BOTHERED TO READ

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If it weren't for the fact of its impressive circulation, the New York Daily News would be an unfailing source of amusement. But the possibility that a multitude continues to give this journal its support after reading its editorials removes the idea from the realm of humor:

"WHAT YOUNGSTERS SHOULD READ: The longstanding charge that Johnny can't read, or can't read as well as he should at his age, continues to plague school authorities throughout the nation. :: Locally, recent tests have shown that more than 25% of New York City's approximately 175,000 junior high school pupils are 2½ or more years behind where they should be on the road to adequate reading knowledge of the English language. :: We'll resist the temptation to blame this sad state of affairs on the public schools, and offer a constructive suggestion to parents; to wit: Your best bet as regards helping your youngster to develop his reading abilities is to encourage (not force) him to read The News, daily and Sunday, year in and year out. :: He'll enjoy reading this newspaper -- which is more than can be said for some other newspapers. He'll keep up with current events, in a paper which prints all the news he or virtually anybody else really needs to know. :: Also, he'll be reading a paper which flatly refuses to print long, involved sentences, and to use fuzzy, unfamiliar words such as 'imponderables,' 'viable,' 'minuscule,' or 'geopolitics' without explaining what the words mean when no simpler term will do the job. :: As time goes by, daily reading of The News will make your boy or girl a sharper, faster, more understanding reader. We know of no greater benefit you could confer on him or her at so low a cost." -- The New York Daily News, 1961

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"They have to be unseen to be believed."

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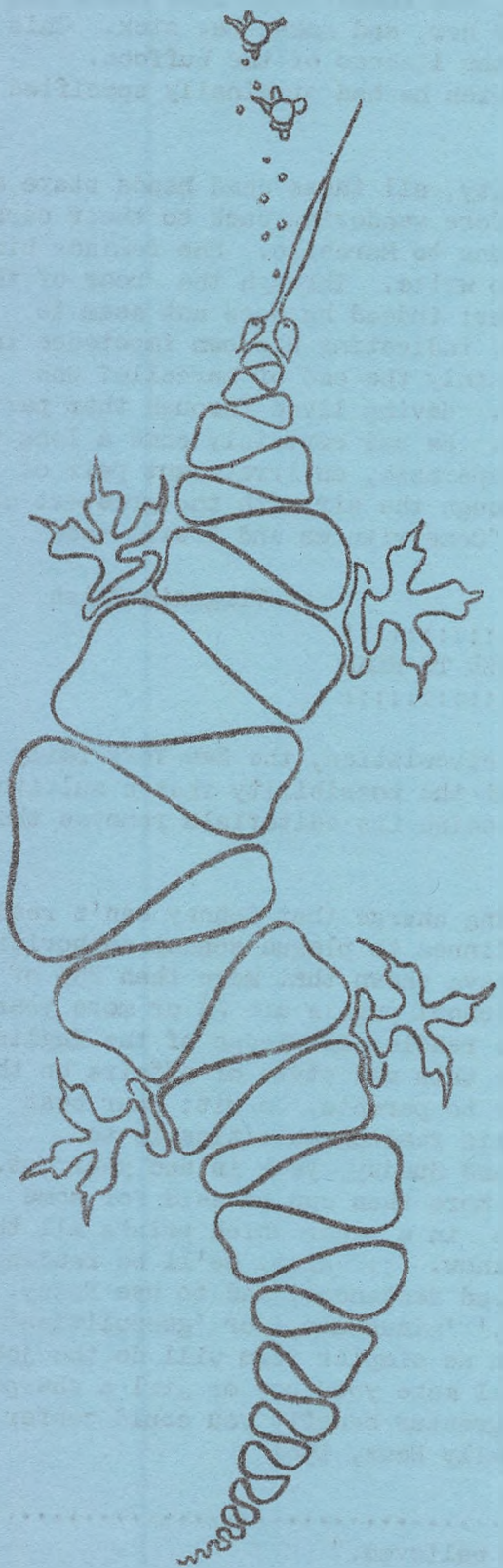
FILE 13
by Redd Boggs



THE EGG AND DR KENDALL

Only the other day Dick Bergeron shipped me the, quote, "egoboo (if you can call it that)," unquote, on the last installment of this column, a little sheaf of verifaxed pages, grubby from the effects of fretful tears and trembling fingers. Altogether it was the most melancholy spate of reading I've indulged in since Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" or David R. Bunch's "The Problem Was Lubrication." Everybody who wrote concerning my column confessed feeling acutely depressed by my "gloom and doom" piece, and an anonymous Newark physician reported peyote consumption up 17 percent.

It comes as a mild shock to me to learn that readers take me seriously, as if I were John Berry, and find their spirits rising and falling according to the "File 13" barometer. This issue I had planned to contribute an encouraging report on the progress that has been made in biological warfare -- all about the new method for inflicting the standing army with athlete's foot -- but the thought of having to read my egoboo afterwards has caused me to cancel the column and substitute a hygenic little treatise on the Good Life. The present column is guaranteed to be as upbeat as the final section of "Darkness and Dawn", so bright and glowing with optimism, bird song, and spring flowers that Bergeron will be forced to run it on apple-green mimeo bond instead of that downbeat blue he uses for Jim Blish and Walt Willis.

Heretofore, had I announced that I intended to devote a column to the Good Life, I would have envisioned my readers chortling merrily and digging each other slyly in the ribs, but now that I have learned that you take me so seriously I imagine recumbent forms scattered from here to Zaragoza, each giving a realistic exhibition of Cheyne-Stokes breathing. I hope you'll feel better when I hasten to explain that my view of the Good Life has nothing to do with plain dirt gardening as the editors of BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS might have it; I don't know much about mulch. No, in my opinion the Good Life is concerned largely with two of the happiest subjects in the world, namely, sex and money. And it's no use to pretend -- just because I'm not a physician and don't have the spondulicks to collect elephants -- that I'm not a recognized expert on these subjects. If I concentrate real hard, I can pretend it for a week at a time, but after all, it's not healthy to live in a dream world too long.

The fact is, when I need advice on sex these days, I no longer have to write to Abby Van Buren. I've even mislaid the stub of a pencil and the lined

tablet paper I used so often in the past. Today I casually amble over to the wall-safe and consult a well-thumbed little volume that was sent to me awhile back by a dear and thoughtful friend, who found it in the 10¢ bin of a Salvation Army book-store in Personal Property, Texas. Through this gesture she was obviously attempting to inspire me to make the usual indecent proposal, and I did not disappoint her. I asked her to co-edit with me; she accepted; and we have happily co-edited ever after. And let that be a lesson to all the other passionate but innocent young fannes in the audience.

The book published in 1925 by the Shrewsbury Publishing Company of Chicago, was written by Burney J. Kendall, MD, who must have been the family physician and early mentor of both Marie Stopes and Havelock Ellis, not to mention Philip Jose Farmer. The cover and title page refer to the book as "Facts for Husband and Wife," but they are pointedly contradicted by the running title on all 283 pages, which insists that the book is called "The Parent's Guide to Sex Problems." Under whichever title, it is undoubtedly the most epochmaking book on my bookshelves. (In fact, I've got so many surplus epochs stockpiled in the attic by now that I'm selling them off at $1.25 apiece, or three for $5.) It's the one indispensable book for anyone suffering an unhappy love life; you might as well give your Albert Ellis collection to the Brownie troop in your neighborhood. Having read this book you'll have opportunity to rejoice that, after all, you're not suffering from a plague of galloping chancres or locked up in a sporting-house.

Fresh from the scrub room, Dr Kendall starts right out with the really basic question: "Why sex?" On page 7, he answers that thorny question by contributing an insight which many readers will consider the most brilliant in the book: It's all because of God's "great plan of procreation," which called for populating the earth gradually, over many generations. It was in His power, as Dr K. points out, to create everybody all at once, but in that case "there would have been no need for woman, nor even for sex." In fact, Dr K. adds, "It is not to be conceived even for a moment that if God had peopled the earth all at once, He would have made woman." Neither, one can infer, would anybody else. I hope I won't be accused of disrespect to Dr K. nor of disloyalty to my own sex if I enter a small caveat here. I suggest that it would be men who would be unnecessary and out of place in that sexless world. Women would get along without men, but men alone would freeze to death when their clothing was worn to tatters for lack of a woman around to thread a needle for us.

While Dr K. pays lipservice to God's "infinite wisdom,"it is clear that he is annoyed because God didn't choose the plan of instantly populating the earth. Dr K. sees this world of sex and procreation as the most sinister place, crawling with the most bizarre dangers, outside of Brian Aldiss' hothouse world. I almost turned into a pillar of salt just the other day when I looked at Minneapolis over my shoulder soon after reading Dr K's account of life in a city. In the big cities an innocent girl is "sold into white slavery and deserted by the brute who has deceived and entrapped her," and the "innocent but ignorant boy" walks "straight into the very jaws of death the first day he reaches the city." Four out of every five city men have gonorrhoea, Dr K. points out, and more than 20 percent have syphilis. If that isn't bad enough, nearly everybody is suffering from constipation. (To alleviate the latter complaint Dr K. recommends oatmeal "which should be cooked for an hour at least, while three hours is even better.")

But these awful dangers are trivial indeed compared with those lurking in liquor and tobacco. Smoking not only imperils the smoker and his wife, who are forever in danger of being "fatally burned by their clothing taking fire," but affects the next generation. "The children of tobacco users," we learn, "are never as strong mentally or physically as the children born from strictly temperate parents." The same ghastly

"influence of heredity" overshadows the use of liquor in any shape or form, as Dr K. loses no opportunity of telling us. He orders parents to give up "alcoholic drink, opium in any form, and tobacco" -- not only the habit of using it, mind you, but the desire for it -- "some months before conception takes place." Of course it is highly imperative that the husband or wife should not be swozzled "or even slightly under the influence of liquor" at the moment of conception. Otherwise, "the offspring will have epilepsy, or be idiotic, and a strong liking for stimulants is almost sure to be transmitted." Dr K. adds,

> As a result of drunken husbands forcing upon loathing wives sexual intercourse the world is full of undesirable offspring that become a public charge; such as idiots, insane, epileptics, deaf, dumb, blind, paupers, thieves, highwaymen, physical weaklings, and all sorts of miserable wretches. This is too often forced upon the wife when the husband is in a condition to preclude the possibility of his parenting a proper child.

All I can say is, the fathers of all the fans reading this column ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Now if you think intoxication is bad, you'll simply croggle when you take a hinge at Dr K's chapters on sexual excess. Passion, the author warns young couples at once, must never be allowed to "rule over reason." Sexual passion takes a fearful toll. "No man can indulge to excess, and become the father of children that are well-born.' And if you indulge to excess you will become "weak in body and mind, irritable, unkind to others and to your wife perhaps, and you may have backache, headache, loss of memory, dizziness, dimness of vision, numbness, etc." In short, you will feel as you usually feel, you mad fool you.

"The terrible results of excessive intercourse" are rather graphically illustrated by a case handled by Dr K. where a man of 30, "troubled somewhat with St Vitus Dance," married a girl of 18. Like Dr K. himself, I would just as sonn skip the harrowing details; suffice it to say that the poor girl was ruptured on her wedding night and "the result was that in a few days she died." No, I didn't make up this story; it's right there on pp 25-6. It is the saddest story I ever read.

Dr K. prescribes rigorously against sexual excess. Double beds are taboo, of course, because "close contact in bed is so apt to arouse the passions." In fact, the good doctor advises the husband and wife never to dress or undress in each other's presence, and after mulling the matter over for a page or two he goes even further. His final statement on the matter deserves a place alongside the San Tsang of the Buddhists and similar canons: "There is every reason why (the husband and wife) should not occupy the same room, and no reason why they should." Ringing words! I am sure we all agree with Dr K., but I would ask in turn, is there any reason why the husband and wife should live under the same roof? Why not keep the wife in the garage, along with the family Graham-Paige? Or better yet, why not send her home to her mother?

Surprisingly enough, despite his prescriptions against sexual excess, Dr K. approves of large families. The average family should have at least six children, he says. How a couple can follow Dr K's suggestions and be blessed with even one child

is a matter that he does not make clear. In fact, the role of the sexes in carrying out "God's great plan of procreation" remains slightly mysterious, like all beautiful things, except that Dr K. makes it clear that the woman handles the "gestation process." He advocates frankness in sexual instruction, but cautions that facts should be taught "in an innocent way." Candidly, I've read and reread many times his passages relating to "the father's part in reproduction," not only to enjoy the beauty and vigor of his language, but to make sure I'm not dreaming:

> There is no need for you to attempt to make any explanation of the father's part in reproduction. Answers should always be truthful, or sooner or later the child will find out that you did not tell the truth and he may lose confidence in you at a time that is most important if you wish to attain the best results. Therefore, when the curiosity of the child has been fully aroused and you are asked squarely what the father's part is, you can explain how in animals the young grow from the egg and how the mother fish will seek some suitable place to lay her eggs, and that the father fish goes with her to hover over the eggs and fertilize them, so they will grow and become little fishes -- so it is with the father in all forms of procreation.

And there you have it; now you know as much about sex as I do. I don't know about you fellows, but when I finish this column, I'm going to mosey down to the river for a little swim and maybe turn over a few rocks. Never you mind what for.

AN ILL WIND AND YOU

At this point -- and not a moment too soon -- we segway gracefully into a learned dissertation about the other factor we must consider in the creation of the Good Life: money. The best way to succeed in business without really trying is to abscond with the company funds. The second best way, as all Warhoon readers already know, is to invest in the stock market. Mr Bergeron and Mr Silverberg, among others, are in the process of reaping a fortune by this method, and you can do the same. The only problem, as I see it, is to choose the right stock, and what could be simpler? Mr Bergeron has taken a flyer on Arkansas Louisiana Gas, and Mr Silverberg on Texas Instruments. Well, sir, I'm not an accredited representative of PWJ&C, and this of course is not an offer to sell, but for the investor who is interested in net quick assets, margin of profit, capitalization ratios, and above all, cash flow, I have only one suggestion to make: Liquidate your assets, sell the family Gestetner, if necessary, and invest every penny you own in the company that manufactures Kotex.

I'm not quite sure what the name of the company is. I tried to read the label on the stack featured at the drugstore, but I found a female clerk watching me speculatively, and I slank away and covered up my confusion by buying a gross of shoe-laces and 27 sacks of barbecue charcoal. However, I'm sure you can find out, and as soon as you do, could you send me the information in a plain sealed envelope so I can get in on the big bonanza, too?

"It is an ill wind that blows no good," as the president of a local construction company said the other day, with an audible rubbing of palms. Since the onset of the Berlin crisis and the Russian atomic tests last year, the fallout shelter business has begun to boom. Everybody in the building trades is cashing in, and new companies are forming daily. Clearly the atomic doom that I propheised in the last installment of "File 13" affords an unparalleled opportunity to smart investors; it's merely a matter of playing your cards right. Not only are all these fallout shelters a-building, but they must be equipped to allow the survivors to live in safety and even in style, and there is your cue.

Shelters come in many shapes and sizes, and it might be a mistake to invest too heavily in a company that specialized in a particular type. Your company might build elaborate shelters which permitted the occupant to arrive in tomorrow surrounded by the luxuries of a pharaoh in his tomb: "a fiberglass shelter in very pleasing colors," with wall-to-wall carpeting and more gadgets than a submarine. But maybe most canny citizens will go in for prefabricated shelters to be set up in the basement and designed to be filled with sand between the double walls. Nobody can be sure at the moment, and you can't afford to guess wrong. Clearly, the best idea is to sink your fortune in a company that manufactures equipment that will be used to stock almost any shelter. An ad for shelters in the local papers provides a clue as to what sort of equipment is being allocated for the shelter program. The ad offers for sale such items as these, at the indicated prices:

Space heater, $13.88
Radiation measurement kit, $24.95
8-transistor radio, $54.88
Flashlight, $1.35
Pencils, $5
Pencil sharpener, 65¢
Card table, $14.95
Generator, $359.00
Crow-bar, $2.49
Chemical toilet, $19.95
20-gallon garbage can, $9.98
Waterless soap, $2.50
Cook stove, $14.47
Cook set, $19.99
Sanitary napkins (box of 48), 98¢

Well, of course, it's a temptation to invest in a company that manufactures 20-gallon garbage cans or chemical toilets, but I think you will agree that the most indispensable item in the entire list is that box of Kotex. Every fallout shelter needs one, and we can confidently expect the sales of Kotex to boom as the shelter program progresses. Once your money is properly invested, you can sit back and watch the radiation count go up and up with perfect equanimity. When the United States begins anew to test thermonuclear devices in the atmosphere, you can lead the cheers. The radiation count is at 123 micromicrocuries per cubic yard of air, up from 4.1 the previous day? Then, assuredly, so is your stock up an equal amount. In a few years, you will have raked in enough long green to build a fallout shelter for your family. A few years after that, you can afford to equip the shelter. Don't forget that 98¢ box of sanitary napkins.

--Redd Boggs

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THE HELL YOU SAY!
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A partial description of Ike at the Summit: "'For the first time since I gave up smoking,' he said, 'I wanted a cigarette just to give myself something to do.' In the privacy of the U.S. embassy later, Ike loosed his pent-up temper, swore vigorously, muttered over and over again, 'I'm just fed up!'" -- TIME, may 31, 1960

A selection from Richard Nixon's sermon on language during the third debate: "And I can only say that I'm very proud that President Eisenhower restored dignity and decency and, frankly, good language, to the conduct of the President of the United States." -- The New York Times, October 14, 1960

ACCIDENTALS AND NOMICS
by JAMES BLISH

Now that Seacon's last filksing is folksung, and the beer-cans are twisted and dried, I find myself still asking: Who did kill science fiction? With all respect to Hugoist Kemp, it seems to me that this question has never been approached in the sober spirit proper to an autopsy; after all, it is a rather grave matter to be dead, and deserves to be studied clinically.

The author of the following paper on the subject took his B. Stf. from the Science Fiction League, one of the earliest academies in the pertinent discipline, and currently operates a large practice.

BACKGROUND

All students of nosology will be aware that the incurable neurological disease called Parkinson's Syndrome has lately been discovered to be, essentially, a curious historical accident. Physicians specializing in this syndrome have long suspected that all the affected patients belonged to the same age-group, and contracted the disease at about the same time. Though some new patients are discovered every year, they are all elderly, and the number of new cases is now declining rapidly toward zero. Most investigators now believe that Parkinsonism is a consequence of the influenza epidemic of World War I, and that when the present victims of the disease are all dead, the disease itself will disappear (unless, of course, the flu virus mutation responsible should re-appear in some future epidemic; but this is not regarded as very probable). It is too late to track down the specific virus which was responsible, but study of the patients strongly suggests that Parkinsonism, like all by-product or secondary syndromes, was an infectious disease, but never a contagious one beyond the first generation of victims.

The present study offers tentative evidence that the writing of science fiction (not the reading of this type of material, which will be considered later) is a wholly comparable, self-limiting syndrome.

CLINICAL MATERIAL

The writing of science fiction, as a clinically definable disease, first appeared in the late 19th Century in a few patients (JV, HGW) who of course did not know what they had and whose symptoms were beyond the skills of contemporary diagnosis. H. Gernsback was the first to see the affliction as a clear-cut clinical entity, and we are indebted to him for the name it still carries (though in the light of present-day knowledge it is in some respects a rather misleading term). Some investigators cite still earlier cases as evidence that the disease was prevalent even in Classical times, but the case records involved are too vague to permit a confident differential

diagnosis; at present, it appears that the disease appeared for the first time around 1850, with the spectacular suddenness of syphilis in 1500.

Like many physicians who become interested in a specialty, Gernsback became rather fond of the syndrome and eventually devoted his life to it. He first established that it was slightly contagious, by developing in the laboratory a vector or carrier for it. His first intermediate host, the Electrical Experimenter, did not prove viable; but subsequently he was able to breed a large, mosquito-like arthropod -- curiously held together with blind rivets at its corners -- which he called Amazing Stories, which was rapidly shown in field trials to be capable of spreading the disease

At first, necessarily, Gernsback used infectious material from the earliest cases, but he was soon able to show that there were susceptible persons in the next generation. Some of the victims of this second round of the disease are still alive today, and are of great interest to the physician who wishes to establish a prognosis (a question never studied by Gernsback, though he made and continues to make many pronouncements on it); this question, too, will be analyzed in this paper in its proper place.

