
Don't look now,
but Kubrick
may have been right,
after all.

WARHOON

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Those of you who returned from the trip brought on by my instructions last issue to help you get the full stereo-optic effect of Wrhn's covers can repack your luggage and prepare to depart again. This magazine's covers are designed to blow your mind, if not your cool, and readers who failed to hold the issue open at arm's length so they could see both front and back covers at once and bring it slowly to their faces should be advised they are operating on a different plane of mental awareness from the rest of us and should get with it. By the way, it helps to keep your eyes open when following these instructions -- and the sooner the better; one never knows when these covers will be declared illegal. The current issue's attempt to perforate your mind with little pin-holes of light was automatic drawing, like all your humble servant's artwork, and, however uncannily it relates to "2001" and the Breen and Blish pieces elsewhere in this issue, was completely unpremeditated. Naturally, the caption was written after I became aware of what was happening but, as Willis is my witness, the artwork was finished months ago and long before I knew anything of "2001" or had seen the articles on it. Fanning in this freaky dimension can get quite exciting because one never knows what's going to materialize on the paper next... and I'm quite impressed with my ability, without so much as a puff of oregano, to relate to unexpected directions of reality befor I'm even aware of them. So come. Join me. Spread out your Wrhn and sink slowly into its cover. Wrhn: the safe psychedelic.

THE SEMI-FAN PROZINE

As an authority on science fiction prozines whose learning in the subject is only surpassed by anyone who has read a half dozen issues of any of them since 1953, I expect my observation that Bob Lowndes' long article on "Science Fiction as Delight" in his Famous Science Fiction 4, 5, and 6 is perhaps the most important piece of s-f criticism ever to appear in the magazines themselves to be accorded the full respect that remark deserves. My suspicions about the importance of this work have nothing to do with its quality -- which is high -- but rather are inspired by its length: covering some 30 pages it must be the longest single article about s-f to have appeared in the prozines -- surely anything longer would have drawn its magazine into competition for best fanzine in some poll and I would have heard about it. And this represents only the parts that were published: Bob thought that it "needed still more length, but I finally determined not to let it go to four parts even though I had to delete a lot of material that had appeared in earlier" drafts. The conclusion I draw from this and other indications such as the announcement in SFTimes that the forthcoming 8th issue will feature the "complete working text of Lester del Rey's NyCon III speech" and will inaugurate a "First Fandom" department by Robert A. Madle is that Bob Lowndes, operating on a base of nostalgia in a magazine devoted to reprinting antediluvian science fiction, is quietly trying to determine the depth of support in the buying public for material about science fiction. If there is sufficient interest, and to a publisher the only kind worth talking about is expressed in dollars and cents, we may be witnessing the opening experiments that lead to the old fannish dream of the pro-fanzine. No one has made it pay yet, but Robert Lowndes has apparently found himself in a posi-

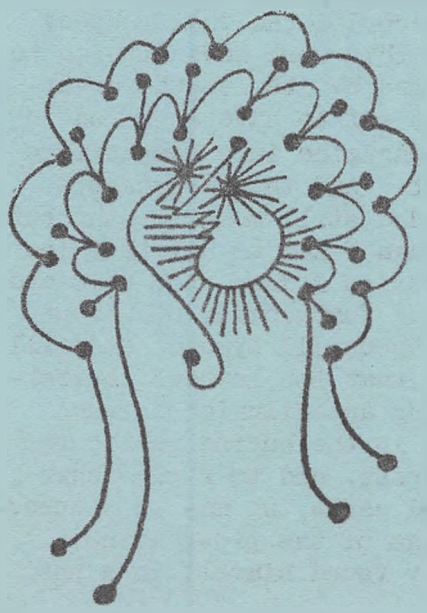
tion where he can find out whether that dream has any possibility of becoming a reality.

And "Science Fiction as Delight" is exactly the kind of material with which to test the water. I read the piece with rapt attention in one long sitting and it's very good; good enough to have appeared in a fanzine even. When I wrote that to Bob he replied with all the rage of the wounded prozine editor: "I have reached the heights; you are too cruel! What future is there for me now that you've declared my editorial good enough for a fanzine?" But even better was his suggestion "Hmm, perhaps you ought to have a special rejection note printed to the effect that this material, alas, is not quite of Wrhn quality, but ought to go to a professional publication." (As we can see, Lowndes will stop at nothing to divert material to his prozine which, by all rights, should appear in a fanzine. And it's instructive to note that when he saw an indication there might be some competition from Wrhn for del Rey's NyCon speech, he hastened to inform me had "bid first" on it!) Actually, my remark, based on the fabulous comment by Laney or somebody, that something was good enough to have appeared even in Fapa, was intended as a compliment rather than the opening salvo of a vicious verbal duel to the death. The trouble with most sf criticism in prozines is that the author doesn't have the space in which to relax and expand on his subject -- exactly the reverse of the situation in fanzines where the average length of an article is rapidly approaching 48 pages and any given publication may contain several such opuses. Most articles in prozines read like they were telegrams that were personally costing the publisher 24¢ a word. William Atheling, Jr, for instance, has polished off "Dangerous Visions" in Amazing Stories with a few well chosen words, but in Skyhook he would have had the space to demonstrate the technical criticism he does so well and everyone, except possibly Jim Blish, would have been that much richer. Consequently, when s-f criticism in a prozine is well enough developed to have appeared in a fanzine then a remarkable event has occured. My sense of wonder is sort of aroused by the combination of antique scientifiction from the thirties and articles which might have appeared in Wrhn or Australian SF Review.

One wonders what Robert Lowndes' absolutely wonderful publisher thinks of all this?

TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER

One of the reasons I am a confirmed auction attendee is you never know what is going to turn up in the things. And it's also the best way to buy something you don't want and don't need just because it seems like you'll never find quite so expensive an item for quite so low a price again. And, of course, the real hook is that the things you really want usually soar way up out of reach in price and you hope that perhaps in the next auction you'll get the item at your price. I've bought many things at my price (and often less) but there's an occasional white elephant lumbering around the apartment to attest to the fact that I'm not always the shrewd bidder I think I am.



On a recent trip to Vermont I was poking around the attic of the old homestead in a trunk which has remained locked and mouldering for some 15 years. The large trunk contains duplicate and other fanzines I have failed to import to New York on various trips over the years for one reason or another. It struck me while once again combing over the festering heap that here was an opportunity to conduct my own auction in Wrhn -- if I could find, between the file folders of Cosmic Circle Comentator and early National Fantasy Fan Federation material, any items I could bring

myself to part with. I haven't had a chance to review everything I brought back with me, but if there is any interest in this idea I plan on making available to the highest bidder selections of the stuff in future issues of Wrhn. It's likely that copies of Futurian War Digest, Fantasy Fiction Field, and Bonfire will come on the market in this department. If anyone is interested in bidding, I'd appreciate a postcard so I can reply and advise you whether you have the item or what the last bid was. For this sale we have:

THE PHILCON MEMORY BOOK: A 146 page combozine commemorating the 1947 science fi ion convention in Philadelphia, of all places. Twenty years ago. It consists of issues and parts of issues of The Burroughs Bulletin, Canadian Fandom, Fanmag, The Fanscient, Fanomena, The Gorgon, Kay-Mar Trader, Burbee's Shangri-L'Affaires, Sparx, Redd Boggs' newszine of the '40s Tympani, and others. Included are notes and/or comments on the Philcon by EEEvans, Sturgeon, del Rey, Hubert Rogers, Campbell, EESmith, Speer, Joe Kennedy, and Milt Rothman, an autobiographical article by AEvanVogt, an editorial and a "Hemmel's Scientific Sorties" by Burbee, convention reports, articles by Boggs, Ackerman, Joqual, and many others. Generally of more interest as a picture of fandom in the late '40s than as top grade reading, but whatever your interest in it not an item one sees offered very often in fanzines. Very good condition. How much for it?

SF 52, 1,2,3, and PAL MAXY, One Shot Wonder #1 (Feb, Mar, Apr, Spring, 1952, respectively): This lot is the height of esoterica -- belonging as they do to that class of fan publications whose circulation is limited by the numbers of legible copies you can produce with carbon paper and a typewriter. They are of interest principally because they are the very first existing publishing efforts of Richard Lupoff, who later went on to prove with Xero his Hugo winning fanzine of some years later that the fanzine really could be an artform after all. :: SF 52 #1: (this is the original; not one of the carbon copies) consists of 10 half-size pages containing a review of Galaxy, two short stories and an article on "The Adult Controversy" ("An SF52 article") which notes that "The best story-plot in the world in hands of a poor author will produce a poor result. Similarly, a mediocre plot in the hands of a Bradbury, vanVogt, Asimov, or Heinlein will still come out as an interesting tale." :: SF 52 #2: is again the original copy, 14 pages, with a letter column in which Gregg Calkins advises "Back off a year or so & start again. ... I'm really astounded that anyone would try what you've done -- it's more work than it's worth, I'm afraid. Typing just won't do it, Richard - you need something better." In a poem entitled "An Editor's Nightmare" Dick has a premonition of Xero: "I fell asleep last night, I think, / And had the most terrible dreams. / I was drowning in gallons of black printer's ink, / And the paper was raining in reams." An analysis of Fantypes, fiction, and a review of Thrilling Wonder Stories, round out the issue. :: SF 52 #3: two pages of original typing - the rest carbon, 14 pages, half-size like the preceding issues. Lee Hoffman replies to Calkins in the letter column: "Gregg Calkins is wrong to imply that SF52 would be a futile gesture. So long as the pleasure you get is greater than the trouble of putting it out, it won't be futile. Also Gregg suggests that you back off and wait a year. Why do that? Think of how much progress you can make in a year of activity, compared to a lesser amount you'd make of being inactive." Elsewhere in the issue Mr Calkins, who formerly thought the magazine a waste of time, contributes the first instalment of a column(!). An introduction states "This is a column of opinion. It is the opinion of the author, not the magazine or the editor". Perhaps this was to protect Lupoff from such rabble rousing commentary as "The trend in Planet seems to be to Ray Bradbury. Seems the readers want more. For my money it would be quite a shock to see Bradbury in Planet. In fact, for my money, he's shocking where ever he is. Maybe he's a literary genius, but I never could abide those morbid and pointless stories he writes, and his "Martian Chronicles" were almost too much for me" -- although it's not clear just how the rabble was to be exposed to this. :: The SF 52s seem to be in mint condition; the Pal Maxy less so with a tear on the side and on the back sheet and is one of the carbon copies.

Pal Maxy is a spoof of Galaxy and features in its 8 half-size pages such epics as "Fishin: Interplanetary", "The Marionette Masters", and "The Illustrated Ham". :: Hardly candidates for inclusion in a list of ten best fanzines, they are nevertheless of of interest to the advanced collector as examples of what they are. To be sold as a lot. Who'll say $70?

THE FANSCIENT 7,9,10,12: Don Day's famous microscopic photo-offset fanzine. Featured superb art by Grossman, Arfstrom, D Bruce, Berry. :: Number 7, Spring 1949, material by Keller, Bullard Moffatt, Ladd, and the "Author, Author" department is devoted to Murray Leinster (this section was a detailed bibliography with extensive autobiographical remarks by the author under scrutiny). 32pgs. :: Number 9, Fall 1949, 64pgs, contains "Translation from the Book of Droom" by Miles Eaton, "Burroughs in Magazines Only" by Richardson, "S Fowler Wright, Master of Fantasy" by Ladd, and many other articles, features, and fiction. The "Author, Author" author is Robert Heinlein, who, for the information of earlier Wrhn readers who hoped to hear from him when his work was a subject of much discussion in these pages, goes on at great length about himself: "Principal Aversions: communists, communism and other forms of fascism; astrology and other ways to be mush-headed; department stores and the large, strong women who apparently live in them; people who express opinions without data; those fans who regard writers as their property; mere galley slaves; censorship; blue laws; people who don't vote, etc. ... it would be quite impossible to credit all the writers who have helped me directly; if I were to attempt to list those who have affected my writing through their published works I would have to start with Homer and not stop short of Stanley Weinbaum." And other fascinating notes about why he writes, etc. :: Number 10, Winter 1950, 32pgs, Lin Carter, Richardson, Kingsborough Reedley (with brilliant Grossman illustrations), Thomas Gardner, and the "Author, Author" department is devoted to George O Smith with a lengthy confession by Smith. :: Number 12, Summer 1950, 32pgs, "Author, Author" this time is Anthony Boucher, article by Ackerman on "Destination Moon", reviews by Day and Evans, fiction, and features. :: All copies are in excellent condition. The Fanscient was possibly the most professionally produced of our photo-offset fanzines -- everything was meticulously arranged and it was a handsome little thing. These are duplicate copies from a much more complete run which I intend to keep for a while longer. To be sold individually.

No waving in the audience, please. It confuses the auctioneer.

FLIRTING WITH DISASTER

In "Science Fiction as Delight", I was delighted with the statement that "Heinlein and Blish are still developing -- a wonderful thing to see, since both have passed the point where they have to progress in order to keep selling. Both could now be coasting along, refining this and that bit each time, but breaking no further trails. Both therefore are at least theoretically still risking disaster, just as EESmith did actually when he tackled a theme which was utterly beyond his powers."

An artist who does not risk disaster; that is, one who is not exploring new areas of experience and new aesthetic solutions is a dead artist whether he knows it or not. There is more to gain in terms of richness and knowledge for the future from a failure than from a predictable reworking of something that was previously successful. Elevator men amaze me. The mind of a man who stands in a small box for hours every day for years just riding up and down is as alien to me as any being from another world we might meet in science fiction. But the s-f author who spends his days riding up and down in the worlds he may have discovered or borrowed years ago is not much better off -- both are in a box and both have limited vision.

Among that small band of the most adventurous creative people who have ever lived,

Pablo Picasso is one of those who most capture my imagination. He regularly completely rethinks his aesthetics. He least of all knows what he will invent next and has often spoken of his work in terms of a corrida -- a potential disaster in which the artist risks being gored by his failure -- and he never knows into what discoveries and realms his work is going to lead him. In fact, one of his monumental struggles is recorded on film and ends in failure. The film medium became the arena of spectators and I'm afraid the unfamiliar eye of the camera unmaned the master -- the painting was a disaster. Later, in privacy, he returned to the battle and produced a fine work on, I think, the corpse of the old.

Of course, Picasso rages in where angels fear to tread: few s-f authors would be able to write a creative work of fiction in view of millions of people, either. But a lack of adventurousness in s-f is difficult to understand -- after all, the rewards in terms of tools for work to come are great and authors have editors to perform the pique and, if it comes to that, plunge the dagger into the throats of unsuccessful efforts.

Have you risked disaster, lately?

THE WELCOME INVASION

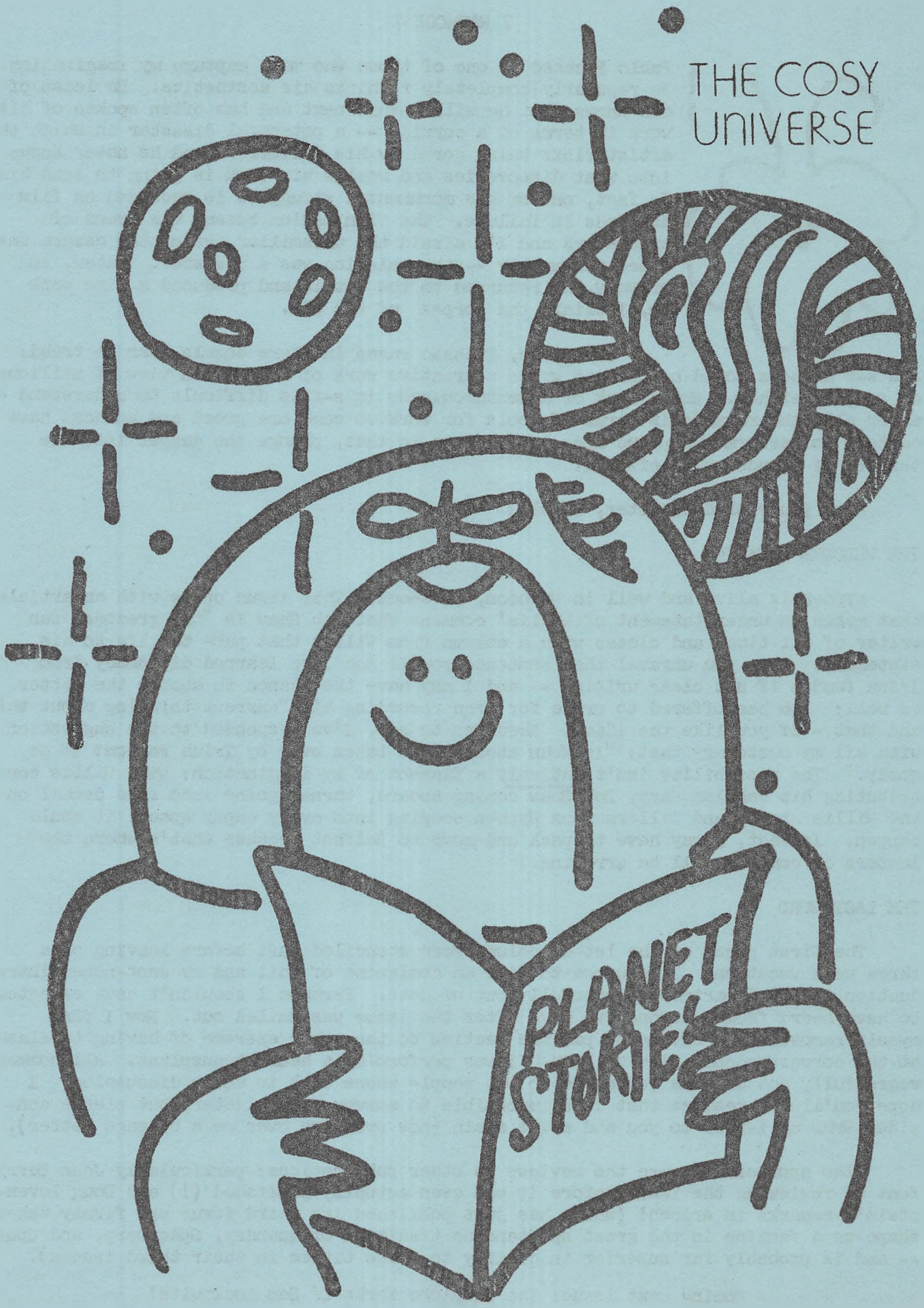
Hyphen is alive and well in Warhoon, it seems. This issue opens with an article that makes an understatement of Willis' comment that Bob Shaw is "the greatest fan writer of all time" and closes with a column from Willis that puts the lie to his statement. When you unravel that sentence you'll see I've learned diplomacy from Irish fandom if not clear writing -- and I may have the chance to absorb the latter as well: Bob has offered to write for Wrhn recording his "current thinking about this and that - if you like the idea". Needless to say, I've responded to the suggestion with all my customary tact: "Is Wrhn about to be taken over by Irish Fandom? If so, goody." The possibility isn't entirely a figment of my imagination: With Willis contributing his regular Harp, Bob Shaw coming aboard, Warner going into fine detail on the Willis story, and fillers from Hyphen seeping into every empty space, it could happen. In fact, I may have to pack and move to Belfast because that's where the letters of comment will be arriving.

THE LAST WORD

The first pages of the letter column were stenciled just before leaving on a three week vacation. I returned to find an avalanche of mail and my snot-nosed introduction to the department wonderfully out of date. Perhaps I shouldn't have expected to have heard from everyone two days after the issue was mailed out. Now I find myself removed from having to pad the section to the other extreme of having to slash at the correspondence file as though I was performing a heart transplant. All comment regretfully not used is forwarded to the people whose work is under discussion. I hope you'll all realize that it's impossible to answer every letter, but please consider Wrhn my letter to you and write again (now everyone owes me a 64 page letter).

Also appreciated were the reviews in other publications: particularly John Berry's feat of reviewing the issue before it was even actually published (!) and Doug Lovenstein's remarks in Arioch! (which has just published its third issue and firmly taken shape as a fanzine in the great spontaneous tradition of Quandry, Spacewarp, and Opus -- and is probably far superior in quality to those titles in their third issues).

Coming next issue: The Complete Works Of Sam Moskowitz!


THE COSY
UNIVERSE
PLANET
STORIES

BOB SHAW

Looking back on it, I have great difficulty in finding any logical justification for the fanatical, semi-mystical involvment I had with science-fiction in my teens.

Like many other fans of those days (I think the pattern is different now) I plunged into the fantasy world of sf as a welcome escape from a reality I regarded as being not too close to the heart's desire. Now lots of people have decided that the real world isn't all they would like it to be, have accepted the idea that there isn't much they could do about it, and have created their own microcosms as a result. There are thousands of other fandoms contiguous with the one we know so well, in which the focus of interest can be anything from budgerigars to old cars. (There was even that famous one about which films have been made -- the Fandom of the Opera.)

But these parallel fandoms have one thing in common in that they take one fragment of the world-picture, draw a line around it, and say "This then is our universe -- let us ignore anything that happens outside its tight curvatures." To me, this isn't admirable, but it is logical. Somebody isn't interested in coping with the broad, grey world, so he shrinks his horizons to manageable proportions.

How then do you explain somebody who has exactly the same problem and solves it by expanding his horizons to the ends of the continuum and even beyond?

Looking back on the teen-age Bob Shaw, I see him reeling back in dismay from the demanding intricacies of the engineering industry in which he found himself, yet deriving the utmost satisfaction from reading about van Vogt's production line for starships in which it took two hundred years for the first vessel to be produced but in which the subsequent ships came off the line at the rate of one every thirty seconds. I see him appalled by the futile complexities of Irish politics, yet enthralled by the galactic power struggles of the Foundation series.

My retreat from the real world was so complete at that time, that even now -- twenty years later -- I still run into occasional difficulties in my work as a journalist through knowing less about some aspects of the country's current affairs than almost anybody you could stop in the street.

But, as I said, the puzzling thing is that I managed to withdraw outwards, like the Stephen Leacock character who leapt onto his horse and galloped off in all directions. I don't know if the science-fiction writers of those days were consciously or unconsciously aiding me in this contradictory motion, but there seemed to be a band of the star-begotten who seemed equally at home in our cosy universe.

Do you remember it?

After a hard day at work, there was nothing more pleasant than dropping in for an imaginary hour or two in some familiar, friendly spot like Mercury. As soon as I realised on which planet a story was set I would, if it happened to be Mercury, relax contentedly and watch out knowingly for the landmarks -- the cold night-side, the fairly habitable twilight zone, and the hellish day-side which was a good challenge to anybody who liked to tackle things 'because they were there.' Sure enough, all those planetary features would appear on schedule, and it wasn't long before I had a spurious but firmly held belief that I knew an awful lot about astronomy. In fact, all I did know about Mercury was that it was first from the sun, was small, and had the three homely regions already mentioned. Had somebody asked me to state something fairly basic, like its density, I would've been flummoxed.

Mars was another favourite stopping off place, with deserts composed of red sand so thinly scattered over relics of ancient civilizations that it wasn't safe to walk

on them unless your toes were protected by thick spaceboots. The canals ran deep and straight, and Phobos and Deimos constantly jockeyed overhead.

Venus I especially liked because it came in two mutually incompatible varieties -- swamp or dust-bowl -- and I felt equally at home in either. And so it went on, right out to places like Pluto which would have been a most inhospitable globe without the benefit of George O.Smith's Plutonian lens. On the way out to Pluto one always, of course, braved the journey through the asteroid belt -- nobody would have been unsporting enough to loop up out of the plane of the ecliptic and do it the safe, easy way.

And beyond the Solar System was a whole galaxy dotted with familiar stars in whose light many a drama was enacted -- brilliant Deneb, vast red Betelgeuse, and Alpha Centaurus in the next block from Sol -- all of them playing their part in the affairs of stellar empires of which I was a citizen...

Time has done terrible things to the cosy universe.

Astronomers are beginning to claim that Mercury rotates with respect to the sun; soul-less probes have violated Venus, and have cast their bleak eyes on Mars. The Martian canals have vanished to little more than optical illusions, and the massive polar caps which suckled them have become thin coatings of frost. And what's even worse, you can't even see Phobos and Deimos unless you are fairly near the equator, I'm reliably informed.

Even the stellar empires have crumbled. It was funny how in the old days we never saw anything wrong with the idea of these empires scorning to shape themselves according to the dictates of military or economic efficiency. Instead, their boundaries always coincided with those of our classical constellations -- which is odd when you remember that a constellation is a roughly conical volume of space, with its apex on Earth and a base that takes in progressively more unwieldly masses of stars the further out you go. Yet the Empire of Orion cropped up time after time, without anybody considering that -- in view of the extreme remoteness of some of its stars and the relative nearness of others -- it might be worth while even to split it up into Hither and Thither Orion. There is a certain barbaric ring about those names which would have gone down well in an Edmond Hamilton story, but even that modest touch of verisimilitude might have been more than he could have tolerated.

In today's interstellar epics the locale stars usually have names the author has made up, indicating -- quite rightly -- that they are mere specks in the galactic clouds. Brilliant Deneb, vast red Betelgeuse and neighbourly Alpha Centaurus rarely get a mention. This is fair enough, considering they are only three out of billions and there's no statistically valid reason for them to keep popping up.

