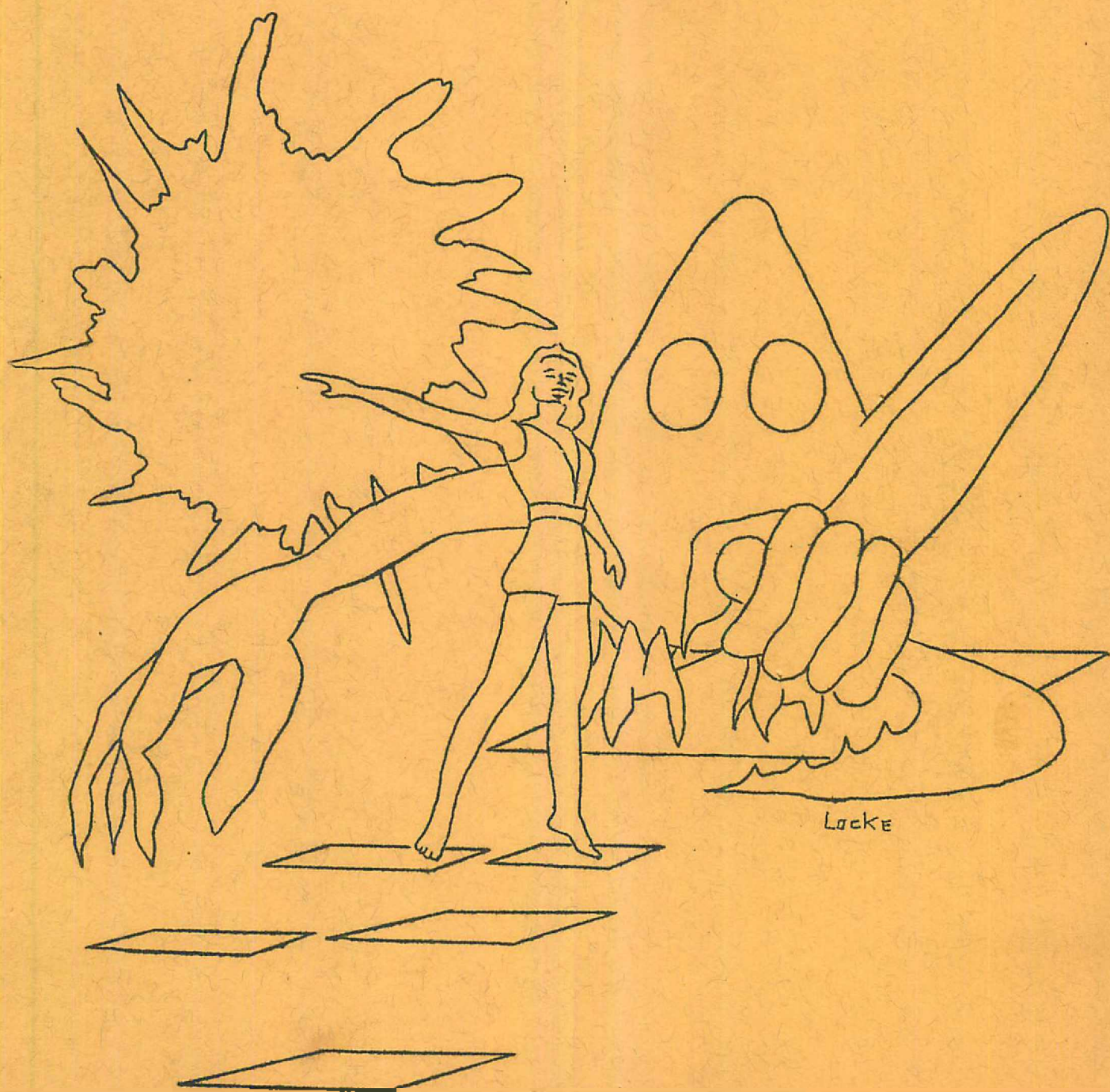


# yandro

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## VOLUME XII NUMBER 7

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This issue is late. So sue us.  
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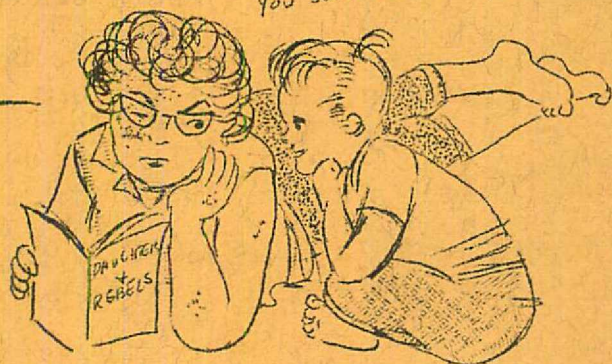
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All sorts of address changes for Richard O. Mann:

July 20 to Aug. 16 - c/o Mrs. J. M. Petersen, 12183 So. 1700 West,  
Riverton, Utah 84047

Aug. 17 to Sept. 25 - c/o Major Edward O. Mann, 46th. Bomb Squadron,  
Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota

Sept. 26 to June ? - Bryan Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing,  
Michigan  
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"Gee, Mama,  
You sure look funny!"



Everyone who ever got out of bed on the wrong side now and then is more than familiar with the phrase: "Just one of those days." But in our case it seems to have been "just one of those months" -- still is. It shows no signs of letting up.

Firstly, for our Down-Under, South American and Antarctic friends, it's been hot here-- not for mere days but for weeks. And in the jolly old

Midwestern U.S. it is also swelteringly humid. Several years ago I was informed the climate in southern Siberia is nearly identical.... the Siberians have my sympathy in the summer, too.

Then I got poison ivy. I'm pretty allergic to the stuff, but for the past several years I've been skating by with only random patches here and there on ankles or fingers. (I'm one of these persons who doesn't need to touch the stuff -- the breeze wafts the oil onto me from miles away, or something.) But this year it kept persisting and creeping up, and then I woke up a little over a week ago with one eye nearly swollen shut. And itching. This brought a halt to stencil cutting, mimeographing, reading, gardening, letter writing -- everything but the urge to scratch.

I rushed to my doctor, who gave me a long lecture on why someone as sensitive as myself should take immunization shots in the spring. I muttered something noncommittal while knotting my fingers to keep from digging at the devils under my skin, gratefully pocketed the prescription and rushed to the druggist to obtain this panacea.