The subsequent course of the plague is by far too well known to require more than a brief summary here. The third stage was the multiplication of vectors, including a number of species which were able to dispense with the blind rivets and other non-survival characteristics of Gernsback's original carrier. At the same time, the causative organism (still unknnwn) increased sharply in virulence as it found a larger population of susceptible victims, until in 1940 it was claiming a relatively large number of healthy and talented young patients. It is not surprising to find that this peak in incidence of the disease coincided closely with a peak in the number of vectors; nor that the vectors began to die out shortly after the incidence-peak was passed.

The number of persons infected in the fifth generation was markedly lower, and though there was a second peak in the vector population at about this time, it was evident that the etiological agent was losing its virulence. Study of the case records shows that almost all the full-blown, desperate cases of the disease (such as LdR, RAH, LSdC, and many others) are concentrated in the fourth generation; in the fifth there is only one truly representative case (ACC). (Some investigators allow JW as such a fifth-generation case, but study of the records shows that this patient is a second-generation relapse earlier identified as JBH).

The current group of patients belongs to the sixth generation, and generally is not very rewarding to the student. The virus involved plainly has lost almost all its power to infect healthy, talented young men; statistical analysis of the patient population today shows it to exhibit a significant number of feeble-minded housewives, a further indication that the cause of the disease is by no means as potent as it was two decades ago. The vectors, too, have been decimated, and appear to be on the verge of extinction.

DISCUSSION

If the present hypothesis is correct, it is important for the practising physician to distinguish carefully between the writing and the reading of science fiction. Many studies by qualified authorities have shown that the reading of science fiction is a nutritional disease, easily cured by supplying to the patient an adequate diet of popular scientific material through his daily newspaper and other breakfast dishes. There are, to be sure, a few records of totally refractory cases, leading to such complications as completism, pseudo-scholarship, fraud, barretry, and

marriage to their patients,but these patients can also be shown to be gravely deficient in virtually every nutriment of our culture, a deficiency beyond remedy in a single lifetime even could the patient afford the expense; nevertheless, even these terminal cases are not in principle addicts, but simply extreme instances of a deficiency disease.

The writing of science fiction is a separate clinical entity and follows an entirely different course. Study of the oldest patients in this group shows that the disease is slowly self-limiting, though the mechanism of immunity has not yet been elucidated. Most patients recover in 10 to 15 years and thereafter appear completely normal, though they may present brief relapses in periods of physical or finantial stress. (Such relapses may of course be alarming to the family physician, but pass rapidly even without symptomatic treatment.) In the present generation of patients, the virus has become so attenuated that recovery may take place in only three years, leaving behond nothing but a few cerebral scars, rather like the lobar lesions of whooping cough, to puzzle the post-mortem.

There is, however, one complicating factor in this otherwise promising picture. Epidemiologists have lately noted the appearance, in some numbers, of a new paperback vector for the infectious material. Thus far, its multiplication has not been followed by a rise in the incidence of the disease, and we may hope that it has appeared on the scene too late to aid in the survival of the new moribund virus.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Evidence is offered to support the thesis that the writing of science fiction is a syndrome comparable to Parkinsonism, and like the latter, will probably not outlast this century. This hypothesis, if confirmed, is comforting; but it should not be made an excuse for neglect of symptomatic therapy for the remaining patients and support for their families, for whom both diseases are both emotionally and socially distressing

RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS are no longer entirely strange to the science fiction novel, and if we have many more which just skate along the surface, such novels may shortly fall prey to Gresham's Law. The danger is very successfully skirted, though, in "Believers' World" by Robert Lowndes (Avalon, NY, 1961; 224 pp., $2.95). The book is a distinct oddity, and must have seemed even odder in 1952, when about a third of it appeared in a magazine (as "A Matter of Faith"); certainly it has had no successors.

There are actually three "believers' worlds" in the novel, each one run by a theocracy derived from teachings which are identical on all three worlds -- yet each planet grimly maintains that the religions of the other two are heresies. Since each of the planets can destroy either of the others at will, this makes for tight politics, to say the least.

The theological significance of all this is debatable and it's my guess that it's also quite minor. Primarily the book is a novel of action, with a plot of intrigue of awesome and perhaps unnecessary complexity; and the secret of the religion of Ein turns out to be a Chinese-box joke-within-a-joke-within-a-joke, to which you may be tempted to respond, "Oh, not so damned shaggy!" When the novelette version first appeared, I proposed that Bob might have been mocking the sterile version of Anglicanism epitomized in Eliot's famous line, "The spirit killeth, but the letter giveth life" -- a precise description of what happens at the crisis of this novel. Bob denied it; I think the book version can also be read this way, but I won't insist.

What is more interesting is that this remains one of the very few s-f works to exploit the world-view of Oswald Spengler, a philosopher-historian once uncritically

popular, and now more deeply in eclipse than he should be.* Lowndes has used several major themes from Spengler in elaborate counterpoint.

The solar system of Ein is completely enclosed in a hyperspatial bubble which provides it with a time-rate much faster than that of our space -- 25 times as fast, in fact,-- but doesn't otherwise block passage between the three worlds and Earth. The effect is to bar any real exchange of knowledge between Earth and the Ein system, since nobody who spends enough time on the Ein worlds to learn anything valuable can talk to his fellows when he gets back home.

However, Earthmen visiting the Ein worlds continue to be intelligible there because the whole culture has frozen. Earth was going through what Spengler calls a "pseudomorphosis" when the Ein system was colonized; that is, it was going through vast technological and other superficial changes which did not really alter its essential cultural stage; and the colonists partook of this disorganization. After their landings, the walled-off space and time of the Ein system jelled them into a "Magian" culture, contemporary in Spengler's sense with the abortive Arab culture of the 9th to12th Centuries A.D.; and there they are stuck, since physically their space-time actually conforms to the conventions of Magian physics (which Spengler calls a "cavern" convention, a strikingly just epithet).

Hence the customs, attitudes and fundamental assumptions of Earth are not only alien to the Ein worlds, but are becoming more so all the time, though only 20 years of Earth time (five centuries in the Ein system) have passed when the story begins. Notice how carefully this relationship has been calculated: Were Ein time slower than Earth's, communication would have been impossible almost immediately and in both directions.

I shan't go into the plot, which is bewildering, and made more so by the fact that the three worlds of Ein are so completely alike -- designedly -- that it is hard for the reader to tell where he is from one chapter to another, though it's absolutely essential to the story to keep track of this. Given Lowndes' premisses, I can think of no simple way to remedy this defect, except to suggest that the book might have benefitted by being longer -- a prescription Bob could hardly have followed with this publisher even had he wanted to. :: As matters stand now, everything happens in a hell of a hurry and a profusion of insights, ironies, comic strokes, plot turns, inventions, epigrams and paradoxes go hurtling by before the reader has half a chance to savor them. An even graver penalty is that, in this enforced hurry to expose all the important facets of this complex notion -- which would have occupied most other writers for twice the 10 years Lowndes worked on it -- the author's poetic gifts bubble briefly and then go down like a stone, leaving behind a prose which (except for its frequent wit) is no more than utilitarian. :: I can't very well blame Lowndes for this; but his book, like del Rey's (van Lhin's) "Police Your Planet", is not in my judgment half the book it could have been if it could have been freed of the Avalon corset. :: I recommend it, all the same. Unsatisfying though it is in some ways, it's packed to the eyebrows with ideas, and even its failures are unique. --James Blish.

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*The first two published stories of van Vogt were explicitly Spenglerian -- in fact the characters lecture each other out of "Der Untergang des Abendlandes" at some length while the Black Destroyer and the Discord in Scarlet crept closer and closer -- but vV soon abandoned this rather difficult thinker for the more manageable fields of blackstrap molasses and scientology. The Okie stories were also founded in Spengler (though I hope less obtrusively, which may be one reason why some reviewers were reminded by them of vV. I can't think of a single additional instance.

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They took me into the Chapel and showed me their Rotsler originals.

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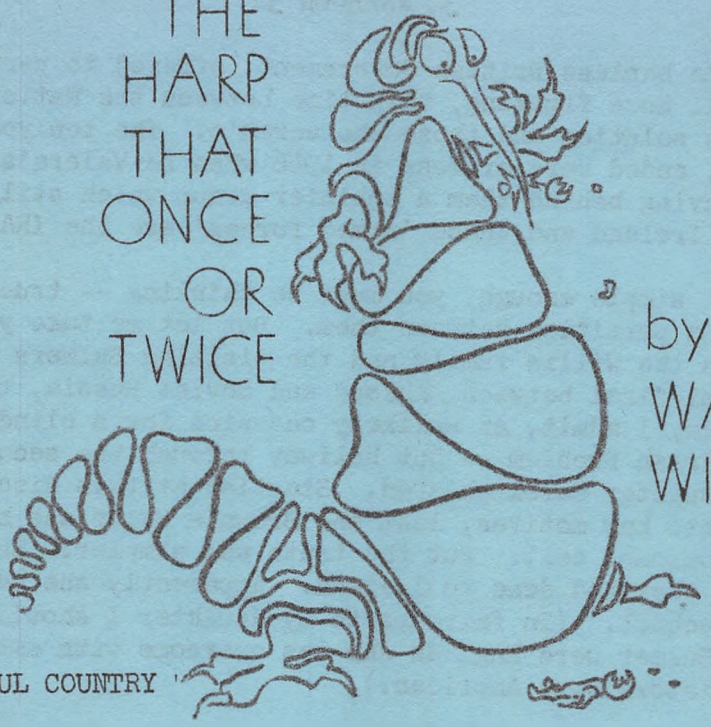
THE HARP THAT ONCE OR TWICE



by WALTER WILLIS

THE MOST DISTRESSFUL COUNTRY

Since I started reading fanzines I have become so indoctrinated in American politics that every four years, come November, I have to be dragged away screaming from the doors of the U. S. Consulate: but it occurs to me that I've never seen anything in fanzines about Irish politics, though I remember once being asked to explain what it was all about. So as a change from the HUAC, and at the risk of plunging all fandom into war about a subject even more emotional than "Operation Abolition", here goes.

My own first instruction in Irish politics came at the age of three, when my mother would sing me this charming little nursery rhyme:

> Tramp tramp tramp the boys are marching
> Hear them Fenians at the door.
> "If you don't let us in
> We will break your door down
> And you'll never see your daddy any more."

The Fenians were of course the current Nationalist Party Sinn Fein ("Ourselves Alone") who had started the latest insurrection against the British in 1916, the one about which Yeats wrote "A terrible beauty is born". And while I was listening to that song some seven years later my "Daddy" was lying on the floor of the tram on his way home from work.

It all started in 1154, when Pope Adrian IV "gave" Ireland to Henry II of England, in the airy way Popes had at that time of disposing of territories which did not belong to them. It may of course have had something to do with it that Adrian IV was the only English Pope there has ever been and that there has never been an Irish Pope at all to give the country back to the Irish. At any rate, the history of the country from then until 1921 consisted largely of attempts by England to take and keep possession. One of the most determined was in 1609, when the population of Ulster, the most rebellious of the four provinces, was dispossessed and replaced by loyal Protestants from England.* It was the descendants of these settlers, now called Unionis' or Orangemen, who in 1914 were ready to fight England rather than be disowned. After

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*Hence Londonderry.

the First World War the hapless British Government offered to partition the country, which resulted in still more fighting, this time between the Nationalists who were willing to accept this solution and those who weren't. The ten years of fighting, known as The Troubles, ended more or less in 1926 when De Valera's exptremists entered ordinary politics, leaving behind them a splinter group which still claims to be the lawful Government of Ireland and whose 'armed forces' are the IRA.

Well that's simple enough, you must be thinking -- true Irish in the South, English in the North, a partition between them. But let me take you to one wet July afternoon in 1958 when the Willis family and the visiting Bulmers were watching the World Cup Football semi-final between England and Soviet Russia, televised from Switzerland. It sounds, I admit, an unlikely occasion for a blinding flash of revelation about the Irish Problem -- but halfway through the second half Russia scored and my ten-year old daughter Carol cheered. Startled at this discourtesy to our visitors I enquired into her motives, lest the Brownie Group she had been attending was really a secret Komsomol cell. But the truth was simpler. She just hated England. Why? Because of what they had done to Ireland. Apparently she had just started learning Irish History at school. (In fairness to my daughter I should say that when she heard Ken and Pamela Bulmer were English she was overcome with embarrassment. She'd thought all our fan vistors were American.)

Well here, I said to myself, is an interesting thing. Here is a child of solid Unionist background, taught in a Unionist school from books which represent England as favourably as is reasonably consonant with the facts, and she has become an Irish Nationalist. She knows nothing of the events of the last forty years, falling as they do into that No Man's Land between the history books and the newspapers: all she knows is that she lives in an island called Ireland. The fact is that it is impossible to be born and live in this country without being Irish, and the Orangemen and Unionists who are still willing to lay down their lives for the British Connection are just as Irish as anyone. They are just Irish in a different way.

The Government of the South recognise this, so much so that their national flag is a tricolour of green, white and orange, the white symbolising the peace that should exist between the two factions; but the true nature of the love-hate relationship between the two parts of Ireland was shown even more clearly be a little-known inciden that took place twenty-one years ago.

At that time Ireland was partly at war and partly at peace. Southern Ireland was neutral, and Dublin was brilliantly lit, well fed and thronging with Germans. A hundred miles to the North, Belfast was blacked out, rationed and as thoroughly at war as London. Except that she had not yet been bombed. Despite the fact that she has the largest shipyards in the world, the experts figured she was too far away for the Germans to reach and need not be defended. They were wrong. In April 1941 the Luftwaffe unleashed on the helpless city the heaviest concentration of high explosive bombs dropped on any city in the United Kingdom in the whole of the war. Then they dropped ninety thousand incendiaries. The news that Belfast was ablaze reached Dublin in the early hours of the morning, and the authorities there did a remarkable thing. They ordered out the Dublin Fire Brigade. Every fire engine in Dublin raced North and before dawn they were crossing the suddenly meaningless frontier, their headlights blazing through the blacked-out villages of County Down towards the burning capital of their old enemies. Between them Irishmen from both sides of history put out the fires of Belfast, and next afternoon the tired Dubliners went quietly home, unthanked. Unthanked publicly, that is, because Southern Ireland was a neutral country and officially nothing had happened. Something had, though. It may not have been in the newspapers or the mouths of politicians, but the people of Belfast remember.

Your editor shocked me twice last issue, once by not printing the letter he got from Jacqueline Kennedy -- you should encourage these neofen: you never know when they might amount to something -- and then by referring to Wrai Ballard and Nan Rapp rolling downhill "in a gaily coloured lurch". Surely, I thought, an educated man like Bergeron should know that a lurch is a deep ditch by the side of a road. I admit that when I looked it up in the dictionary to confirm this I found some silly reference to the game of backgammon, but I've known all my life what a lurch is and no mere lexicographer is going to leave me in one.

LOST HISTORY

The oldest doodle in the world is in a ruined castle called Dunluce on a cliff in County Antrim. It's a crude drawing of a Viking ship, scratched on the stone by a bored sentry, and probably drawn from life. I've seen many relics of the past that are more imposing, but none had got through to me like that doodle. Why, I don't quite know. Perhaps it's the sheer unexpectedness of it, this casual triviality surviving when monuments designed to last a thousand years have perished without trace. But more likely I think it is its informality, this little genuine human thing by- assing the pomposity of recorded history from one ordinary man to another. I remember getting the same feeling of awe from a short story by Eric Linklater, a simple little tale about a man interviewing an old sailor whose ancestors had all been sailors, and listening to the stories they had handed down of their adventures... and suddenly realising with an eerie shock that one of these sea-faring yarns was an eye-witness account of Jason's voyage in search of the Golden Fleece.

Since then I've been on the lookout for things like that, and I've found a real example that is almost as wonderful as Linklater's imaginary one. You know the little dancing game that very young children play?

Ring a ring of roses,
A pocketful of posies.
Tishoo Tishoo
All fall down!

A pink rash like ringworm was the first symptom of the Great Plague of London in 1665/66. People carried bunches of flowers in the belief that they warded off infection. The onset of death was accompanied by a fit of sneezing. And 'fall down' was what 70,000 people did in that terrible winter which the children remember for us.

But for sheer scope of history the prize must go to the contemporary philologist who has put forward the theory that "aurora" is the oldest word in any language. His reason? In Central Africa there is a tribe of monkeys who at dawn congregate in groups and grunt "Ur-ur." --Walter A Willis.

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CREEPING FAME
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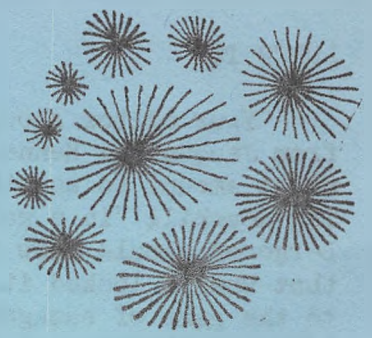
The following item appeared in THE NEW YORKER for the week of March 21, 1962:

"That comes as close to a physical demonstration of the old Biblical phrase 'Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,' as anything I know of." -- Astounding Science Fiction.

"The Gospel According to Macbeth?"



THE READERS AND THE RESPONSE

by Robert A.W. Lowndes

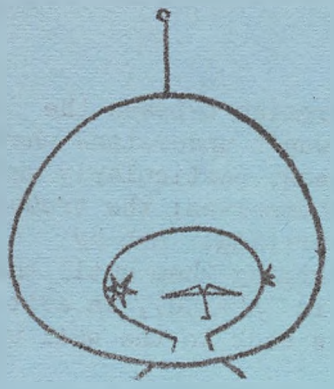
The points that Blish makes in Warhoon #14 on the problem of the science fiction author in relation to response to his work are very valid, to my way of thinking, and I have personally felt the disappearance of both -- both as a writer and an editor. The capsule comment upon an issue of a magazine, favorable or unfavorable, is of as little value to an editor as it is to the writers praised or panned; the off-the-cuff or symopsis type of "review", which is about all you see in relation to science fiction books these days, is equally worthless to the potential buyer and the author.

In regard to letter departments in the magazines, however, an editor cannot publish better letters, or more letters, than he receives -- unless he grabs himself a handful of pseudonyms and writes them himself, trying to compose the type of letter he'd like to receive, hoping publishing same will elicit some response from readers. This sort of thing has been done at times, I suppose, but it's no solution -- unless it really stirs the readers up to the point where they start producing themelves, taking the time to read and think and then express their feelings and opinions. At all times, when I was editing for Columbia, there were some readers who cared enough to write and go beneath the surface of "like" and "don't like"; at no time (except for the first few issues of the revived FUTURE -- that May-June 1950 issue drew over 250 communications, counting the ones that continued to arrive up to some months after the magazine went off sale) was there enough to give the editor any sure idea of what was really helping the magazine, or to be of any value to the authors.

Actually, I do not think that authors can justly expect really worthwile criticism from even the most devoted fans -- and this is not intended as a slam at fans. (There are, and usually have been exceptions in what we loosely call the fan field; and for these perhaps editors and authors have not been sufficiently grateful at times.) Since the early 30's, most of the fans and readers who wrote in to the magazines simply were not old enough to have read, and thought, and experienced enough to be able to make the sort of penetrating, understanding criticism that an author needs. Some writers, true, were not -- or are not -- interested in anything more than pleasing their editors and readers to the extent that repeat orders and sales will be set up; the general run of fan letter that comments on the contents of the magazine suffices for this type of writer. The other type of writer wants to know, from the eyes and brain and heart of a reader what he has really done and why it seems good or otherwise to a discriminating reader.

With both the general reader and the critic, there are levels of discrimination; but the teen-age fan, however intelligent (and many of them are remarkably as well as being perceptive), usually is not able to tell the writer what he needs to hear, as distinguished from what he wants to hear. I think that comparison of the "Discussions" department in AMAZING STORIES between 1927 and 1930, and that same (and just about all other) department of comments later on will show a distinct drop in

(Continued on page 37.)