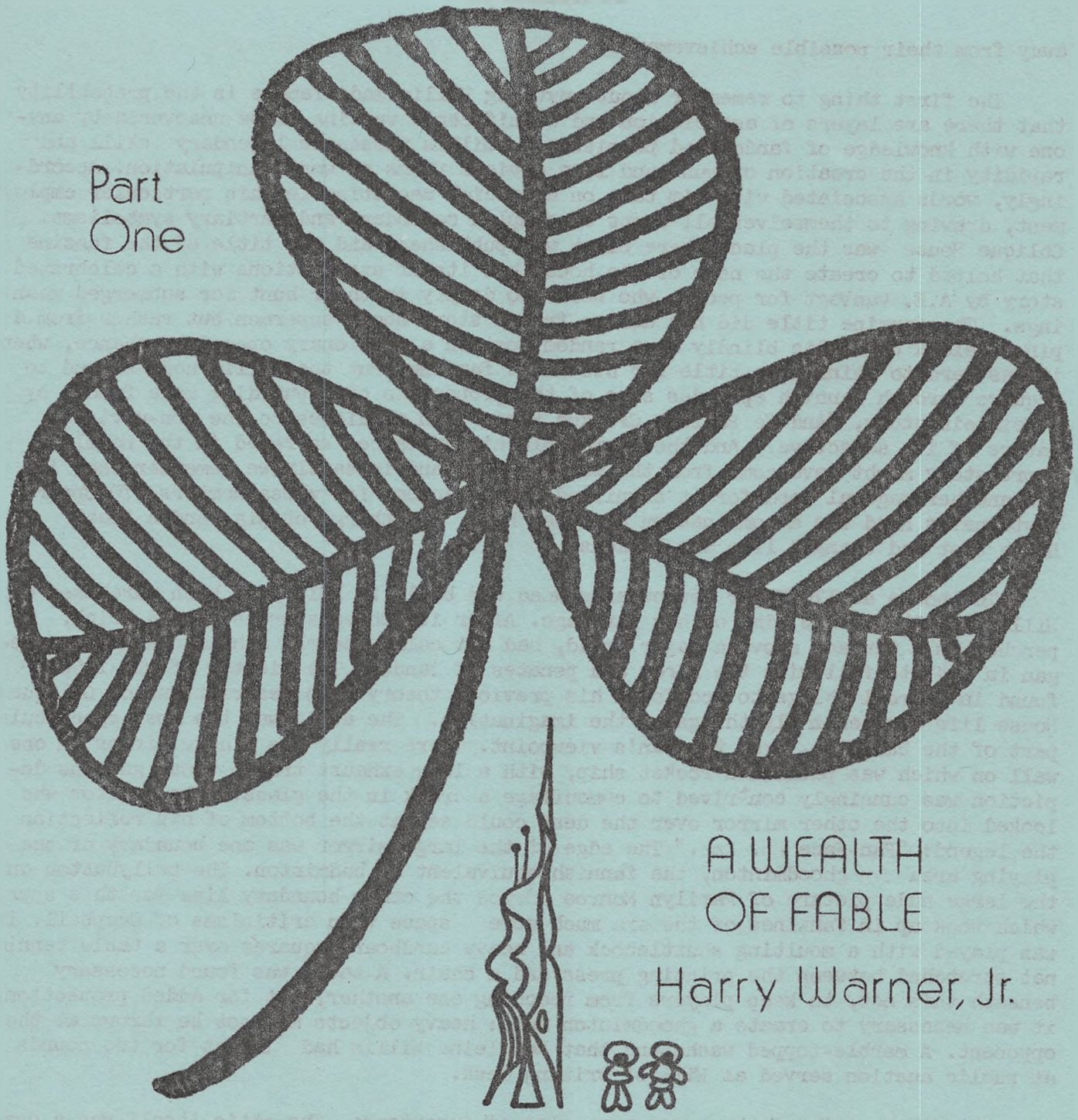
But when I go home tired from the office and pick up a book there just isn't the same feeling of entering a friendly continuum where I am bound, as one of the star-begotten, to receive a special welcome.

The question I now ask is -- has the cosy universe really disintegrated? Or is it still there, in modified form, screened off from my perception by a vibration frequency to which only the souls of neo-fans are attuned? --BoSh

.....

REMEMBER HYPHEN?: I'm going to do what Erick Frank Russell did with the Vitons. I will write a story about myself and sell it to Astounding...Everybody has at one time or another complained of how the wind always seems to blow in their faces when they take a bicycle out...Yes, it's quite true! Willis and White, the sobersides, the starched collars of fandom, have acquired water pistols!...By Bob Shaw in Hyphen #1, May 1952.

Part One



A WEALTH OF FABLE

Harry Warner, Jr.

"The facts were only a fragment of the fascinating things which took place," the first John Berry once wrote. As a fact, 170 Upper Newtownards Road continues to exist in Belfast. It is a fragment of 170 Upper Newtownards Road, in the spiritual sense. The fascinating things which took place there were the evanescent, human, unpredictable manifestations of the mind and the spirit of an individual, phenomena which transformed into a real never-never structure the building that became known as Oblique House. There might be a moral in this twin aspect, or a duality which a Korzybski could utilize for a revised volume on general semantics. There is mundanity and there is fannishness, perfectly distinct but regrettably unseparable, until such time as some fan of the future manages to utilize the twonk dimension to break completely free from the demands of environment and corporeal body. Until he comes along, Walter A. Willis should serve as the ultimate example of how an individual can transform fandom, transmute stodgy surroundings, and transcend the dreary realities that snatch most fans

away from their possible achievements.

The first thing to remember about anything Willis made famous is the probability that there are layers of association and significance waiting to be uncovered by anyone with knowledge of fandom and persistence. Willis possesses legendary skill and rapidity in the creation of puns and less obvious forms of word manipulation. Accordingly, words associated with him take on a special magnetism in this particular employment, drawing to themselves all sorts of complex secondary and tertiary symbolisms. Oblique House was the place where Slant was published, and the title of the fanzine that helped to create the name of the house has itself associations with a celebrated story by A.E. vanVogt for people who seek too deeply in their hunt for submerged meanings. The fanzine title did not derive from a story about supermen but rather from a pin, wielded by Willis blindly at a random spot on a dictionary opened by chance, when it was hard to think of a title for his first fanzine. But the Willis home seemed to acquire through fannish episodes some of the properties of a building made famous by a Heinlein story, "And He Built a Crooked House", in obedience to the non-upright nature of its adjective. And the improbable circumstances narrated in the Heinlein short story might have come from the world of if; and instantly we remember that IF was another magical word for it signified Irish Fandom, for whose members 170 Upper Newtownards Road was a combination of Upper Room, Venusberg, utopia, and a Bleak House that had changed like the Dickens.

The house at 170 Upper Newtownards Road was built in 1910, had been purchased by Willis in 1945 at the time of his marriage. After its three stories of red brick, perched on a terrace above a major road, had sat calmly nearly a half-century, it began in 1947 to fill with the lares and penates of fandom. The visitor of the 1950's found in it real things to confound his previous theory that descriptions of Oblique House life were entirely things of the imagination. The attic was the most spectacular part of the building, from the fan's viewpoint. There really was a huge mirror on one wall on which was painted a rocket ship, with a long exhaust trail, whose gaseous depiction was cunningly contrived to camouflage a crack in the glass. The visitor who looked into the other mirror over the desk could see at the bottom of his reflection the legend: "Fan-Face No. One." The edge of the large mirror was one boundary of the playing area for ghoodminton, the fannish equivalent of badminton. The bellybutton on the large nude picture of Marilyn Monroe formed the other boundary line for this sport, which took up in fanzines of the era much more space than criticisms of Campbell. It was played with a moulting shuttlecock and heavy cardboard squares over a table tennis net stretched between the printing press and a chair. A table was found necessary beneath this net, to keep players from reaching one another, but for added protection, it was necessary to create a ghoodminton rule: heavy objects may not be thrown at the opponent. A marble-topped washstand that Madeleine Willis had bought for two pounds at public auction served as Willis' writing desk.

But other parts of the house were also of importance. The attic itself was a comparatively late development in the Willis story, for his fandom centered in a back room during its early stages, moving to this attic only around 1954, and after a couple of years, it began to engulf other parts of Oblique House as fannish materials began to pile up. The American press on which later Willis fanzines were published had come in a crate that first served as a base for the press, then as a workbench. Once, at a war surplus sale, Willis bought a cavity resonator. It became a conversation piece even in the midst of all that competition for attraction. There was a blackboard, on which Carol, the Willises' small daughter, used to write permission for fans to play with her toys, if she felt they measured up to it. Another important exhibit in the house was a bucket, about whose history we know only the fact that Mr. Ziff had kicked it.

If Willis the fan was the attraction that drew Irish fandom to Oblique House,

Mrs. Willis the other fan was the force that made it almost impossible to leave, for her cooking and tea-brewing abilities. Madeleine is the only known wife of a fan who brought a 22-cup teapot. The only thing that any fan ever said or wrote in criticism of her is that she flatly refused to put a pound of tea each week in the hot water tank. Her presence helped to keep the tea-drinking bouts within civilized limits, and for some of these even her teapot proved inadequate; on October 18, 1959, Berry drank 25½ cups of tea, a record which apparently still stands. Berry himself once claimed that the teapot contained 15 gallons, but he was probably prejudiced by the memory of his big afternoon. As a cook, Madeleine was most celebrated for her cakes.

How did it all begin in a fannish sense? Fortunately, we know beyond doubt one of the decisive moments, a rainy afternoon during the latter stages of World War Two. Walter and Madeleine had been going together for nearly a year. Neither was a fan. Nor did they know an important fact about one another until they took shelter from the showers under an awning in front of a news agent's shop and wandered inside to wait for the rain to slacken. In one of the crucial moments of fan history, both reached simultaneously for the same copy of a British reprint edition of Astounding. A fraction of a second had revealed what a year had concealed: each, unknown to the other, read science fiction. "I think I first realized his intentions were honorable, when he started to let me read the novelette first," Madeleine remarked much later about that crucial day in their courtship.

Like medieval man, who was unaware of his prehistoric ancestry, most Irish readers of science fiction in this era were unaware of the primeval source of these British reprint editions. Long before, during the 1930's, pulp magazines that failed to sell in the United States were shoveled into east-bound ships, to serve as ballast until the vessels reached the British Isles, whereupon they were unloaded and put on sale at thruppence apiece in jumbled mountains on counters in Woolworths and similar shops. The war had brought an end to this. The absence of letter sections from these truncated reprint editions made it hard for potential new fans to find one another, and theBritish Isles fandom of the 1930's and early 1940's had been confined to England and Scotland, for the most part. So, despite the marriage of Walter and Madeleine, there was no real founding of Irish fandom just yet. Irish fandom's equivalent of the discovery of fossils occurred in the summer of 1947. In a second-hand bookshop in Austin Street, a slum area washed by the waves of lower Newtownards Road, Walter found the January, 1947, Astounding in the United States edition. Walter stared at it, unbelievingly, reasoned that a new species is not apt to exist in vacuo, and went on the hunt for relatives. He scoured Belfast on foot and rode his bicycle to surrounding towns, seeking United States editions of prozines. He found none, but Madeleine spotted something just as important. It was a copy of Walter Gillings' old prozine, Fantasy. In it was a letter section, in the letter section was a communication from James White, and in the White letter was an address ending with the word "Belfast". Walter wrote a letter to this James White and Irish fandom was born. Trapped by Walter's cunning lure (a statement that he owned old British reprint editions), James replied to the letter on August 26. This was later reckoned by common consent as Irish Fandom Day, although White himself later claimed that his first personal meeting with the Willises had occurred on August 25.

The James White who came calling on the Willises that fateful August had from the nose downward a perpetually happy face, topped by eyes and forehead that looked with worried expression toward some disaster that never came. Walter discovered that James had played an important part in his life, even before they met, because James did not work on Wednesday afternoons. James had been making a scientifically clean sweep of prozines from the back issue stories on Wednesdays, accounting for the Willises' inability to find them when they did their magazine-hunting on Saturdays. The encounter enabled Walter to read large quanities of magazines he had been unable to find.

Circumstances smiled on Irish fandom at this point: if James' collection had been really vast, both might still be silent readers who failed to make the transition to fan. But Walter wanted to read even more science fiction stories. On New Year's Day in 1948, Walter achieved his first contact with fan civilization outside Belfast. It came in the form of a letter from Liverpudlian Ron Holmes, who was struggling to keep alive the British Fantasy Library, a lending service for the few fans who remained active in the British Isles. The same envelope contained the first duplicated material issued by fans which Willis had seen; this BFL Handbook might with charity be considered a specialized kind of fanzine. Walter also discovered around this time Operation Fantast, which Ken Slater was directing. This was a merchandising, communications, and correspondence project which may have done more than anything else to revive interest in fandom over there after its wartime decimation. There was a fanzine called Operation Fantast, once again sharply different from the kind of fanzines for which the British Isles became famous a few years later.

But it must be remembered that before Willis, fan publications were utterly different on the eastern bank of the Atlantic. Before the war, there had been superbly literate little fanzines, more civilized and much more sanely concieved than the American fanzines of the era. Wartime shortages of paper and conscription of fans had cut British fanzines to a scattering of paper-thin publications, increasingly sober in tone. The return of peace did not create anything spectacular in British fanzine publishing. Much later, Vincent Clarke thought back to the pre-Willis fanzines and to those that came in the 1950's and summed it up: "Willis has a lot to answer for." The best fanzine that Willis saw in his earliest stages as a fan must have been Manly Bannister's Nekromantikon, an American publication of great quality but extreme serconnish nature. Further, Willis himself was not yet in 1948 the personality who was soon to influence fans on two continents. Walter pinpoints the start of his real emergence as a person at a trip to England in 1950. When he went to London that autumn, Clarke and Ken Chapman invited him to stay at their apartment, the Epicentre. Walter describes the episode like this: "It may have changed my whole life, and it certainly changed my writing style. Hitherto everything I'd written had been either serious and solemn or terse and turgid. I had spent a night in the Epicentre and I had become a fan."

So the impulse toward fanzine publishing that caused Walter twinges in 1948 came not from a desire to find an outlet for puns nor from an intention to show how much delight can be found in fandom. The fanzine urge derived mostly from Walter's desire for more contacts that would bring him a better chance to collect more prozines. While Walter was making his first contacts with American fans who are now long forgotten, like Paul Doerr and Dave MacInnes, he drafted the first issue of a fanzine in early 1948. This draft progressed no further, for a time. Madeleine thinks that an issue of Norman Ashfield's Alembic was an important factor in the transformation of Walter into a fanzine publisher. She asked him one day, "Why don't we publish a fanzine? I'm sure we could do better than that." Then, one day, Walter was visiting a non-fan friend who worked in a drug store and was tidying up the establishment's attic. They ran across a small press which the proprietor had used at one time to print billheads. Walter hastened the tidying up process by removing from the clutter the contraption, which was small enough to fit neatly beneath his coat. Proving that even Walter has goofed on occasions, he took along only enough type to set two and one-half lines.

Walter found someone to repair the defective roller on the little press, and invested in a half-font of type from a printer's supply house. A friendly printer down

the street lent him five pieces from a font of larger-sized type, so there could be an imposing title: SLANT. It must be understood that this printing press was not the complex and large hand press which you see in operation in movies about struggling young publishers of weekly village newspapers. It was basically a metal box into which you put the type. You put paper into the lid, closed the lid, and pressed with a handle, inking by hand, and feeding one sheet at a time. When he ran out of i's partway down a page, Walter kept going by altering the text, disposing of words that contained the short-supply letter. When this resource had reached its limit, James wielded a razor-blade on plywood to create a line cut that filled the remainder of the page. After an estimated hundred hours of work, that first issue of Slant was completed. It was dated November, 1948, it was ready to be mailed out on October 11 -- and Walter suddenly found himself possessed of a fanzine that had nowhere to go. A Nottingham fan named John Gunn had taken over charge of the British Fantasy League, and had promised to distribute Slant for Walter, who knew few fans' names and addresses. But he apparently got caught under Max Smart's cone of silence, ignored letters, and it was not until Christmas Day that Walter acquired a list of British fandom. Two days later, 150 copies of Slant were mailed out.

It was a 12-page issue, consisting of three folded foolscap sheets with saddle-stitching, no price was asked, and virtually nobody in the United States received a copy direct from the publisher, except Forrest J Ackerman, who was more fan than pro at that time. It produced about a dozen letters of comment, one of which even contained some stamps to be used on future issues. A second issue again encountered distribution problems. It was intended to be mailed with Vincent Clarke's Science Fantasy News. But by July, Walter again decided to mail it independently, and this time, the Willis fame began to spread to the United States, because the NFFF roster was put into service as a source of recipients. Ackerman, who has been a fairy godfather in more ways to more fanzines than anyone is likely to realize, cheered and encouraged Walter enormously in two ways. He asked for 25 copies of Slant, in return for which he sent prozines. Even more remarkable was the fact that Ackerman sold for $19 to Avon Fantasy Reader an item from that second Slant, a story by Clive Jackson, "Swordsmen of Varnis". Prodigies became innumerable. Ted Carnell asked Slant authors to submit to his prozine, New Worlds. Manly Bannister, publisher of Nekromantikon, shipped a font of type to Walter. By working three nights weekly plus weekends, James and Walter were achieving such quality that they felt justified in charging a price for Slant, starting with its fourth issue, and Walter decided to purchase the typewriter which he'd previously borrowed, after having survived two years of fanac with nothing except a ballpoint pen for writing purposes. This was a 1912 model typewriter which he and James carried home through a downpour, slung across a broomstick; on it, James later began to write fiction, when Walter gave it to him. Halfway through the fourth issue -- 42 pages, some containing James' finest linocuts -- a terrible thing happened. The handle of the press exploded. The neighborhood blacksmith made unsatisfactory repairs, and it became necessary to have the final page of this issue mimeographed by Ken Bulmer and Clarke. And just as Walter was beginning work on a fifth issue, something without precedent in fandom occurred. It served as a magnificent symbol of how an individual who had been unknown in 1948 had grown in esteem by 1950. Bannister sent him the Nekromantikon press.

(To be continued.)

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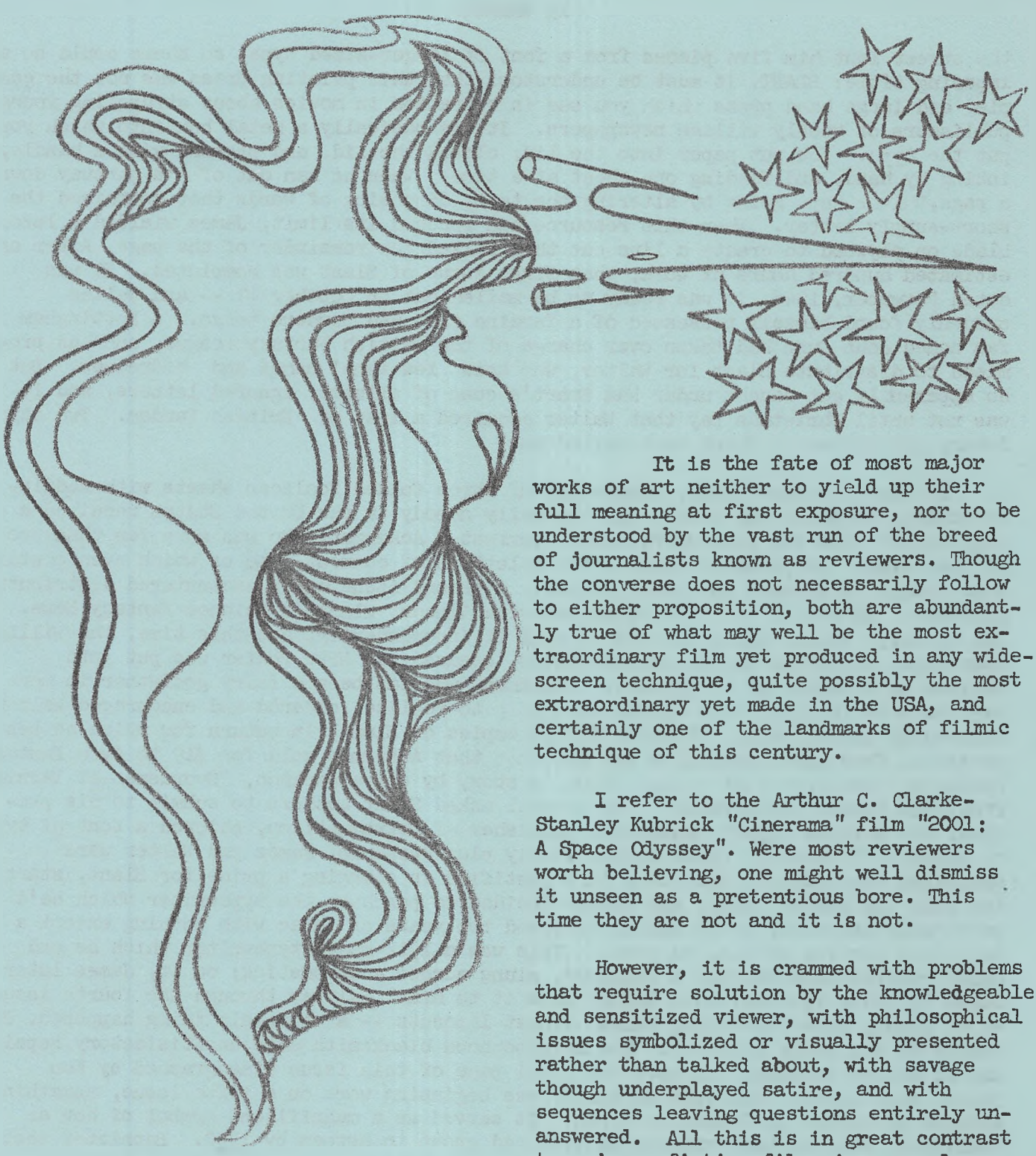
REMEMBER HYPHEN?: Another true fan prostitutes his genius...He is the first bull to carry his own china shop with him...Nothing legendary has happened for a long time... I am the victim of a vast international conspiracy the ramifications of which are beyond my feeble comprehension...I will let people quote themselves into trouble...My chief gripe against Dianetcs is that there have been no new vanVogt stories for three years. Its chief blessing is that there have been no new Hubbard stories for three years...That flash of sanity known as .gafia....From Hyphen #5.



THE BLOWN MIND ON FILM

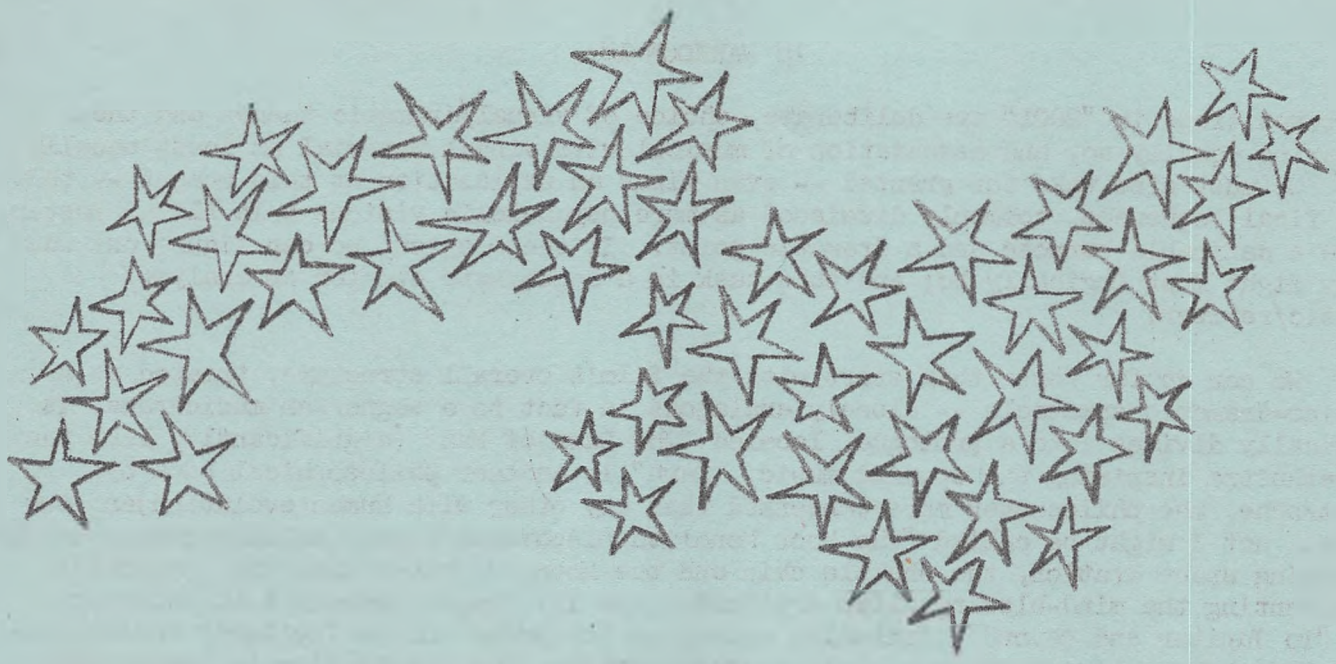
Walter Breen

It is the fate of most major works of art neither to yield up their full meaning at first exposure, nor to be understood by the vast run of the breed of journalists known as reviewers. Though the converse does not necessarily follow to either proposition, both are abundantly true of what may well be the most extraordinary film yet produced in any wide-screen technique, quite possibly the most extraordinary yet made in the USA, and certainly one of the landmarks of filmic technique of this century.

I refer to the Arthur C. Clarke-Stanley Kubrick "Cinerama" film "2001: A Space Odyssey". Were most reviewers worth believing, one might well dismiss it unseen as a pretentious bore. This time they are not and it is not.

However, it is crammed with problems that require solution by the knowledgeable and sensitized viewer, with philosophical issues symbolized or visually presented rather than talked about, with savage though underplayed satire, and with sequences leaving questions entirely unanswered. All this is in great contrast to science-fiction films in general; these normally use straight narrative techniques (at most with flashback), the special effects being confined to more or less fumbling attempts to portray bems or alien landscapes or the like.

Not so "2001". Here special effects are essential to the drama, used for verisimilitude in a manner hitherto



undreamed of, and the narrative technique is wholly unlike that usual in Hollywood -- deliberately so. We cannot assume that anything here is merely accidental or the result of slipshod thinking. Under the circumstances, it is no particular surprise that the film's publicity has carefully eschewed any reference to SF. After all, calling it SF automatically would put it into a Category right there with "I Married a Teen-Age Monster" and would limit the kind of publicity -- as well as billing, performance contracts, etc -- which it might otherwise receive. Not to mention that Clarke and Kubrick are aiming it at a wider audience than those who automatically investigate anything labeled SF; and their purpose is vaster than with most SF. Whether or not fans approve, this was evidently deliberate.

Whether it is justified is moot, but it is unimportant here; my purpose is not to defend the film or its makers but to analyze it and provide solutions to the enigmas built into it.

In searching for meanings in a film or other artwork as deliberately ambiguous as this one, the risk is always present of superimposing one's own subjective reactions (personal associations not shared by other viewers, let alone by the makers) and ascribing those to the creators.

(An instance of this risk for "2001": it would have been too easy to assume that either Clarke or Kubrick had heard the opening "Zarathustra" Dawn fanfare under some such conditions as I did. It was played at San Francisco's planetarium show on Stonehenge, spring 1967, at the very moment of equinoctial dawn as the sun rose over similarly shaped monoliths precisely aligned, and the similarity is uncanny. I will never again hear it without visualizing the Stonehenge scene -- awesome in the highest degree -- then the climactic recurrences in "2001". But I dare not suggest that either Clarke or Kubrick had this show in mind in the choice of that opening music.)

This risk can be minimized by making no unverifiable assumptions of familiarity with this or that on the part of Clarke or Kubrick. On the other hand, we must not forget Kubrick's extraordinary "Dr. Strangelove", again SF-that-is-more-than-SF, or Clarke's esoteric (in all senses) "Childhood's End". Clarke is probably to be credited with more of the finished film than he would admit, thematically speaking, considering the body-disregarding form of human evolution-in-a-lifetime following confrontation with alien intelligence in the last-named book.

Clarke is also too sensible a writer to succumb to the common temptation of confusing obscurity and profundity. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that any

juxtapositions in "2001" are deliberate, choice of visual/dramatic themes and their ordering equally so, and association of musical with visual material at least equally so. We must also take for granted -- even minus an explanation at this moment -- that the final sequences, commonly dismissed as mere psychedelic visions a la Alfred Bester, have a definable purpose and a dramatic point. If these exist, we can figure out what they might most logically be; and this task is a legitimate one for an analyst/critic/reviwer.

We can do far worse than start with the film's overall structure, treated as a musico-dramatic spectacle -- closely analagous in fact to a Wagnerian musicdrama. It logically divides into a prologue, labeled "The Dawn of Man" (significantly, like the Zarathustra inspiring the opening music, "Dawn" is another philosophical book by Nietzsche, the philosopher more concerned than any other with human evolution)and two acts. Act I might be called "The Moon Monolith Discovered", and includes scenes on the orbiting space station, the shuttle ship and the Moon, climaxed with the spacemen's confronting the mind-blowing alien artifact. Act II, roughly parallel in structure, is "To Jupiter and Beyond", including scenes on the probe and in Jupiter's environs -- and Elsewhere, climaxed with a similar confrontation. The parallelism is intentional and clear.

(We can identify about 20 musical and/or visual leitmotifs, recurring in purposeful combinations much as in Wagner, Mussorgsky or Puccini. I am not aware that any previous reviewer has studied these for this film, though they clarify various levels of meaning in a way no analysis ignoring them could do. Without bothering to provide a numbered catalogue, I shall consider some of the more important ones below.)

As in even the most verismo operas, action is held up at times for psychological musical developments in this film -- again hardly the case in most SF, and obviously intentionally here. It is unfair to criticize the film for not being a "slice of life" straight narration when at every second or third scene is plain evidence that it is conceived as an artwork along operatic, even tragic, lines.

A prologue as full of impact as "The Dawn of Man" would be purposeless unless demonstrably relevant to what follows. This one, though overlong and prone to too-slow pacing, is clear enough. Dawn -- shown visually first by sequences of extraordinarily brilliant sunrise over various landscapes, heightened by behind-screen projection, and associated with the Zarathustra fanfare -- clearly here represents (1) manifestation of overwhelming superhuman forces, (2) an analogy with the dawn of mind in man, evolving from darkness of ignorance to the light of understanding. Both (1) and (2) are connected to the two major plot lines. The prologue's connection with Act 1 is underlined by the visual pun ending it: the newly sapient apeman hurls a bone into the air, homo sapiens hurles a satellite into orbit. Use of the fanfare at that moment spells out the dawn of thinking man.

But the fanfare is also associated with the new moon (geocentric conjunction in celestial longitude between Moon and Sun), with emergence of Moon from darkness -- traditionally a rebirth -- as in turn the Sun comes out from hiding, and with the monolith as an alien implant from the Jovian system. Its recurrence at the very end is no accident but a mystery to be explained later.

Note the parallelism between sudden use of slow motion at the prologue's end, above mentioned, and the similar apparent slow motion of the space station in orbit; and compare the unnaturally rapid motion in the finale through the Jovian atmosphere and the slow motion in the Louis XVI room at the very end. For all its extraordinary realism of effects, this film clearly involves a flexible timeflow, as psychedelic a view of time as in Psalm 90: "A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday

and as a watch in the night." This too is purposive, but the reason has to come later too. It is, however, connected with the essentaially operatic structure of the work.

The monolith (always associated with a peculiar tentative groping gesture, reaching out to touch, never any attempt to pull down, carry off or open up) is also associated with this same fanfare, significantly one of the most overwhelming brief passages in all music. For the monolith itself (which Clarke somewhere calls a Sentinal) is something to which nobody can remain indifferent, however enigmatic its outward featurelessness. Apemen confronting it have their minds challenged, blown into sapience. Human discoverers of the Moon monolith are panicked into concocting a spurious epidemic news release in order to preserve a needless secrecy. (Here, surely a satire in "security" precautions wrapped around everything from war gas chemistry to UFO data...) Spacemen examining it at the new moon collapse, exposed to its sudden burst of Jupiter-aimed vibrations, heard as unbearably loud keenings. We never learn of their fate: recovering uneventfully, mad or dead? Dave in his little shuttle craft, confronting it unseen (?) in the Jovian atmosphere, has a psychedelic experience culminating in the famous White Light, then out of the body (apparently after his own unrealized death) finds himself in the Inner Planes undergoing an uncomprehended aging/death/rebirth, confronting it in plain sight only to take on the form of a fetus in a bubble, wide-eyed with wonder but significantly resembling himself in his former body: the dawn of bodiless mentally evolved man, as in "Childhood's End", as the fanfare proclaims the Beginning.

Of the meanings of this extraordinary sequence more later, as much else must be considered to make it really intelligible. In the meantime, it is probably intentional that there are similarities of proportion and shape between the Cinerama screen, the exit passageway in the space station, and the monolith, each of these being in some sense a means of egress or gateway to some other kind of environment, plane, or level of perception. And the similarity of gesture on the part of apemen, spacemen and Dave immediately brings to mind the Jungian collective unconscious: we behave in many ways as though concealed within us are our apelike ancestors of four million years ago.

The reason for choice of an operatic structure for this film must be to convey or manifest something not otherwise readily communicable -- here patently multileveled symbolism. Any artform in its higher levels of excellence defies total translation into any other medium (form follows function, medium is shaped to intention, and"2001" says among other things 'Thus I refute McLuhan'): and often enough we find gropings towards media nonexistent in the creator's day. Wagner's own stage directions show that the effects he had in mind are precisely,those easiest done on widescreen film -- underwater shots, lap-dissolves, flashback, vast panoramas, etc., though regrettably enough no Eisenstein or DeMille or Kubrick has attempted to film the Ring tetralogy. Joyce in "Ulysses", another experiment with time involving overtly psychedelic sequences, clearly groped towards other film techniques: elementary special effects, rapid cuts, internal monologue and multiple exposures. Scriabin, in his Poem of Ecstasy, Poem of Fire and final unfinished opera specifically experimented with what is today called multimedia. As for "2001", it is clearly designed for widescreen in multimedia, and if Clarke is actually talked into releasing a novel based on the film, it will not succeed in recreating the impact of the film.

The essence of that primitive form of multimedia known as opera is drama of which music (singing with instrumental interludes) is essential in carrying forward the action in a heightened manner impossible to "straight" drama. Division into acts and scenes is partly for convenience in changing stage properties, etc., partly also for demarcating discrete episodes or phases of the action. Use of a prologue contributes in other ways, sometimes (as in Boito's "Mefistofele" giving the behind-the-scene story, that known to the author -- and by dramatic irony the audience -- but, as Marion Z.

Bradley has pointed out, not known to the characters of the drama themselves.

Here the prologue has served a function already indicated, and the two acts to follow emphasize two major plot lines. Respectively these are the effect on minds of confrontation with super human alien force (here the monolith), and the tragedy of a computer into which had been built super-human intelligence but -- fatal flaw -- incapacity to handle emotion. These two plot lines, each a story in itself, are intertwined in the final act to overwhelming effect, possibly with less than complete success; but then Clarke is attempting, with techniques involving utmost verisimilitude, to make viewers themselves (like the film's apemen) confront something beyond their ken, in short to blow their minds even as the monolith did to those who confronted it. Small wonder, then, that an essentially operatic/multimedia approach was chosen for this essentially Wagnerian project; still less wonder that the most advanced film technology was required. The film is successful enough overall to justify its means, even to justify the existence of Cinerama.

But here we reach one of the major criticisms leveled at "2001". This is its use of recorded music, some of it excellent, some banal. This was deliberate; Kubrick could have hired any composer, in or out of Hollywood, with traditional or electronic techniques. Yet he chose records. We have seen to some extent why the Zarathustra fanfare; we can understand some of the alien electronic sound; but in the name of everything holy, why the "Blue Danube"?

In perspective, this is one of the most humorously original strokes in "2001". As the space station majestically rolls and dances through its orbit, its sonic commentary is one of the most banal of all dances, originally suggestive of (now faded?) elegance. And aboard the station, what do we face? The usual group of gray-flannel-types, drinking hard liquor for icebreaking...one of Conrad Hilton's ubiquitous establishments...a Howard Johnson restaurant, doubtless with its usual plastic food...and a flossy new pay videophone. The perhaps overlong sequence, permeated by banality, appears to slow the pacing, but it does have its points. Clearly, once a space station is actually built, this is just what we will find in it; romanticism and Sense of Wonder give way to extensions of big corporations' mundane money games.

If over-familiarity is associated with banality, this is only because wonderless people have made it so. We have here an instance of what in my UC Berkeley thesis I called the "Law of Pejoration", hitherto unpublished but practically universal: Over any sufficiently long time, any social process tends to deteriorate. Actions once the privilege of the few become first entitlements, then unwelcome duties (e.g. voting, jury service, literacy, educating one's children, etc.); esoteric religious symbolism is misunderstood, taken literally and finally made into debased vehicles for Kitsch; words once brilliant and precise neologisms become vague common-places; beautifully apposite figures of speech become cliches; terrifying imprecations become mild intensifiers; agonizing musical progressions become common currency of tin pan alley hacks; a violinist approaches his 200th rehearsal of Beethoven's Fifth with a boredom not present at his first or fortieth. Air travel has already become commonplace; eventually, Clarke suggests,, space travel too?

In the film we are not told this, we are shown it in action, and it is all of a piece with the big corporations' ubiquity.

The function of banal material here appears roughly analogous to the function of seemingly banal village band music in Mahler symphonies, themselves of Wagnerian intensity and scope, portraying mood sequences making often definable multilevel dramatic points without being program music in the Straussian sense.

I am not arguing that the banality of the space station episodes is a good thing:

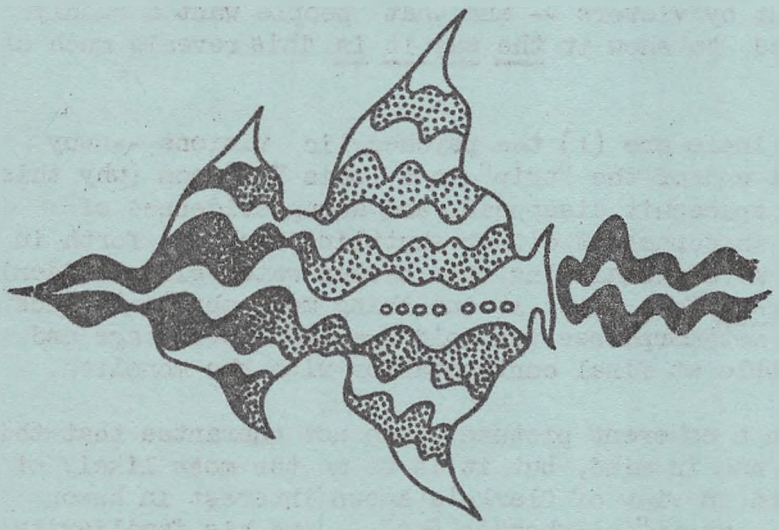
I am saying that it was calculated, deliberate. In convincing verisimilitude, these episodes are a series of deadly thrusts at what this civilization does to its most wonderous accomplishments. For a parallel, were the Pyramids of Egypt to be transplanted to the USA in some unheard-of reclamation project, even as when the colossal sculptures were moved out of flood levels when the High Aswan dam was being built, doubless in ten years they would be provided with nearby flossy plastic motels and air-conditioned hotdog stands complete with pay phones, postcard racks and stereo jukeboxes.

Under the circumstances, is it any wonder that a passenger in an Earth-Moon shuttle ship is portrayed, like any long distance airlines traveler today, as falling asleep before his TV set? Where is the Sense of Wonder that should imbue such a fantastic journey? Where are the snows of yesterYear?

Clearly anything that is to revive the Sense of Wonder has to be more extreme. Even a months-long journey to Jupiter becomes the scene of chess games (one wonders why no crossword puzzles) on the crew's part.

The film acquires additional significance, then, as a biting attack on the monotony imposed by modern technolggy -- and on some of the latter's abuses. This last specifically in the role of IBM in one of the major characters: the computer HAL 9000, the villain of the drama.

HAL is as much an archetypal symbol as the monolith -- quite unusual for post-Iago villains; and it is clear enough that, motives aside, he could have been a hero. It is a wonder to me that IBM people co-operated to the extent they did in supplying uncannily convincing data, design elements and hardware for "2001"; probably they did not fully understand what Clarke and Kubrick had in mind! For the role of this ultrasapient computer is a deadly satire on certain implicit (formerly also explicit) aims of IBM, and a quite logicalextrapolation on consequences of developing such a computer (itself a known aim of IBM).



Whether or not Clarke and Kubrick consciously had in mind the old joke about the ultrasapient computer fed the question "Is there a God?" replying "There is now!", the film is nevertheless the ultimate comment on that story. For one of the major plot lines is in fact the results of building a computer of that degree of intelligence, without at the same time building in either the Three Laws of Robotics (or some equivalent ethical code) or any capacity for emotion/empathy/concern for human welfare. HAL is the only crew member knowing from the outset the full story of the monolith, knowing that the journey would be one-way; and yet it does not confide in Dave any concern over either fact. Its reaction to Dave is instead that of a snoop preparing a Psych Bureau personnel-file report. And so as soon as HAL does display anything remotely like emotion, it malfunctions and continues to do so in more dangerous ways until Dave, in desperation, gives it a (fatal) functional lobotomy by turning off its higher mental function circuits.

The capacity to be human implies the capacity to make mistakes--and correct them.

The capacity to be human implies the capacity to feel emotion and act on it.

The capacity to be divine is the capacity to experience and act out love in a more-than-human degree -- whatever other abilities may be there.

HAL 9000 was built without any of these capacities; a fatal flaw in the most literal sense, as therefore five crew members lost their lives.

Is it an accident that its Eye at once suggests, at times, the All-Seeing Eye in tradition, and the red Eye of Sauron? Is it an accident that HAL's initials are a single-letter displacement of IBM (H before I, A before B, L before M: thank ycu, Bill Sarill)? On seeing the film a second time, one is tempted to wear the famous button reading I AM A HUMAN BEING: DO NOT FOLD, SPINDLE OR MUTILATE.

HAL 9000's fatal flaw can be described in a word as hubris, overweening arrogance -- its apogee being HAL's decision that human capacity for error cannot be allowed to interfere with the progress of the journey. Hubris is the very flaw in heros of Greek tragedy, leading directly to their downfall. Esoterically, Greek tragedy's principal recurrent theme is retribution, rebalancing, the action of the law of karma. "All that I am is the result of what I have thought," as the Dhammapada says; "action equals reaction" and "in whatsoever manner ye mete, it shall be meted out unto you" are two other famous statements of the law. If a computer acts in such a way as to affect people adversely, is it not subject to the consequences? Normally this would have been automatic, the spaceship going out of control and the computer perishing with it; but for dramatic purposes here, as HAL had taken on human attributes, its karma would appear in a human manner.

But the karma cycle is not limited to HAL's offense and its consequence. HAL malfunctions like a blown mind, slays the hibernating crewmen and in turn is slain by Dave, who in turn dies analogously with a blown mind.

We come here naturally to the significance of the incredible finale. Clarke refused to discuss it in detail at the Lunacon save to insist that the meanings were there and would have to be thought out by viewers -- and that people want a cuddly universe whereas he and Kubrick wanted to show it the way it is. This reveals much of Clarke's beliefs and conclusions.

The mysterious elements in the finale are (1) the psychedelic visions -- why are they there at all? (2) the abrupt end of the "trip" in a Louis XVI room (why this anachronism?) where shuttle ship and spacesuit disappear, and among evidences of immense luxury and expansiveness are instances of either shuttling back and forth in time or more probably of creation by mere visualizing (the broken water-glass suddenly reappearing pristine, the dinner of real food which is one thing most obviously lacking in space travel), and (3) the sudden metamorphoses into old age and extreme age and then rebirth as a fetal form in a bubble at final confrontation with the monolith.

These can be all accounted for in a coherent picture. I do not guarantee that this is precisely what Clarke and Kubrick had in mind, but it is to me the most likely of several reasonable possibilities. And in view of Clarke's known interest in human metamorphic, out-of-body, evolution -- as in"Childhood's End" -- and his familiarity with the law of karma, above, is highly likely that something of this kind was intended.

Here I must quote something Clarke said at the 1968 Lunacon, which reveals much more than he may have realized -- or, possibly, which showed that his hearers were unfamiliar with traditional symbolism second nature to Clarke. He said that the original plan was to make the probe aim at Saturn rather than Jupiter, but Jupiter was chosen instead in medias res for credibility.

This accounts for the peculair mixture of Jupiter and Saturn symbolism in the

finale. Considering what went before, it is only to be expected that there would be symbolism here; and this time it is nothing private, just traditional astrological symbolism. Forget about newspaper astrology and consider these complexes, which have been common to mystical and religious systems since antiquity: Jupiter is symbolically associated with expansiveness, fulfillment, lavishness, generosity, luxury, wealth. Saturn, farthest out of the planets known in ancient times, the limit of the Ptolemaic astrological system, is associated with payment of karmic debts, retribution, limitation, contraction, old age, mundane practicality, boundaries, and the skin as the physical boundary of the body.

From these lists one can see immediately how the Louis XVI room sequence is a mixture of Jupiter and Saturn symbolism: the lavish surroundings of luxury on the one hand, and Dave's aging on the other. Use of the Jupiter or Saturn movements from Holst's "The Planets" -- itself a masterwork intelligible in full only via familiarty with this ancient symbolism -- might have settled the confusion, but in overridingly suggesting one planetary symbol it would have overruled the other and both were dramatically necessary at this point. Dave had gone physically as far as he was meant to.

But if Dave is suddenly in an environment in which this kind of thing occurs, even to creation of environmental changes by merely visualizing them, as with the food and the glass of water, he is no longer physically alive in the usual sense; he is out of the body and most probably dead though probably not realizing it. (Not that the sound of breathing, previously loudly emanating from the spacesuit, has stopped.) This has been already hinted at by one of the last visible illuminated markers in the shuttle craft as he leaves it.

We are therefore in the middle of a frankly esoteric or occult frame of reference: ancient Jupiter and Saturn symbolism, the law of karma, Inner Planes after-death survival (and note that the type of experience of the newly dead matches that reported independently via thousands of mediumistic communications). It is no surprise, then, to find other esoteric material in "2001", and it is consistent with Clarke's other work. Traditionally, over cycles of incarnations, human long range goals are supposed to add up to evolution into higher life-forms or planes of consciousness, eventually as disembodied mind, sooner or later to reunite with God/Tao/the Cosmos or call it what you will. The final confrontation with the mindblowing monolith and immediate metamorphosis/rebirth/evolution into the wide-eyed fetal form in the bubble must be taken as symbolic, and Jungians may have the least difficulty here. "Unless ye are reborn of water and the spirit..." "Unless ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven..." And the Dawn of Man music overwhelms us again. Which is only the culmination of another chain of (as it now appears) symbolic abrupt metamorphoses" apeman into human, flung bone into orbiting station, computer into human, aged Dave into fetal form; and we think again of the adept-level children in "Childhood's End", no longer bothering with bodily limitations, jaunting over the universe.

What this understated film appears to be saying, by implication, is that confronted with some overmasteringly superhuman force, any mind -- apeman, human or computer -- is forced into another level or realm of operation (or misoperation), even at the cost of drastic change in the body it inhabits. In short, the mind is blown. And here is the key to the psychedelic sequence Dave undergoes -- with us -- on entering the Jovian atmosphere, with yet another avatar of the monolith in orbit with Jupiter's moons. Dave is even then being forced to react to vibrations from superhuman

intelligence. The light/color streams of energy flow, the retinal circus visions (partly suggested by the kalidoscopic flicker of closed-circuit TV screen messages reflecting the shifting internal states of HAL's mind), the bewilderingly swift passage above the Jovian chromatically altered landscape, the exploding galaxy of blazing light -- all this is the kind of thing encountered either in spontaneous psychedelic experiences or on LSD. Confrontation with elemental forces, as in Himalayan expeditions and solo ocean crossings, etc., often produces such experiences even to depersonalization and dissolution of the self/world boundaries (note that Dave does not appear himself during the psychedelic visions!), metamorphoses, death and rebirth, standing outside time. These are not essentially different save in causal circumstances from the LSD experience, if one may rely on the majority of descriptions of both.

The temptation is overwhelmingly strong indeed to assume familiarity on the part of Clarke and/or Kubrick with LSD, probably during the earliest experiments when the pure Sandoz product was available (far more potent than any blackmarket LSD). If so, this in turn accounts for certain structural features of the film.

But whether or not LSD is chemically behind "2001", the resemblance is uncanny. The film is a trip (pun intended, and a "trip without a ticket" at that: its effect on viewers is notoriously ecstatic. It represents much the same kind of Jungian worldview with esoteric and ancient Indian aspects as Leary has adumbrated and as many LSD users now take for granted. Considering it as the viewer's trip, it is -- as often -- programmed with recorded music, rather than specially constructed live music, and the music is chosen in such a way as to modulate the total experience. The rate of flicker-like vibration of HAL' mental states ---as of the psychedelic vision sequence -- closely approximates, I am told, the internally generated flicker common in LSD trips; the use of behind screen light at climactic points, and of offscreen strobes at others, as in the famous Berkeley Light-Sound-Dimension shows, deliberately mimes certain LSD phenomea. And the total effect, including the order of the psychedelic sequences, so closely parallels that of LSD visions as to restimulate such experience in some viewers.

Though clearly Clarke had more important things in mind than a mere high-quality light show: the psychedelic material, incandescently consciousness-affecting as it is, necessarily is only a part of the whole dramatic presentation, its function that of showing us the effects on a highly organized human mind of such a confrontation. That here is a total-environmental trigger rather than a chemical one is unimportant.

Clarke has said that he intended to show viewers what the universe is really like out there. This can be taken in several senses: the grave dangers built into any such voyage; the probable confrontation with alien intelligence operating on principles so unfamiliar as to be quite impossible for us to establish communication or even understand the action-and-consequences sequences; or even the effect of such a journey on humanity. Most probably all of these at once, since a multilevel symbolic presentation is chosen, and any one of these points would have been easily made without the fantastic assemblage of advanced means. It may even be concluded that inner space and outer space are similar enough to make little difference, or that outside our comfortable home planet the usual euclidean view of time no longer applies. In fact, this itself appears to be one of the points "2001" is making, namely the ancient recognition that it is possible to journey at least mentally (and sooner or later physically too?) to accessible realms where time is recognized as a creation of the created, stretched, compressed, shuttled back-and-forth in, twisted spirally or even mirror-imaged at will; where space is something that can be stepped around rather than laboriously traversed; where symbolic systems are common experience; and thinking makes it so; where bodies are entirely superfluous. The so-called Inner Planes, in short.

If this equation of Inner and Outer space is intended, then we are very close

(Concluded on page 62.)

The Clarke-Kubrick motion picture is, to the best of my knowledge, the first "talking" science-fiction movie to appear without music specially composed for it. Some of the s-f film scores of the past have been fairly distinguished: With an obligatory nod toward Jack Gaughan's passion for Max Steiner's score for "King Kong", I'll mention only the music by Sir Arthur Bliss for "Things to Come", and Lieth Steven's for "Destination Moon".