THOUGHTS ON A VESTED INTEREST

by Brian W. Aldiss

In the States as in England, no doubt, one of the signs of increasing respectability is decreasing friendliness. Mats with WELCOME woven into them are to be found only in humble homes. James Blish is certainly right in linking the disappearance of letter columns from sf magazines with the search for status of those magazines. Those columns were often rowdy, slangy, ill disciplined, and thick with the opinions of cranks. In short, they were just like home -- and a homey air is not rarified enough for magazines in search of cultural kudos.

So the letters have gone. But the cultural kudos has not come. And the fictional content of the stories -- the emotional lift, if you'll forgive the filthy expression, they should give you -- has been diluted by didacticism, which plays hob with any medium aspiring towards the level of art. (Who started this rumour that 'Analog' is changing its name to 'Monologue'?) It is too bad, and perhaps just an accident in time, that this dilution trend has come to upset what, in its inception, was a worthwhile ambition, one we all rooted for; it's not difficult to imagine that something different might have taken place. For instance, well, there seems no law that says that when sf became a recognisable minor genre with its own literary conventions it should not have attracted 'respectable' writers, such as Graham Greene, William Golding Iris Murdoch, and C.P. Snow, all of whom here and there show tendencies to think and, particularly in Golding's case*, to speak in something like sf terms. This didn't happen. Instead, we attracted -- but you know whom we attracted and what they are doing as well as I do. They commit the cardinal crime of dullness. They are safe and failing to imagine, which imagining would seem to be one of the chief functions of a sf writer.

In other words, the search for status failed. Right men, let's recognise that fact. Back to the old drawing board, as the man in the Peter Arno cartoon says. Let's have letter columns again, and see what emerges. As Blish points out, three factors are involved in the issue: the writers of the letters (i.e. the readers), the editors, and the authors. The letters have different values for the three classes. Readers see that their opinions are welcome as well as their cash, editors get that nutritious thing Blish calls feedback, writers get a therapeutic mixture of kicks and pats -- at least, they do in NEW WORLDS, which still runs Postmortem. These three values are not equal.

Letter columns are of most value to readers. This I say as a reader. Back in '38 when I asked for AMAZING and ASTOUNDING in a piping trebel, it was the correspondence columns I first hounded down among the Stamp Out Footrot ads. Today, I still buy FUTURE and ORIGINAL for their correspondence and reader's departments. It's the old human urge that needs no apology to want to know what your neighbour is doing behind his fence: only in this case it is his psychology rather than his proximity that is the attraction.

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*Golding once confessed to me that the imagery in "Pincher Martin" was influenced by sf.

About editors: Editing is a frustrating job, always a compromise between the material you want and the material you get. The average reader won't understand what you are trying to do, which will tempt you to ignore his criticisms, particularly when, on any one point, readers can be guaranteed not to agree among themselves; the trouble is not that the customer is always right, but that he is always writing! But by shutting off this confused babble of voices or, even worse, by triming them until they reflect one's own voice (as seems perilously likely to happen in ANALOG), an editor is shutting himself off from reality. Surely only a man with his back to the wall will turn his face to the wall in this way?

For writers, I'm less convinced that letter columns are a good thing. Certainly an author needs to know what his readers think. But his editor or publisher (or agent, that father figure with a mother's problems) should convey this to him, levelling down the praise and toning down the booing. A writer is a delicate organism; equally axiomatically, a reader may be as neurotic as a writer; his criticisms, though mere personal fads, may harm the delicate mechanism. When some fellow wrote in the now defunct NEBULA, "If Aldiss imagines that he has hit on the Australian vernacular in "Ten Storey Jig-saw", give him a hearty boot from me", I was (stupidly) infuriated and hurt for weeks by this rudeness, though remaining unmoved by the critical point made. Praise, too, is unacceptable unless couched in terms that apply to the writer concerned. If one extolled Walt Willis' delightful column in Warhoon #14 by saying that it at last brought Richard Hakluyt the recognition he deserved, Walt would be right to take the compliment with a pinch of assault.

To a large extent, a writer has to be deaf to all but his own eccentric music. He, after all, is the one who knows best what he is trying to do, even if he may not know best how to do it. And even editors, who are trained to do so, often fail to see what he is attempting until long after the event. You know some of those enigmatic puffs above the stories -- "A one-sided viewpoint has its disadvantages, huh? But apply that viewpoint to a one-sided problem and maybe-"... you know the sort of stuff -- must often baffle the writer of the story as much as it does the reader. Add to this editorial peril a mettlesome correspondence column, and a writer may feel a pressure to conform on which he wastes needless energy resisting. In the past, he did not resist; notice how, in various of the 'Golden Age' of the magazines, almost all stories were written in one same flat tone of neo-realism taken over from thrillers and leavened occasionally by flights of purple taken over (heck, left over) from the Poe tradition. Those Golden Ages coincided with fat letter columns.

Readers are not averse to new ideas in sf. They do show a resistance to the idea (an idea strong enough to stand as a fact for some writers, myself included) that to convey something new and strange you have to attempt to find an individual way of saying it. Letters, after all, are generally bashed off in the heat of the moment, before the full effect of a story has sunk in, so that tales with showy punch endings generate more praise than stories with more lasting attractions. (remember that excellent bit of criticism in Peacock's "Headlong Hall", where one of the characters says, "I distinguish the picturesque and the beautiful, and I add to them, in the laying out of my garden, a third and distinct character, which I call unexpectedness." And his friend asks, "Pray, sir by what name do you distinguish this character when a person walks round the grounds a second time?")

In short, the correspondents are not professional critics. Nobody can expect them to be, but there seems a flaw in Blish's article when he complains because there are none of these unprofessional critics in the letter columns and too many of them in the review columns!

But I'm indulging in argument when I meant to luxuriate in agreement. I would

agree that for all but a few writers correspondence columns are a pleasant -- perhaps a necessary -- thing for sf magazines (or for most of them -- the late AUTHENTIC used to have a ghastly column, creeping with blatant puffs and patent bluffs..

Agree also that most review sections are poor, although this applies not solely to sf reviews but over fiction generaly . In the Oxford Mail, I run a sf column on what Blish calls the shopping list principle, cramming in mention of all titles I can lay my hands on, perhaps only allowing fifty words on each title. Within that space, practice allows one to say "what it's about" (like "Rogue Moon" has a matter transmitter), say what one thinks of it, provided one thinks anything, and add a word of comment (like this man Aldis Bugrys doesn't spell his name like the fool publishers have it on the title page). This review method is lively, inaccurate, full of prejudice; but the liveliness can be reckoned to attract non-sf readers, and the rest will be discounted by sf readers who know my name and therefore suppose (correctly) that I, being another writer, shall grind an axe whatever I say; at least they have a street plan to the maze, even if it's not drawn to scale. I'm convinced that sf cannot be reviewed in any other way, unless one has more room to spread than magazines and papers can allow: fifty words or a thousand, nothing in between. Otherwise simplifications creep in, particularly if one is addressing a mixed audience, i.e. the converted and the unconverted.

The situation is bad. It's surprising that more reviewing does not take place in fanzines, together with more profiles of an author's total work. Could not every fanzine rake up someone to review all the important books and at least some of the magazines? This might sound tedious; it might be that we would get a lot of nonsense written here and there; but, in the words of Wilde, "To know the truth one must imagine myriads of falsehoods." It is a principle not unfamiliar to science fiction.

--Brian W. Aldiss

LOWNDES -- CONCLUSION

age-level of the letter writers. One result is the faaan type of letter; another is the thoughtful, well-reasoned kind which merely shows the immaturity of the writer. Again, this is no slam! The youngsters who wrote about Nat Schachner and A. Merritt on the same level that one writes about Shakespeare, Tolstoy, or T.S. Elliot had the perception to see the difference between Schachner or Merritt and Joweph W. Skidmore; they did not have the range of experience to perceive the difference between Schachner or Merritt and literature. Not at their age. The gosh-wow-boyoboy group either could see no difference, or preferred the easier-to-read writers. Some of the latter never get beyond that stage; some of the former have gone as far as they'll ever go -- but not all, in either case. (I won't mention names but express hope that I've gone beyond the level of most of the letters I had published in the 30's!)

A jog of my imperfect memory urges me to note here that the letter departments during the term of Sam Merwin seem to show some of the best aspects of the teen-age fan and reader (as Sergeant Saturn showed much of the worst); but I do not think that this quite got back to the level of the early "Discussions" departments. (But in some respects, it was ahead of them, as a large percentage of the criticism there was concerned strictly with the science content of the stories, or lack of it, or the pseudo-scientific absurdities.)

With the book reviews, it seems to me that only under very rare conditions can they be hoped for in the magazines -- I'm referring to genuine criticism, rather than just reviews. You have to have an editor whose publisher will let him run what the editor thinks is good, and who cares enough for literary standards in science fiction not to care whether a lot of fans and readers are outraged by honest and competent criticism of current idols. Or past classics. This means giving the critic

as much space as he needs and paying him top rates -- two requirements which many publishers will not accede to. ("They get the books free, don't they? Why pay them?" "Look at all these letters slamming Knight? You've got to give the readers what they want, not what you want -- are you an editor or a reader?")

Outside of the magazines, the wasteland -- except for brief spells where science fiction seems to be booming, and newspapers will run reviews of science fiction books, but even then rarely long, discursive reviews.

The one place where there's still an opening, of course, is in the fan magazines. Difficulty here is (a) circulation, getting the reviews to the authors in question, some of whom may not be minded to pay any attention (b) critics -- obviously, the competent (and, after all, criticism is a talent which must be nurtured and practiced; while anyone can criticise very few are capable of meaningful criticism) have to be willing and able to donate a lot of time and thought. One sign of hope is that, through the years, there has nearly always been one or two such. But this is, at best, a sad case because a worthwhile critic needs to be paid for his work just as much as a worthwhile writer; and he is needed just as much. In the last analysis, only love of the medium will save us, because there sure isn't the money around to nurture critics. --Robert A. W. Lowndes

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THE VIEW FROM DOWNUNDER

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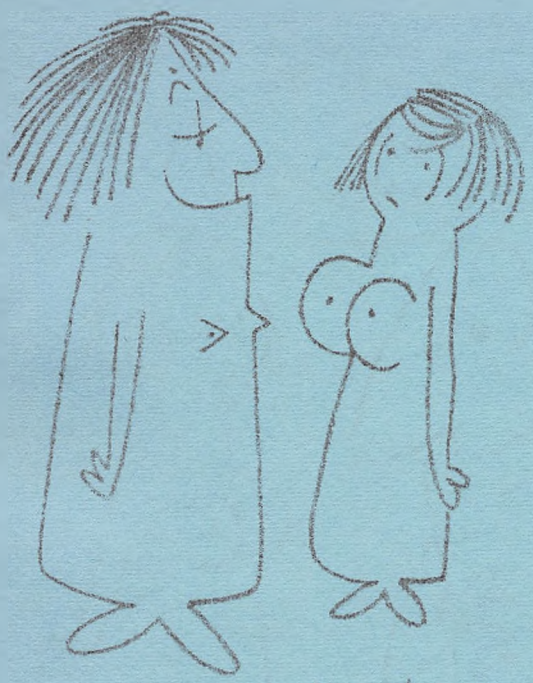
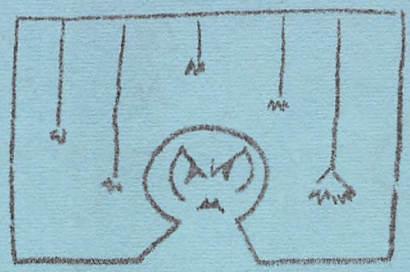
"Blish is right about Kennedy and his apparent lack of resolution on using a powerful "'lever' to aid his foreign policy. I think the basic reason for this is that Kennedy is a very poor politician. I'm not confusing 'statesman' and 'politician' as Bob Tucker did in DISCORD recently -- Kennedy is a good statesman. Clean-living, religious, independently rich, married to a beautiful wife and possessed of nice kids. He is honest, faithful and ethical. However, as Machiavelli pointed out, the great politician only appears to be these things -- honest, faithful etc. In reality he must be hard, callous, brutal and strong if he is to get anywhere. Kennedy backs away from the power at his elbow because he is honestly unwilling to use it. Such strategy conflicts with his ethics. :: American presidents are more or less prohibited from being good politicians. No doubt there have been some men among the roster who have attempted to manipulate rather than lead the people, but they didn't make much of a mark. These days, the President is a figurehead, a public-relations symbol rather than an active worker in the government. Kennedy's whole attitude since his inauguration shows just how true he is to the 'nice guy' image built up for him. His confusion on the Cuba problem, both pre-invasion and after, the Peace Corps, his bright and beaming speeches and press conferences, full of gags and irrelevant questions... they all indicate just how downright peaceable the man is. But I don't think we need peaceable men in government just now. The trouble is that the American people wouldn't accept a good politician in the office of President. Even the upper crust -- intellectuals, men in communications and local government -- seem to prefer the pretty rather than the powerful president. The politicians in government are frowned upon, humiliated whenever possible. I remember seeing CBS's coverage of the U-2 incident. Hagerty, Eisenhower's press secretary, appeared on the show together with a number of government and civil figures. The technique of direction was to show film-clips of 5 or 6 men in turn, each commenting on the same phase of the subject. Hagerty was usually last. To the query 'Do you think we should have admitted that Powers was spying for us?', A answered 'No, I don't', B was the same, ditto C. Then Hagerty said 'Yes' backing it up with some (I thought) valid arguments. But of course he had already been discredited by the previous speakers, if only by implication... He told the people what he felt they should know, not what they wanted to know. When found out in an error, he refused to admit he was wrong. This may sound incredibly immoral and fuggheaded, but an attitude like this is the basis of real political sense."-- John Baxter, Sidney Australia, Feb 26th, '62.

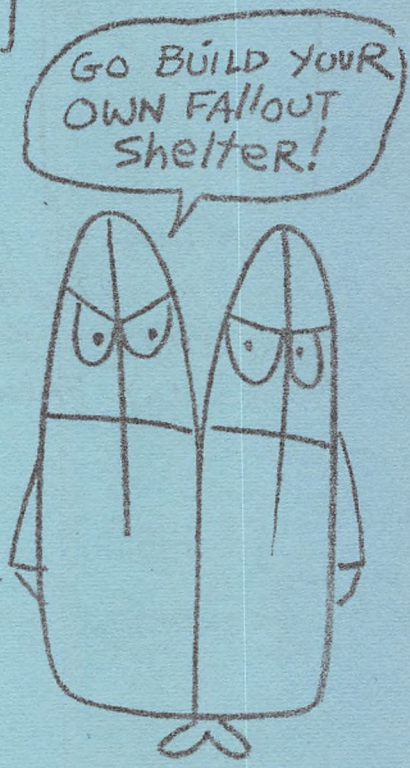
The Tattered Dragon in a Strange Land

by Nancy Rapp



When you've been in fandom as long as I have you'll know how to handle fresh neofen—





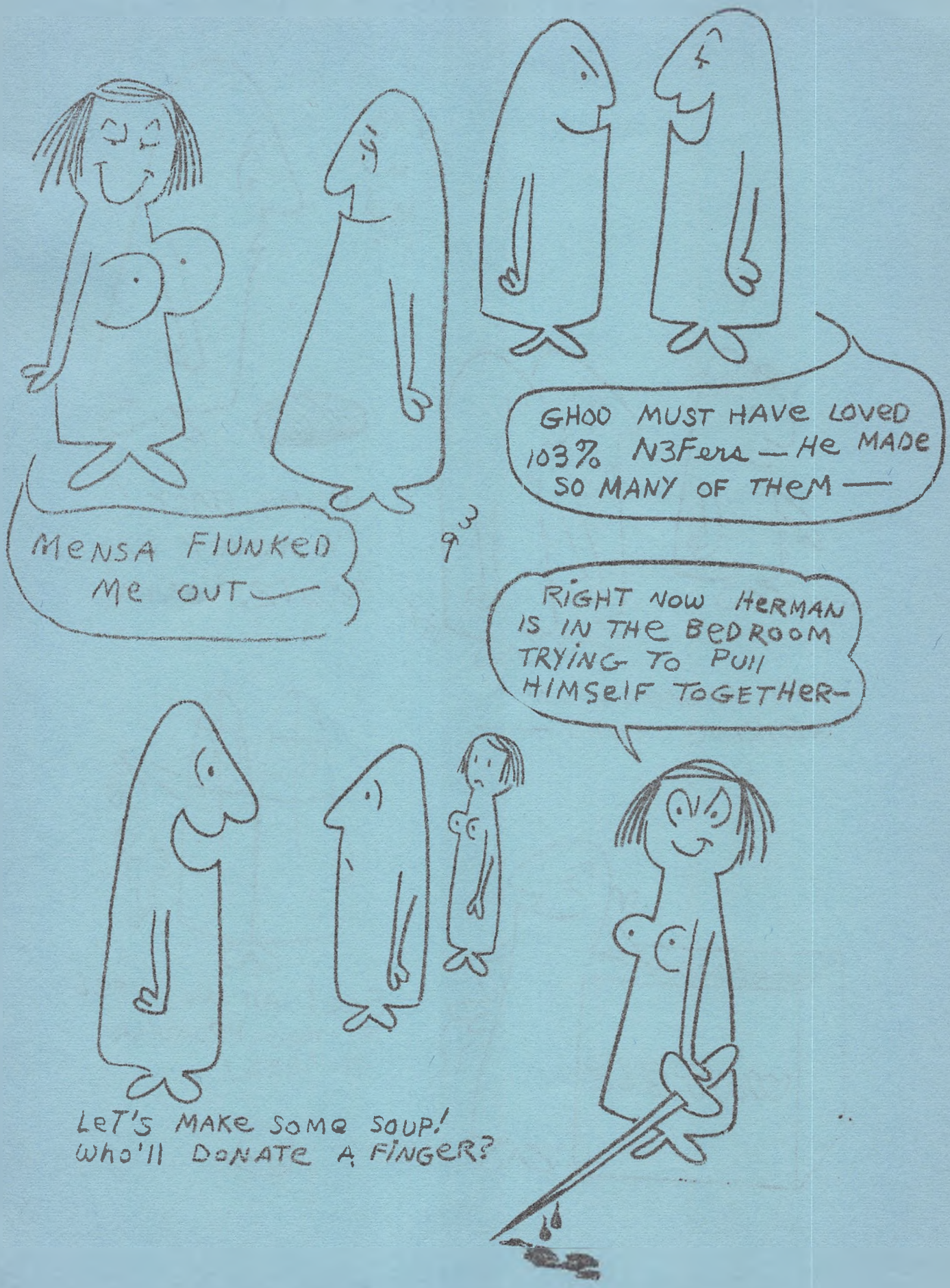
I only found one bathroom in your palace — no wonder you have a kingdom of nomads—

gw

Your wife and I have decided to become water brothers—

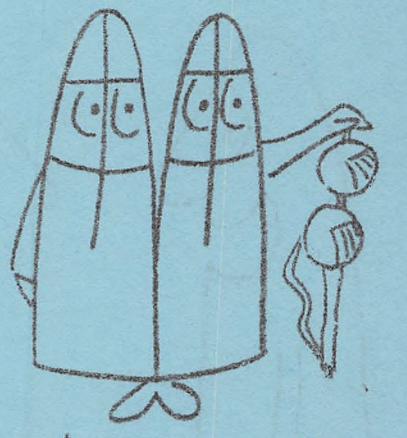
gw


AND WHAT'S MORE, I DON'T INTEND TO EVEN TRY TO GROK YOUR SILLY FANZINE-
LET'S GIVE WAY TO AN IRRESISTIBLE IMPULSE!
EVER SINCE I BECAME A PACIFIST THAT DAMN DOVE'S BEEN CIRCLING OVER ME-
I'VE DECIDED THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY IS A COMSYMP OUTFIT.