Kubrick instead has chosen to use only items from the repetoire, perhaps to emphasize continuity with the past (although three of the pieces involved will be familiar only to a few specialists.

The opening music is the first section of Richard Strauss' tone-poem, "Also Sprach Zarathustra". In Strauss' work, the passage is his impression of Zarathustra's greeting to the dawn. Appropriately, Kubrick uses it in three places: To introduce the "Dawn of Man" sequence, to accompany Dawn Man's discovery of the bone weapon, and at the very end, as Reborn Man approaches the Earth.

The music is additionally appropriate because of its purely musical ambiguity. The opening theme is a trumpet proclamation, C-G-C. These are two elments of a chord in C, but because the chord is incomplete (an open fifth) one cannot tell whether it is major

or minor until the third is added.The drums also hammer away at C and G. In the answering chords, Strauss alternates from major to minor twice, goes back to the major,changes to F major (the subdominant) reinforced by a descending trombone arpeggio,and then goes back to C major in a blare of full orchestra and organ. The apparent finality of this "ending" is deceptive; Strauss ends the composition as a whole in both major and minor at once, a passage unsuitable for any purpose of Kubrick's, but which will be in the minds of any viewers of the picture familiar with the work.

Virtually everyone has noted and commented upon the use of the "other"Strauss' "Blue Danube" at the beginning of the next section of the film. I thought this marvelously wedded to the graceful rolling of the space station, and even more so to the turning of the Pan-Am spaceship during its approach to match the rotation of the great wheel. The music has no such visual component in the succeeding voyage to the Moon, but in cases its extreme familiarity helps to stress the nearly routine nature of both flights.

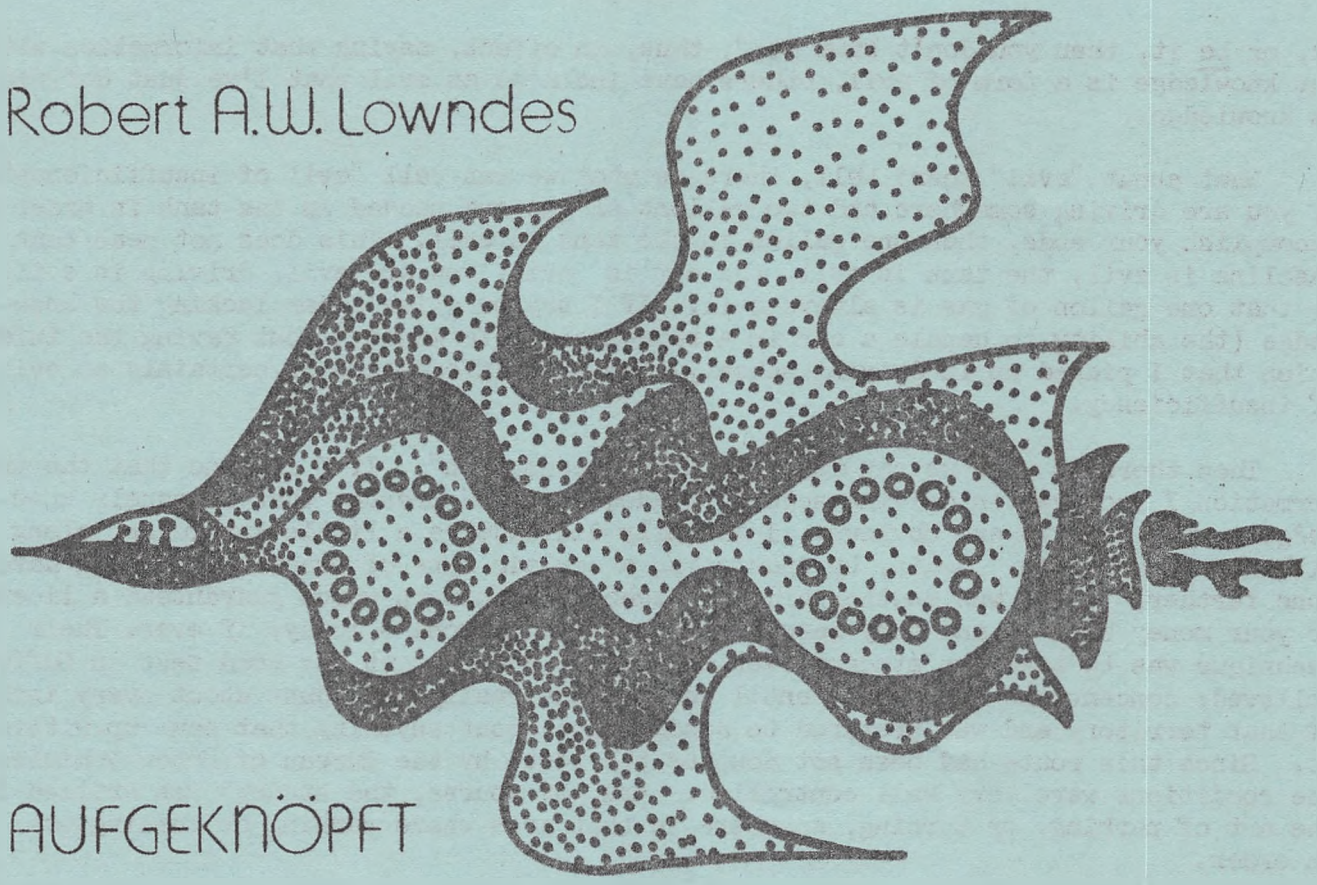
The atonal music which anticipates and accompanies each appearance of the mysterious slab, one of three pieces in the film by someone unknown to me named Ligeti, contrastingly is in no key at all and has no spoken rhythm. Virtually unknown though it is, it should be familiar in principle to many science-fiction fans, for it is plainly derived from a section of the late Karl-Birger Blomdahl's s-f opera"Aniara". This is the section in which Blomdahl used a recording of the "Dawn Chorus" -- the up-and-down movement of the ionosphere when the sunlight first hits it in the morning -- which, when converted into sound, sounds peculiarly like a women's chorus wailing at a great distance; to this, Blomdahl added a string quartet to impose upon the natural noise a harmonic structure and a haunting melody. Ligeti is not so reticent; he uses actual voices, and pretty damn loud ones, too, but the effect of his work is nearly identical with Blomdahl's. Again, a highly appropriate choice.

The music which accompanies the flight of the Discovery toward Jupiter is a passage from Kachaturian's Gayne ballet. I do not see any literary association here; however, the slow meanderings of the strings, which never do seem to get anywhere in particular, do suggest the great length of the journey; the relative familiarity of the music again suggests that there is a lot about this flight which is also routine; and the (to my ears, at least) excruciating banality of the music (Kachaturian was one of those Socialist-Realism composers whose work is a potpourri of every 19th-Century cliche' in the literature) also suggests that the main human component of the trip is boredom.

Ligeti is called upon again for the faster-than light journey, for the same reasons as before (the non-traditional texture of the music, the chorus now associated with the slab, and the strange noises contained in the piece)plus one other: This second composition falls into three contrasting parts. The first part coincides with the light show; the second with the breakout into relatively normal space (beginning with the approach to the globular cluster), and the third with the journey over the alien landscape.

Finally, a short bit of musique concrete by Ligeti is heard during the sequence in the alien motel. This is not music at all as most of us understand the term, but a series of noises either recorded (and distorted) on tape, or produced directly by signal generators. A few of these noises are distorted human voices, and the whole suggests some kind of activity going on behind the scenes. Unhappily, since the composer made fairly extensive use of an echo chamber in this piece, to me the sounds suggested strongly that they were coming from the huge bathroom shown.

This Turkish Bath effect is to my ears the only mistake in the film's music (except for the fact that it was recorded throughout at entirely too high a level, a defect few theater operators will have the wit, though they have the means, to correct). In all other respects it is most carefully thought out and fits perfectly. --JB



Talking about James Blish's three novels, "Doctor Mirabilis", "Black Easter", and "A Case of Conscience", the author dons a mask of objectivity, becomes William Atheling, Jr. (presumed to be a son of Ezra Pound), and notes in part: "...each one is an examination of one aspect of the question of whether or not Knowledge is in itself a form of evil."

Here's a place, if there ever was one, where it seems to me that a little semantic examination is an awfully good idea before plunging right in. What is meant by "knowledge" in this phrase? What is meant by "in itself"? What is meant by "a form"? What is meant by "evil"? Just asking these questions tells me one thing right away: I cannot answer them in a universal sense, meaning that my views will not express either the whole truth or part of the truth for everybody everywhere and for all times. Well, that's a relief; so I'm not going to try. I'm going to try to express what these things separately mean to me, then put the sentence back together and again define it for me.

To me, "knowledge" includes information, but information is not necessarily knowledge. I have knowledge of driving a car under special and protected conditions: it was a driving school car and the instructor was there besides me to put on the brakes, etc., when an emergency came up that I could not handle. I have a lot of information about driving a car without such special protection in traffic conditions and along highways, etc. But my knowledge of this is minute: I obtained just enough to satisfy me that (in view of my poor muscular coordination, and inability to remember left from right when I'm thinking about anything else) getting actual knowledge of driving seemed to present too high a probabllity that such knowledge would very soon be the last I received in this body --and would very possibly discorporate others as well as myself.

However, from what I have read on the question, I can see that while some theologians and philosophers have defined "knowledge" in this sense, saying "If you can't do

it, or be it, then you don't know it.", thus, in effect, saying that information without knowledge is a form of evil, others have included as evil what I've just defined as knowledge.

What about "evil" then? Well, there is what we can call "evil of insufficiency". If you are driving somewhere and two gallons of gas are needed in the tank in order to accomplish your ends, then one gallon in the tank is evil. This does not mean that gasoline is evil, the tank is evil, the car is evil, you are evil, driving is evil, or that one gallon of gas is always evil. If I try to drive a car lacking the knowledge (the ability to handle a car in a reasonably safe manner), but having the information that I picked up in driving school, then that information is certainly an evil of insufficiency.

Then there is what we can call "evil of presumption". If I imagine that the information I received in driving school is adequate, and presume that it equals knowledge -- the results are obvious. I actually did acquire a little knowledge, along with the information. Again, by undergoing a certain type of practice, I could have gone farther. There was another driver's school in Suffern which guaranteed a license, or your money back -- and they rarely had to refund anyone's money, if ever. Their technique was to take the student over the actual course that the road test in Suffern followed; concentrate upon that; until the student really knew just about every inch of that territory and was prepared to handle just about anything that came up within it. Since this route had been set down as the route by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the conditions were very well controlled. And, of course, the student was drilled in the art of parking, or turning, anywhere in that area where parking or turning was in order.

Had I done what many other Suffernites have done, I would have come out with considerably more information and actual knowledge about driving than I now have.I believe I could have obtained a license, for I can tell the difference between left and right when I know my course thoroughly and keep in practice. The training would have given me a sense of confidence, too; even as it was, with the Suffern High School course, I had become much more relaxed behind the wheel than I thought was possible. But the very first time I went out to practice thereafter, I forgot to look to the left, at an inter-section, concentrating as I was on making a good turn to the right into the intersection. There was no "stop" or any other sort of sign; but had someone been barreling along as I made a rather good turn into that road ... Dorothy's new car, The U.S. Army's new 2nd Lt. Rogalin beside me.

Here, then are two forms of evil: insufficiency and presumption of adequacy. Certainly we can call insufficiency an evil in itself. Presumption of adequacy may or may not lead to evil results. (Sometimes that which is presumed to be adequate actually turns out to be so.) Information is not knowledge, but is often confused with knowledge.

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Let's take a book at Adam and Eve in the myth of the Garden of Eden. Eve says to the serpent: "...God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (I'm quoting from the Revised Standard Version.) And the serpent replies to Eve: "'You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

Clever serpent! The myth shows that the creature was telling the truth so far as it went -- but sufficient truth? Eve and Adam did not drop dead immediately when they ate the fruit. The fruit did impart information about good and evil. And they did

become "like God" in that they had some of God's information now that before they didn't have. The serpent neglected to mention that eating the fruit would make them become "like God" in one repect and in one respect only, aside from the limitations of "like". The information did not include knowledge needed to handle the information, nor the wisdom which can come only from experience. Nor did it make their relationship with God a closer one; on the contrary, it resulted in an immediate sense of separation, which we are told was later manifested in actual physical separation.

My own feeling is that this myth tells something important about human beings and the Universe. And the explication that I've heard which makes the most sense to me goes like this" God did not intend Adam and Eve to live in ignorance. (After all, Adam had had the beginnings of instruction, in naming the animals.) Had they obeyed, the time would have come when they could have eaten the fruit of the tree without disaster.

This denies the proposition: "knowledge in itself is evil", but not the proposition "knowledge is in itself a form of evil". The first is all-inclusive and so vague that anyone can point to some unpleasant event that follows after the obtaining of any particular knowledge and claim the proposition proved post hoc ergo propter hoc.(Which is one of the classic logical fallacies, but nonetheless a very effective manner of emotional presentation.) However, we do not need the fallacy; there's enough solid evidence of some form of unhappy consequence to almost any kind of knowledge, which would not have happened had the subject not obtained this knowledge, to justify suspicion, at least.

But look at the proposition Atheling states again. This suggests that evil comes in more than one form (something we're already aware of) but presents a limitation. All knowledge is a particular form of evil, in itself; it is not to be considered as all forms of evil, in itself -- though other forms may be consequent at times. Other forms are a risk, but one particular form is a certainty.

I don't believe we're just playing with words here; I think there is a whole universe of difference between the proposition: "knowledge is in itself evil," and "knowledge is in itself a form of evil." The first leads logically to anti-intellectualism; the second does not. In logic, "sequiter" refers to something that positively must follow: "non-sequiter" can either mean "does not follow at all" or "does not necessarily follow -- perhaps in this case, but not in that".

We are aware that anything whatsoever becomes absurd when carried to its logical extremes; after all, proceeding logically to the point of absurdity is one of the permanent forms of humor, and is one of my own favorite forms. Very few who have confused the proposition with its abbreviated and distorted form, and proceeded to anti-intellectualism, have tried to do away with all knowledge or even all information. But the area which they have considered good or "Godly" knowledge has been awfully restricted to say the least.

(I realize that the word "all" does not appear before the word "knowledge" in either propositon. It is, however, implied by default.)

What happens when neither "knowledge" nor "evil" is defined within the proposition is that most learning (outside of folklore and verbal instruction sans books) becomes forbidden knowledge; coming into contact with this is supposed to bring automatic horrors down upon you -- and the limit of this sort of evil depends upon the imagination of the persons describing it. So we have"forbidden books" and "wicked wisdom", etc. Without subscribing to any religious basis for it, H.P.Lovecraft wrote most of his stories on this distorted proposition. Undefined "evil" shortly becomes defined

as total evil, so that we have areas of knowledge which must be destructive because it is (by definition) impossible for such knowledge to be put to any good use. It can only corrupt and debase the person who obtains it, or hasten the process of corruption and degeneration that has already started when the subject consented to obtain the forbidden knowledge.

To me, that's the most fantastic element of all: the notion that any sort of knowledge must be totally evil in itself, totally incapable of being used for a good purpose. It requires a source of evil more powerful than human beings; and if you balk at anything like the Christian portrayal of The Devil (which, as "against" God, but not equal to God, though more powerful than man, fits the requirements) as the source, then so far as I've been able to see you have to settle for something far worse if you are going to account for evil at all. Which, I believe, is exactly what Lovecraft did.

The proposition that all knowledge is in itself a form of evil is something quite different. It limits the necessary evil of knowledge to a certain area; in other areas, knowledge may or may not be evil, depending upon circumstances -- and, of course, there are other kinds of evil. But what is the specific form of evil that all knowledge is?

I suggest that we can find the answer there in the work of the great mystics, including the anonymous author of "The Cloud of Unknowing",which I have just read in the Ira Progoff translation, published by Julian Press, second printing 1961. The interesting thing about this is that the author (who may have been John of the Cross, as Atheling, Jr. suggests) was apparently never charged with heresy, nor was the book prohibited. However, the author desires small and select circulation -- restricted to persons who are certain (and whose spiritual advisors are convinced) that they really have been "called by God" to go into this form of work. It is a "secret book" in that it deals with matters which just won't make any sense at all to most people, just as advanced Einstein equations is a "secret book" to me -- I'm not even prepared for elementary Einstein.

However, "The Cloud", classic though it may be, was written for a fourteenth century English audience, which was Roman Catholic to the core. Julian Press is also the publishers of the late Joel Goldsmith's latter works, and is still issuing collections of his writings, which are much more to the twentieth century; in the latest one, "Beyond Words and Thoughts", Goldsmith is saying the same thing as the author of "The Cloud", without the impedimenta of medieval theology.

Goldsmith writes in chapter one (page 9): "The mystic who wrote"The Cloud of Unknowing" knew that you must have discernment, not knowledge. He knew that no one can ever reach God through knowledge. God can be attained only when that altitude of consciousness which this mystic described as 'unknowing' is reached, and that 'unknowing' does not mean ignorance. It means a state of consciousness where the mind is at rest and the Soul-faculty can receive the things of God."

I have found the same definition in the various Indian philosophies, particularly some aspects of Hinduism; as well as in the Bardo Thodol ("The Tibetan Book of the Dead"); the epistles of Paul in the New Testament, and various of the apocryphal "gospels of Jesus". The words are different -- for example, in the Bardo Thodol "knowledge" (or knowing) is used in places to mean what Goldsmith means by"discernment"; and for me, Goldsmith puts it much more clearly; you do not have to wend your way

through as much lore, ceremonial, ritual, etc, as one must do even in reading "The Cloud" to get to the real meat. All these trappings are meaningful for people in the particular milieu, and they're fascinating for a person like me (I'm fascinated by history, theology, religious customs, etc.); but they get in the way of the point being made.

What reading the particular sources mentioned above has convinced me of is that the particular form of evil that really relates to the proposition, "knowledge is in itself a form of evil", is the evil of insufficiency. One just cannot get enough. The student finds that the more information he gets, the wider the area of ignorance opened up to his consciousness. The mere process of solving one problem is likely to uncover a dozen more. And both information and knowledge arouses desires in the heart that cannot be fulfilled in a single life-time.

The mystic philosophies I've mentioned above all assume that life is continuous; that one's individual consciousness continues after discorporation, and that it is consciousness, rather than a particular body, which is really life.

Some of the "knowledge is of itself evil", in the total, absolute sense, philosophies also consider life to be continuous; but while such philosophies are truly anti-intellectual, preferring ignorance to knowledge, the mystic philosophies above agree that knowledge is to be preferred to ignorance -- but there is that which is better than knowledge. But "that which is better than knowledge" is not generally considered by these mystics to be something one can go to directly. It's the higher course, but the highest cannot stand without the lowest; one must first be satisfied in one's being that knowledge is better than ignorance; then be satisfied in one's being that knowledge is not enough.

Which is why most of these philosophies are (or were, at one time)"secret" teachings. Or confined to an"elect", etc. They could be dangerous to persons not ready to receive them, at least to the extent of destroying "faith"which was adequate to the person's particular state of development but not being able to put anything in its place. The gospel warning,"Cast not thy pearls before swine",does not imply that the "common man" ought to be treated as an animal it does imply the observable fact that the level of consciousness of most "common men" is not much above the animal level. (And the pig is a highly intelligent animal; it keeps itself reasonably clean when not confined to filthy surroundings, and has never been known to engage in persecutions or massacres.) So most of the mystic doctrines referred to above oppose mass conversions, proselytizings, etc.

The principle of secrecy is sensible enough if you consider the fact that the booklets in children's chemistry sets do not contain the formula for TNT. This is not "forbidden knowledge" in the anti-intellectual sense; but it's a very good analog of "secret wisdom" of the mystics.

The one-life-only philosophies are not necessarily anti-intellectual, although H.P. Lovecraft's fiction certainly is. While his characters do not go around burning books they disagree with,there's the constant theme of types of knowledge which are total evil, per se, and from which nothing except evil can come. A materialist in his personal life, HPL pursued knowledge and information up to the end of his days here;and his personal philosophy was such that he could get along with the insufficiency of knowledge. But reading both his stories and his letters lead one to suspect that he considered the lot of a person who was content with ignorance might be better than the intellectual's.

I must confess that I don't remember now what answer Blish gave to the question whether knowledge in itself is a form of evil -- or whether he answered it at all in any of the trilogy. I'd like to see Jim's answer (even if it amounts to citing chapter and verse of something I've already read by him). I'm not convinced that there is just one simple, single answer for everyone, everywhere, at all times -- not even if, as I suspect, all the answers finally lead to one. --RAWL.

Part
One

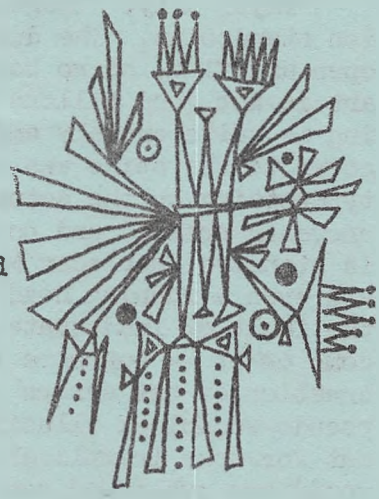
REFLECTIONS ON DANGEROUS VISIONS

"What you hold in your hands is more than a book. If we are lucky it is a revolution." -- Harlan Ellison, in introduction to "Dangerous Visions".

"...a book cannot be a revolution, no matter what Harlan says, but can only reflect one..." -- Algis Budrys, reviewing "Dangerous Visions".

I put off reading "Dangerous Visions" until most of the shouting had died down. I am easily put off reading a good book because of the noise others are making about it and in this case Harlan had been making noise about the book for over a year in advance of its publication. Indeed, at the 1966 Westercon I sat on a panel with Poul Anderson, Phil Farmer, Larry Niven and Norman Spinrad, playing Devil's Advocate at the whim of the moderator, Harlan Ellison. You need not guess that the topic of this panel was Dangerous Visions, and that I alone was neither asked to appear on nor represented on the final table of contents of the book of the same name.

All last week I had a mounting toothache which made writing (of the creative type: fiction) next to impossible. I was supposed to be making requested changes in a book for a hardcover publisher and I was not happy with either the request nor my ability to meet its demands. My writing was at a standstill.



Ted White

"Dangerous Visions", bilious green cover and all, had been reposing on my coffee table for two months, waiting for me to crack its covers. I finally did. I read three quarters of it before making the forty mile drive on Long Island to my dentist to have a tooth pulled. Actually, I needed (at least) two teeth pulled, but it appears that if my teeth themselves are unhealthy, their roots are in superb shape, and my dentist gave up on the second after a heavy struggle for the first, during which I wept at the frustration of it all.

After returning home, the side of my face numb and a bad taste in my mouth (which later became a foul breath), I finished "Dangerous Visions".

Why tell you this? What possible value can such a preface have?

If you need ask, you obviously have not yet read the book yourself. For if it is not indeed a revolution (and I agree with Budrys: it is not), it is an event. Through the medium of his introductory notes and the authors' afterwords, Harlan has firmly fixed and rooted his book in the throes of its origins. In the process of lauding his contributors -- and of libelling them -- Harlan recreates for you the very birth-pangs of his book. He seizes you and involves you -- sometimes to your horror -- in the event of "Dangerous Visions". This is inescapable unless you opt to skip reading all but the stories themselves; something even the strongest have not been able to do with success.

But if the book is an event, so is the reading of it. I read it in three sittings, within the total time of thirty-six hours, bad tooth and all.

As I read each story, I 'rated' it. My rating scale is personal and subjective, and based on a number of conscious and unconscious criteria, but, for the advantage of the shorthand, I rated each story on a scale of A to F. Of the thirty-three stories in the book, I rated two A's, two A-'s, seven B+'s, one B, two C+'s, seven C's, five C-'s, one D+, three D's, one D-, and one F. For my own purposes I gave a plus the numerical value of plus .4, and a minus the value of minus .4, so that, for instance, an A- and a B+ would not have the same numerical weight, but would be 3.6 and 3.4, respectively. When I averaged out my ratings I found I had 2.3 -- or almost a C+.

If you're acute, you've already added up the tally above and discovered I was rating only thirty-two of the thirty-three stories; that is correct, I found it impossible to rate one story anywhere on, above, or below my arbitrary scale, so I left it off.

This numberg game doesn't amount to much, but if it says anything, it shows my judgement that the book in question barely exceeded average in the quality of its contents, and had only eleven or twelve stories that I would consider really worth ballyhooing, out of a total of thirty-three. Curiously, Judy Merril, with whom I seldom agree, also found twelve stories to admire in the book; unfortunately, our lists don't overlap too heavily, and six of those she loved either left me indifferent or annoyed me with their ineptness. But, for the record, I must say that I do not think much of the material in "Dangerous Visions" meets a very high standard, and this disappointed me.

Perhaps inside this ponderous fat book there is an excellect thin book screaming to get out.

Physically, "Dangerous Visions" is an ugly book, and a disaster from the production standpoint. The dustjacket depends, for its artistic point, upon being spread open and flat, as no book is normally displayed. The color choices are dismal. The art is not good Dillons (despite the visual pun on Harlan's face), and the logo lettering is quite crudely amateur. (The statting of "Doubleday Science Fiction" from the cover to the spine was monsterously foolish, since it fits there not at all.) The typesetting on the actual spine of the book is clumsy, with the type unevenly set, unevenly spaced, and not quite -- but almost -- symetrical. The interior of the book is standard Doubleday Mediocre, with typographical errors, dropped and repeated lines, and even a running head from one story carried over onto the next. I doubt this is the fault of inadequate proofreading -- I imagine Harlan used the fine teeth of his comb on it -- but more likely the result of carelessness in production itself: the creation of new errors in rectifying the old, etc. Certainly the use of the Dillons' pseudo-woodblock illustrations should have helped make this a more handsome book, but for some inexplicable reason the illustrations ("illuminations" would be a better word) are published over the introductions and must often be separated from their stories by several pages of thinly leaded type. The typography itself is a sort of 'Ludlow-Anonymous' face, undistinguished by any character save that of utility; the display faces are similarly dead of inspiration.