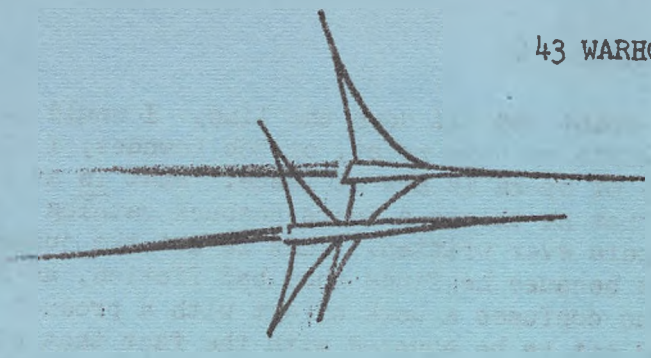

MENSA FLUNKED ME OUT—
GHOD MUST HAVE LOVED 103% N3Fers — He MADE SO MANY OF THEM —
RIGHT NOW HERMAN IS IN THE BEDROOM TRYING TO PULL HIMSELF TOGETHER—
LET'S MAKE SOMO SOUP! WHO'LL DONATE A FINGER?

HE'S ENGAGED IN GROKING ANTS ——

COME BACK! I'll NEVER SAY "ZOTZ!" AGAIN



See! All we NeeD IS TWO PROPellOR BLADes!



UNPREDICTABLE REACTIONS

As letters to this department get longer and longer, it becomes more and more obvious that the presentation of each missive with only "::" to indicate paragraphing was wearing down your eyes and my patience. In the future, longer than ordinary letters will be normally paragraphed and short ones will be handled as before. If the reasons for this change haven't been obvious the following marathon should make them so:

JAMES BLISH: Offhand Walter Breen's discussion of "Stranger In A Strange Land" seems to have little bearing on my view of the Heinlein book; and most of his points--the new ones -- strike me as slight, despite all the apparatus he brings to bear on them. Incidentally, he and I have yet to tangle on even one Hugo winner in public; it takes two to tangle, and though I did reply to his comments on "A Case of Conscience", the reply has yet to see print after two years.

"Promiscuity" is a useful term because most people have at least a general idea of what it means, which can be reinforced by any dictionary; while "genuine plural affection," "Non-exclusive sexual friendships" and "expansive love" are all private inventions having precise meanings only to their private inventors. I agree that my word carries pejorative overtones in our society, but this doesn't bother me, since the acts in the novel to which I applied the word are also officially unacceptable. If Walter wishes me to choose some less loaded word in order to give Heinlein's argument a fair break, he must first assume that I think the point worth the effort -- which is another subject entirely. For example, I agree neither with Breen nor with Heinlein that the abandonment of sexual possessiveness is an index of maturity; but I was less interested in arguing RAH's handling of sex than I was in arguing the peculiar deficiencies of his metaphysics -- one of many such choices that I was forced to make in reviewing so long and widely-ranging a book. (And as a matter of strategy, I expected that there would be no shortage of reviews which did discuss the sexual material -- and I wasn't disappointed.)

The program or story Breen assigns to Mahler's 1st Symphony is one of those things about which there can be no argument; it is oneof the first aspects of the work a moderately experienced listener apprehends, and Walter's account of it is perhaps the best I've ever seen, even including Mahler's own. However, this is irrelevant, as literary content is always irrelevant to music when it is subjected to the test of time. If this symphony survives -- as I think it will -- it will survive because it has musical content, not expressible in any other terms than musical; and to get to that, it is essential to throw the "program" out and concentrate on the substance. To use the simplest possible example, nobody who has been saturated with a popular ballad called "Moonlove" of the 1940's can again hear the french-horn theme in Tchaikowsky's 5th in its proper context until he has managed to expunge from his memory the sappy words that were set to it. Similarly, the man who is trying to follow the literary story of the Mahler 1st or of any of the major Strauss tone-poems while listening is erecting a wall between himself and whatever real value the music may have. (This is why I used the "Mazeppa" as a horrible example: take away the programmatic distraction, and the music is clearly trash.) In the same sense, I think RAH's little story about the Rodin is charming and probably true, but irrelevant; and the aesthetic point to which it goes out-and-out wrong.

Breen's remarks about the effects of opera libretti on the fates of the operas

composed to them are dead wrong, at every point and all down the line. I would love to see Harry Warner come charging into the lists on this point, or Bob Lowndes; I will forebear, since at the moment the history of opera is not at issue. What is at issue is Heinlein's statement, on the record, that he thinks a Sears-Roebuck catalog to be a superior cultural achievement to any opera ever written. This is not the judgment of a skilled fiction writer rejecting operas because he finds them bad fiction, as Breen suggests. It is the judgment of a man who confuses a work of art with a product of commerce. This confusion is radical, and not be be equated with the fact that some opera-goers go to operas for irrelevant reasons (just as some people read psychiatric works in hopes of striking some hot stuff); what Heinlein is telling us, regardless of Breen's digressions, is that he thinks aesthetics is a sub-discipline of technology. This needless to say, is untrue.

The analogy, and suggestion of influence, which Breen draws between "Stranger In A Strange Land" and "Venus Plus X" strikes me as strained to begin with; and of no importance even if true, since Breen's list of "ethical imperatives" supposedly common to Heinlein and Sturgeon could as easily have been derived from a file of the fan magazines of the late EEEvans, without bothering to invoke so many resounding religious Names. Walter is silent on the single major question of this kind that I raised: the extensive use of murder as a tool of the Heinlein-Smith religion.

I am sorry if I gave the impression that I thought the eclecticism of the Heinlein Smith religion to be a mark against it; I know as well as Breen does that all religions borrow from their predecessors, and had the question even entered my head, I probably could have recited on the subject as lengthily as Breen has, though perhaps a mite less respectfully toward old ESQUIRE articles by Huxley and other aspects of Hollywood Vedanta; but I simply assumed that anybody knows that religions, like all other ideas, have ancestors. What I was hoping to show, instead, was that Heinlein's selection from other religions involved him in a series of contradictions which he made little or no attempt to reconcile. If Walter wishes to point out that most sacred books could be so described, I'll agree at once, but when an author who mocks his fellow-men for irrationality puts together such a book, the fact deserves to be noticed. ...I do not agree that "Thou art That," insofar as it has any meaning at all, is equatable to Heinlein's "Thou art God." Heinlein seems to me to be saying exactly the opposite; but of course he's not consistent about this either.

My judgment is that the book is valuable in spots and well worth reading, but much less thought-through than Heinlein could have made it; and that Breen's attempt to do some of that thinking for the author is predictably fruitless.

Wilimczyk makes a lot of good points, but I'll leave the job of replying to his discussion of "Starship Troopers" to Bob Lowndes, if he wants it. I think I've said everything I can possibly have to say about that novel -- probably twice.

On "Stranger In A Strange Land",it's perfectly true that the angels in the interludes do refer to someone called The Boss, by which Heinlein may be intending us to infer a single God; on the other hand, he might be simply the local supervisor, like Koschei the Deathless in James Branch Cabell's pantheon. But I think this is another of what Wilimczyk calls Heinlein's 'tongue-in-cheek bits' -- either that, or it's one more instance of the elephantine, jocose bad taste of the interludes getting completely out of hand. If we are intended to infer that the Boss is God, then it's inconsistent with the pluralistic religion Michael Valentine Smith is pushing; but that was exactly one of the points I wanted to make about those interludes as a whole, that neither their theology nor their metaphysics are consistent with those of the main body of the story.

I don't thing "Stranger In A Strange Land" is any more poorly organized than most Heinlein books, including most of the best of them, but that's because I don't find any of them "tightly plotted". I think most practising fiction writers would agree, on the contrary, with Sprague de Camp's judgment that Heinlein has never been an exponent of the well-made novel, but instead likes to see things happen in a historical or slice-of-life or reporterial style, without the artificial connections of logic and structure. "Beyond This Horizon", which Frank names, is an perfect example. It is, as he says, strong on story -- but it's nowhere on structure; to cite just one structural flaw, right in the middle it changes its mind as to what it's about, so that it winds up not being about anything in particular.

I don't downgrade Heinlein for this; although it isn't the kind of novel I prefer to write, I enjoy reading it almost as well as I do the well-made novel-- or I do when it's handled as well as Heinlein, Wells, Wyndham and Clarke do it. "Beyond This Horizon" is an exciting account of the way certain things happened; it comes alive, and it's brilliantly imaginative; and I would no more expect it to have a structure than I would so expect of a four-or-five-day running account of a real abortive revolution in my newspaper. In contrast, take Sprague's own "The Stolen Dormouse," which tells a similar story but is put together as carefully as a watch...and for me it doesn't come alive, perhaps precisely because I can hear it ticking. Since in terms of raw talent I think the two men about equally gifted (my back is to the wall on that statement, but I'll fight!), perhaps this shows that the abortive revolution is an inappropriate subject for a complex conventional structure. This is the lesson I've always drawn from it, anyhow.

I suspect also that Frank is equating "tightly plotted" with "strong on story", but Heinlein proves excellent well that you can lack the first and have the second. Narrative drive is a gift -- or a technique -- all to itself; it depends partly from the pressure of events (either by making 'em happen fast, or by invoking suspense) and partly from imaginative pressure (keep the reader guessing). Tight plotting is an organizational matter and a story can have it and lack narrative drive altogether. Much of Bob Silverberg's work, for instance, is tightly plotted, but has very little impetus. When they occur in combination, as in the best work of del Rey, then you really have hold of a live wire.

Re Ryan, it's my own conviction that Heinlein in "Stranger In A Strange Land" is operating at one level of meaning below where he thinks he's operating. I am not impressed with him as a philosopher. In fact it seems odd to me that s-f has had so few writers who show any interest in philosophy; it's a major source of enrichment for mainstream fiction and always has been.

Hardly agree with a word of the Armistead letter, mostly because I would never dream of taking anything said on a dust-jacket flap as even vaguely authoritative. Flaps are written by underpaid sub-sub-readers who, 95% of the time, have not read the book themselves. but are saying about it what the sales department -- which hasn't read the book either, but has been "briefed" on it in a single meeting along with a dozen other books* -- things will sell books. In this specific case, the statement of intentions attributed to Heinlein, if accurate (which I do not believe), is a disaster, since the book in no way supports it... My complaint about the lack of a physical substrate for the assumptions of "Stranger In A Strange Land" was a criticism of

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*This is specifically the way it is done at Putnam's, RAH's publisher (and mine).--JB

Heinlein's logic, which is visible on the page, not his intentions, which remain unknowable.

Speer asks what's Freudian about "Gulf"; this would be fun to answer, but I have been pre-empted; my wife wrote an elaborate Freudian analysis of the novel in a fan magazine (most probably SKYHOOK but I'm not sure of this) some years ago. Incidentally it prompted a postcard from Heinlein bearing the flat statement that she seemed to have been the only reader who had understood the story. On transsubstantiation, it depends on what Speer and I agree to mean by a 'major' Christian communion. My tendency would be to define the adverb by counting noses, in which case my footnote is correct and what the Unitarians believe couldn't even creep into a footnote to a footnote. Without accurate knowledge of what people believe in Indiana and other foreign countries, I can't claim that most Protestant religions subscribe to transsubstantiation but I note that Heinlein puts such an assumption into the mouth of Jubal Harshaw -- the only point in the novel at which he mentions the subject; and I suspect he's right. I agree that the Christian Scientists don't have this belief, but what of it?

My feeling about the footnotes in my review (re Warner) was that they were further details in support of a point in the text, but being only details didn't merit holding up the argument. Nobody should feel obliged to read a footnote before going back to the main text -- this is a very bad reading habit. Much better to follow the main argument to the end, then go back and read the footnotes and see what they support (if anything)... Warner's remarks about Castillo cut deep; I had cherished some such suspicion about the man, but never could have put it so cogently. (New York)

HARRY WARNER: I think that Buz is overly alarmed at the extent of his disadvantage in these discussions. There must be a few dozen non-apa readers of Wrhn who whiz through your mailing reviews too rapidly to absorb much, simply because they have had no training in the highly specialized art of listening to arguments of which only one side is audible. Then there is the blotterpaper effect of apa mailings, which seem to absorb readers in remarkable fashion -- I keep hearing from individuals who enjoy Horizons although there is no possible way in which these individuals could have access to FAPA mailings. If we assume that you send Wrhn anyway to many of the persons who get to read someone else's SAPS mailing, I don't imagine that the difference in readership between your side and Buz' side is particularly great, and there must be only a few individuals out of that difference who are stupid enough to try to judge the victor of the contention on the basis of only your side of it. All this may sound like an unimportant point, but it has significance: if we get too alarmed about such matters, it could lead to further divorcement of apa publishers from general fandom, just at a time when there is better contact between the two vague bodies than at any time in many years.

I hope desperately that you get that essay from Virginia Blish. I haven't seen anything by her in fanzines for too long, I didn't meet her at the Philcon as I'd hoped to do, and I saw "La Dolce Vita" last summer. /Harry!! -RB/ The three inducements combined are overpowering. The movie frightened me dreadfully, because it struck me as a dramatization of how everyone in a large and conglomerate group can manage to mess up his life with only slight opportunity for this feat.

I didn't read Burroughs when young, so the closest parallel I possess to your nostalgia is in the Andy Lane series of boys' books. They were just barely stf. for the most part, dealing with aviation advances that were partially reality or obviously just a short distance ahead, although one of them centered around a jet plane long before this propulsion became practical. I know exactly what box in the attic contains them and I want to read them again for old times' sake and to form the material for an article, but I'm afraid that I'll regret it.

It never occurred to me to take seriously the final two movements of that Mahler symphony and I'd like to know more about the reasons that Walter Breen links Mahler's life with his interpretation of them. I had always believed in the customary explanation that the third movement is a musical hypocrisy of sorts, a fake funeral march, and the main theme is most definitely a parody on Frere Jacques. I know that the opening of the finale is traditionally supposed to have startled a dozing old lady into falling out of the balcony at the first performance of the symphony but the rest of that movement seems quite cheerful and optimistic to me.

You are digging a bit deeper for your musical reproductions, I note. This is obviously Schumann but I forgot to verify before leaving the house the exact work from which it's taken memory tells me that it's the Album for the Young but I have trouble remembering which item belongs where in all the collections of short works which the composer published under general group-titles. I can't think of anything more completely out of character with the superbly penetrating Willis column that it heads.

I have never heard of J E Pournelle, probably a damaging admission of ignorance on my part, and I can't imagine if you ran this article as a horrible example or a thought- provoker. The retort should be obvious and self-evident: if Congress is to be an investigative group, it should function as the other major investigative body in American life, the grand jury, in confidence and without exposing the accusations against the individuals unless it finds sufficient evidence to indict. Can you imagine how many reputations would be left if the grand juries had peanut galleries and public information officers and called up for cross examination anyone who had an accuser with some political influence.

Heinlein's letter brings up an obvious question: if he doesn't like to write and does it only to make a living, why does he concentrate on the poor-paying markets and fail to follow up the ground-breaking that he did to build a reputation in writing for the slicks? I suspect that his real reason for writing for pulps and books that will never hit the best seller status is this: he writes because he wants to convert people to his ways of thinking. This would explain his preference for juveniles, since the young mind may be most easily swayed by hidden propaganda. Frank Wilimczyk says quite wise things along these lines in the letter section this time.

"From Russia, With Love," sounds like a variant on a J D Salinger title which I can't remember securely but sticks in my memory as something like "To Esme, With Love and Squalor". I think it's the story about the soldier who almost cracks up and is held together at the critical time by thoughts of the ltttle girl and her brother whom he met by accident.

Originally I didn't intend to say anyting about the anti-opera opinions of Walter, but there's some space left. Maybe I'll make a FAPA article out of the topic eventually, since quite a few fans seem to be prejudiced by the libretto problem. I feel that the libretto can't hurt an opera unless it's outrageously bad or good, and the trouble that some people have seems to involve considering the libretto as they would consider the book for a play. To judge an opera libretto in this style is equivalent to judging the set of a play by the standards of great painting: to say that the scene of act two is not as cheerful and luminous as a Vermeer or as sinister and emotionally moving as the best of Rembrandt, for instance. Obviously the set should not intrude into the conscious except when it is needed: for an interior there should be chairs and they should not collapse when the members of the cast sit in them unless this is necessary for the course of the drama. Similarly, when an Italian tenor shouts "Vendetta!" repeatedly he is not conveying great literature to the

audience but he is getting across the functional idea without distracting anyone from the matter at hand. I don't think that the libretto for Boris is perceptibly different from or better than the libretti for a thousand Italian grand operas of the mid-19th century and can't imagine why it's so frequently cited as a great one. It is important to note that really great drama almost never can be set to music without the most drastic kind of revision. How many operas can you name to the words of Ibsen? Shaw becomes musicized only as musical comedy like "The Chocolate Soldier" or "My Fair Lady" There's an occasional rare exception like Pelleas or Salome whose libretto is simply an abridgment of the original play's text, but usually, a libretto that can be read without the music and stands alone on its own strength will be too strong to be a satisfactory opera. Contrariwise, where could you find a playwright who could describe the entire situation with the first 50 words of his script, as Piave did with the opening lines of Rigoletto? (423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland)

JOHN BRUNNER: I rather wish I had Robert Heinlein's self-discipline about writing only for essential purposes. I quit OMPA for that very reason; I quit getting around to acknowledging fanzines, so that eventually I stopped getting any; then comes something like Wrhn fuller of interest than an egg is of meat and I'm apt to write six close-typed pages.

Have to confess the Berlin crisis scared me blue for a while, mainly because I'd been doing some serious reading on the alleged and actual causes of the first two world wars, and if there's one thing that's certain they got started through a succession of pieces of sheer damned foolishness, a commodity of which we still have too much lying around our planet for anyone to sleep easy in his bed...

Interesting...other people's reactions to the Soviet Exhibition. Depends on how you look at it. It wasn't slick or gimmicky, the way Western exhibitions of that kind tend to be. I felt about it much the same way as I feel when I read an account of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London - it revealed a different area of concern in Russian patterns of thinking, a more substantial, plainer concept of what's worth being proud of. The thing that impressed me so much was not that the exhibition showed anything essentially superior to anybody else's (although I'm surprised nobody singled out those lovely hydro-fin cruisers, like water-going spaceships off a Frank Paul cover) - but that this has happened in a mere 45 years.

Still... I made myself a promise to quit the subject. I think I give my American friends the impression that I'm a fellow-traveller, but I've been assured by a guy I know who used to be on the WORKER that my views are those of an old-fashioned liberal capitalist, so I suppose I'm somewhere in the middle of the road...

The main reason I set out to write this letter was to get in beside James Blish and hollar agreement. Something has got to be done about the review situation. Over here the situation is'nt so bad:Amis reviews for the OBSERVER, and does a good job, Wyndham is in the LISTENER, and sometimes science fiction anthologies and novels are reviewed with the week's crop of straight fiction, though not as often as one would like.

But I've published around a dozen novels in the States, and I've seen one review from outside the field, not of what I believed to be one of my best; I've had one or two fan letters forwarded; the last four of my books have gone without either reviews or letters, as far as I'm aware. But in '59 I had a book out over here from Gollancz, and it was noticed in somewhere around thirty places.

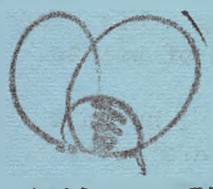
It's not that there's a lack of interest in what's being published. The current VOGUE has a (patronising) feature on Britishsf, and last week I was interviewed for

a BBC programme on the same subject, and I am now meeting more people than ever before who read science fiction occasionally along with the rest of their novels and who aren't ashamed to say so. We need - desperately - good and frequent reviews, intensive criticism within the field by people who know its own standards and outside it by people who know good from bad writing and are willing to encourage the good.

What the hell are we going to do to get it? I'd buy the lousiest magazine imaginable for a book column by damon knight, and I can;t be alone in this (in fact, the arrival of damon knight as a reviewer would automatically make some competing magazine the worst). But (a) dk is not God and (b) what I appreciate is the chance to compare five or six opinions expressed at length by people who are worth listening to

Is there somebody with enough of a stake in the sf field to provide at least a stopgap in the form of a really comprehensive bi-monthly review? It could be the size of Wrhn, as I envisage it; it would be composed partly of comparative reviews, partly of letters from readers. It would stick as strictly as possible to actual criticism of published work, and somehow avoid making fascinating digressions. SPECULATIVE REVIEW began as something along these lines, but what's needed is a publication which even though its circulation may be counted by the mere hundreds should impress publishers well enough to include it in the review-copy list. It should be photolithoed at least; with a photographic cover;it should be sold, and only sold, at an economic price (barring contributor's copies, of course) even if this price is as high as a dollar.(I don't think it need be.)

I am assuming that every working writer in the sf field and every aspiring writer who wants to get the feel of what's going on will sooner or later come to feel that this review is indispensable. The publisher would have to aim at at least a token payment to his reviewers; he would also have to aim at advertising revenue to provide this, without endangering the independence of the opinion in it. If someone wants a notion of the standard which can be achieved by this sort of thing, he should take a look at SING OUT! which does for the folk music fan what's generally left to duplicated fanzines in our field and does it with a standard of polish which impresses outsiders. I'd love to contribute to this review when it happens. It's got to happen in the States, of course, if anywhere. (London, England)



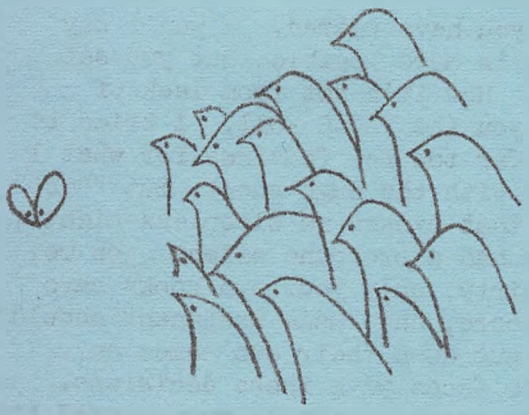
ALVA ROGERS: Walter's article brings to mind a question that has puzzled me for sometime concerning Heinlein. Why is Heinlein, more than any other writer of science fiction, almost always charged with in some way advocating the particular philosophy or society he presents in his novels? Because of "Starship Soldier" he's pictured as having a cynical opinion of man's desire for peace and is accused of extolling the virtues of a war oriented civilization. But Doc Smith's Lensman series (as Ted White points out in VOID) are even more unrelievedly warlike and bloody, and no one has accused the gentle Doctor of being a warmonger or a neo-fascists. Is it because Smith's novels are really fairy tales with an air of unreality about them, whereas Heinlein's are grimly anchored to present day realities and are logical extrapolations of same? Of course "Stranger in a Strange Land" was written and presented as a serious novel and not as sf, and therefore is fair game for critical examinations of its thematic contents and discussions of the author's motives and beliefs. But again I wonder, when is a work of fiction simply a story and when is it a tract? Can anyone really tell with Heinlein? :: Blish's complaint about the absense of letter columns and good book reviews in the sf magazines is one that has been voiced many times by many other fans, but seldom from the viewpoint of the writer. Campbell has argued against the resumption of an extensive "Brass Tacks" department by stating that all the sf magazines that have heeded the crys of hard core fans for fan departments have since folded. I hardly think this was the sole reason

for their folding, and anyway, a letter column such as ASTOUNDING had many years ago could hardly be classified as a fan department in the sense that Campbell means. There was a time when the voice of the fan was heard in the land -- and perhaps in the editor's office, as well. Way back in 1937 -- February, to be exact -- Tremaine, with much fanfare, discontinued the "Brass Tacks" section and substituted a department called "Science Discussion", wherein the letters would be concerned with discussions of serious and speculative science and not with the trivia of which stories in the magazine were liked and why. This experiment lasted just 10 months --correction, 9 months. In November, 1937, the department was retitled "Science Discussions and Brass Tacks" with the explanation that too many readers had written in complaining of the absence of a letter column in which they could discuss the fiction in the magazine. One letter criticised the whole idea of the "Science Discussion" column as being a devise whereby the editor could get himself a few short articles every month without having to pay for them with anything more tangible than a little egoboo to the writer. At any rate, the column from that point on was a combined one with the two types of letters under separate headings, and after June, 1941 the combined title was discarded in favor of simply "Brass Tacks". At no time during these years was the letter column in ASTOUNDING composed of anythng but serious attempts to discuss the magazine and its contents and to indicate likes and dislikes, and usually with well thought out reasons for those likes and dislikes. It was never a "fan" column the way the letter columns in the Standard Pubs and PLANET were, for instance. This serious type letter column is the type Blish pleads for, of course, and not the fannish type that Campbell abhores. :: Reading "The Wine of Wrath" left me depressed for days. I admire the Boggs intellect so much that I felt there must be something intrinsically wrong with me for not being able to view the world through such a Glass Darkly. Perhaps I'm deluding myself because I am at heart a cowardly man and unwilling to face reality and therefore deliberately strive to maintain an attitude of optimism in the face of all the predictions of doom that one is confronted with daily. Perhaps I'm a fatalist, I don't know. Anyway, I enjoyed "File 13" very much, including his "Fandom's Cornerstones of Faith" which hit awfully close to home on a couple of points.

FRITZ LEIBER: Enclosed is a subscription for the next five Wrhns. I haven't read most of it, but the Breen item and your musings on "A Princess of Mars" were enough. :: The latter item hit me particularly hard because I'd just been digging out a memory of a scene from "The Gods of Mars" involving Xodar, Carthoris, Matai Shang and Phaidor (ha! --the brave beautiful infinitely treacherous Martian pope's daughter!) to be able to refer to it in a book. On rereading -- some years back -- those books proved amazingly skeletal; apparently my imagination had supplied nine-tenths of the adjectives and many interesting footnotes. Just the same, the first three of them are quite a unified piece of work, taking us to both poles of Mars (polar exploration still being a sort of ultimate on earth when they were written) and introducing us to all five different colors of Martians, plus the plant men and great apes. I'm looking forward to a continuation of your rearwards time-traveling. :: And to the stuff about "La Dolce Vita". It's a great movie, with an amazing flavor of Aldous Huxley, especially "Point Counterpoint." Fellini promises to take a place beside Bergman and Cocteau. (Santa Monica, California)

FREDERIK POHL: What Blish says makes much, if not total, sense (I can't understand his continued aversion to reviews of non-fiction books -- partly because he keeps changing his grounds for the aversion: last time I heard from him on the subject it was because they were the cause of reviewing fiction titles late; now it is the incompetence of sf reviewers to review non-fiction). However, I think there is a concealed postualte to which I do not subscribe. The postualte is this: That it is the obligation of science-fiction magazines to teach science-fiction writers their trade. :: I don't think this is so. Editors have certain obligations to writers. Publishers do, in terms of rights, pay, etc. But I don't think the magazines themselves -- i.e.,

the finished commercial articles placed on sale for a price -- should be shaped to please or help or otherwise benefit anyone except the cash customers. :: I wonder, very seriously, how many of the cash customers care a damn about book reviews and letter columns. Of the six existing sf magazines, four have book reviews; it seems to me that is about enough, if not indeed preposterously too much. Four -- not quite the same four -- have letter columns. It seems to me that's about enough too. Maybe if more interesting letters were written more columns would be in order; I don't know. The bulk of the letters we get fall into one of two categories: Either they say, "You've got a fine 'zine there," or they say, "You louse, call this a prozine, whyntya print more LETTERS?" The others, from which I try, really I do try, to select the letters we actually print, are those which do say something about the stories, about sf in general or about Life...but even these have the common habit of referring without explanation to some previous letter or event, so that the casual reader doesn't know what the dickens they're talking about. (Any more, for example, than I know what most of the letters in Wrhn are about, for which reason I gave up trying to read the letters.) None of these letter types seem to me to give a large majority of our readers their money's worth. I acknowledge the possibility that this may be an error of judgment on my part. I would welcome hearing from anybody who wants to take the trouble to try to change my mind -- meanwhile I will go on running the book-review column in GALAXY and the letter column in IF, wondering every issue if it's really a good idea. :: I do feel that the "feedback" of which Jim speaks is a most valuable aid for writers. I could not agree with him more. But what would be wrong with a magazine like Wrhn, for instance, spending a little of its space on reviewing current prozines? Other fanzines do, I know -- but, it seems to me, very seldom. :: I conjecture that you may have considered this and decided against it on the grounds that it wouldn't be very interesting. I'm afraid I think that decision is right...for both of us.



REED BOGGS: To be different: some flaws of Wrhn that shine out like a wart on Bardot's chin: (1) The staples ought to be spaced so as to come close to the top and bottom and not concentrated so close to the middle. (2) Wrhn, with 56+ pages, needs and deserves a table of contents. Whenever I look through the Skhk file to find some item or other, I curse the 22 issues in which I did not feature a ToC, and you (and your readers) will do the same with Wrhn, unless you publish a copious index sometime. (3) Wrhn could stand more careful proofreading. Remember what Mark Twain said: "In the first place God made idiots. This was for practice. Then he made proofreaders." (4) Your covers, including the present Ku Kluxers being infiltrated, are gorgeous, but everybody (well, all right, not everybody but at least one person) is faunching for more interiors in color such as your lovely spaceship flare pattern a few issues ago. (5) "A Spectator's Clippings" still ought to close the issue despite the aquisition of a bacover. :: I suspect, too, that Wrhn could stand a change of pace such as a piece of fan fiction or something. Maybe the heralded VB essay on "La Dolce Vita" will provide it. At any rate I look forward to her first appearance in a faanzine in four years or more. (Just possibly her first essay in a general fanzine since "A Gaudy Treasure" (?) in MASQUE ten years ago, perhaps. Though she had a few poems in Skhk, or one at least, after that.) :: I still think Wrhn is a dazzlingly attractive fanzine and all in all, far and away the #1 fanzine. I don't see why I should "re-establish Skyhook" when you are already publishing a fanzine so near my heart's desire. :: Your reminiscenses of John Carter ought to serve as a model for such things: you manage to point up the utter shortcomings of such a work without destroying the sense of wonder you saw glimmering at the core when you were age 13. That's difficult to do, as I found in writing the Buck Rogers thing. :: I

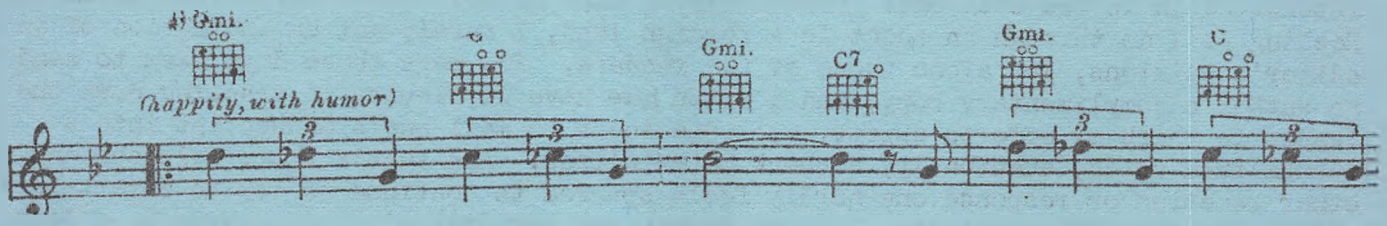
won't attempt to comment on "The Loves of Yesteryear" at the moment except to say thanks for all the luscious egoboo! :: Since yours is one of the few mailing-comments departments I read carefully, I vote for its continued appearance in all copies of Wrhn. It's safe to predict that the vote will be almost unanimous in favor of mailing comments in all copies. Once I contemplated the removal of MCs from Skhk's non-FAPA copies -- indeed, I thought at first that I actually did cut them out for one issue, but if so I find no evidence of it now -- and nobody seemed in favor of it. Perhaps it smaks of censorship. (2209 Highland Place N.E., Minneapolis 21, Minnesota)

SAM YOUD: This time I opened at a spot where I was able to take something in -- that you have an essay coming up on "La Dolce Vita", and I feel inspired to write you a few lines in the hope that you will send me that issue as well. I am most interested in people's comments on this film, which I too have seen three times. (The third time, eighteen months after the first two, I expected to find weaknesses -- in fact, I found all sorts of achievements I had missed earlier and was staggered to realize that the film ends on a note of hope, on a close-up of the young girl's face. And talking of faces, what wonderful uses Fellini makes of them! There hasn't been anything like it in art since the Flemish Primitives). To go back, beyond that inordinate parenthesis, I presume you have over there, as we have over here, the Fellini-Antonioni battle. I did not see "L'Avventura," being fairly confident that I would find it a load of manure, but I was finally pressured into seeing his next film, "La Notte." This was, in fact, a load of manure, but the big critics say otherwise. The fact is that their mean little souls have got so used to grubbing around in obscurities (the more obscure the work of art, the more important the critic's job) that the kind of light that shines from Fellini's screen dazzles and bewilders and angers them. Enough, enough. I would like to read what Virginia Blish says. (England)

BRIAN W. ALDISS: This is a very handsome animal you have reared. I won't say I found it more readable than PITFCS, but it certainly is more legible. But you set me a fine old problem with these FANAC and Hugo Polls. How it's not from lack of interest but lack of competence that I fail to return you the FANAC poll. I tried to fill it in -- it lies here half finished -- but I get far too few fanzines for what I say to count for anything. :: At least I did better with the Hugo sheet. But "best" novel? You mean the one that took up most of my time, that caused me sleepless nights, that sent me to reference books and to poets, that has had a profound effect upon me, that made me laugh and cry? Once you're past, say, thirty, only your own books have that effect on you, whether they're marvellous or mediocre, and "Male Response" should qualify as my "best" book of the year. But only bums put down their own names on these things. So I leave a blank. Writers oughtn't be faced with these decisions. This is work for fans! :: Burroughs is an author who should first be encountered at a certain age. He passed me by until I was too old for him. But your "Back To Barsoom" really recreates the spell of a first encounter with sf. Over here, a boy's weekly called "Modern Boy" used to run serials about one Captain Justice and his buddies; the paper folded with outbreak of war in 1939. But Murray Roberts' Captain Justice was the character I never tired of throughout my boyhood and can think of now only with affection, though by some old copies I still have I know the glitter has all departed; adolescence and bad prose is the most potent mixture in the world. (Oxford, England)

JOHN BAXTER: Which comes first -- the intelligence or the sense of humour? Walt Willis's recent writings seem to indicate that a man has to be very bright indeed before he can gain a reputation as a wit. I have never read anything by Walt which could be described as ill-written (though "The Harp Stateside" comes close in parts) but lately he has branched out into so many new areas produced so much downright brilliant work that my admiration has blown right out the top of its tube. He hasn't

eschewed humour but he seems to be getting more serious and scholarly without losing that characteristic Willis skill with words. I'm very glad to see this, not so much because I have a liking for serious work in fanzines but because it shows that fandom can produce a man who, when he chooses to be serious, can compose something besides a science fiction story to make his point. Many fan writers think that if they have a sf story published, their mark has been made and their intellectual ability established. This is not really the case, as it is simple for a fan to write sf if he has any sort of ability and knowledge of English. We know all the cliches, all the jargon, most of the conventions and usually have a few original ideas that can form the basis of a fair sf story. The dice are loaded in our favour. The man to be congratulated on his sale to a prozine is the new outside writer and not the prominent fan. We have been born with the science-fictional silver spoon in our mouth, whereas the new man has had to fight for acceptance. Walter Willis is one of the rare fans who hasn't fallen back on sf to say what he thinks. He does it the hard way, fighting against the tide in what is essentially a hostile area for writers of this type. (I suppose that is an incredibly fussy way to say "I like Walt's piece about Eskimos" and I'm not quite sure if the mention of sf by fans is quite relevant but let it be. For years, I have been trying to say something about a Willis article which was half as interesting as the article itself -- why should I succeed now?) :: I think Jim Blish is overestimating the value of sf prozine lettercolumns as a barometer of opinion. Certainly they would have given a reliable indication of reader reaction if their contributors had been a random sampling of the buying public, which of course it wasn't. Only a small proportion of fans are keen enough to write a letter of comment on a prozine, and these fans tend to be drawn from the established body of active fandom or from its immediate fringes. Because of their relatively wide background and experience, these fans have different standards to those held by the average casual reader, and their choice of a good story would on most occasions differ from that of the non-fan. Similarly, the science-oriented ANALOG reader will want something different again. Professional magazine lettercolumns are a guide to the general climate of critical opinion, not to the popularity of a story, and while letters of comment will generally compliment a story which receives good reviews in fanzines and the few magazines which still carry review sections, they well seldom tell you whether any minor story made an impression on the ordinary average reader who doesn't have the energy to write. And, after all, this is what you want to hear. Any writer worth his salt can tell quality from trash, but it <u>is</u> difficult to gauge which way public opinion is swinging, to tell which general type of story is most popular. Only the silent 95% can tell you this, and they aren't talking any more these days than they did in the 40s. ::



It was pleasant to see an ANALOG writer shot down in flames for the second part of Blish's act, but it has been done before, for which reason I doubt that two and a half pages were required for the execution. Also, the statement that statistics on human characteristics cannot be extrapolated indefinitely is not headline news. Richard Abernathy neatly tied the whole matter up in "Professor Schulker's Fallacy", an F&SF story of many years ago. Surely Blish can do better than this. I hesitate to criticise the man because he writes like an angel most of the time and with a flair that I find discouraging in the extreme. Besides this, he does a regular column for a fanzine, and people with that kind of generosity should be given the benefit of every possible doubt. But really...According to damon knight, Blish is an expert on everything from Ezra Pound to limnobiology, in addition to which he also writes fine

fantasy, poetry and criticism. I have so far seen none of this genius exhibited in "Accidentals and Nomics" (although the Heinlein critique in 13 appeared to be something of a tour de force). Perhaps the genius is only trotted out for paying customers? One can hardly blame him but it is a disappointment. :: Blish's letter in "Unpredictable Reactions" is more in the style that I expect from the man. The paragraph on music is especially good. I generally dislike most classical music (though I have a passion for, among other things, Bach fugues and stylised Spanish music such as Faure's Pavanes and De Falla's "El Amor Brujo"). However, Blish's comments fascinated me. Lord knows why -- I was left dead by the lists and counter-lists that were flying around late last year when Berry woke the whole classical bit. It is just the magic of the man that does it. What you see in Heinlein I will never know. All fandom ought to burn "Stranger in a Strange Land"in a vast bonfire and then go home to read "Earthman Come Home" once more. :: Speaking of Heinlein, are we supposed to believe that statement that he "does not really like to write"? I find it difficult, nay impossible to accept that. No man writes unless he likes it, and the men who write for a living are those who like it well enough to spend their lives doing nothing else. There are days, no doubt, when Mr Heinlein would rather not sit down to the typewriter and knock out his quota, but these are balanced by those on which he can hardly wait to get at it. Any author has this kind of trouble, but the fact that they persevere shows just how deep the dedication goes. (Sydney, Australia)

WILLIAM F TEMPLE: Like Heinlein, I don't really like to write. This has always struck me as queer, because why write at all if it hurts? Yet I find a large proportion of writers will do anything to postpone going to that desk and facing that blank sheet of paper. John Wyndham always has "just another cup of coffee first." Myself I usually just sit and wait for the unexpected visitor who, as expected, always turns up in time to be used as a scapegoat for my not beginning that chapter. :: Yet other kinds of artists, say painters or sculptors, love their work and can't get down to it fast enough. Why should writing be different? Of course, it's no strain for those writers who merely let it pour from their typewriters like water from a faucet. Unfortunately, their stuff is usually as colorless as water, too: anyone can pull an endless string of dead cliches from their memory. :: But the stress of having continually to invent new terms to express, freshly yet accurately, what those cliches expressed so well when they were invented is probably what we're shirking. Even a top executive doesn't have to make a thousand decisions a day. :: I agree with Blish. As if writing wasn't toil enough, it's frustrating to be unable to check from readers' columns to what extent you've been successful. Some writers say the only check they're interested in is the cash one. Personally, I find it not always sufficient incentive. Dealing as I do through an agent in a foreign land, I rarely get an indication of an editor's opinions, let alone those of the readers. Few mags these days seem to send an author's complimentary copy, and I often have have difficulty in tracking down the issues in which my efforts appear. :: One seems to mail one's manuscript into a vacuum from which, eventually, a check materializes. And that's that. Without any other reaction or response one hardly feels spurred to continue to try to entertain a silent and invisible audience. It's as though you were relating your yarns to a deaf mute. I miss the sometimes lunatic but always lively readers' columns of the old THRILLING group. (Wembley, England)