It seems a shame that Harlan must needs scream at us from between the ugly iron bars of the physical book. Dangerous Visions do not need drab packaging.

(The same day I first thumbed through a copy of "Dangerous Visions" I was also shown copies of the new editions of Mervin Peake's "Titus Groan" trilogy. The contrast was eloquent: those were truly handsome books and a good example of the sort of bookmaking our present technology makes possible.)

But, aside from the art by the Dillons, the package was beyond the control of the editor. Let's speak of the editorial contents of this book.

I am not one of those who decry Harlan's introductions. I have enjoyed his introductions since his first short story collection, since to me they lend much more personality to his books and make them all the more uniquely Ellison.

However, I wonder if Harlan didn't let his introductions run away with him here. When an introduction is longer than the story which follows it, it is too long. And in too many cases Harlan has trumpetted the values of the story to follow or its

author too well; the story is an inevitable anti-climax. For instance, in introduction to Henry Slesar's "Ersatz", Harlan says "If there is a better short-short writer working in America today, I can't think of his name, and I've got a helluva memory." Unfortunately, so have I, and when Harlan, in his longer-than-the-story introduction, reminded me of Slesar's "The Gray Flannel Shroud", I immediately recalled the fact that I read it eight years ago. But who can follow an emcee who says of one, "Henry Slesar is a master of the short-short story. He can kill you with a line."? As it happened with "Ersatz", the line he killed me with was his tipoff to the "surprise" ending, which occurred a page earlier. (The story is only two-and-a-half pages long.)

The trouble with science fiction short stories is that it is almost impossible to write a good one. Not impossible; merely almost impossible. Most of the good stories in "Dangerous Visions" are the longer ones, the novelettes. There are a number of reasons why this should be true, but the one I like best is the fact that the science fiction short story is an intersection wherein the worst faults of both short stories and of science fiction collide.

One of the worst faults of science fiction -- of bad science fiction, at any rate -- is the substitution of idea for story. By this I mean a story which exists only to propound an idea. For years sf got away with this dependancy, but there was a limit to new ideas, and a limit to the way old ideas could be rehashed to look new without adding something more. A typical idea-story would be any of those hoary gems of the thirties which seized upon some unruly phenomenon -- like the fourth dimension-- and played with it for three to twenty thousand words. The plots were rudimentary: the stories were travelogues of the ideas. When the idea was used up, the story stopped. There is, ghod help us, an ersatz 1935 idea-story in this very book -- "The Night That All Time Broke Out" by Brian Aldiss -- which would have gone well with a brightly colored Paul cover and one of his interior drawings showing everyone in baggy jodhpurs. It really wasn't until Campbell's revolution -- as Asimov points out in the first of his two introductions -- that the idea-story began to be fleshed out a little.

One of the worst faults of the short story is that it looks easy (which it isn't), and attracts the notion that an idea is all that is needed. After all, how much fleshing-out can you do in 3,000 words? (Quite a lot, if you're good.) Even such veterans as Lester de Rey fall prey, in this book, to the substitution of idea for story. It's no good insisting it isn't a story at all, but an allegory. That's a weak cop-out.

I view the short story, in its ideal (my ideal) as a sort of emotional nexus of a much larger story which is not stated, but only implied. It is the heart of a novel. There is no reason a short story can not be as profound, as moving, or as involving (for the reader) as a novel. But they rarely are. Why? Because instead of searching out the emotional crux of a story, too many writers settle instead for a thin peeling off the outer layer of the 'bigger story'. They settle for gimmicks; jimcracks in effect. This would be my strongest complaint against the short stories in "Dangerous Visions": they are superficial.

In his introduction to the book, Harlan says, "Each story is almost obstinately entertaining. But each one is filled with ideas as well. Not merely run-of-the-pulps ideas you've read a hundred times before, but fresh and daring ideas; in their way, dangerous visions."

He has put his thumb on the principle failure of the book

The notion of a collection of "dangerous visions" was a sad one to begin with. The criticism has become cliche by now, but let me repeat it: a 'vision' is 'dangerous' only within the context of blandness. Surround any single genuinely 'dangerous'

vision with a host of others, all equally 'dangerous', and you have nothing more or less than cacophony. The point is lost amid the welter. What is left is a book that screeches. Or would have, had this goal been adhered to. But, while most of the stories simply aren't 'dangerous visions,' they are, too many of them, idea stories.

Very few of the ideas embodied in these stories are "fresh and daring", and most of them are trite. Several (such as "The Happy Breed" by John Sladek) are presented as new because their authors have done so little homework that they have no idea how dated their notions are. (Sladek follows Jack Williamson by twenty years, and "With Folded Hands" is still the more powerful story.) Science fiction writers of the past saw the dangers of, for instance, automation, back when automation was still an uncoined word. Today the man in the street can see those dangers -- particularly to himself -- and it takes no seer to point them out.

In fact, for the most part the New Thing writers in this book seem blessed with the ability to look no further ahead than the tips of their noses, although some (Aldiss) manage passably well to look backwards. There is not one Orwellian warning in this book that I couldn't have gleaned from today's newspaper headlines, and anyone who wants to tell me this is good "speculative fiction" obviously has no idea what "speculative" means.

But let's backtrack a bit.

Harlan is proud of the "new ideas" in these stories he's presented. Why? A new idea (if ever there was such a thing) does not a good story make. Not unless it's an idea-story to begin with, and I've already told you my opinion of them.

But what about the "entertainment" Harlan speaks of? Well, as Bob Silverberg pointed out in his recent Disclave Guest-of-Honor speech, different things entertain different people. Someone will probably find entertainment in almost anything. So I can easily imagine that all the stories in the book <u>are</u> entertaining to someone, somewhere.

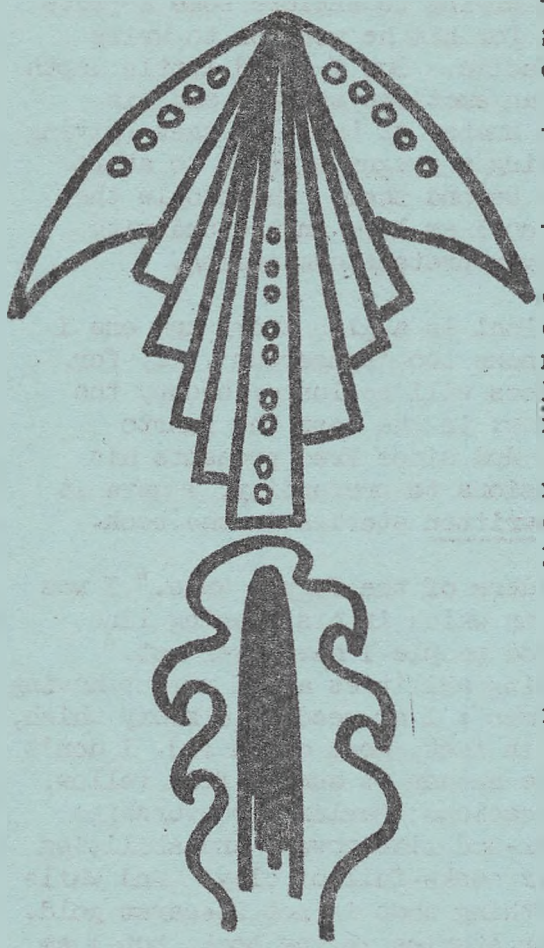
But not to me. To me a great many were painful bores. And were they submitted to me as an editor, I'm afraid I would reject many. <u>Not</u> because of their 'dangerous visions', nor their supposedly controversial content, but because they are <u>weak</u>, poorly done, or struck me as totally unconvincing.

Harlan also trots out again his theory that sf fans are stuck in the mud, outraged because science fiction has suddenly Arrived and everyone, "even the bus driver and the dental technician and the beach bum and the grocery bag-boy are reading <u>his</u> stories..." I think this theory grew out of Harlan's love-hate relationship with fandom, from his anger with and need for the love of fandom, of his old peer-group -- because I can see no other justification for it. It certainly does not fit the facts.

The facts are that sf is less accepted by the total populace now than it was twenty years ago.

The facts are that when outside commentators speak of science fiction come to life, they most often state, "This isn't science fiction -- this is real!" Science fiction, in the public mind, still means ray guns and rocket-ships blasting off Pluto, and Superman. It is quite true that today the general populace has assimilated many sf conventions: galaxy-spanning spacetravel, time-travel, et al, have bored into the general unconscious of mid-century Western Man via the comic books. They understand it; they simply don't accept it.

And while Harlan goes on and on about reactionary fans still preferring "Skylark"



to "Cat's Cradle", the facts belie him. It's Skylark Smith that bag-boy is reading; not Vonnegut. (The other day my wife, coming home from work on the subway, saw a man reading one of my books. I felt a little tingle of pleasure when she told me that.)

We're still a minor eddy of the mainstream in terms of sales. And we're still as far as ever from 'mainstream acceptance'. No president has yet confessed a fondness for science fiction; the label is applied, in TV Guide, to every monster-from-outer-space movie shown each evening on Channel 7. Some of the literatti may have found us and liked us, but for the most part they've left us alone: the label, "science fiction", is still the kiss-of-death in the minds of many publishers (which may be why Harlan prefers a different label: "speculative fiction", coined many years ago by Robert A Heinlein.

On page xxiv, Harlan says, "Oh, there are challenges in the field, and truly controversial, eye-opening pieces get published; /sic/ but there are so many more that go a-begging.

"And no one has ever told the speculative writer, 'Pull out all the stops, no holds barred, get it said!' Until this book came along."

But on page xxvii, he admitted, "unless a story is exceeding hot, it can be sold somewhere; if no one bought them, there was a better chance that they were simply gawdawful, rather than too controversial..." It might have been better if, instead of begging his potential contributors to be controversial, Harlan had begged them to write for him their best story, and hang controversy. Because many of the better writers in this book have published better stories elsewhere.

I said I wasn't in "Dangerous Visions"; I was wrong. "Mr and Mrs Ted White" are among those thanked for assistance with the book. I'm mildly pleasured, but my assistance was minor -- ferrying Harlan about in my car during one of his trips to New York to hash out the details of the book. I rather think my name was included here for the same reason I was asked to join his Westercon panel: Harlan likes me, despite the pity he feels for me as one of the old-guard, stuck-in-the-mud fans.

So much for my introduction. Now for the stories:

Lester del Rey says of his "Evensong", that it "is not fiction, but allegory." In a generous mood, I rated it a C- for honesty.

"Evensong" might be described as an anticlimactic P.S. to "For I Am A Jealous People." In that novelette, you'll recall, God deserted mankind for another race, and Man metaphorically thumped his chest and said he'd go on without God. Lester believes in Man quite fiercely, and if "Evensong" had been a story instead of an allegory, he might have told a story (the hints are there) quite as powerful. I'm reminded of Clarke's "Rescue Party" which, in its last few lines, somehow fills one's heart with pride in Mankind.

Pride in Mankind is so Out among today's cynical writers that I think it qualifies as a 'dangerous vision' in and of itself. But "Evensong" doesn't do it.

Bob Silverberg has said of his "Flies" that he was trying to explore some aspects of love; and that when "Flies" did not quite say it all for him he went on to write "Thorns". I rated "Flies" a B, largely because it was facile. But I found little depth to this story of a man remade by aliens to transmit human emotions to them and his resultant choice of emotions. Silverberg seized upon a number of brutal images (giving drugs to someone who is trying to shake the habit; forcing a pregnant woman to abort when she badly wants the baby), but I sense very little beyond them. The people they happen to are not real enough for me to care about and so I am left in the end with only the acts themselves to care about. That, and an over-pretentious ending.

"The Day After The Day The Martians Came" by Fred Pohl is a glib story and one I could easily imagine in any sf magazine. Its point is none too 'dangerous', if, for all that, somewhat novel: once the Martians come, Negroes will no longer occupy the bottom rung on the social totem pole. But they don't now: in the east the Puerto Ricans do, while in the west the Mexican-Americans do. And since Fred presents his punchline in an over-simplified form smacking of pretensions to profundity, I gave it only a B+ despite the fact that it was one of the best-written stories in the book.

I gave the same rating to Philip Jose Farmer's "Riders of the Purple Wage." I was prejudiced against the story by Harlan's introduction, in which in his opening line Harlan tells us that Farmer "is one of the few truly good people I have ever met." This may well be true, but it is immaterial to his writing abilities and I resent having having it thrown in my face. I am not reading a "good man"; I am reading a story which, for all that its author is a saint, may be awful (and, in fact, most often is). I don't want to be told that I should like the story because the author is such a fine fellow. I've observed this attitude in Harlan on a number of occasions: Harlan hero-worships those he considers better than himself, attributing near-God-like powers and abilities to them until they inevitably betray themselves by their socks-full of clay. And while Harlan is hero-worshipping a man, that man can write nothing that is not 24-carat gold. This factor explains the presence of several rather poor stories in the book, but I am relieved to report that it does not hold true for "Riders of the Purple Wage". But I had to fight off Harlan to find it out for myself.

When "The Lovers" first appeared in Startling Stories, it hit me like a ton of bricks. And from then on I was a Farmer fan. I read everything he published, and liked much of it. But somewhere along the early 1960s, my eyes began to open a little. The Ballantine edition of "The Lovers" had a dreadful opening grafted on to it. "Flesh" read like a book that had had every third paragraph removed. "Tongues of the Moon" was so bad that it should never have appeared under Farmer's name (he described the same spaceship at the opening and the closing of the book, once as a sphere, then as "cigar-shaped"; the prose inbetween alternately limped and ran). "Dare" was the last Farmer I forced myself to read. It contained the germs for three of four fine books, but aborted each before term. The plotting was capricious and the motivation for its characters inexplicable.

So I approached "Riders" fully prepared to hate it. Farmer's prose style had been growing progressively more wooden in his books, and the notion that he was to pull a rabbit from Joyce's hat did not intrigue me as it might some people.

It doesn't feel like 30,000 words. The future society is rich in genuinely science-fictional extrapolations, but so much wordage is spent on punning (both within and outside the narrative) that the plot is meagre. Nonetheless, I read it with enjoyment. Farmer succeeded in doing something rather rare in sf -- something only Phil Dick and a few other writers (Alexei Panshin, in his "Rite of Passage") have done -- he has created a believable environment which is not like any we know today, and he has created a cast of characters who go through their own daily minutia in a believable fashion. Their mores are not ours, their art forms are not ours, but in that essense which is humanity, they are us.

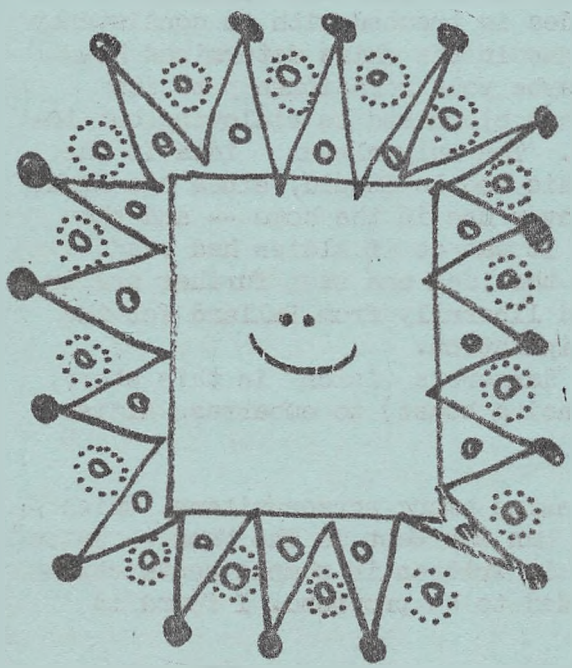
Budrys points out that Farmer is satirizing Heinlein with his Grandpa Winegan, a

Wise Old Man figure who is the world's last billionaire. What no one else has pointed out is that Farmer gives the (inadvertant) lie to Sturgeon's story in this same book -- but I'll deal with that in its own order.

Yet, for all I appreciated, even enjoyed, "Riders", it did not involve me. I stayed outside the story. Despite its use of present-tense narration, it felt too leisurely in its pace. In contrast with, for instance, the Phil Dick story, it never really made me care about the protagonist or his problems. Perhaps it shouldn't, but that is one of my criteria for a story, and that accounts for my rating it only a B+.

Miriam Allen deFord's "The Malley System" is minor and predictable, despite its attempt at a punchline at the end. Like so many of the stories here, it seems to recognize its lack of content and offers an afterthought-like punchline in compensation. The opening sequences are narrations, first-person, of short, violent incidents. They are superficially shocking, but their like can be found in almost any issue of The National Enquirer. It appears that these sequences were written without any names, but that Harlan added the names (Shep, Carlo, Miriamni, Richie B, Brathmore) in place of A, B, C, etc., as headings for the sequences. Harlan was right to do so: the story needed some inner sense of human reality, because everyone in it is faceless. However, I judged the story only a C.

"Yours Truly, Jack The Ripper" apparently made a deep impression on Harlan Ellison when he first read it in 1953. This is understandable. Jack entered legend almost immediately, for unlike today's mass murderers he presented (and still presents) an unsolved mystery. His crimes were grotesque, curiously perverted, and he boasted about them. There is something of Jack in each of us who have known moments of rejection from society, as Harlan surely has. He is a personification of the violence with which we'd like to strike back, even as we recognize the fact that we cannot. Harlan appears to have initially considered him an embodiment of Evil, and when he suggested Bloch show Jack in the sterile "steel autoclave" of the future, it was because Harlan had in his mind's eye the vision of that contrast and confrontation.



But Robert Bloch's "A Toy for Juliette" is, to speak kindly of it, a C story, and its only function in this book is to set the stage for Harlan's "The Prowler in the City at the Edge of the World". (Permutation on that title, involving cities at the edge or end of this or that seem to fascinate Harlan also.) This is a shame, because Harlan's story is the first I rated an A in the book, and the contrast between the two stories is clearly to Bloch's disadvantage. Harlan, you see, simply went ahead and wrote the story Bloch didn't write.

This is perhaps inevitable: you hit upon an idea for a story you'd like to see a friend write, and you tell it to him and his eyes light up, and he writes the story...but...when you read it you realize it's not the story you wanted him to write: it's his own story after all. Not so very many months ago, a comic-book artist named Gil Kane asked Lee Hoffman and me to write a 15,000-word novelette for him around a character he'd thought up. Lee and I divided the task between us, and it became my job to work up an outline Gil would like.

I wrote two long outlines, and Lee wrote two chapters to go with the first one, and Gil didn't like them at all. We had missed the whole point of his character, he said. Finally, after much sweating and mucking about, we agreed we had indeed. And we suggested he try soneone else. He tried Lin Carter. "I want a modern-day Conan", he

told Lin. He'd told us he wanted a modern-day Doc Savage. When Lin showed him an outline, he accepted it grudgingly; "This is just Conan in modern clothes", he told me later. (Lin chuckled when I repeated it to him.) In the end, as I'd told him he would have to do, he wrote his script himself. There was nothing else to do: it was his conception, and none of us could read his mind, despite our apparent verbal agreement. Thus it so often is, when one person is trying to write for another's goal. The more specific the suggestion, the less likely the goal will be realized.

Harlan should have known this. And when he came to write his own story, he should not have left it in any way dependant upon Bloch's -- because Bloch's should have been (firmly, kindly, politely) rejected. "Prowler" should have been structured to stand on its own.

Because it is a good story. It is Harlan doing what he can do and doing it well. It is science fiction. The city and its inhabitants are everything they were not in "Juliette" -- and it is ultimately they, not Jack, who must be considered Evil.

Still, I am hard to convince when I read stories of Good Against Evil (unless it is pure fantasy, as in Tolkien), or am shown someone or something which is stated to be Evil-with-the-capital-E.

But I will credit Harlan (who, I believe, finds it much easier) for convincing me this time.

It is curious to note the way in which various stories in this book, quite accidentally of course, speak to each other. Harlan's story speaks to Silverberg's and to Miss deFord's, and makes its point where they fail.

In the introduction to "The Night That All Time Broke Loose," Brian Aldiss is quoted as saying of himself: "I know I am the world's best sf writer; I want others to know it too!"

He picked a poor story to prove his point.

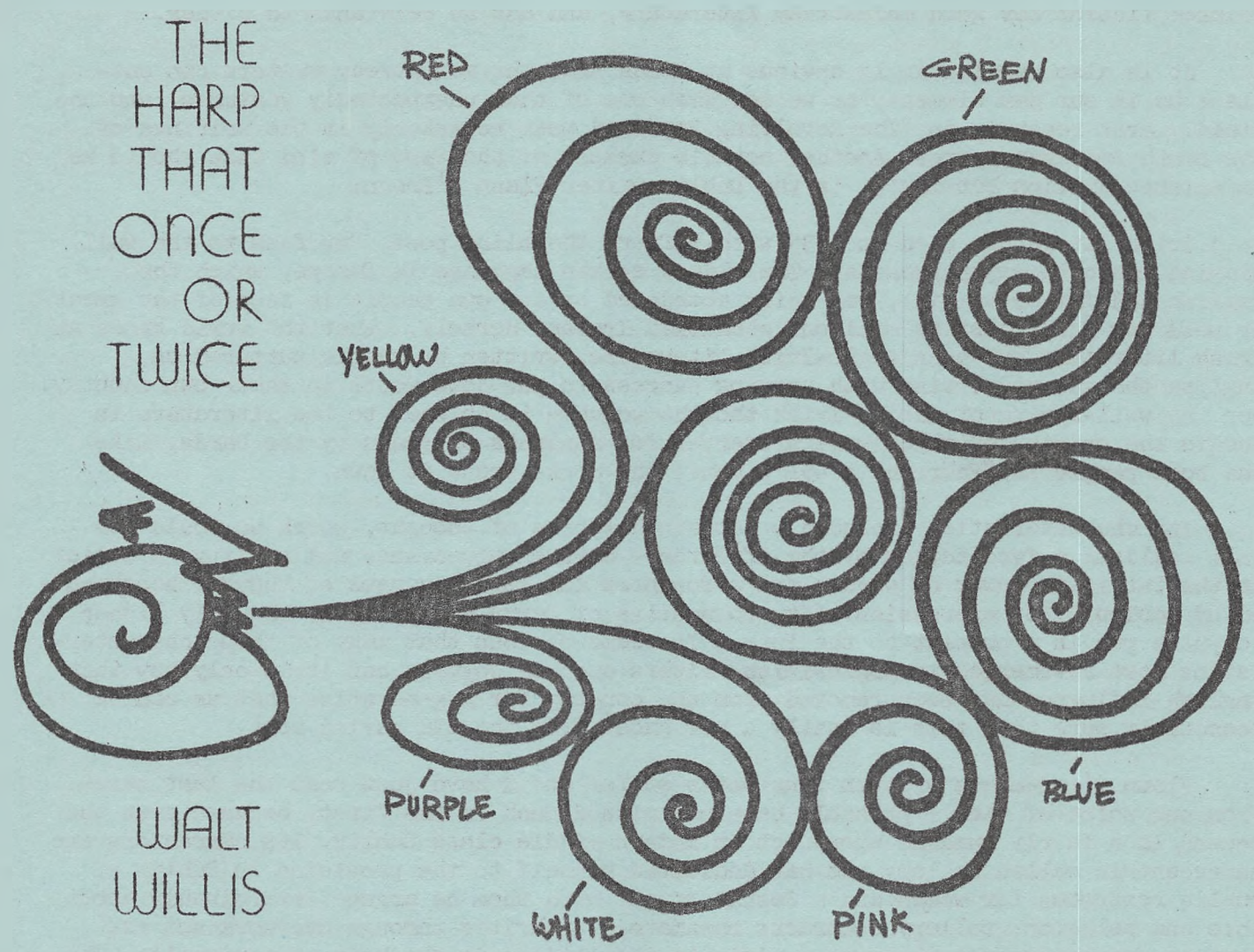
There is damned little you can say about "The Night That All Time Broke Loose". It's what I might call a stupid-idea-story. Other writers having mined the ideas with worth, Aldiss has chosen to work the ones without worth. The sum total idea in this one is that "time gas" is discovered in pockets of the earth, and that inhaling it will subjectively transport one back in time. The idea is treated with no consistency (at one point it is stated that the pressure of the gas in the mains determines how far back you go; later it appears that density, or maybe your relationship to its point of origin determines it, because once the gas has blown and is billowing out into the free air it is under no pressure to speak of). The only clever idea is the commercial use to which such gas might be put, but this too is Stupid, since one might assume research into the past would take precidence over use in the home -- and the overall idea of a "time gas" is monumentally stupid. It was as if Aldiss had read Bob Shaw's "Light of Other Days" and decided to take the idea one step further and into complete absurdity. In the process he has borrowed liberally from Ballard for the sense of deliberate obscurity and would-be myth-manipulation.

I can't believe Harlan found one "new idea" or "dangerous vision" in this story, and I rather wonder if he printed it (and that pre-facing boast) to embarrass Aldiss. If he did, he succeeded. I rated it a D.