FELICE ROLFE: Walter Breen's article was one of those thinggs that is not easy to comment on, because he went into so many subjects. He went rather far afield from his theme, for instance in the discussion of Mahler's First. But as a matter of fact, the digressions were the most interesting parts of the article. I was happy to see some small defense of Heinlein's esthetics, because Blish touched on one of my pet peeves when he referred to "the esthetics of an engineer" in his review of Stranger. Without commenting on this particular engineer's esthetics, I must say that that is a sloppy overgeneralization. I have known many more engineers who were talented amateur

musicians, and vitally interested in all the fine arts, than I have artists or musicians who were talented amateur mathematicians or engineers. (It may be justificably argued that this is because I know many more engineers.) :: Speaking for myself, I've noticed that my appreciation of Bach has almost paralleled my growing love of math. Which may or may not be significant. ::Willis, in his most interesting column, says something about a psychotic society's being "so inherently unstable as to be unlikely to develop interstellar flight". (I think I got that reference right.) Wasnt it in Naze Germany that the V-2 rocket was developed, from which our space research program has stemmed? You can't discount the psychotic society quite that fast. (California)

WALTER BREEN: I'm no opera buff, but I got Blish's riddle right away. "Pace O Mio Dio" is neat, referring to "Pace, pace, mio Dio" in act IV, Verdi, La Forza del Destino, AND to "Pace, pace, o vita mia!" in Mozart, act I, Don GeioGiovanni (after Batti, batti...); "Pasta Diva" recalls "Casta diva" in act I, Bellini's Norma; "Profeta" is probably italianized from Meyerberr's Le Prophète. Do I get the scroll? (California)

JIM GROVES: Breen on "Stranger in a Strange Land" was most interesting. I think that the thing that gripes most of the detractors is the sexual mores involved. By achieving the conscious control of conception the characters are able to separate the two functions of the sexual act, sex for reproduction and sex for pleasure. The former remains monogamous and the latter may then become more of a social act with the consequent extension of range. The idea is nothing new to the human race but it is new to Western society. My main gripe is the speed with with Heinlein's characters throw off previous social conditing. tain't that easy. The most amusing thing is that the mental control postulated is not absolutely the only way to get this result, cheap effective oral contraceptives will have the same result in time. (England)

ROBERT A. W. LOWNDES: My appreciation to all who were interested or irritated enough to comment on "In Contrary Motion". A few return comments. The Secession Example: may have been badly chosen (and I really don't think it's important now, Juffus). My impression, from a fair amount of history-reading is that many influential and highly-placed people, on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, honestly and sincerely believed, in 1861, that a state did have the constitutional right to secede from the Union. Or a group of states. President Buchanan was among them; he believed that he had no right to prevent the Southern States from going their own way, once they had decided to do so. It seems to me that this was a relevant issue in 1860 -- and nothing that the Supreme Court may have decided after the war makes any difference to the question's relevancy in 1860 or 61. A legal question then. The outbreak of war changed the subject, after which, obviously, the winners were not going to decide that the losers were acting within their rights. Really, Avram! The corruption question: was not directed particularly at Heinlein's civil society since he took care not to state or imply that it was a utopia. (In fact, DuBois dwells momentarily on the point that it is not perfect or ideal.) But the military was described as if corruption did not or could not exist in it. Corruption can be very nearly non-existant in the early stages of a revolution or utopia, if the environment is right for selfless idealists. But where such has been the case, it hasn't lasted as long as a generation, let alone longer. Heinlein's military setup had been going much too long, and was too large, by the time of Juan Rico's entrance into it, for any "incorruptible" phase not to have passed. The whipping question: was not directed as to whether corporal punishment is or can be desirable, or ever entirely free of sadism. You can be sure at times whether flogging is sadistic -- whether it is sexual release for the person ordering, performing, or witnessing it -- but I doubt if a layman could say for certain in any individual instance that it was not. (However, Heinlein's description of the entire sequences seem to indicate his efforts to divorce the punishment from sadism; no one comes forth with a sadist's response to it, unless I overlooked something.) ... Admitted that this is shaky grounds as there may be a spectrum of sadism; I tend to thirk

of it as "Need of a substitute for or necessary accompaniment to intercourse." (Flogging of "criminals" would be expression for the substitute type.) :: Would like to make a suggestion in regard to the music debate, to see if anyone finds it useful. Consider categorizing music into three parts (a) serious (b) light (c) just barely. :: Serious music has substance which requires close attention from the listener. Light music has little substance, and does not require close attention; its substance and integrity lie in the composer's arrangement of the material -- and thus it should not be monkeyed around with. Just barely music has no substance, and does not want close attention. Since it has only tunes or beat or whatever, so long as these get across, you can turn it over to Rubinoff and his violin, or someone on the harmonica, and it really doesn't matter. :: There's a spectrum running from the best to the worst in all three categories; and any one of them may employ devices and methods of presentation used in the other two -- although I think it most often happens that light music and just barely music derives from the methods and devices originated in serious music. Any one of the three may be simple or complicated technically. :: Which works go into which category? Well, it's easy to pick the extremes, but there can be lots of valid disagreement when it comes to borderline cases. I think I'd put "Sheherzade" in the top level of light music, and the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto #1 in the bottom level of serious music -- but I wouldn't argue with anyone wha wanted to reverse the two, or put them both in either of the two categories. On the other hand, I'd dissent against any nomination for either at a high level of serious music. With "just barely" music: obviously even the most dedicated lover of serious music is going to like some tunes -- for nostalgic reasons if no other. The odds are that if you like "Willow Weep For Me", for example, you'll prefer one arrangement to another, or have one favorite arrangement and think some arrangements poor, bad, or outrageous. But here I think it's pretty much a matter of individual choice, and the various arrangements of a popular songcan't be assessed in the way one would assess a work of serious music. :: It goes without saying that the fact that a work in question is serious music (requiring close attention) does not mean that the work is good, or that you'll feel it was worth your attention after you've heard it -- once, or many times. But you cannot assess whether there is anything there for you in a work of serious music without paying close attention. (Oh, you can decide that it isn't for you, just because you don't want to pay close attention -- but that isn't assessment; that's cursory rejection. No crime, no sin -- but let us not confuse what's going on with something else. Assessment sets up bias -- your judgment after you've examined the evidence; cursory rejection is prejudice -- judging before you've seen the evidence, refusing to look at the evidence.) (Suffern, New York)

GORDON R DICKSON: It's quite true that if the magazines had letter columns, I for one would be turning to them all the time to see what readers thought,not only of my own writings, but those of other people I knew, and those I did not know and wondered about -- in short, everybody. There'd still be a bit of a doubt in my mind though, as to how far what I read represented the readership of the magazine in general and how much it was representative only of those readers who write in to the letter column. Since even part-voice is better than none, however, I suppose you'd better put me down as a mild for. :: If the authors would write in and talk technical about each others stuff, this would indeed be fine -- not only for the ones criticizing and being criticized, but for those beginners hovering on the brink of writing and interested in knowing what else there might be to the birth of a story other than a fortunate flash of lighting. The trouble is that good letter writers among writers like Jim are in the minority. Too many are like your dishonorable undersigned, who with the best of intentions lets his correspondence pile up until sheer terror drives him to acknowledge at least part of it. (Minnesota)

CHARLES WELLS: Since I haven't read "Stranger in a Strange Land" what comments I have on Breen's article must be of the nit-picking kind.

In the first place, it seems to me that his statement on page 21, beginning of the last paragraph, is a non-sequitur, He says, "The 'miracles' worked by Smith -- so far from being ridiculous as Blish seems to think -- are actually the precise ones traditionally ascribed to prophets from Jesus on down or up as the case may be, and they are not nearly as fabulous, it would seem, as some ascribed to Apollonious of Tyana." How does the fact that they are traditionally ascribed to prophets like Jesus keep them from being ridiculous? In the first place, did Blish think that the very idea of anyone performing such miracles is ridiculous, or did he think that they were ridiculous in the context of the novel, which was (perhaps) otherwise more levelheaded? Breen seems to be defending Heinlein against the latter charge, by pointing out that they are indeed an integral part of the novel. But I wonder if Blish wasn't thinking of the former. If it is ridiculous to contemplate anyone performing such miracles (which from the various descriptions I have read sound more like Superman than Jesus), then however tightly knit into the symbolism of the novel they are, they are still ridiculous. Unless, that is, one wishes to consider "Stranger in a Strange Land" fantasy rather than science-fiction.

Second, the discussion of syncretic religions on page 19. While it is true that Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism (the only three I know much about) are eclectic, insofar as practices and particular peripheral doctrines go, it is not true that they are eclectic at the core. In fact, Breen, in the first paragraph of part four, says what I want to say: "/the religions/are a jumble of accretions from numerous sources onto the particular individual approaches which make each unique." Christianity and Buddhism, at least, are even today stamped indelibly with the personality of their respective founders, regardless of how much this core of the religion is overlaid by accretions from other sources. And Judaism has always seemed to me to have as definite a personality as the other three (admittedly a subjective view) which may indicate merely that the founder's name is lost.

But if Blish is criticizing the Heinlein-Smith religion as being eclectic at the core, then Breen does not answer his criticism at all. Religions eclectic at the core seem not be be viable. I think an obvious example of such religion is Hitler's religion of the Aryan people. Another one may be Liberal Catholicism, a curious mixture of Eastern spiritualism and Roman Catholic liturgy, which I have not heard hide nor hair of for several years.

The various possible counter-examples to my thesis, that completely syncretic religions are not viable, which Breen might propose, are Baha'iism, Shinto, Hinduism, and similar types. But Shinto and Hinduism are part of a national culture, and the cultural core replaces the personality of the founder as a unifying force. And regardless of all its talk about being the fulfillment of all religions, and regardless of its entirely laudable ideas on world unity, Baha'i has always seemed to me to reflect preeminently the personality of its founder, Baha'u'llah, who, regardless of whether he was really the Last Prophet or not, seems to have been a true genius -- unlike this near-contemporary, Josepth Smith. (The fact that there are several million Mormon and only several thousand Baha'is merely proves my belief, as far as I am concerned.)

Now that I have demolished Walter Breen (I should live so long!) we proceed to Walter Willis, whom I have no intention of demolishing; else, what would we do with all that money?

It seems to me that Walt contradicts himself in the second paragraph. If our appreciation of beauty is based on functional efficiency, how do we come to have preju-

dices against certain life-forms? Well, anyway, whether he contradicts himself or not, he certainly raises the question. Is it that we appreciate functional efficiency except when our prejudices interfere? Or are we sometimes prejudiced in favor of functionally inefficient forms for other reasons? (Are large breasts functionally efficient?) Walt doesn't investigate these questions, but goes on to talking about science fiction; I wish he would do a Harp installment on Beauty.

The same thing happens in Blish's article. The heading about unicorns provides much more room for discussion than his article, which is about sf authors. Of course, in both Willis's case and Blish's, the articles' main subjects are not something which I can discuss, since I am neither a writer nor an Eskimo, whereas, being a mathematics major with a philosophic bent, the subjects that they pass over do interest me. Maybe I'll write an article about beautiful nonexistent unicorns (with big breasts). Flippancy aside, I don't want to detract from either of the articles; they were well-written and interesting.

Perhaps authors like Blish who want feedback from their readers could allow their addresses to become generally known in fandom, along with their desire to receive letters from readers. I realize that fandom is small, and probably a biased sample, but I expect they would get letters galore if they indicated that they wanted them, even if they let it be known that they would not have time to acknowledge them all.

I am woefully impressed by the first section of "File 13". Boggs can write! It's too bad Boggs isn't Bertrand Russell; if he were, this little example of literate temper-tantrum might get published in pamphlets and distributed all over the world by sincere, sign-carrying prophets of doom and maybe even do some good. It's certainly far more impressive than most doom-literature and more effective too, for instead of saying, in effect, "Prepare to meet your maker!", he compresses all the tragedy of human existence (well, practically) into a kind of sideways invective that doesn't impress you until you have read it three times.

Instead of detailedly listing all the things I think are wrong with Jerry Pournelle's article, I am going to concentrate on one thing. Why is he "unalterably" (a self-damning word if I ever heard one) opposed to Federal Aid to Education merely because Congress will 'supervise its expenditure." "Supervising expenditure" doesn't NECESSARILY mean Congress will tell teachers what they have to teach or require godless communist textbooks to be used or something equally horrendous. If I find it quite within the bounds of reason to believe that "supervising expenditure" will amount to things like making sure the money doesn't go into the pockets of the principals, keeping it from being used to construct grandiose stadiums which dwarf the twenty-years out-of-date classroom buildings, and that sort of thing. To be sure, it might result in a requirement that only integrated schools can receive money, but that would hardly be anything but constitutional: the Fourteenth Amendment is more explicit than some people think it is. Maybe there is where Pournelle's objection lies. If it is, well, frankly, I don't think it will ever do anything BUT lie there. (Ohio)

LARRY McCOMBS: I certainly would hate to see the mailing comments dropped from general circulation copies of Wrhn. Though I am not even on the waiting-list of SAPS or FAPA, I find your discussions of matters dealing with the apas to be consistently interesting, and often containing ideas which I can apply in more general contexts.

It seems to me that the reason Heinlein's viewpoint on sex is "misunderstood" is that Heinlein himself doesn't really understand it. He knows intellectually that he wants to support what Ted White has termed "expansive love," but he fails when he tries to actually depict this non-jealous love in action. Although he wants us to feel that any form of sensual pleasure between water brothers is an aid to growing closer and is

completely natural, he still has a slight leer in his eye as he describes these sexual contacts.

To some extent, I think that Heinlein is aware of this short-coming. He knows that his own prejudice against homosexuality is a defect, but he cannot quite overcome it. Breen fails to point out, though, that both Jubal's prejudice against homosexuality, and Caxton's against orgies, are over-ruled by the progress of the plot. Heinlein never brings himself to describe more than the slightest physical love-making between male water brothers, but he certainly implies that it will occur when the water -brothers have become more adept in the Martian language and thought.

I got the impression in my first reading of the book that the essential quality for fine art was not "story-telling" as such, but the containing of ideas and concepts which the viewer may grok in depth. Thus the statue which graces the cover-jacket doesn't really tell much of a story, but it provides many ideas and concepts which a thoughtful man will be able to meditate upon at length. As Harshaw points out.

There is one point at which I feel that Heinlein made a severe mistake. He draws upon the common tendencies of the great religious masters for most of his characteristics of the Smith religion, with one glaring exception. Smith uses his supernatural powers to destroy persons who are not attempting to correctly grok a given situation, but are acting to decrease growth or growing closer. In all the religions with which I am familiar, the adept renounces his right to harm other beings when they are wrong, but rather allows them to harm him. Gandhi expressed these ideas quite clearly, explaining why even the man who "knows" the truth must not use violence to harm those who are "doing wrong": "Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes." Heinlein rather begs the question by having Smith hurl these people into another dimension, rather than kill them, and implying that they'll have another chance in the next life anyhow. Here I think that Heinlein has erred in applying to his primary religion a concept which is normally associated only with secondary religion

As Breen points out, the "soup ceremony" was a parallel to Christian ritual cannibalism. But it also serves to exphasize the attitude toward death among the members of the Inner Circle. A few moments before, Jubal had been heartbroken and ready to commit suicide because of Smith's death. Now he shares the understanding of the unimportance and jubilation of physical death to such an extent that he feels it an honor to partake in this small ceremony, deliberately given an everyday mundane touch. The faut that Smith has died physically is not even important enough to bother with a fancy ceremony.

And, when you consider it rationally, isn't it more "natural" to do honor to a departed brother in this fashion than by sealing his body within some sort of box and burying it in the ground or in a tomb to stretch its dissolution out over a period of centuries, allowing his body to remain in its unnatural soulless awkward state rather than permitting it to return to the cycle of nature where it belongs?

Smith's death seems to me to serve a very definite purpose. The fact that he walks calmly to his death, speaks lovingly to his murderers, and dies with a smile · while trying to explain to them that "Thou art God," is such a parallel to the death of all religious martyrs that it could not be accidental. There is nothing quite so deep-seated in man as the fear of death. To see a man go happily to his death, trying to impart his love to those who are killing him, is perhaps the most emotionally stirring experience the ordinary man can undergo. Those who watched Smith die will begin to wonder. As long as he was hidden away in the temple, he was an evil villian

plotting to destroy them and their church. But when he walks out to save them with his love, and dies at their hands still trying to do so, their villainous stereotypes do not fit so well... You will notice that the Fosterites also went willingly to their death when called by the personal message of God, but theirs was a selfish death. Those to be taken went joyously because they expected rich rewards above. The ability to endure a painful death while trying to help those who hate him was something quite different in Smith.

In his death, Smith at last exercises the principle of Satyagraha or "non-violence" which has been so conspicuously absent throughout the book.

I wonder if Blish couldn't talk Davidson or some other sympathetic editor into mentioning this fact in his editorial column. If the readers knew how few letters an author receives, I'm sure they'd write more often. I never bothered to do so because I assumed that my letter would be one of hundreds or thousands, and would be of no significance for any purpose other than a little egoboo for me if it were printed.

One problem is that the circuit becomes one-way. Blish is one of the few professional writers who has (or will take) the time to respond to his readers in any way other than another story. If he merely wants to listen to the readers discuss his stories (as they would in a prozine letter column) he need only subscribe to the dozen or so fanzines which currently carry on discussion of stf stories. But if he wants someone to really give him personal and perceptive criticism, he must show a willingness to listen and respond. If other authors feel as he does, why don't they get together and publish a fanzine, or become regular contributors to an existing one (such as Wrhn) and take part in active discussion with their readers? But when Heinlein writes to say that he won't take the effort to offer any comments upon the criticism and discussion of his books, he certainly throws a wet blanket on any attempt to communicate with him about them.

The one point which Pournelle fails to take into account is the use of congressional exposure as a political weapon. The Committee certainly has the right to make known to Congress and to the people facts which it discovers. Likewise the President has many special powers which he may invoke in emergencies. If the President were to delcare the country to be in a perpetual state of emergency, grant himself a perpetual right to his most extreme emergency powers, and begin using them to further his own political ends, he would be acting within his legal powers, but the nation would soon rise up against him (I hope). This is approximately what the House Un-American Activities Committee has done, however. It has been given a perpetual license to go on investigating from now till the Second Coming (something totally unprecedented for investigative committees), it has made use of its powers of subpoena and inquiry in extreme fashion, often playing outrageous games for the sake of publicity, and frequently using its power of exposure to make political threats. Its Congressional immunity enables it to go about claiming that various people are Communists or fellow-travelers, withholding its sources of information as confidentail, and immune from retaliation or even fair chance for rebuttal by its victims. At this point, the Committee, in my opinion, has exceeded its authority, even though it is within the letter of the law. It has made frequent and injudicious use of powers which were intended for sparing and careful use.

Also, most people have not denied the Committee's right to "exposure", but have protested that it accomplishes its name-calling while pretending to "investigate." A witness is asked questions, not to add information to that possessed by either the Committee or the public, but to enable the committee to set before the public certain insinuations and charges contained within the question. It is this attempt to hide

its real purposes that infuriates most of the Committee's opponents.

Speer: the only reason we're not fighting a war with the porpoises is that we're not convinced that they're intelligent enough to be our equals. As long as we put them in tanks and make them jump through hoops, they remain pets. If we had no such image of them as cute little pets, but had met them as intellectual equals who asked us to quit messing up their oceans with our war games, and to please be careful about destroying the fish population, I'm sure that we'd have lots of people urging a war to wipe them out.

The question "Who will protect us if we become pacifists?" is not a valid one. A true pacifist does not wish to be protected. He has achieved a peaceful unity within his soul which forbids him to use violence against other people. Once he has a achieved this unity, he does not desire to lengthen, protect or cushion his own life in any way. The fact that he may starve to death, be beaten, or his wife raped is very unimportant compared to the mental peace of which non-violence is a vital part. Of course, there are "pacifists"who merely want to avoid fights when possible, but have no moral objections to violence as such, if necessary. For them, the above question is, I think, unanswerable. But it was because of these people that Gandhi insisted upon distinguishing between "passive resistance" (a more tactical weapon, used by those too weak to benefit by violence) and "non-violence" (a moral rejection of the use of force, requiring strength and bravery far beyond that shown by the user of violence).