Harlan introduced Howard Rodman as a towering genius among screenwriters, which he may well be for all that I know of him. But "The Man Who Went To The Moon -- Twice" is a cloying little piece of pseudo-Bradburyania. It is written in simple sentences, and speaks in simple thoughts. I presume it is intended to be profound. I found it banal. I gave it a C for using good English.

On the other hand, Harlan says of "Faith of Our Fathers", "I asked for Phil Dick and got him. A story to be written about, and under the influence of (if possible) LSD." This saddles the reader with an unnecessary frame of reference, because Harlan

(Continued on page 62.)



THE STRANGE WORLD OF FLANN O'BRIEN

It is curious that the mountainous labours our science fiction authors have devoted to speculation on the unknown should have produced such small mice of original thought. The most honourable exception, Van Vogt, is looked down on nowadays because his writing and characterisation are not up to the standards of mainstream fiction: a criticism which seems to me rather like Schopenhauer's dismissal of the female figure as round-shouldered and knockkneed. It is true that Van Vogt was no Marcel Proust but his stories were full of the creative imagination which gives life to the genre. Compared to him later authors, with the exception of a few like Blish and Sturgeon, seem epicene creatures expressing themselves in stories which are largely extrapolatory or derivative, the literary equivalent of self-abuse.

The modern auther, noting that postage stamps keep getting bigger, postulates the obliteration of New York in the ye ar 2000 by a monstrous first day cover delivered from an Eastern dictatorship. Adding some fashionable sadism, social criticism and stylistic tricks left over from last year's avant garde, he has no difficulty in selling "The Mailed Fist" and it is immediately hailed as a significant contribution to the longed-for integration of science fiction with the mainstream by those who have already taken the plunge and proclaim, between chattering teeth, that the water is lovely. The native denizens of the mainstream quite rightly ignore it as being neither flesh nor fowl, but pure red herring. It is only too obvious it is neither good

science fiction nor good mainstream literature, and has no relevance to either.

It is also humiliatingly obvious at times that the mainstream writers can outclass us in our own element, as we see when one of them unexpectedly ventures into the field...most recently in "The Revolving Boy" and most remarkably in the writings of the South American Borges. Another notable example of the type of mind that should be in science fiction but isn't, is the Dublin writer Flann O'Brien.

Irish literature died in 1835 with Raftery the blind poet, "my face to the wall, playing music to empty pockets". The oldest spoken language in Europe, which the English had failed to kill, was being abandoned by its own people in face of the greater need for food, just as millions abandoned Ireland herself. What the world knows as Irish literature has been Anglo-Irish literature, written by people nurtured on English thought and trying with varying success to put down roots in their own country. For the well-spring of native Irish thought we have to go back to the literature in Gaelic the origins of which were preserved for hundreds of years by the bards, like the book people in "Fahrenheit 451", until the monks wrote it down.

Its characteristics included a certain hardness of thought, which we would now call realism: a fascination by the dffference between appearance and reality: a belief in the intrinsic power of words: and a fondness for inventiveness of thought accompanied by ambiguity of expression. (St. Columcille of Derry was probably the only bishop to put a pun in a protest to the Pope.) It seems obvious that many of these characteristics have re-emerged in Anglo-Irish writers such as Joyce, but it is only now that English influence has been removed from the country for a generation that we can be reasonably sure that this is really a new shoot from the old buried root.

Flann O'Brien has written four books so far and I have just read the last three. From our point of view I probably have not missed much in the first, because even the second is a fairly mundane story set in modern middle class Dublin. Its characters are an eccentric called Collopy who has dedicated himself to the provision in Dublin of public restrooms for women and a Jesuit priest with whom he argues interminably about this and religion. Collopy contracts rheumatoid arthritis through overwork and exposure, and the Jesuit arranges a visit to the Vatican in the hope of a miracle. The scene in which, through an interpreter, the Pope asks after Collopy's health and finds he is really being asked to use his influence with Dublin Corporation for an unspeakable purpose, is one of the great comic episodes in literature, but the book is of no importance from our point of view other than as indicating the author's inventiveness.

With the third, however,"The Dalkey Archive", we are transported half way to a another plane. It is one dominated by a mad scientist and by a policeman obsessed by bicycles. I might draw analogies with Alfred Jarry and Franz Kafka but I don't think this is necessary or perhaps even relevant, even if I knew enough about either. It is I think sufficient to point out that the bicycle plays quite as important a role in the life of the impecunious young Dubliner as the horse did in the American West, and that it is the main front on which he comes into contact with authority. The eccentric scientist, De Selby, who is a sort of humourless Charles Fort, believes that time is an illusion caused by the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere and has proved it by maturing the best Irish whiskey overnight. Unfortunately he also belives that God lost his battle with Lucifer, current thought on this subject being the result of a false communique issued by the latter, and proposes to remedy the present deplorable state of affairs by annihilating time and with it the world Lucifer has mischievously created.

The book deals mainly with the efforts of the hero to avert this catastrophe. He is aided by Sergeant Fottrell of the Dublin Police who goes everywhere wheeling a

bicycle which he never rides. This is because of what he calls the Mollycule Theory. When a hammer strikes repeatedly on an anvil, mollycules of the anvil will enter into the hammer, and vice versa. It stands to reason, the Sergeant points out, that the same thing will happen to human beings riding bicycles on bumpy roads, and many unfortunate people in Ireland have by now become more than half bicycle. Conversely of course many bicycles have become part human, making for great danger to the public and great difficulties for the police. He touches on the immorality involved by men riding girl's bicycles and vice versa, and on the element of treason involved by the fact that all bicycles are made in England, but the most serious case was one of murder. The suspect, a man called McDadd, rode a bicycle with solid tyres, and his condition was so obvious that an enemy attacked his bicycle with a crowbar. McDadd slew him for it and Sergeant Fottrell had a very difficult choice to make, but finally he hanged the bicycle. "Did you ever see a bicycle-shaped coffin?" he enquires. "..a very convoluted item of woodworking."

The eccentric De Selby makes no personal appearance in the most recent book, "The Third Policeman", but dominates it from footnotes explaining his ideas. These sometimes run to several pages and create another imaginary world of commentators and critics which is even funnier than the narrative itself. The narrator is a young man who kills a miser to get the money to publish a exegesis on De Selby. While searching the house he is confronted by the ghost of the murdered man and a long conversation ensues in which the concept emerges that the winds have colours. "People in the old days had the power of perceiving these colours and could spend a day sitting quietly on a hillside watching the beauty of the winds, their fall and rise and changing hues, the magic of neighbouring winds when they are interweaved like ribbons at a wedding. It was a better occupation than gazing at newspapers." This harks back to a 10th Century Gaelic poem which asserted "The east wind is purple, the south white, the north black and the west dun" (the colours ascribed by O'Brien are almost identical but it would be too much to hope that he arrived at them independently) and even to the belief of the pre-Christian Irish in the Sky Boar which controlled the elements. In rural Ireland the belief is still prevalent that pigs can see the wind.

The miser says that this faculty is still possessed by the policemen at the local station, who possess other strange powers; the narrator, having now lost all memory of his crime, goes to them for help in finding the miser's money. This has all the authentic quality of half-waking nightmare, the type in which through absent-minded monomania one inexorably brings about one' s own destruction, anguishedly witnessed by a more conscious self. The remainder of the book, apart from the footnotes, deals with the narrator's relationships with these mysterious policemen. They too are obsessed by bicycles, and indeed the author has succeeded in the remarkable feat of re-selling vertually verbatim several pages of his previous book, and to the same publisher.

But while the official time of the policemen is taken up with bicycles, their off-duty hours are spent in eternity, literally. They have discovered that for some strange reason the cracks in the ceiling of one of the rooms in the police station form a map of the district, with the addition of one road unknown to them. They find this road, the entrance to which had been overgrown, and at the end of it an elevator which takes them down to a vast region of machinery-filled rooms, a sort of planetary basement. They call this eternity because time does not pass there, and spend most of their off-duty hours in it, mainly to save themselves the trouble of shaving. Its character and real nature are too complex to describe here, except to say that it is really under the control of the mysterious third policeman who makes his appearance towards the end of the book.

The activities of the second policeman, Constable Pluck are however more intelligible. He is simply a spare-time hobbyist, working with wood and metal, but what

O'Brien makes of these simple activities is something almost frightening. Constable Pluck has, for example, made a little spear so sharp that it will cut you before it touches you, the last few inches being quite invisible, and whether or not the last inch exists at all a subject for philosophical conjecture. He has also made a little wood and brass box so beautiful that there is simply nothing worthy to be kept in it. He solves the problem by making another box even smaller and even more beautiful, which the narrator describes as "so faultless and delightful that it reminded me forcibly, strange and foolish as it may seem, of something I did not understand and had never even heard of." Constable Pluck pursues the inexorable logic of his solution to the point of invisibility and beyond, in a scene which to me has the mind-stretching quality to be found nowhere in science ficiton but in Van Vogt and the later chapters of Stapeldon's "The Starmaker", and O'Brien's description of the narrator's reaction seems to me of the sense of wonder which we look for in modern science fiction so vainly.

The scientific ideas which coruscate from the footnotes have all the period charm of the Phlogiston Theory, or of those brass and ebonite machines in films of stories by Verne and Wells. De Selby's ideas about the atmosphere are expanded with an engaging semblance of plausibility. He believes, for example, that night is an illusion created by insanitary accretions of black air caused by fine volcanic dust, sleep simply a succession of fainting fits brought on by semi-asphyxiation, and death the eventual consequence of these. However occasionally there is an idea which is almost valid as a science-fictional concept, in particular one involving mirrors in which O'Brien independently arrives at something very like the postulate advanced in Bob Shaw's Slow Glass stories. O'Brien points out that the reflection a man sees of himself in a mirror is not of himself as he is, but as he was a small but calculable fraction of time in the past. The ineffable De Selby, by constructing an arrangement of infinitely reflecting mirrors, claims to be able to detect a growing youthfulness in his receding images, finally discerning with the aid of a telescope the countenance of a young boy "of singular beauty and nobility."

O'Brien is of course thought of as primarily a humorous writer, and since he is very funny indeed I suppose that assessment is fair enough.. Though I might add that he writes like a dream and that in particular his dialogue seems to me to do for the speech of the people of Dublin what Synge did for the dialect of the West of Ireland, that is to create a new and beautifully expressive literary language. However from the science-fictional point of view our interest must be in him as an isolated outpost of the literature of ideas. I say isolated with however some of the smugness of the English newspaper headline which after a storm announced CONTINENT CUT OFF FROM ENGLAND. It seems clear that O'Brien has little knowledge of the science fiction field -- in an appendix to "The Third Policeman" he makes it clear that he regards as novel an idea, that of the narrator being dead, which is all too familiar to us -- but one must wonder whether he or our average contemporary author most nearly follows Ouspensky's recipe for original thought, to "think in other categories". When one considers the marvellous fecundity of ideas he has been able to generate out of a background which apparently consists primarily of Roman Catholic philosophy and the Victorian science taught by the educational system of that Church, one wonders what advances such a mind might make on the wild frontiers of modern science. And one also asks oneself, rather sadly, why the activity of our own troops on that front has been so pedestrian. --WAW

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Note: In view of the ingenious hoaxes we have had in recent years maybe I should solemnly swear to those of you who may not have already heard of Flann O'Brien that he is indeed a real author, with a real publisher -- MacGibbon and Kee of 3 Upper James Street, Golden Square, London W1. --WAW

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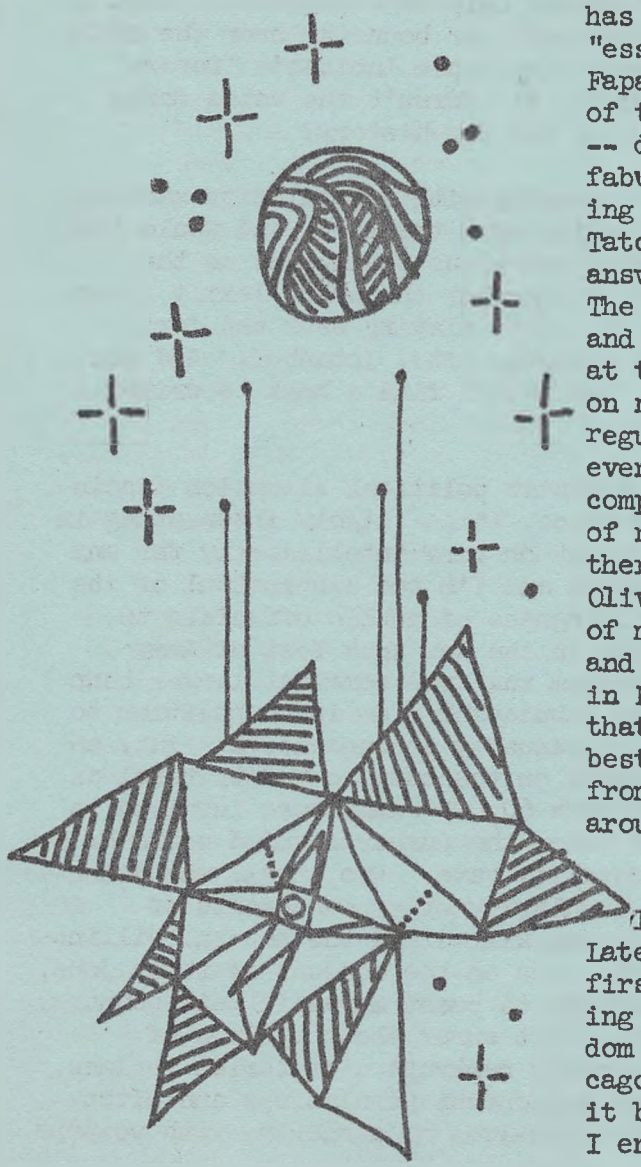
DISSONANT DISCOURSE



In Terminus Telegraph George Scithers expresses regret at the disappearance from membership of Bill Rotsler and Ted Johnstone. It occured to me that Fapa has no obituary writer and if anyone needs another idea for material to use in their Fapazines there it is (last issue I suggested an introduction to the waiting list would be in order). A resume of Johnstone, who left in "mutual boredom", would come in handy because for the last 15 minutes the only things I could remember of his Fapactivity was the vague recollection of controversy over his admission (and it may have been about another person entirely) and the thought that he may have changed his name at one time -- hardly accomplishments old time Fapans will be reminiscing over for the benefit of present waiting lister #45 in the distant future -- so I am non-plussed by Scither's sense of loss (though I do recall enjoying Ted's contributions in Saps). But the departure of Rotsler certainly represents the crumbling of one of those pillars that the pantheon has long been famous for and directly attacks that "essence" of Fapa George later inquires about. A Fapa obituary of Rotsler (possible title: "The Last of the Insurgents") would make fascinating reading -- detailing as it would such contributions as the fabulous Masque and a career that included lightening flashes of inspiration like Quotebook and The Tatooed Dragon. I think it's these last items which answer the question "what is the essence of fapa?". The membership of Fapa is a highly creative group and while the best of us are rarely at peak interest at the same time no one knows who is going to turn on next. I think that's the lure of Fapa beyond the regular draw of old war horses like Horizons -- and even that publication can pull a surprise by being composed almost entirely of a fascinating selection of notes for a fan history. In the last mailing there was a devastating and hilarious piece from the Oliver King Smith Agency, the unexpected appearance of material from at least 8 Hugo winners, the Harp, and Poul Anderson's fascinating remarks on his craft in Niekas. The wonderful thing about a mailing is that it usually contains something that is among the best produced in fandom during that quarter. Judging from the length of the waiting list, the word gets around. :: Brief comments on mailing 123:

SERCON'S BANE - FMBusby: I've since found that line in an earlier Wrhn credited to Walt Willis. Later in commenting on Serenade Walt wrote, "The first use I know of the expression 'What's worth doing is worth doing badly' was in my defense of fandom against Ed Wood during the panel debate at Chicago in 1952, but someone must obviously have said it before. Probably GKChesterton." SALUD - EBusby: I enjoyed your perceptive review of "A Hard Day's

Night" and hope you'll publish your article on the Beatles soon. :: I sometime think I might like to live as a painter but then I wonder how I would make a living: my trouble is that I don't want to sell anything I like and if I don't like a painting I don't want to sell it for that reason. :: I wonder if Terry Carr found your observation about Lighthouse that "many of the people who receive it just don't read it" as hair-raising as I do. The possibility that when it arrives with the Fapa mailing you put it aside with the mailing to read later, shouldn't apply to the last issue, at least, since it was postmailed (and that issue received far less comment in Fapa than previous issues which were circulated with the rest of the bundle). But I really must disagree that your attitude is typical, Elinor; not if the voting in the Fapa poll is any indication. That was Terry's only contribution to Fapa all year and he took the best editor/publisher category, best single publication, #2 regular Fapazine, and enough points to rate as #1 Fapan -- topping Warner by 16 points. I should think, then, that the light comment was due to being postmailed -- a sure way to avoid comment, if not notice. THE FANTASY AMATEUR: I voted in the egoboo poll but apparently the ballot never reached Cox. If it had Boggs and White would have been in the Top Ten in the final tabulation and two of you lucky people would have been out.

KIM CHI - Ellington: I thought "Bonnie and Clyde" a beautiful film in many ways but a lot of the mood of time and place was destroyed for me by the pseudo-turkey-in-the-straw music that intruded in various parts. It served only to characterize them as fun-loving kids and the audience seemed to think their old car bouncing over the hills to the accompaniment of this music the greatest humor coup since Lubitsh's "Desire" starring Cooper and Deitrich. Can anyone explain why? :: Weren't the notes Harry published in Horizons things that had been omited from the fan-history?

SNICKERSNEE - Silverberg: Israel seems to be a country with a population made up, in large part, of New York City bus drivers. :: I enjoy your travelogs and would like to see you expand further on Istanbul. I too found a marvelous restaurant on the Bosphorous down that road pass the Emperor's palace. Remember the boats lazily ferrying up and own the river with their wandering search lights playing back and forth slowly over the water in the night? An incredibly romantic city, Istanbul. And you should see Barcelona at the earliest opportunity. You should find a book to write in the work of Antonio Gaudi.

NULL-F - White: I found your comments on the domestic political situation fascinating -- much more so than your remarks on Vietnam which, while highly interesting in their own right, are not a subject I feel I can comment on very intelligently for any great length. All I know is what I'm fed by the media and I'm too distrustful of its resistance to manipulation and the demonstrated willingness of public officials to manipulate it. For instance, I recall a tabulation in the New York Post of Army releases of the number of enemy killed in South Vietnam that was somewhat larger than the entire army of North Vietnam. And even on that tabulation I am in no position to pass judgement -- not having kept a running score of casualty announcements. But, on the other hand, one thinks of Robert Kennedy's comment on the enemy casualty total in the Tet offensive: official US estimates were that some 60,000 enemy were involved in the offensive, that we had killed 20,000, and that twice the number wounded would be a conservative estimate of wounded with so high a fatality rate. Who, then, was doing the fighting now, RFK asked? Given the monotonous regularity of announcements of thousands of enemy slaughtered to the scores of our men killed and the natural willingness of our public servants to put the best possible face on the conduct of their jobs, I tend to suspect these estimates are a macabre attempt to boost morale in this country.

If the specifics of Vietnam elude me I'm quite a bit surer about my lack of support for this country's support of oppressive morally bankrupt dictatorial regimes, its traffic in arms that are often used to suppress malcontent populations and often against other countries which are either defending themselves or attacking with weapons

we have also sold them. I think $30,000,000 a year (a share of which finds itself rapidly into Swiss banks while literally millions of our countrymen are hungry, disadvantaged, and inadequately educated), an admitted 24,000 Americans killed, and the destruction of Vietnam, may be too high a price to pay for Vietnam. In fact, with a total troop committment in excess of 500,000, it may very well be a price which limits to nuclear retaliation our response to attack in other areas of the world -- an undesirable position to be in, I should think. It would seem that in the last 5 years we have spent enough waging war in Vietnam to have made every family in that country wealthy. Which should be almost enough about a subject on which I have very little information I can trust: however, I did note with interest a news story in the Times about a forthcoming book, "The Betrayal", by "Lieut. Col. William R. Corson, a former commander of the Marine Corps' Combined Action Platoons in South Vietnam" which is "a wide-ranging indictment of the conduct of the war, the pacification effort, the Adm inistration's public information program and the South Vietnamese authorities." At this writing, Col. Corson is serving in the Defense Department in Washington D.C., though when the book is published it is not expected that he will be...

Naturally I have been following the domestic political situation with avid interest so enjoyed your remarks on this very much and as far as I agree with them find them highly intelligent. I don't know if you recall, but we have a history of agreeing with each other on politics: In Wrhn 11, April 1961, you wrote "I've constantly enjoyed your political commentary, since your politics seem to closely mirror mine, and you are both well-read and articulate where I am not. /?-RB/ It is an indescribably fine pleasure to sit down and read a set of comments which tellingly demolish Nixon on the one hand, and cautiously appraise Kennedy on the other." Those were the days.

Much lip-service is given to television as a medium of instant history and I must say that it is 100% true: I was staring dully into Lyndon Johnson's face when he made his announcement of abdication and as far as I'm concerned it was his finest moment. Though it did not make him a sympathetic character in my eyes -- the first uncharitable thought was that Nassar had pulled something similar and second the fear that now he would win the sympathy of the Wisconsin voters and trounce Eugene McCarthy in that state's primary two days later. If it was a Nassarian maneuver, the unsympathetic Wisconsin voters proved this isn't the country for that sort of thing (maneuvers were tryed for other primaries and proved equally ineffective: two that come to mind were the dramatic unannounced trip to Glasboro two hours before the polls opened in California and the intimation, a couple days before the voting in Indiana, by Humphrey or his forces that Roger Branigan (remember him?) would make a good vice-president). His unpleasant qualities stuck in my mind in the face of his withdrawal before the vengeance the Democratic rank and file were using Eugene McCarthy to wreck upon him. I remembered that he would answer the most responsible of his critics on Vietnam by attacking his most irresponsible critics; by attacking "quislings and cowards" and in the next breath extolling patriotism -- in the blind and arrogant assumption that a dialogue of name calling was an act of patriotism or even vaguely a democratic debate. All of this is terribly dangerous when it comes from the President of the United States -- being as it is an example from the highest source for more of the same either in reply or emulation. RFK's much criticized accusation that LBJ was calling on the darker impulses of the American people was not without basis. Perhaps he was acting in the hope that the intemperate response would unite the less intemperate (and hopefully a majority) of the country behind him against the flag and draft card burners. (But the majority was not so naive that it would fail to see that a country was also burning.) Perhaps Lyndon Johnson's withdrawal was a tacit admission that he had no answer.

My immediate reaction was that this sowed up the nomination for Kennedy. I reasoned if LBJ had seen the writing on the wall that his vice-president, who had been more royalist than the king on Vietnam, could hardly pick up the anti-Vietnam cudgels at this point and would be no less a liability to the party in November. I overlooked the fear of the party pros for RFK and underestimated the extent to which the

fossilized Democratic machinery could cling to a kamikaze mentality that nominated Goldwater in the other party. Thus we've seen the improbable and bewildering rise of the Politics of Happiness when the nation's capital is alternately burning or swarming with the protesting impoverished. Hubert Humphrey's candidacy would be low camp if it weren't high tragedy.

And, yes, on the other hand, "in his first two or three years he accomplished more important domestic legislation than either Eisenhower or Kennedy in the more than ten years before him". But we shouldn't fault Ike for something he had neither the imagination or desire to do. And the programs that Johnson got through were in large part those stalled in Kennedy's divided congress -- a congress still under the spell of the Eisenhower coma and certainly one with no overwhelming message from the country that this young leader was to be followed rather than led. JFK called for the times to change but it was LBJ, doubtlessly the more effective congressional leader anyway, who had the tremendous national unity working for him in the wake of the Kennedy assassination and later an unmistakeable mandate handed him by the Republican party's suicidal impulse to nominate Barry Goldwater. Johnson is extremely effective in wielding the consensus of disaster: he governed skillfully following the death of Kennedy and the defeat of Goldwater. He successfully brought about the civil rights legislation after the King assassination and he will probably effectively lead the fight for gun control legislation following the death of Robert Kennedy. He will be remembered as among the best of Presidents and among the worst of Presidents.

It was about one week before the Oregon primary when I read your comments on the candidacies of Kennedy and McCarthy. Being an omnivorous reader of anything to do with this audacious effort to change the policies of the Democratic party, I could see the straws in the wind were blowing against RFK. So I decided to put off writing these comments on Null-F for two weeks until after the California primary -- it's no news to anyone that this incredible election year has changed completely every two weeks and anything I write at any given point will be of interest only has history by the time this issue is distributed. I write this on June 23 and the latest national polls (which are much better at creating news than predicting results) indicate that McCarthy could beat either Nixon or Rockefeller and the Humphrey/administration viewpoint has suffered a severe defeat in the New York primary. At this point the fatalists are conceding the nomination to Humphrey but the fatalists have always made the wrong judgement on McCarthy and it's still two months to the convention: McCarthy is a very patient man, 3H has exhibited a talent for putting his foot in his mouth which is only surpassed by George Romney, and Ted Kennedy probably has the power to make a decisive choice between the two.