Derek Nelson: I don't think that Castro's claim to have been a Communist for years means very much. It is obviously to his benefit now to claim that he has always known what he's doing -- otherwise he'd have to practically admit that the Communists have taken over his revolution. I spoke some years ago with some ex-communists who were at the time outspoken anti-communists. They were all agreed that Raul and Che had received Ccommunist training, but that Fidel was a well-meaning idealist with with Marxist leanings but no communist training or loyalties, who was being used through his intense drive for egoboo. (New Haven, Conn.)

FM BUSBY: We do not seem to have agreed on an acceptable solution to the problem of presenting arguments to greatly-disparate readerships. Since it is not my natural bent to go Upstage and refuse to comment on a zine that interests me, I will most likely continue to grotch at you on the subject from time to time until a workable arrangement is reached. Worse things have happened. :: It is not feasible for everyone in SAPS to foist their MC-arguments into your pages. You often write at good length on subjects that stimulate response that is also on the lengthy side. I do not think you would want to live up to an offer to print even my own arguments stimulated by Wrhn, let alone a possible 35 responses. You would have to cut very heavily, and in such case the punchlines would suffer unduly, no matter how fair you tried to be. It would be unfair to expect you to do the work of relaying all rebuttals to the non-SAPS portion of your 200 readers. It is equally unfair to say that your opposition has a fair shot at reaching your entire readership through your own pages; you simply couldn't back up such an offer, except for occasional vignettes. A certain amount of realism is indicated here. :: Ordinarily, a general fanzine contains its controversies mostly within its own pages and therefore distributes the diverse viewpoints equally to its readership. An apazine, on the other hand, carries just its own side of arguments to a readership that is automatically privy to all the other zines that carry the opposing views. With Wrhn, you have souped-up the GEMZINE formula of collecting a large audience for your own side of arguments arising in a smaller group, so long as you distribute your SAPS MCs or SAPS-inspired editorials to your overall readership. I do not like to argue with you in this situation, any more than I would like to debate in a very large hall with you holding a live microphone and me shouting

to reach the fifth row. It is not a matter of who is right or wrong on a given point; it is a matter of not caring to waste effort in a lopsided situation. : As you say, you can't be expected to publish the entire mailing. As I say, I don't care to debate before a small fraction of your readership. Answers, anyone? :: The near-uniform negative response to your "Whiter SAPS?" item was of course rewarding to all who take pride in SAPS-traditions. However, you should not feel personal twinges at the vehemence employed in spots; in fact, this is a sort of compliment to you. If Joe Neo had said as how SAPS simply had to reorganize, two or three pepple would tell him to go soak his head but not too long, in a kindly sort of way with a few lumps on it. But when you, sir, did several pages on the subject, it was all too easy for a number of us to wonder whether the popularity of Wrhn would obscure the judgment of some of the membership with respect to your proposal. In consequence, you caught a certain amount of rebuttal material over and above that needed to refute your statements, on the premise that Wrhn's prestige might have given your gripes more weight than they would otherwise have carried. And so it goes. (Seattle, Washington)

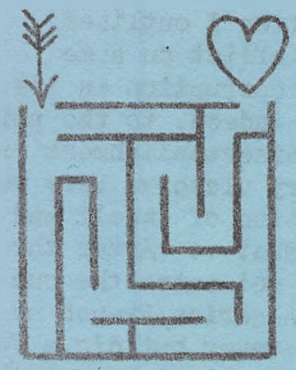
RB: The offer was to publish comments from SAPS members in "the matters in which they feel put upon" not all your "arguments stimulated by Wrhn" or "a possible 35 responses." Your analogy is telling but incomplete: you neglected to mention that I offered you the use of the microphone. I stand by that offer: any SAPS member whom I engage in discussion can present his case in these pages if he thinks it's necessary. In other matters his chances of being published are as good as any other letter writers'.

RICHARD ENEY: I suppose it's no good trying for the nth time to get people to grok the difference between attempted objectivity and being a patrickhenryite (say, did you know there was a Polaris sub really named USS Patrick Henry? Nature imitating art, I guess...) though I hoped you, at least, wouldn't make this particular mistake about my motivations. However, your question on a possible nuclear war between France and the Algerian rebels touches just the point of my essential difference with Walt Willis and, I think, you. If I may first bring out my magnifying glass and nit-picking tweezers for a moment, let me point out that Algeria is a bad choice since the targets -- the French -- are mixed too closely with native populations for area weapons to be tactically useful; Israel and Egypt would be better as your opponents. But then, Israel and Egypt wouldn't afford me the chance to pick out the flaw in the concept of repressing nuclear war by an unspecified social innovation. :: I'm not clear whether that's your solution of choice, though I'm pretty sure it's Willis's -- he chided me for not believeing in the possibility of "achieving a political break-thru" which would end the risk of atomic war. Aside from the objection I've already voiced to such a notion, which is that it's conflict and not some obscure and outre alien process which leads to wars (and that, therefore, any formal organization would have to deal with, not some singular identifiable process, but the totality of causes for human clashes), the case you cite is that in which the conflict is not between two enemies with the organization stepping in as a neutral third party, but directly between the anti-war organization and another group. Any social institution acting to exert control can without loss of generality be regarded as an aspect of government: what happens if you have a rebellion? I suppose the automatic reaction here is to declear that anybody who offers opposition to a group aimed at preventing nuclear war is automatically wicked and must be Wrong, but let's waive that question to ask the operative one whether our rebels could make the worse appear the better cause. If they could (and who can look at the returns of the last election without thinking how easily half the country can be deluded?) you're automatically presented with a situation in which the AWO is party to precisely the sort of conflict that has engendered the bloodiest wars of all. Could any such conflict arise if the pre-ventative for nuclear war were no distinct organization, but the will of the individual participants that things should not go to that extreme whatever happened? I trow not, as the chronicler saith. But tell me, since we're playing the game of

awkward questions, what would be the move of choice if the situation I outlined arose and the AWO itself had gotten embroiled as a party in a conflict on some genuinely critical matter -- say, half-a-dozen flagrant cases of corruption in its top-level officials -- and things went to the point of arms and, indeed, to the point at which the AWO was about to get presented the alternatives of disestablishment or troika-style emasculation if it didn't score some sort of military victory. Very well: does the AWO start pitching Bombs, or does it allow the destruction of itself and leave the road free for the various nations to start pitching Bombs? :: After throwing that curve ball at you, the least I can do is set a good example and catch the one you pitched earlier. The answer to what is to be done in a pending Algerian/French or Israeli/Egyptian set-to with high-fallout weapons is: nothing whatever but dig a few feet deeper into the ground for our shelters. I've seen a possible solution, but it's inconsistent with the basic assumption of my own pacifism (that the lives of highly-developed humans are intrinsically valuable), so I can't buy it though I'll set it out for you in a minute. :: For all I know the Patrick Henryites might be glad to see the A/F having it out with "On the Beach" style bombs -- both Algerians and French are Soft On Communism, after all, and those decadent Europeans actually allow the Reds to elect members of the Chambre -- but glad or not there's absolutely nothing they, or anybody, could do. That is, when intervention would trigger the use of those "On the Beach" weapons against you -- with the same results touching fallout that would follow the war intervention was trying to forestall -- and moral suasion promises no result (if it did, the situation wouldn't be critical enough to justify any other action even if atomic weapons weren't in the picture, right?)...that being the case, I ask you, What Should "A" Do? Strikes me it's about the right moment to apply that old Army saying about not knowing whether to shit or go blind -- quasi, whether to cop out of the responsibility for action by mental or physical disability -- when a problem like that is presented. :: It may make you feel better to reflect that even the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, surely no citadel of the death-before-dishonor boys, has been equally unable to deal with this N-nation problem when the solution demanded so some failsafe positive prevention rather than pious wishes. At least, they have been unable to advance any suggestion which was both plausibly effective and also showed that sortof respect for human life which, after all, is supposed to be the motivation for the soltion in the first place. In the November issue, for example, one of the solutions proposed was a Patrol of multinational Polaris-tupe subs under orders to fire their nuclear missles, anonymously and without warning, at any installation wherever situate which was, or was kept secret enough to possibly be, an unsupervised atomic plant. If the Patrick Henryites have produced anything more ruthless than that, I haven't seen it. (417 Ft. Hunt Rd., Alexandria, Virginai)

RB: A thousand apologies for giving the impression that I equated your comments on survival with Patrick Henryism. A quick check of those mailing comments in #13 reveals that anyone could have assumed from them that I was doing so, but when I said "in this proximity", I meant the subject not you. How you cast your ballot is your own business, of course, and if you thought I was trying to call you a Patrick Henryite you must have been puzzeled by my criticism of that type of criticism in "The Mind of Robert Leman". :: However, my question doesn't imply or commit me to any solution of choice; I'm not any more inspired on the subject than the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists or even Heinlein in "Solution Unsatisfactory", I'm afraid, and short of periodic prying up of floor boards in every closet in Siberia I can't envision any trustworty system of "mutual" disarmament either. Since we'll only trust ourselves it would seem that the only effective protection against this type of warfare would be those devicies that can neuralize the payload before it reaches its objective. Remind me to tell you of some of my other dream fantasies someday.

(Concluded on page 72.)



DISSONANT DISCOURSE

It would be more than a little hypocritical to pretend that I didn't find the last mailing exciting. If the one before it could be characterized as the Seacnn Memory Mailing, the last might also take its title from the subject treated most widely and most passionately. It might be called the Richard Bergeron Appreciation Mailing, since so many of you went to such lengths to make very clear just how much you appreciated my article "Quo Vadis, SAPS?". Most of you have a pretty good idea where SAPS is going and gave the impression that you also have a pretty good idea where you wish I'd go. While the agreement was overwhelmingly in favor of my thesis that SAPS loses its best members (the most famous Sap of all, Art Rapp, said "It is probably true that SAPS serves as a training ground for FAPA...") the agreement was just as overwhelmingly in line with Rapp's conclusion "...but this is not necessarily a disadvantage to SAPS." Since the response was so widely negative to my question "Should Something Be Done About It?", I'll content myself with describing the reasons advanced as 'good and sufficient'. The consensus is perhaps best put in the letter from Rick Sneary in the last issue and in the quote from Joe Kennedy in that letter; to which interested non-SAPS are referred. I'm sure I'll not be able to keep myself from twiting a nose here and there in the coming mailing comments, but the consensus makes extensive debate on the subject senseless. I'd like to thank FMBusby for his solicitous note, which will be found in the letter column, but I felt no bitterness at the response. As a matter of fact, I found it a thrilling mailing: one publication would fling me into a deep freeze and the very next was apt to be roasting me with egoboo. Why, even Wally Webber said Wrhn was the best magazine in the mailing. Comments on the 58th SAPS mailing:

SPECTATOR -- Bruce Pelz: I wonder at the appointment of a subzine, "CRY", to count the ballots, when there was annoyance last year over some of the votes having been made known to more than one person. :: Gordon Eklund should make a fine addition to the membership.

POT POURRI -- John Berry: I'm not about to read through 2000 fanzines to find the reference, but I recall reading somewhere recently a criticism of Ian Fleming 's James Bond story wherein the dective was able to compare some fingerprints and in a matter of minutes decide which ones matched. The criticism was that even an expert would have required a couple hours work under the conditions given before identification could be attempted. In light of this criticism, I was interested in your apparently lightening recognitions of finger prints seen an hour apart and noticed at a glance. As a finger print expert, your comments on this would be appreciated. :: The comments on pro-activity for the sake of pro-activity are as devastating as any I've read. I only hope the people who have urged you to write professionally attempt to answer them. They look irrefutable to me.

TELEKINETIC TERRACE TIMES REVISITED -- Lee Jacobs: Let me know when you find out who I'm a pseudonym for. It will be of great interst to me. In the meantime I've done some investigating on my own: Bergeron's name is on the name plates at 110 Bank St and has been for a number of years. He does have an unlisted phone number now, though for a time, when fans started calling at unusual hours, it was disconnected. I manage to see him occasionally, no mean feat for a mere fan, and he assures me that he's just as interested in meeting fans as he ever was. :: As SAPS detective, Lee, you might try to clear up a mystery for me: how does Cox plan to circulate that airbrush cover through FAPA? I think I sent him only 60 copies. :: I doubt that your comments on Wrhn as a SAPSzine were intended seriously, however, at the risk of being

denounced for Creeping Serconism, I'll deal with them for the benefit of anyone who swallowed them Hook, Line, and Mimeo Crank. "Less than 20% of Wrhn is distributed thru SAPS"? 42 copies (plus seven or eight which are retained as file copies) of a 200 copy run is less than 20%? And because Wrhn has a non-SAPS distribution it's not a Sapszine? Next you'll be telling us that because GRUE, SKYHOOK, LIGHTHOUSE, GEMZINE, STFANTASY, HORIZONS and others, had/have non-FAPA circulations; they're not FAPAzines. Let's not confuse the distribution order: Wrhn is distributed through SAPS before non-member's copies go out.The allegation that Wrhn is not "intended"for SAPS is too clarivoyant to be defensible. Unless that are rigid standards for sapszines to which Wrhn doesn't conform, the only way you can tell whether or not it's intended for SAPS is by reading my mind. And since you "firmly believe that any Saps member should publish whatsoever he wishes within the bounds of Good Taste", I don't think you're even going to try. As long ago as Wrhn #7 I hoped to Earl Kemp that "every Sap has his own idea of what a sapszine should be like, and -- if he lives up to that attitude -- each sapszine should mirror its editors ideals. Wrhn lives up to my ideas of what the most rewarding sapszine should be: a vehicle for the best work of its editor (whether it's any good or not) and anything else of interest that he can make available to the members. Other members use their sapszines as sublimation for letter writing and this is noticeable from their magazines as well as their statements. This is quite all right since anything that doesn't annoy the OE is the member's own business; just because a SAPS member doesn't get the feeling that he's eavesdropping on someone's correspondence doesn't mean Wrhn isn't intended for SAPS.

PORQUE:-- Dee Webbert: Does that male sex symbol on your cover have anything to do with the official promotion of the Seattle Worlds Fair or is that just doodling on your part? I refer to the emblem behind the word "Seattle's" not the drawing of the tower.

THE DINKY BIRD -- Ruth Berman: This was enjoyed, but it took Jim Blish to save me from having to leave it at that. Yours was the only mailing comment on his column that drew a reply. Jim wrote: "...Ruth Berman's principle of starting with an author's title is a good idea only if one is sure that the title is the author's. (As in this case it was. Thus far I have had three titles ("Year 2018!" "The Frozen Year", and "VOR") forced upon me by publishers, and I'm far from alone in this."

THE CONVENTRANIAN GAZETTE -- Paul Stanbery: It was amusing to see "A Journal of Civilization"used as a masthead title on this after I'd struggled with myself and finally decided against using it on Wrhn in the last mailing. I settled for "The independent anarchist's quarterly". Was the old HARPER'S WEEKLY the first to use "A Journal of Civilization"?

A. MERRIT'S FANTASY MAGAZINE -- Ed Meskys: Was a copy of this sent to Sam and Christine? :: I have a theory that interests create priorities. For instance, I've noticed that fans who complain that they don't have time to take more care with their fan writings seem to be able to find the time to travel around to conventions, do research on guns, or listen to collections of jazz and classical music. Why do people hate to admit that they just don't care to spend that much more time on their fannish writing? :: Your 20 minutes with Purdom was rather more than I had with JFK during the campaign. We'd waited for him over an hour in a tightly packed room in the Waldorf when he and Jackie breezed in, said little more than hello, mumbled something about a Big Neighbor having to be a Good Neighbor (re Latin America) and was off again. :: Is the owner of Stephan's Book Store a fan? Just before Christmas I was in the store looking over the collection of sf and buying a copy of "The Star Dwellers." Stephan (?) was goshwow over the new Heinlein and explained some of the controversy re "Starship Troopers" and that Jim Blish wrote some good reviews from time to time. I didn't unmask myself. :: Heinlein's interest in reincarnation predates the reference

to Bridy Murphy in the AMAZING annish article. I tripped and fell flat on my face over that very idea at the end of "Beyond This Horizon". As you may remember that whole book carries itself along as an intellectual worry over the reason for existence only to reach the point when the decision is made that brain cells have latent memories and therefore reincarnation is postulated; though the answer may be imperceptible to us our descendents and thus our egos will find the answer.

DIE WIS -- Dick Schultz: Enjoyment and disagreement are not mutually exclusive.

NANDU -- Nan Gerding: Since I had a hand in the inspiration of this fanzine, I hope I can demand an explanation for at least part of it. What does "Saps is Saps is Saps and always the twain shall meet." mean? This is the most fascinating bit of mumbo-jumbo in the whole magazine and if Nan doesn't care to explain it I hope somebody will be interested enough to interpret for me. :: I'm not quite sure if this is a libretto for "The Ride of the Valkyries" or an answer to "Quo Vadis, SAPS?", you never make this point clear, but I'd love to see this line set to music: "Any suggestion for such a change is completely dictatorial in concept, non-democratic in deed, and unthinkable in essence." If you can find anything as undemocratic as that statement in my article, please let me know. :: I note that you get into areas of value judgement that I thought best to avoid in an already unwieldy article. If I had, though, the basis for the opinions would have been demonstrated. I'd like to see you buttress statements like the charge that SAPS has in it "ineffective jabber, comment on comment on comment, filling pages which could easily be put to much better use" and your opinion, expressed on another occasion, that SAPS exerts pressures on its members to conform or else.

GIMBLE -- Ted Johnstone: I was born in Coventry (Vermont), but all this fannish stuff about that place is over my head. :: Why was this copyrighted?

SLUG -- Wally Webber: There are so many fabulous lines in this that it's difficult to pick a favorite. I'll settle for the parenthesis following a fannishly infuriating line: "(I'm safe in my fallout shelter now, and I'm not letting anyone in whether they knock or not.)" :: What's this about calling most of the magazines (if not all) in the mailing "The best magazine in the mailing"? Are you trying to plunge SAPS into war? :: No I don't put a great deal of work into Wrhn, because I don't have a great deal of time for it. Most of it is produced in the spare time of one month per quarter. The air-brush covers don't take more than 3 hours each. I doubt that I spend as much time fanning as, say, Walter Breen, Redd Boggs, or Ted White.

WATLING STREET -- Bob Lichtman: The only punchline I could write to your thought that a "Los Angeles Chronicle" is the only way "the area could get the liberal newspaper it needs so badly" is to wonder whatever happened to plans for the west coast edition of the New York Times, which I understood was to have been published from Los Angeles? :: There's a refreshing spirit of independence about the New Lichtman and I concur that that method of laying out your magazine before writing anything Must Go. Giving yourself a certain number of pages to fill up before you think you've got an editorial must have made you feel as though you were working for the magazine -- rather than making the magazine work for you. Write what you feel like saying (in a manner that will keep us awake, to be sure) and then present it as tastefully as possible but resist the temptation to blow up trivia to membrane fineness just to cover a certain number of pages. Better to have one paragraph that says something you wanted to see in print than 4 just to make it look as though you have a balanced magazine. :: "Berkeley: Focal Point of a Mood" was lovely stuff, but a little judicious editing that could have deleted the repetitious Terry Carrisms would have improved it. I have nothing against Terry Carrisms, except that they are better left to Terry Carr. :: Why the mailing address, etc? Careful, you'll start hearing that

WATLING STREET isn't intended for SAPS. :: You mean everyone doesn't "indulge in fanac only when the mood hits" them? :: I certainly agree that you "probably remember as much about fan-history from reading fanzines as" I do and also "don't really think waving this fact about is necessary." So why do it? My mention of the Laney article had to do with my distress at the wide mis-reading of my article on Money. Everyone took it so seriously I was beginning to wonder if they'd also thought it was written by Ed Wood. :: No, that illustration was supposed to be Jackie. :: If one "could fill an entire magazine the size of this one with a long mailing comment on Wrhn's average issue and still have more left to say" why the complaints that you had nothing to write about in your editorial? :: I hope no one got the idea from "Quo Vadis, SAPS?" that I think the organization is about to collapse. Far from it. I agree that "SAPS will go on indefinitely no matter who belongs to it." So? So will the N3F. The question wasn't how to save SAPS from extinction; the question was how to improve it. :: Nor do Bob Leman's politics worry me; especially not from the standpoint that they "throw off my ideas about typical fan reactions", as they surprise you. It's the non-typical fannish reactions that interest me, and when fans start reacting in herds I tend to lose interest in the subject at hand.

SON OF SAPROLLER -- Jack Harness: "Bishop Bergeron", indeed! Which should indicate that at least those parts that mentioned my name caught my eye.

THE PROSE OF KILIMANJARO -- George Locke: Your discriptions of the frantic glances over the shoulder by the drivers of the glider tow-truck made me wonder whether there isn't such a thing as a mirror in Kenya? Or are they all used to buy land from the natives? :: While I was in Hawaii, I kept hearing brief reports of glider pilots over the wind-ward clifts of Oahu. I believe they set a world's recor

OUTSIDERS -- Wrai Ballard: I thought Cogswell's letter in THE VINEGAR WORM was brilliant. :: I was about to give a poker faced answer to your question to Toskey, "when was the last time you fertilized a Canadian Thistle", but after considering the state of repair of the SAPS sense of humor decided against it. At any rate, it reminded me of GMCarr's answer to the sardonic question "Do men ever rape female gorillas?" She wanted to know: "why would anyone want to? Would any human male be strong enough to? If so, why bother? Wouldn't a genuine, consenting, old-fashioned seduction be more sporting to the gorilla (gorilless?)? What would be the object, anyway? Pleasure? (Ugh!), a baby Hummilla (or would it be a 'Gorman'?). If the latter, why not use artificial insemination?" And so on into the night. :: If people tend to think of guns as "something with which to kill" it's probably because most of the guns that have been made were so intended -- whether for game, protection, or aggression. Granted that "a gun is just something to make it easier for a person to kill if he is so inclined" just as a glass is designed to make it easier for a person to drink if he is so inclined. Purpose can sometimes be inferred from usage. :: As for whether or not "Quo Vadis, SAPS?" was a "disservice to SAPS", you're of course entitled to your guess,but I'll start worrying about it when the OE starts agreeing with you. I rather think that SAPS is big enough not to be hurt by me. In the meantime, at the risk of seeming immodest, I cite the opinion of the OE on the issue containing my "Disservice": "WARHOON is probably the drawing-card of SAPS these past few mailings..." :: I'd agree that my "list of members SAPShas lost is more than loaded for...some never belonged" if I had presented those names as members SAPS lost. But I didn't limit the list to SAPS, I was concerned with "those people who remain interested in ajay publishing" as I said before I gave the list. The case was adequately made without any need to juggle the list and I consider your implication a disservice, Wrai.

SAPristi -- Andy Main: Your comment on CCON is the sort of thing that should come at the end of a long review, refutation, or explanation. To most people, myself included, the remark begs for explanation and lacking it shriveles up like a vat of dryed acid. A word of advice: you wouldn't have anything to worry about from most fans, but it would be wise to take care who you address these unexplained words to in the future. A mailing comment is hardly worth a law suit, is it? :: I'm forced to agree that Bergman has meaning, even if no one can agree on what it is, but I've decided that my antipathy for him is based on his intellectualism. His films seem so calculated that the passion drains out of them. Even his baudy comedies of manners are so polished and flawless that they remind one (this one) of the dissection room. Now the Italians! Ah, Fellini! Antonioni. A wedding of passion and intellect.

SIX PAGES -- Owen Hannifen: Is your father the Hannifen Leman wrote about in THE VINEGAR WORM re the formation of Dorcas Bagby fandom?

COLLECTOR -- Howard Devore: I suppose Jack Speer meant "On my honor as a stefnist" seriously, but after all these years, it reads as a gag-line. :: I wonder at the power of obliquey the word "informer" must have that the thought of it kept you from letting the police know of the where-abouts of a car-thief and a bad check passer? Could a society survive that offered the protection of silence to thieves? Would you consider someone an "informer" if they'd told the police the whereabouts of someone who'd stolen your car? The point merits some discussion, if only for my own curiosity for I can't understand the attitude -- why support the police with your taxes if you consider anyone who helps them an "informer?"

THE PRACTICAL DUPLICATOR -- Lichtman-Demmon: The staggering between the editorial we and the more usual pronoun indicates that Calvin W "Biff" Demmon must indeed be a stranger to Port Wine. Visit us again, Calvin.

BANG -- Les Gerber: Kennedy's efforts to pattern himself after Roosevelt, particularly during the campaign, were so blatant that I could hardly agree that he was trying to do it "without having anyone realize what he's doing". In Wrhn #10, I noted the "constant ressurection of Roosevelt, which became quite funny at times; as when he'd follow it up with an injunction for the people to look to the future and not the past." The resemblences to Rooseveltian technique have been less striking since his assention; even talk about possible "fire-side chats" didn't materialize in the sort of homey communication with the people that the term conjures, though he may consider the televised press conferences a modern version of them. (Kennedy is probably tempermentally incapable of projecting familiarity to 180,000,000 people on cue and I rather respect him for not making the attempt.) The more obvious Rooselveltian gambits I recall from the campaign were the selection of Johnson for a running mate and widely publicized speech on what would be accomplished in "The First 100 Days of his Administration" -- a resemblence that stopped with the speech. :: Explain: "If the earth and the moon didn't appear to be the same size from the earth, there wouldn't be such a thing as a total eclipse." :: Your conclusion that "the contents of fanzines should include anything worth reading or looking at, and those are my only criteria" was the basic point of "Fandom on the Half-Shell." :: Well, why not let a piece of writing sit around long enough so that you can view it objectively? Even a day or two makes apparent errors and mistakes of expression that aren't noticable at the time of composition.

HOBGOBLIN -- Terry Carr: The White mailing comments were enjoyed as was the wandering "It Certainly Is A Wonderful Thing." :: I must be totally style deaf for while I can notice a difference in feeling between authors like yourself, Terry, and Bill Donaho (aside from subject matter) I'd be hard put to analyze the crucial differences between two typical sentences. Which probably means that I'll never be a

prozine editor or a literary critic. :: "Andersonville" and "Not As A Stranger" gave that Sense of Wonder feeling you're talking about. When we were young enough for it, sf was able to create that identification with another world. SF has changed in many respects but the most important changes have been in ourselves...as a rereading of favorite old classics will show.

SPELEOBEM -- Bruce Pelz: I can't think of anyone who dropped FAPA for SAPS either. Can anyone? :: I didn't say, and no one should have read that into the article, that people like Terry Carr, who might lose interest in the organization, should be retained as members inspite of lack of interest. What I did think desirable was the type of organization that would attract and keep fans like Terry Carr; but that seems to be the least of the memberships; interests. Since prescriptive attention is ruled out, diognostic curiosity now leads me to wonder why the best fans of the past have ultimately prefered FAPA to SAPS?-- with the exception of only Art Rapp as far as I can tell. Anyone care to hazard a guess? Wrai? Buz? Dee? :: Your reading of the "Rosinante" quote from Leman seems accurate to me, but it wasn't a matter that annoyed me. The"How to lose readers, department"title was meant facetiously as was the selection of the other quote from THE VINEGAR WORM. Leman has a way of putting things that invariably entertains and breaks me up. The quotes weren't meant to be snide and I'm sorry if they seemed that way in the context of the rest of the issue with its criticisms of Leman. Actually, to give you an idea of my opinion of Bob and most of his works, after 15 minutes of mental debate between DISCORD and HYPHEN for number one place on the FANAC poll, I yelled "A pox on you both!" and put down THE VINEGAR WORM after deciding that it had all of the wit of HYPHEN and all of the style and much of the learning of DISCORD. :: I appreciated your comments on publishing material in your apazine. With Wrhn I've managed to find myself the best of both possible worlds; genzines and apazines. If I had to chose between the two, the choice would definitely be in favor of the apa: the echo chamber effect and the more leisurely pace would be the deciding factors.

IGNATZ -- Nan Rapp: Thanks again for the cartoons in this Wrhn.

SPACEWARP #73 -- Art Rapp: The outline of your fanfiction writing technique doesn't sound substantially different from Walt's. In the example he was writing about, Willis also started with little idea of what would come next and improvised from that point on. It sounds complicated when explained but only because words are long and life less so. You've both been using free association techniques -- as most fiction must. :: Annent the damage Welch has done the conservative cause: I note that even Nixon seems to be asking anyone who wants to support him in California to chose between Welch and Eisenhower. How left wing can you get?

SAPTERRANEAN -- Walter Breen: What kind of talent is it that allows Walter to concentrate on our material and at the same time retain that proper degree of objectivity that's required to realize that what you're reading would make a marvelous quote for a quote cover? :: I can't understand the willingness of fans to confine to such small groups as the Cult some of the excellent material I've seen in various FANTASY ROTATORS. My personal inclination with something I like or a proud of (with the exception of air brush covers) is to circulate it to the largest number of people so that they may be similarly delighted. :: I was surprised by your comments on the "Jamesian moral equivalent for War" for I had planned on demonstrating that the will to power that the N3F provides an outlet for might otherwise have been

diverted into starting World War III. :: Agree with you concerning the value of scientific demonstration or refutation of voting patterns that have attained the state of truisms. Shortly after the votes were in following the last election, Betty Kujawa sent me a couple of loosely based David Lawrence columns that claimed Kennedy's Catholicism helped rather than hurt him and in the absence of conclusive data (this didn't stop Lawrence or Betty, though) all I was able to do was point out their loose moorings for her. I wonder if Betty recovered from the Rockefeller (!) Foundation report that demonstrated the exact extent to which Kennedy's religion hurt him? :: Did you ever write that article on fandom for THE REALIST? :: I doubt that Sam will take notice of your article in Wrhn unless you send him your copy. He hasn't been on the mailing list for over a year. I grew tired of mailing those copies into such a large vacuum.

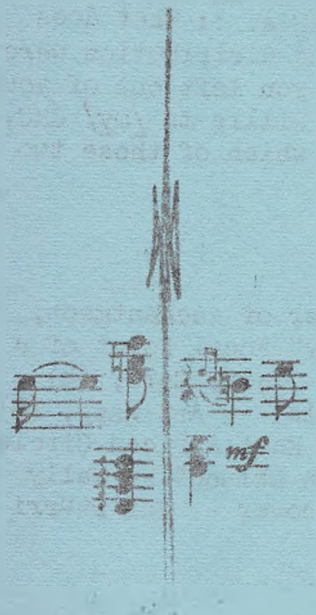
FENDENIZEN -- Elinor Busby: There has been much talk that SAPS had changed greatly in "the past year or two" but little explanation of what the change has been curious. I've cited the opinions of people who think SAPS has changed, but I've not indicated agreement or disagreement. I don't notice any great qualitative change since I joined.

RESIN -- Norm Metcalf: Actually, what I said was that the amount of enjoyment and inspiration I get from a magazine determines the length of these individual mailing comments. The length of my comments doesn't have much "relation to the quality of the zine" either. Like yourself, many high quality productions draw little comment from me while something like NANDU I could hold forth on for a couple of pages if I let myself. It's possible, and frequent, to enjoy something but not be inspired by it.

SPACEWARP #72 -- Art Rapp: I wouldn't care to go back into time beyond the advances in dental plumbing or anesthetics. The possibilites of being burned or stoned as a sorcerer or madman would be harrowing enough without adding physical distresses to them.

RETRO -- FMBsuby: I'm sorry if I gave the impression that your disenchantment with SAPS was anything more than transitory and pleased to see a renewing of your enthusiasm. :: There isn't much point in continuing to debate whether or not there's a trend away from SAPS, since even refuting your arguments and winning agreement won't necessarily imply any need for a change -- as an overwhelming number of members seemed to have already agreed. :: Where was my "evident feeling" indicated that I had demolished Bob Leman? You're entitled to your opinion that I haven't won my case against Leman, but I would have prefered to see myself corrected in Wrhn by Bob, you, or anyone else. In the absence of sufficiant interest on your part to back up the opinion with documentation, I'll have Chocolate, thank you. :: For the sake of Walt Willis' sensibilities, I have no intention of quoting at this time GMCarr's 1957 comments on PAMPHREY which Leman commented on, but I've just reread them and I can assure you that I did not "fob off 'the burden of GMCarr's comments' in such a way to make them appear most obviously grotesque." If anything they read even more grotesque in GEMZINE. Since you go on to say that I "from personal experience know damn well /this/is not true"(that they were most obviously grotesque), I assume that you've checked her comments before calling me a liar and are ready to defend her comments against my characterization of them. You may have 5 pages in the next Wrhn letter column to clear Mrs Carr's comments on Willis and PAMPHREY from my grotesque attack. :: Your sarcasm re a number of points you felt I should have commented on from the Wolfe-Moon articles is ill taken, since before closing the article I said "If there are points any of you feel I should have touched on, I'll be only too glad to give them my attention in next issue's letter column or in plain brown envelopes." Please don't berate me for not dealing with your pet points before I've had a chance to find out what they are.... I condem lies and distortions on the part

of its detractors as well as on the part of the committee. Happy? Yes, I do have pretty uncompromising standards for truth as applied to government committees and their works and while I condemn lies from any source, I do find myself a bit more shocked when I find lies coming from someone who's supposedly working in my best interests. Don't you? Now, exactly what points did you want covered? Perhaps we can condemn them together. :: The contradiction between my admonition of Mrs Carr for "reviewing the critic instead of the criticism" and my comments on Leman is more apparent than real. I wouldn't have minded if GMC had reviewed the critic and the criticism because she's entitled to her opinions and speculations about me (as irrelevant as they may be); what I was criticizing her for (and she chuckled agreeably over this in her follow up letter last issue), was skirting the issue by confining her fire to me. As for my comments on Leman: with the possible exception of one point, which I now think may be just bad phraseology, all of my irrelevant comments were in the nature of highly flattering compliments. I apologize for intruding evaluations of Leman's wit and talents into a critical piece where they had no place. My other charges were that the injudicious nature of Bob Leman takes the form of implication of guilt by association and the ad hominem. Here I wasn't reviewing the critic; I was reviewing the methods of his logic, surely an elementary consideration in any attempt to refute logic and expose fallacious conclusions. Bob Leman may be the nicest guy in the world, for all I know, but I certainly don't want him on my jury. :: Of course, your "report of the students' anti-HUAC resistance did not...condone it". It was central to my argument that even some defenders of the film are contradicting it, without knowing it, and echoing, without knowing it, an attack made on the film by the Bay Area Student Committee for the Abolition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Would you care to comment on this? :: A check of the micro-film newspaper files dating from Jan '50 to Aug '50 at the New York Public Library reveals only the January pronouncement by Acheson on our defense perimeter in the Pacific. I rather think this is the speech you had in mind: Philip Potter writing in Sevareid's "Candidates 1960": Richard Nixon "said the most vocal critics of present policy thought... Acheson was buying peace in Korea when he announced in January, 1950, that the United States would 'not defend Korea.' When a reporter wrote that Acheson had made no such announcement...Nixon made a correction. His texts thereafter had Acheson announcing that "Korea was outside the defense zone of the United States.'" Nixon's reference to "the most vocal critics" pins it to the January speech. We'll let students of Nixonianism decide just what this tells us about Nixon's integrity; in the meantime, how do you reconcile your comment that Acheson "specifically stated that Korea was not on the list" with Acheson's statement that "we have a direct responsibility in Japan...The same thing to a lesser degree is true in Korea"? Now that 200 people know about this you're welcome to explain your side in Wrhn. But you ought to be able to tell how you became a dupe of the Republicans in less than 10 pages.



:: It wasn't inferable from your statement that you meant only SAPS and FAPA when you said "howcome all the Liberals just want the HUAC deactivated and none say Word One about a more just and effective substitute for it". Not "all the Liberals" are in fandom; though it may seem so from time to time. I can only comment on what you say; not necessarily on what you mean, it seems. Where did I advocate "transferring HUAC functions to the Judiciary Committee"? That was the suggestion of the present chairman of the HUAC, Congressman Walters. Don't you trust his judgement? :: In a free society, sabotage as a means to change the society, is the enemy of that society and must be punished. Existing laws well fortify the United States against undemocratic change of its political system, therefore I can see no point in the prying of the HUAC into

the activites of people who have broken no laws. Do you? :: Gee, I didn't realize you were spending "a solid year" trying "to elicit facts" from Dick Eney and myself re Richard Nixon. When I gave an answer I knew it would be at least 6 months before you heard from me again on the subject. That's the way it is in apas with comments on comments, you know. Takes time. But you'll learn; after all, you've only been in SAPS a short time. One and one-half exchanges in six months doesn't sound like a very solid effort to me, but I give you credit for it, since I have no way of knowing what other means you were using, Perhaps you had thrown telepathy into the breach? :: I'm surprised that you've spent so much space on politics without caring much for the subject. I wouldn't have spent 10 seconds on it if it hadn't interested me; just has I spend no time on the subjects of mathematics or Coventry, say. And I'm sorry the appearance of politics in SAPS made you unhappy. Personally the appearance of any subject in any SAPSzine hasn't made me unhappy -- and I can't imagine why the amusements of another editor in his own magazine would, but this little bit of information is hardly needed to prove that we're different people. :: If the discussion was confused, I'm afraid it was by your attempts to get me to go into the biography business, rather than any deliberate effort on my part. Please, Buz, I don't even have to try to get confused. If you'd wanted the case proved a against Nixon instead of for Douglas, it would have been so much simpler and so much more economical to have said "If you think Nixon smeared Douglas; prove it!" and "Put up or shut up!" (if you'd wanted to add a little spice), but to go on prattling about the red dye used in Mrs Douglas' hair (to use fannish hyperbole) was quite another mattter. (I've stated your demand and it didn't even take one line! Oh well, I'm in no hurry. The events we've been discussing happened over 11 years ago. If you still want the answer, I can give it to you in six months from Republican textbooks. All you have to say is "Yes." That's not very political. :: By the way, if what you're after are "reasons for the great liberal /in SAPS/FAPA or in the whole country?/ aversion for Nixon", I'm afraid the answer won't supply it. That aversion is so broad and covers such a multitude of sins that the Douglas case is lost among them. :: Prove that the circulation of Wrhn is larger than THE VINEGAR WORM's. :: What does "the genzine bit" mean? :: Your comments on mailing comments and distribution were taken up elsewhere, but one delightful piece of characterization you left out of your note in the last Wrhn was that you "have no intention of playing Willis to /my/ GMC." Delicacy for all parties concerned prevents me from pointing out which of those two would have been most apt to have drawn a parallel like that.

EGOBOMBSHELLS

The 10 most admirable items from the last mailing, in order of enchantment, were: (1) "The Hagerstown Letters" -- Harry Warner, (2) "Berkeley" Focal Point of a Mood" -- Bob Lichtman, (3) "It Certainly Is A Wonderful Thing" -- Terry Carr, (4) "Scorched Earth" -- George Locke, (5) "All's Wells That Ends Wells" -- Art Rapp, (6) "St. Nelson and the Emperor of Foofoo" -- Richard Eney, (7) "The East African Circle Chasers Association" -- George Locke, (8) "The Truth About Gordon Eklund" -- Wally Webber, (9) "Robert A Heinlein" -- Ed Meskeys, (10) Eddie Jones cover -- Pot Pourri 20.

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UNPREDICTABLE REACTIONS - CONCLUSION

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Long as this letter column was, there's still the usual list of people who were unavoidably crowded out. In any event, all comments are forwarded to the parties whose work is commented on and in all cases greatly appreciated. Please keep writing ART WIDNER, TOM DILLEY, BEN JASON, KEVIN LANGDON, RICK SNEARY, MICHAEL McQUOWN, LARRY HARRIS, LEN MOFFATT, SETH JOHNSON, NORM CLARKE, GREG BENFORD, JOHN R ISAAC, SALLY KIDD, JOE SANDERS, LARRY WILLIAMS, TED COGSWELL, LES GERBER, RICHARD KYLE, COLIN FREEMAN, BEN KEIFER, SID BIRCHBY, and FRANK WILIMCZYK.


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