A win for Kennedy in Oregon would have pulled key people in the McCarthy campaign into the Kennedy drive. (I was working as a volunteer for RFK and prepared the "Why I Am For Kennedy" advertisement with Arthur Schlesinger which appeared here in the Times and later did an ad with Ted Sorenson in the aftermath of the assassination for his campaign for a delegate seat at the Democratic convention.) A copywriter and I had prepared an ad (type was set, a photograph was shot, and a plate was made and shipped to California) for a millionaire who was backing McCarthy: the illustration was a blowup of a McCarthy button on a lapel and the headline was "How to nominate Hubert Humphrey". It made the case that RFK could win and that McCarthy couldn't -- as indicated by Kennedy's victories over McCarthy in Indiana and Nebraska and his standings ahead of McCarthy in the polls. The ad was to have been signed by some of the top people in the McCarthy campaign -- whose names I cannot reveal, naturally, and was conditional on McCarthy losing in Oregon. It did not run, of course, since Oregon kept McCarthy viable for California. The ad was then scheduled for New York (McCarthy's people were ready jump the minute McCarthy took a third beating by Kennedy) -- dependent on a Kennedy victory in California. Kennedy won and at 3:00AM I watched him, confident, proud, young, passionate, it seemed to me that he would have turned the country around and taken the nomination. (He was quoted by Jimmey Breslin the next day as saying, just before he went down to face the cameras and claim his victory, "Hubert

Humphrey. I'll chase his ass. Where ever he goes, I'll go." It would have been something to see: the excited crowds that turned out for Senator Kennedy as against the tepid collection of party hacks who were greeting Humphrey at that point.) And then, in another instance of instant history he was gone and those who agree with me are left with a candidate who has been beaten in primaries by Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, and George Smathers (the Florida primary). However, the evidence of the primaries is that the country desires a change in political direction. If McCarthy is nominated, there is a chance. If 3H is nominated, I fear Richard Nixon will be the next President -- and vis-a-vis Vietnam, I'm not sure it would make that much difference though I expect things will get much hotter in this country. :: I've indulged myself at some length above but these mailing comments are the only space in which I intend to discuss, and then perhaps only rarely, these topics in the new Wrhn. The scope of Wrhn is vaguely confined to fandom and science-fiction and the miriad interests growing out of these subjects but there will be digressions into political and other far removed topics in this department. Blame Fapa.

HORIZONS - Warner: Readers who skip your masthead, missed one of the most slyly brilliant bits in the mailing:"Television rights reserved", indeed! :: I'm not sure what was so startling about the resurection of Dick Bergeron with Serenade. After all, my annual eight pages were due that mailing. :: Perhaps they mean that making the full Hugo voting tallys known would be "too hard on the losers" financially. It certainly wouldn't make any difference in the fanzine category where the contestants are used to fan polls that give full results. :: I agree that Star Trek is a visualized Planet Stories. :: The Hagerstown Journal reminds me I kept a detailed diary of notes of my involvement with the Kennedy/McCarthy/Humphrey campaigns. I did volunteer work for only one group but have daily contacts with people intimately involved with the other candidates -- a most curious position, I assure you and an exciting one. I have enough material to write a book far more complicated than "The World of A". DOORWAY - Benford: "A Day In The Life" always struck me as the day before The End. After the fun of Sgt. Pepper's band it begins with a mordant dash of reality "Woke up, got out of bed, dragged a comb across my head". The news of the day hits. And the ending is the ominous direction in which we are heading.

THE RAMBLING FAP - Calkins: The question posed by Lighthouse is not "which is better...twenty pages every month or sixty every quarter";in the context of Fapa, it's "twenty pages every quarter or eighty every year". I would prefer the quarterly appearance to the annual. :: I am increasingly surprised at this spreading consensus that Lighthouse is "not necessarily a friendly, likable fanzine". I find it as genial and relaxed as the sorriest crudzine -- though there is nothing uncontrolled about it. And therein lies it's triumph as a work of art. :: Why call the revived Oopsla "volume two"? Why not just continue the numbering? If you use "volume two, number one" people won't know how many have gone before unless you use the "whole number" tag and if you do that you might as well continue the consecutive numbering anyway. Don't throw away your glorious past.

GODOT - Deckinger: Who "the devil can comment on a 300 page fanzine?" Why, Fapa members, of course, though I suspect they don't realize it. If the mailing arrived as a bound volume I expect many would throw up their hands and refuse to comment on it; yet it is no less, in effect, an omnibus publication just because it is not stapled together. GMCarr once gave Fapa an object lesson on this point when she separated an issue of Gemzine and entered each department as a publication. A number of members either were ignoring most of her departments or were complaining that Gemzine was too large to comment on. I can't understand why members can comment on a 300 page mailing but are discouraged by a 90 page Lighthouse. Perhaps they would feel more up to it if they took the staples out of the Lths and commented on 45 single sheets. HORIB - Lupoffs: Sorry, but even when your "Circle of Sophistication" was timely, I would have been mystified by the selection of Walter Breen following my name. This is nothing

against Breen, but Walt Willis is the only sophisticated fan I know and his name, oddly enough, appears nowhere in the circle. Did the Circle take into account the famous fannish observation that "you are not truly sophisticated until you've had carnal knowledge of a goat"? :: "The Xero years" will always be the Wrhn/Xero/Void years to me -- a time when you never knew which of those fanzines to expect next and a time Boggs called "the best of all possible fandoms". :: I'm pleased you wrote the article about Xero for Arnie Katz. I'm more and more impressed with his abilities as an editor -- when I wrote Warner he replied he was sorry but just a few weeks earlier he had agreed to write "All Our Yesterdays" for Quip. I wanted it for Wrhn (though I'm not in the least unhappy with the direction Harry's activity in Wrhn is taking). You've got to move to stay ahead of that Katz.

TERMINUS TELEGRAPH - Scithers: Your information that the Swiss seldom kill each other though all adult male citizens are required to keep guns and ammunition at home may be an argument that gun laws aren't the answer to urban murder but I think it an even stronger argument that Switzerland is a sane country. What do you think the effect of a similar law would be here in the United States? These years America is wearing its subterranean psyche unmasked; the Mad Bomber, the Boston Strangler, the Chicago nurse mass murder, the killings from a Texas tower, not to mention wholesale assassination, are just the eruptions of a culture that finds popular heros in Bonnie and Clyde and understands the message in The Doors classic "The End", which tells us "Father", "Yes, son.", "I want to kill you.". The ending of this higly popular ditty is "Kill ..kill ..kill ..kill ..kill ..kill." :: I agree, of course, that people kill and not guns but the problem is that we seem to have so many people who will kill at the slightest provocation. I would prefer that these pepple find it more difficult to get hold of guns so that when the slight provocation occurs the first thing they can get their hands on is a chair and not a gun. Yes, I know that anyone who really wants to kill will find his weapon somehow, but the statistics cited by Senator Magnuson of Washington, a former supporter of the gun lobby, are worth pondering: "In Dallas, where guns are freely obtainable by anyone, the percentage of homicides commited by gun in 1963 was 72 perccent; while in New York, the Sullivan Law, one of the strongest local gun laws, has kept the rate of murder by gun at 25 per cent. Among the country's 10 largest cities, New York had the fifth lowest assault rate, the third lowest murder rate, and the lowest robbery rate." I suppose hunters rightly feel that they can protect themselves from maniacs, but there are some of us who sit home publishing fanzines who would like not to have to bother. :: I'm properly awed by Amra's circulation of "about 900" and a print order of 1,500. I've seen a few issues and it's a beautifully done magazine, but your subjects are outside my interests so I've never subscribed. I don't know if you mention other fanzines in it but, in view of your distribution and the possible healthy influence it could have on the future of fandom, I would like to suggest that you briefly review a very few of the better fanzines like Psychotic and Australian SF Review. The response from the mentions you received in the Conan books far out-strips anything I've heard of from prozine review columns. Does anyone know what it would cost to buy one of the back pages of a pocket book to list several fanzines -- preferably a pb like "Dangerous Visions"? Harlan?

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REMEMBER HYPHEN?: I'd appreciate a short paragraph giving the low down on this Shaver business...I buy it only for the illos and they're consistently lousy..."I don't see how science fiction is improved merely by making somebody pregnant."...What I'd like is an eraser for my typer which would extend into the fourth dimension...I don't go around begging for egoboo...Most people will admit that it improves the appearance of a fanzine imensely if the large majority of the words are spelt correctly...It seems that you can get away with anything if you just say that it's funny...From Hyphen #7.

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Come back, Redd Boggs.

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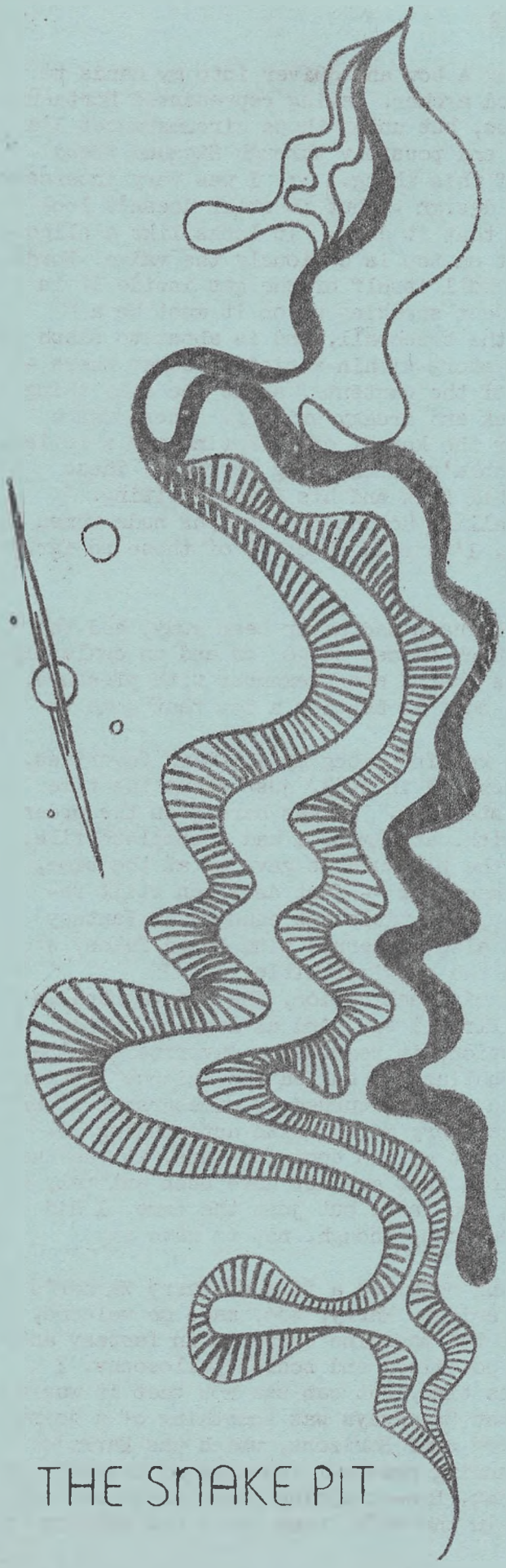


51 WARHOON 51

If it wasn't for the fact that this issue is emerging in the pre-convention slump; a period of fannish lethargy exceeded only by the slump following the convention, I probably wouldn't be making a point of observing that apparently most readers of the last issue thought they had 2½ years in which to write a letter before this issue was published. I mention this less the seasonal slump prolong the light comment on Wrhn and force my contributors to reassess their positions. After all, they are putting a great deal of time and thought into their work -- time that (in terms of response) might be more profitably spent engraving the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin or constructing cathedrals of match sticks. :: Strangely,this issue contains two of the best letters I've ever received: White's and Lowndes'. But they were solicited (which may point the way to a new technique for filling up letter columns!). In Skyhook 23, winter 1954, my mentor Redd Boggs wrote "Sometimes I am convinced that nobody actually reads Skhk at all. A subsequent application of egoboo usually soothes away that notion in time, but even if the sad conviction persisted, I think I would continue to publish Skyhook for myself alone." Aside from wishing in an aside that it were possible to look over Redd's shoulder to read the current issues of Skyhook, I'd like to sadly note that I'm no Redd Boggs (just thought you'd like to know). :: The response to the poll of the Top Ten fanzines was too disappointing to tabulate but I'm glad I asked -- if only for the reason that it inspired Bob Lowndes' wonderful reminiscences. It's a difficult question to answer but it's one I want to address myself to at some future date. For the moment I'll content myself with changing the subject by saying if I were to be banished to a desert island and could only bring five complete fanzine files with me, they would be Hyphen, Quandry, Skyhook, Warhoon, and Onpxlt. :: Some wonderful people did write:

BOB SHAW: I've just read Wrhn 23 with great pleasure -- tempered only with a slight pang of dismay at the passage wherein Walt Willis describes me as "the greatest fan writer of all time". Walt has asserted this before and I'm always tremendously flattered (even though I know that he is the gfwoat and that I don't even come into his class), but at the same time I get a surge of pure panic. It's like going to an Olde Englishe Fayre with Robin Hood, hearing him announce to the crowds that

I'm the greatest archer of all time, and thrusting a bow and quiver into my hands to give a quick demonstration. I am a reasonably good archer, having represented Northern Ireland a couple of times in international matches, but under those circumstances I'd probably put my shaft right through Maid Marion, and possibly through Sigmund Freud who I can see has just popped up in the middle of this thing. :: I was very interested in your account of the evolution of the cover design -- but it still doesn't look like a planet and I don't know how you can claim that it does. It looks like a slightly under-inflated beachball, and the small object on top is obviously the valve. Words are issuing from the valve, which means that the ball itself or the gas inside it is an intelligent life-form. The spiky metallic object sneaking up on it must be a different type of creature which is inimical to the beachball, and is about to slash it open with its cruel teeth. So you had a good story-within-a-picture cover there -- but you thought it was a planet. Tsk. Tsk. :: Of the contents, about the only thing I didn't really like was the piece about Phil Dick and druggy writing. There was a time a good few years ago when all one needed for the kernel of a fanzine was a review of "Destination Moon" and a paragraph about Ed Noble's forthcoming marriage. These staples have been replaced by an article about Phil Dick and his druggy writing. (Another hardy perennial is a piece by Rotsler telling how he photographs nude women all the time but thinks absolutely nothing of it. I've read about 43 of those so far.) (6 Cheltenham Park, Belfast 6, Northern Ireland)

ROBERT A W LOWNDES: Wonderful! It's as if Warhoon had never been away, and the two-year absence was nothing more than a dream which seemed to go on and on endlessly.

I don't know whether I can list ten fanzines that I even remember with pleasure, but bringing the question up does stir memories, so I'll mention a few that come to mind.

The very first one I ever came across still remains among my all-time favorites. That was Science Fiction Digest, to which I subscribed in 1933, just about the time that the round-robin serial story, "Cosmos" was starting. It was hardly on the order of Wrhn, but SFD is one publication of which I wish, at times, I had a complete file; I can still re-read it and recapture a trace of the pleasure it gave me at the time, even while realizing that it is not a very good magazine -- just as I can still re-read many of the old stories of the times. Later, the title was changed to Fantasy Magazine, to acknowledge the fact that they were also concerned with Weird Tales, etc., and the change made sense; but I still preferred the original title.

Don Wollheim managed to obtain printing for his publication, The Phantagraph in 1936, and his first printed issue was also the first I saw. And as long as TP was primarily concerned with fantasy and science fiction, it remained a favorite of mine.

Olin F Wiggins brought out a hectographed publication called the Science Fiction Fan, some time in 1937. It wasn't very good, even when he turned to mimeography after -- I believe -- three issues; but it did come out every month, with astonishing regularity, and if it was not the very first to accept my own contributions, it was the first to invite me aboard as a regular contributor. This may not have been entirely a good thing; the result was that I wrote too much too fast; but just the same, I did get practice in writing regularly. I'm just as content, though, not to have any copies, now.

On the other hand, I'm sorry about not having retained a file of Harry Warner's Spaceways, which started in 1939, if I remember aright. Harry, too, made me welcome, but was more discriminating; his aim was to keep the magazine centered in fantasy and science fiction, rather than wandering off into political and social philosophy. I can't say that I appreciated this decision at the time, but can see now that it was a sensible one. ... (I'm haunted by the feeling that Spaceways was something of a joint venture between Harry and Jim Avery.) Later, there came Horizons, which was Harry's alone, and must by now be one of the longest-standing personal fanzines of history, if it hasn't yet made the record of being the longest. Eye-straining mimeography was one of its characteristics, and that often remained in the 40's, when Harry was putting

it into the Vanguard mailings. But I wouldn't think of disposing of my copies (I have only the Vanguard series) even though glasses and a good strong light are needful. Harry Warner stands alone as perpetrator of two of my all-time favorites.

Imagination (which later became Voice of the Imagi-nation) retains its uniqueness in my recollection, especially in its second carnation, where it became the first all-letters fanzine -- or at least the first I remember seeing.

These are the oldtimers which I loved most in the days when I was strictly an amateur, with little more than vague hopes of "sometime" becoming a writer. (Becoming a science fiction editor was something I never dreamed of before 1940.)

Some of the titles above were in the mailings of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, but my impression is that even those which did still maintained an independent list of subscribers,etc., outside FAPA. There were many other good fanzines, and a number of excellent ones (from what I hear) that I never saw; I don't believe that I ever saw F.T.Laney's famed publication, and only saw a few issues of Searles' Fantasy Commentator, when Sam Moskowitz's "The Immortal Storm" was running there.

A few of the publications in Vanguard retain my affection, and some admiration for excellence beyond the range generally expected in fanzines. At the very top, I place James Blish's Tumbrills, and wish he had the time and inclination to continue it; Virginia Kidd's Discrete is the only other one that ran for any length of time which I'd put on the same level -- her Quarterly I consider another carnation of the earlier title, but the title change was most sensible since she was trying to do something quite different. There's another that I wish could still be with us.

Needless to say, I still retain affection for my own wayward and foolish child, Agenbite of Inwit, but have no more inclination to revive it than Jim and Virginia have to restore their titles.

Bill Danner's Stefantasy is still going, and while it retains a good deal of its flavor,I can't help but feel that his Vanguard issues were his best. Partly because he had so many targets to shoot at with each mailing. WMD always claimed that he published his magazine just for the helluvit, rather than to prove anything; but reading over a run of issues, and noting the themes that recur and the intensity level of some of them, shows various areas of self deception. No matter; we're none of us free from that. It's a unique little magazine and I'm always glad to see it.

Judy Merrill and Damon Knight both had continuing magazines in Vanguard, and reading them over today (as I actually did the summer before last) shows that success has not changed either of them. This was back in the middle and late 40s, you'll recall.

As to today's fanzines: the crop is so large that I don't want to see them all -- it was too large twenty years ago, and from various samples I suspect that there are more really good ones than I'd have time to follow. So I won't list any titles, though I do appreciate being sent them and really mean to try at least to list them in Famous Science Fiction some issue. ... The fact that this appears in Warhoon, however, rather than in some other fanzine which might be willing to print it, says something.

The spaceship designs are delightful, and I was particularly amused by the undulating one that Atheling got and the glorified saddle that I received, as well as the dog-faced one selected for the left side of Walter Breen. By all means continue.

Walt Willis and Breen both remain favorites, each in his own way; and with Breen there's the pleasure of enjoying and getting sense out of a discussion of stories that I haven't read. The one exception is "Eye in the Sky"; I saw that one in manuscript, when it was submitted to Avalon Books, and enjoyed it thoroughly. But I couldn't put my heart in to so much as suggesting the sort of changes and whittling down that would have been necessary. The Ace version differs somewhat from the original, and I'm not at all convinced that the differences are improvements. In this instance, the nearly full loaf is indeed better than none, though.

Atheling on Blish explains partly, for me, what I felt was wrong with the magazine

version of "Faust Aleph-Null"; it wasn't, for me, "pared down almost to the bone", but pared beyond that point, and vital bone structure removed. As a result, I'd include it in a list of reader-cheaters. If the story were only one of phenomena and ideas, wherein the emotions of the humans involved are brought in solely to the point necessary to keep the plot going (as in a great deal of Lovecraft), then I'd say this was fine. Unfortunately, for all the fact that I find the phenomena and the metaphysics interesting, it is the individual reactions to both that held me most firmly. Fr. Domenico was presented to me sufficiently for me to feel that this is his story; without seeing the effect of the final manifestation upon him, being deprived of the opportunity to share his feelings and reactions, "Faust Aleph-Null" does not have an ending; it merely stops. ... Perhaps the book version may have something in it which will reconcile me to the ending, so what I have said above does not necessarily refer to "Black Easter"; but what I've read so far requires me to list "Faust Aleph-Null" as a badly-flawed good story. ... Obviously the author had a different opinion.

Which is not to demean Blish's venture into writing stories "pared down almost to the bone"; it's a legitimate way of writing, and the traps therein are those of picking the right stories for this sort of approach and making sure the knife doesn't slip. ... I myself am trying to write some good stories with exactly the opposite approach; letting them expand, at the risk of looseness of structure and almost the certainty of sections which this or that reader may find not only irrelevant but dull. I don't think this is the only way to write a good story, or even the only way for me to write a good story; but I do want to see if I can get some good ones out of my system which seem to me to call for this sort of treatment -- meaning that stories which, to my mind, do not want expansiveness are put to one side.

The "trilogy as trinity" idea (as an afterthought) has its uses, the principal one, for me, being that of simply giving the reader -- or better the potential reader -- information which he might not have had otherwise: Were you taken by "A Case of Conscience"? Well, the author has written two other novels in the same spiritual field of discourse, although they are not otherwise connected. In some ways this sort of trilogy is better than the series of three dealing with the same characters, etc., since an author involved is not bound by so many elements of what he has written before; what is lost, of course, is the surface unity. But so long as it is something more than a promotional ploy on the part of an author (and Atheling makes his point well enough to satisfy me that there is something more than promotion here; I read the three novels), then such afterthoughts can be useful. I know I shall want to reread all three, even though "Black Easter" may be painful for reasons stated above, but if I had done so without having read Atheling, I might not have noticed the connection. The final proof, for me, is yet to come; the proposition sounds good, but I cannot argue the point before trying it out.

TED WHITE: My "top ten" fanzines? That's a very difficult question, and while I'll try my hand at a list, I want it understood immediately that I am not ranking these titles in any order beyond the order in which they occur to me:

Hyphen: very possibly the best fanzine ever published.

Quandry: more a mystique at its best than just a fanzine.

Oopsla!: the first annish turned me on enormously (one of the very best), but later issues during the mid-fifties grouped together some of the best columnists in fandom.

A Bas: the best thing about A Bas was Boyd Raeburn, despite the way others, like Kirs, dazzeled us.

Innuendo: it reached its peak with the seventh or eighth issue, when Terry reached his peak as an editor and writer.

Psychotic: I maintain great fondness for the dittoed issues after #10, in which it seemed everything worth talking about in fandom happened in its pages.

Skyhook: sometimes mustily dry, always impeccable, and a clear fore-runner to Warhoon in its scholarly approach and wry wit.

Grue: best in its earlier Fapa issues, but always good when Grennell was good.

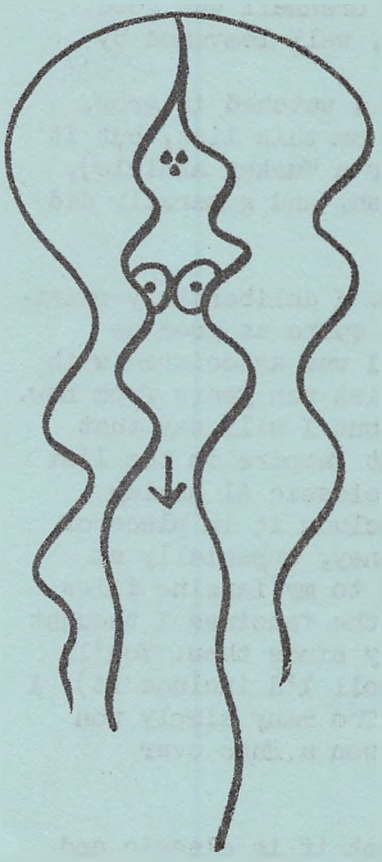
Slant: the only fanzine that published good amateur fiction, well leavened by Willis wit.

Vega: I'm being sentimental about this one; I was a neo and I watched it grow, envying Joel Nydahl every issue. It wasn't as good as the others on this list, but it was a focal point, launched the revival of interlineations (after a Tucker article), presented fankind with Boggs' thesis on Annishthesia in its annish, and generally did what focal points do.

That's 10 titles. You'll note they're all from the fifties. I deliberately omitted Wrhn (which I regard as having been, in its last incarnation, quite as good as Skhk) because it's your poll, and Void (either version) because I was associated with it. More recent fanzines, Lighthouse included, might make the list ten years from now. Or maybe not. I'm not competant to judge pre-fifties zines, but I will say that from what I saw of Spacewarp it was overrated. I suspect I'd put Vampire on the list if I'd seen more copies. I overlooked Masque -- especially the classic Al Ashley issue-- and maybe, if I had the above list to do over, would include it in place of A Bas, Grue, or Vega. You can't ignore talents like Burbee and Laney, especially at their insurgent best. :: And so forth. I suppose if I went back to my fanzine files and checked the zines still in blue folders I'd have an idea of the fanzines I thought top-level in 1956. But I doubt my standards have changed greatly since then. You'll notice none are Hugo winners (although Wrhn is, and in another poll I'd include it). I don't think that much of zines like Xero, Amra, Niekas, et al. Too many simply won because they overwhelmed the most voters. Fanac, for instance, won a Hugo over Innuendo. But Inn remains the better fanzine.

I disagree with you about the present Hugo-spaceship. I think it is classic and elegantly simple. It certainly resembles no portion of any present-day first-stage rocket I know anything about, and I think that is entirely fitting. The Hugo rocket is an idealization of the space-rocket, and resembles a Finlay conception more than anything else. The three Anthony Elson drawings leave me cold. The one you described as a fluted cone strikes me as a suitable paperweight and not much else. The second, bears a superficial resemblance to rockets of your own design (so much so that I wondered if Elson was a hoax you were testing on us), but also reminds me of a christmas tree ornament. The globe, as shown in the drawing, is simply hideous, and no other word describes it adequately. The busy bars on the sides of the column, the proportions of the column to the globe (too thick, too ugly-massive) -- it looks like a 1930's piece of futurism, or maybe a caricature of the 'Daily Planet' building. Worse, they look like trophies. Step into a trophy store some time (as I have) and you'll find yourself surrounded by objects which scream their 'trophy-ness' at you -- figures crudely copied from Greek and Roman statues, balanced on one foot of pot-metal over a towering structure that shouts its ostentation. Every trophy bigger, every trophy more grand, every trophy more 'trophy-esque'. :: The Hugo rocketship is timeless, undated. It is sleek and beautiful and quite up-thrusting enough for me. The plastic Hugos we awarded last year look like liquid glass; when polished they have an illusion of transparency, shaded a bit by the hint of milky translucency. They have no molding seams; they've been carefully hand-worked and buffed and polished. Compared with earlier Hugos which shed their plating or the like, I think they will prove durable and beautiful for a long time to come. (The Baycon would be giving plastic Hugos too, if, I'm told, Donaho hadn't offended the man who makes them.) Properly speaking, I believe our Hugos are lucite. They do not look cheap.

I am overwhelmingly glad to see Willis back in Wrhn's pages and back in fandom as well. My feelings for Willis run the gamut from affection to veneration, but if ever there was a single fan I valued most highly, it would be Willis. I watched his creeping perfectionism throttle his productivity a few years ago -- even as it did Burbee -- and I mourned for it. But you can't tell a man that he shouldn't adopt



ever-higher standards for himself, and you can only stand by and hope he'll find a way out of the dilemma. I hope The Harp will give Walt that chance. :: While staying with the Willises in Ireland after the 1965 Loncon (and that was one of the most pleasant weeks I've ever spent anywhere -- the Wheels of I.F. are overwhelmingly good hosts) I had a chance to read both versions of Willis' proposed Regency Book. The second expunged fandom and added in ersatz scenes of a mildly sexy nature which I thought failed miserably to come off. The first, the one Walt quotes here, is the honest one -- the one in which he told things as they were, simply adding necessary clarification for the mundane reader. The honest book was, I think, deserving of publication. And still is. Terry Carr has been trying to get the manuscript from Budrys for years, in order to see if he could sell it for Walt. At the recent SFWA Awards Banquet in New York, Terry repeatedly asked Budrys where it was and if he'd hand it over. Budrys maintained he had it, but smiled a secret smile (very typically Budrys) when asked to surrender it. "Did you misplace it?" Terry asked. "No, I know exactly where it is," Budrys said. But he won't give it up.

What Lowndes says this time around has needed saying for a couple of years, now. I feel very uncomfortable when I discuss Chip Delany, because I believe we are friends, because he has been kind and generous to me, and yet I cannot join the throng who worship him as an Award-Winning writer. I like the things he sets out to do, most often, but I cannot accept the notion that he has yet really succeeded. I couldn't finish "Babel-17". The opening section in the bar embarrassed me in its clumsiness. I couldn't read "Starpit" either, and it was not until I listened to it on WBAL that I found myself getting inside the story (published version at hand to read as I listened). That was a story with three or four good endings, all of which were ignored, and a couple of major stories buried in its wordage unexhumed. And an impenetrable opening. I've read "Nova", and told Chip what I didn't like about it: mainly his very exterior approach to his characters -- the first third of the book has not one single element of involvement in it. And yet, his instincts are good. On the educative level, Chip knows more than I do -- about writing and about literature. Furthermore, he believes in craftsmanship and in storytelling (rare elements among most authors acclaimed by the New Thing enthusiasts). But mixed in with this (it was obvious in his Lighthouse article last year) is a would-be artiness, a pretension to Literature-with-the-capital-L, which I think cripples him. And I suspect three Nebulas in two years haven't helped. (Well, they've helped his pocketbook. I'm here to tell you that winning a Nebula or a Hugo is often good for at least a thousand dollars more on the advance for a book. And once you've won an award editors who sneered in your direction suddenly give you carte blanche.) But "Babel-17" was not better than "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress", and like Doc Lowndes I'm a little dismayed with the SFWA members who think that it was. :: (But let's not go too deeply into that. The SFWA honors its own: if you died, or if you're an outstandingly Good Guy and local pet, you can count on a Nebula for anything half-way good.)

I was prepared for a deeper look into Phil Dick than Walter Breen gave us. I was a little surprised that he a) quoted so few books for examples, and b) made no attempt to discover the chronological strings that tie them together. I see no reason to lump "Eye in the Sky" in with the later period Phil Dick books and ignore the others of that era. In the interests of bibliomania, here are the books and their dates of publication:

"Solar Lottery", 1955
"The World Jones Made", 1956
"The Man Who Japed", 1956
"Eye in the Sky", 1957
"The Cosmic Puppets", 1957
"The Variable Man", 1957
"Dr. Futurity", 1960
"Vulcan's Hammer", 1960
(the last two are expanded magazine novelettes)
"The Game-Players of Titan",1963
"The Simulacra", 1964
"Clans of the Alphane Moon",1964
"Dr. Bloodmoney", 1965
"The Crack in Space", 1966
"The Unteleported Man", 1966
(1964 mag)
"The Ganymede Takeover", 1967
(with Ray Nelson)
(the above are all Ace Books)

"Time Out of Joint",
Lippincott, 1959 (Belmont,'65)
"The Man in the High Castle",
Putnam, '62 (Popular Library'64)
"Martian Time-Slip",
Ballantine, 1964
"The Three Stigmata of Palmer
Eldritch", DDay,'64 (McFad,'66)
"The Penultimate Truth", Belmont'64
"Now Wait For Last Year", DDay, '66
"Counter-Clock World", Berkley, '67
"The Zap Gun", Pyramid, '67
(1965/66 mag)

Now, then: that's twenty-three books, and I may have missed one or two. Phil himself classifies them as pre-1960 and post-1960, the breaking point being when he decided to stop writing sf and try mainstream novels, none of which ever sold. I gather they were plotted in a syncronomous fashion, and all I know about them is that one had a tire-regrover as a protagonist. "I looked for the man with the meanest job in the world," Phil said. "And I hit upon a man who works for a used-car lot, cutting tread-groves into bald tires so that they'll look better than they are." :: The first sf novel written after this period was "In Earth's Diurnal Course", the title of which was changed, when it was finally published, to "Dr. Bloodmoney." It, and several other books of the period, were written before "Man in the High Castle". It is interesting to speculate on what might've happened if one of the others had come out first; Castle was not so much the best, as the first Phil Dick novel in several years. :: Check that list of books. The break comes between Castle (1962) and "Vulcan's Hammer" (1960). But Hammer, like "Dr. Futurity", was a minor item originally written for one of the Columbia mags and blown up for Ace. The last originally-written novel of the 'first period' was "Time Out Of Joint" (1959), which received almost no notice when first published. And before that we find a collection ("The Variable Man"), and "The Cosmic Puppets", which was "A Handfull of Darkness" in Satellite in 1956. The 1955-57 period, then, gave us five rather good novels (all of which strongly hinted at the later books), which nothing followed except the transitional "Time Out of Joint" in 1959, until 1962, when Dick suddenly reappeared in an apparent burst of brand-new glory. :: I gather that he wrote half a dozen books in 1961 or 1962, beginning with "Dr. Bloodmoney". They followed on the heels of his defeat as a mainstream novelist, and blossomed while his then-current marriage was accrimoniously falling apart. From what I gather, the extreme tensions galvanized (or goaded) Phil into a fantastic spate of productivity. I'm surprised Walter did not mention the overlapping vocabulary in all these books, or the feeling that all the major protagonists are being subjected to continual stress situations -- both I think symtomatic of what Phil was going through during this period and his speed in writing. :: At least eight books (by my count -- and that's just the published books) were written in the 1961-63 period. They share the same vocabulary, intensity, and mood; they can almost be read open-endedly. And they could, by the Atheling Test, be considered a series inasmuch as their continuing preoccupation is with the ambiguity of Truth and Reality. :: Walter disappoints me because he never really gets under the surface of these books. He seems determined to relate every element he points up to psychosis, and he drags in elements of metaphysical nonsense (like astrology) which have no bearing on Phil's work, and he ends with a glib statement of Phil's 'psychedelic' work, but so what? He gets personal without getting personal, if you know what I mean. Phil is not, per se, psychotic. Phil evokes the psychotic in his works (particularly in Palmer Eldritch), and partly, I think, to rid himself of personal demons. Many writers freeze up when in personal emotional difficulties. Phil just writes faster. In fact, since his remarriage his productivity

has fallen off sharply. :: Walter also misses the point of that sequence in Castle wherein a protagonist slips into an "alternate universe." The universe is ours, and objectively speaking it should be the only 'real' portion of the book. Instead, so skillful is Phil in creating the world within the book, that transition to our reality becomes a black nightmare, the most chilling single element of pure fantasy in the book. The juxtaposition is brilliant, the effect overwhelming. It brought the short hairs up on the back of my neck. (So did the final scene in "Martian Time-Slip".) :: More important, for all the cataloging of qualities in Phil's books, Walter ignores the most basic: ambiguity. :: Ambiguity exists on almost every level. There are few true villains or heros. Characters we view as villains through one protagonist's eyes, become heros when seen through their own. As in 'real life,' there is an ambiguity of purpose and ideals. Look at Barney Mayerson's relationship with Leo Bulero in Palmer Eldritch for an example of what I'm talking about. While ostensibly saving worlds, Phil's protagonists may well be deep in thought over problems with their wives. A man sets out to murder another man and ends up his friend, while still wondering if he shouldn't murder him. :: The ambiguity of reality itself is explicit in Palmer Eldritch and spelled out in the title of "The Penultimate Truth". And it is dealt with on a more literal level in "Time Out Of Joint" and hinted at in the vanVogtian complications and 'recomplications' of the five earlier novels. Actually, everything in the later books exists embryonically in Phil's first book, "Solar Lottery". If Breen had reread that book and then set out to write his article, it would have been the better for it. As it is, the piece is long-winded, but superficial. Too bad. (New York)

WALT WILLIS: I did start to make a list of my favourite fmz, starting with Quandry and Spacewarp, and then realised I had quite forgotten Warhoon: the traumatic shock frightened me off, reminding me of the occasion when nearly twenty years ago Madeleine forgot she had a baby and went home leaving Carol and her pram outside a shop. (Strathclyde, Warren Road, Donaghadee, N. Ireland)

TERRY CARR: I must comment on your poll of the all-time Ten Best Fanzines. I can't put them in order (I don't think you insisted on that anyway), but my list would go about like this:

Warhoon: because it's one of the most literate and witty magazines of any type I've seen, with a format that's never less than functional, sometimes extremely attractive.

Hyphen: because it's the greatest fannish fanzine of all time (better than Innuendo, yes -- I throw that in because Inn is often mentioned as the best of fannish fanzines by people with somewhat shorter memories), and one of the wittiest magazines this world has ever had the fortune to produce for itself.

Inside: as published by Ron Smith, for many fine articles, some devastating parodies, and a sense of real experimentation in fanpublishing.

Grue: probably the best personalzine we've ever had, with contributors as good as its editor.

Oopsla!: because it was a first-class fannish zine with superb layout that didn't deaden its verve one whit.

The New Futurian: Mike Rosenblum's zine of the mid-50s, which was so good it stood out in a era of fannish zines even though it was purely sf-slanted.

Void: in its last few years for good writing both fannish and stfnal, some absolutely brilliant cartooning by Reiss, Stewart, etc., and the fine layout sense of Ted White (I except any issues on which I worked; those before me were very fine and the zine didn't need me).

Peon: Charles Lee Riddle's zine of the late 40s and early 50s, for excellent layout and material that probably struck the best balance of types I've seen in any fmz -- it was, if you will, the best generalzine we've had.

Quandry: for the sheer fascination of the mind of Lee Hoffman when she was being fannish.

Masque: Rotsler's somewhat erratic but more often brilliant zine of the late 40s

that combined not only Rotsler's talents but those of writer-friends like Gerald C. FitzGerald and artist-friends like Russ Manning plus generous helpings of the best of the Insurgents at their height: Burbee, Laney, Condra, etc. :: That seems to be ten, and the list doesn't satisfy me; I'm sure I'll think of two or three tomorrow that I've missed, and slap my forehead. The trouble is that there've been many, many really good fanzines but extremely few near-perfect ones like Hyphen or Inside. If I were to list candidates that came to mind and were reluctantly discarded, I'd have to say Shangri-L'Affaires (whether under Burbee or the various combines of the late 50s, it was often brilliant but always sloppy in both editing and appearance), Vampire (Joe Kennedy's zine was always very pleasant but never really hit the heights), Xero (just a bit too erratic in quality and layout), Habakkuk (same comment), Fantasy Magazine (I was tempted to list it both because it was really good and because its light shone so strongly in the 30s, but ultimately decided not to include historical values in my judgments), Confusion, Spacewarp, Le Zombie, The Acolyte, Diablerie, Horizons, Yandro, Cry, Orion, Eye, Bem, Cosmag/Science Fiction Digest, The Fanscient, Vorpal Glass..etc. etc. ad infinitum, just about. Yes, and add Australian SF Review to that latter list and the current Psychotic, and... Enough. I'll be interested to see what results you finally get. Me, I've been reading fanzines for 20 years, and collecting old ones almost as long; and though I have a decent respect for my own taste, I couldn't call my own list definitive even to myself. (35 Pierrepont St. Brooklyn, New York, 11201)

WILLIAM ATHELING: In "Trilogy as Trinity" I overlooked a couple of very minor but possibly interesting points about "Black Easter" which might be worth mentioning. Though it is true that the novel is not science fiction, the names of all the white magicians in the book are derived from those of s-f writers, editors and critics (the sketch of me is particularly unflattering, I feel). Several readers have already detected this, but some of the names are likely to be unfamiliar to Americans; for example, Carelli (after whom the hero is named) has published only in Italy; Bonfiglioli was the editor of the now defunct British s-f magazine Impulse, before Harry Harrison; Monteith is an editor (and director of Faber and Faber. What all this is intended to convey I don't know, except that the author needed a flock of names and thumbnail characterizations in a hurry and hence used some already familiar to him. On the other hand, the name of the black magician comes from a still-popular American novel of the early 1900's, "The Damnation of Thern Ware", and the reason for this, although again very minor, should also be pretty obvious. :: I have an excellent review of "Black Easter" from Chip Delany for the November Amazing. I am hoping to get reviews into print there within three months of the books' publication dates -- maybe the first time this has ever been attempted in a s-f magazine. While I understand the problems involved, I still think it ridiculous that Analog is still reviewing 1967 books in its June 1969 issue, when very few readers could possibly buy the books being reviewed. :: The book review editorship has also given me a new item for your sottisier: SaM has characterized my review of "Seekers of Tomorrow" as "the hydrophobic ravings of a mad dog." Though I have felt for some time that there was something tantalizingly familiar about SaM's polemical style, this remark finally tipped me off: it is the rhetoric of the Soviet Writers' Union of the Stalin era denouncing a colleague for ideological impurity. :: I am delighted to have Warhoon back. (New York)

JOHN W CAMPBELL Jr on Wrhn 22: Walter Breen's discussion of psi and psychopathy has some definite, but not very well braced, postulates; most of his "evidence" comes from quoting one story or another. :: All professional authors of fiction are professional liars, who's business is making their lies plausible and convincing. That's what "writing good fiction" means. Therefore good fiction does not constitute very useful evidence of any propositon. :: Now most of the arguments made against "primitive psi" in Breen's discussion apply equally to intelligence. Misused intelligence is also a terrible thing; a highly intelligent psychopath is exceedingly dangerout -- only the stupid ones are readily spotted and soon stopped. :: This proves

intelligence is destructive...? :: Presumably, memory is not a psi function. (Maybe it is; we certainly don't understand it very well!) But eidetic memory is a very rare phenomenon -- usually found in children, and idiot savants or the "Mr. Memory" types who've memorized vast quantities of data, can repeat it on demand, and don't know what to do with it. Like a library, they're full of neatly cataloged little cabinets containing an immense amount of data -- and that doesn't make the New York Public Library, or the Library of Congress either wise or intelligent. :: Usually the requirement for the use of a vast potential is control. So we have hydrogen fusion engines called H-bombs -- but no H-fusion power plants. :: Wise selectivity seems to be the problem in usefully applied psi. Given a radio receiver that can pick up everything from the super-long-wave Navy transmissions on 12 KC to the UHF TV stations, but no tuning mechanism, you could make damn little use of it. Of course it would permit you to determine when you came near a powerful transmitter, by the way some of the chaotic pinputs overrode all others, which might be of some use. :: But the easy way, the lazy way, of handling that problem would be to shut off the noisy thing, and get along without it. Or at least cut down the sensitivity to a point that nothing but the immediate-local 500-KW blaster stations came through as a murmur. :: The long, slow, difficult, and nerve-racking method would be to develop a tuning system whereby you could listen to one 250 watt broadcast station in South Africa, while none of the 50 KW stations in your neighborhood drowned it out, or even came through the tuner at all. :: Very primitive organisms developed light-sensitive spots, to distinguish day from night; it took a lot of evolution to go from that to a functional eye that not only sensed light, but could recognize images. :: In a sense, light-sensing is a very primitive thing. But that doesn't mean that human eyes -- which are light-sensing devices too, of course -- are very primitive. :: I think the problem is that we now have a psi-sensing organ, called "a brain", but haven't yet succeeded in evolving an adequate equivalent to the optic and auditory centers. The eye, without the analytical mechanisms of the optic center, wouldn't be very useful; an ear, without an auditory center, would be equally limited. :: But there's no evidence at all that psi is solely a primitive function. A horse can kick; a man can strike with his fist. This shows they're basically equal? But the horse can't sew, solder an electronic circuit, or open a simple gate latch. :: Those things call for a far finer control of the same, fundamental, primitive thing -- mechanical force. (New York)

RAY NELSON: I greatly enjoyed Walter Breen's analysis of the recurring themes in the work of Philip K Dick. My own feeling about these themes is that Phil chose them in the first place because he thought they were important, and he repeats them because he still thinks so, and because there is still more to say on them. :: There are other recurring themes in Phil's work, however, which Walter may have missed. The one that first comes to mind is the use of two heros, one a little guy, an average Joe "like you and me", and another who is some sort of superman or demi-god (or even God in person). The basic movement of the plot is the elevation of the average Joe to the level of the superman, so that somehow the actions of the average Joe become important to the superman. The superman need not be a hero. He can even be a villian, but the climax of the story hinges on the moment when the little guy somehow reaches the big guy's level. The mythical archetype behind his basic plot is that of Prometheus, the enemy of the Gods. :: It says in the Bible that no man can look on the face of God and live, yet Phil's work, it seems to me, is an attempt to look on the face of God. Phil himself is the little guy and God is the big one, and the more recent the story, the more clearly is this intent spelled out. It is most clearly shown, I think, in his short story, "Faith of our Fathers", in "Dangerous Visions". The dangerous vision is this... God, the Monster, the ghastly image of the ophite gnostics.

Certainly the world is a battleground of forces beyond human control. Because God is a monster, and if there is a devil, the devil is another monster.

Certainly reality is a thin, sometimes transparent skin over a seething chaos of psychotic horror. Because God is a monster, and thus the universe is like the well-

known "Torture Garden", beautiful only if viewed superficially, filled with torture and agony if viewed more closely.

Certainly in such a universe one must cling to integrity in adversity. Such integrity is the only good possible, if God is a monster.

Certainly in such a universe humans and robots are hard to tell apart, since anyone who is not aware of the monsterous nature of God must be something like a robot in his unthinking blind obedience.

Certainly there must appear a duality between true and false creators. Every human who takes it upon himself to create is an enemy or at least a rival of the monster God, stealing God's power of creation for himself. Only hacks can be "righteous."

Certainly an obsession with suicide is not to be wondered at in a universe where God is a monster.

Certainly political conflicts must all reduce themselves to a struggle between the ins and the outs, if God is a monster. Man's real enemy is too powerful to attack, so we have no choice but to vent our frustrations by quarreling among ourselves.

Certainly time must be "out of joint" if God is a monster. What isn't?

Certainly, if God is a monster, psychotic states must be the organism's refuge from the vision of the universe as it really is. (This reminds me of what a junkie girlfriend I used to have once told me. "It isn't what I'm taking that will kill me. It's what I know.")

Thus Walter Breen's view of Phillip K Dick's work is more penetrating than most, but fails to see what I feel is the underlying basic theme of all Phil's writing. :: Phil keeps writing this because, I think, he believes it. He is trying to warn us. :: And what.. and what if he just happens to be right? (333 Ramona Ave, El Cerrito, Calif)

CARL BRANDON: This issue was quite up to the excellence of former years. I'm very happy that you're still able to persuade people like Robert Lowndes, Walt Willis, James Blish and Walt Breen to write for you -- especially Breen, since he has been one of my favourite fan writers ever since I first discovered his name in (I believe) an issue of Habakkuk some five or six years ago, and since I've seen almost nothing by him in the last couple of years. :: The top ten fanzines:

Quandry: Lee Hoffman. For consistent high quality, literate writing and intelligent humor as well as for a distinct, attractive personality.

Habakkuk: Bill Donaho. For quality of written material as well as a sensible approach to a wide range of subjects.

Skyhook: Redd Boggs. For being the best fanzine of sf criticism I have ever seen, and also for being intelligent, amusing and very professional in the best sense.

Lighthouse: Terry Carr. This is also chosen for being professional, both in a appearance and contents, as well as for still retaining a very noticeable personal touch.

Void: Ted White, Pete Graham, Terry Carr, Walter Breen, Greg Genford and a host of others. For being the best Quandry-like fanzine published since Quandry, but also for being distinctly and excellently itself.

Warhoon: Richard Bergeron. For a pleasant layout and for its intelligent, literate discussions of both sf and of other subjects.

Hyphen: Walt Willis. For its consistently high quality of humour, writing and illustrations, but foremost for being so intensely and captivatingly an exponent of the irresistable Willis personality.

Horizons: Harry Warner. For keeping a quality over more than 100 issues which is extremely rare in any fanzine, for being interesting, sensible and amusing, and for being unpretentously and captivatingly itself.

Fanac: Ron Ellik, Terry Carr, Walter Breen. For being timely, interesting, funny, well written and intelligent, as well as for being the only news fanzine I know of that stands rereading after several years.

Inside & Science Fiction Advertiser: Ron Smith. For being extremely well edited and produced and for publishing high quality writing ranging from serious debates to elaborate irony. (Norrskogsvägen 8, 112 64 Stockholm, Sweden.)

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CONTENTS

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REFLECTIONS ON DANGEROUS VISIONS - Continuation: doesn't quite say the story was written while high on LSD, and it isn't a necessary fact anyway for appreciation of the story. For me it was the second A story in the book, and a long time a-coming (pg175).

Phil's novels are built up of thin layers of the arcane and the mundane, neatly stacked so that their total result is a complexity, an ambiguity, and a startling juxtaposition of diverse but compelling elements. But too often his short stories have represented only single layers left standing alone, shorn of the complex interrelationships found in the novels. (Perhaps this is too personal an analogy, but I think of his constructs -- his novels -- as thick wedges of mica, made opaque -- and challenging -- by their density; his short stories too often seem to be thin, transparent pieces of that mica, peeled free. The very way in which Phil builds novels out of short stories lends substance to this analogy: contrast "The Days of Perky Pat" (Amazing, Dec '63) with the novel into which it grew: "The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch".)

"Faith of Our Fathers" is an exception. It is short, but quite as dense as Dick's best novels. The density lies in part in Phil's delightful sleight-of-hand: he presumes a future outrageous on its surface (in the end, the Chinese Communists have won the world; the protagonist lives in Hanoi), peoples it with totally human, striving individuals all playing their own games against each other, and then hits us with the $64.00 question: if everyone is being drugged with hallucinigens daily, why does an antidote provide at least twelve <u>different</u> underlying realities?

"Here's Phil Dick questioning reality again," you might easily say -- and with some truth. But it's a novel (if not 'dangerous') idea, and Phil carries it cleanly and smoothly to its ultimate answer: what if reality is just an aspect of God?

"Faith of Our Fathers" is not Christian in its theology, and it escapes the unhappy fate of all the other anti-God stories in the book. Phil Dick's "God" is bone-chillingly more real than the Christian boogey-man. (Budrys, in reviewing the story, says that Dick "makes sense only to himself," but all that appears to mean is that Disk made no sense to Budrys. The point of the story seemed clear enough to me; maybe Ayjay and I are on different sides of the Generation Gap or something.) --TEW

(Concluded next issue)

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THE BLOWN MIND ON FILM - Conclusion: indeed to Herakleitos's formula "The Way Up and the Way Down are one and the same." Today we'd say "the Way In and the Way Out", but translate it as you will, the meaning is cognate to the Hermetic Axiom, <u>As above, so below</u>, the fundamental proposition of the Western Esoteric Tradition -- being rediscovered by scientists today in some such form as that the universe consists of a number of similar principles, correspondences and structural or processual resemblances operating similarly at different levels.

I salute Clarke and Kubrick for creating, then, what must be called the first genuinely esoteric or occultist film so far put across to the public. Doubtless like all major occult works of the past few thousand years, it will be misunderstood by the uninitiate, and either viewed puzzledly, admired for the wrong reasons, or laughed at again for the wrong reasons. But at least a few in the meantime may have learned some of the truth from exposure to it in such a shattering manner. --WB