Eventually it worked, although I still look, to say the least, blotchy. And the instructions were among the most fascinating medical directions I've ever encountered. It was the usual beginning heavy dosage, then gradually tapering off into nothing by the sixth or seventh day. This I understand -- it was the emphasis on whether before or after meals as the time for ingesting the tablets that puzzled me.

Well, and as I walked on down the Yellow Brick Road....

I began mimeographing this issue of Yandro. And I promptly ran out of ink. This was doubly annoying because we had ink on order, and were short of cash so that rushing forty miles minimum to purchase some from a local store would bite into picnic supplies. So there was nothing to do but push stencils and stuff aside and turn to other things, such as trying out my pressure cooker in an attempt to preserve some vegetables.

This was a gamble, because the last time I tried to can anything, last fall, something went very very wrong and the lid of the canner was



for all practical purposes welded to the bottom section of the canner. Buck sweated over it for several days, trying to separate the two, and then the local dealers of that brand of aluminum ware had a crack at the thing. They tried several types of solvent, gasoline and a crowbar, unsuccessfully. Finally we shipped the whole thing back the manufacturer (and went through a number of mountinglly irate letters trying to get things straight with a numskull in the front office). After much delay, we finally got the thing back, with a new lid. I don't know how they got the old one off -- dynamite, possibly.

So, in such a situation fraught with menaces of here-we-go-again, I prepared some pints of corn (pints of corn were what did the foul deed last time -- jump in with both feet, I always say, mm Hmm) and made the plunge.

No trouble at all, so I thought the spell was broken.

Until I started running short of paper while running this. It's still going to be a race down to the wire, but perhaps if I mumble the proper incantations, all will go well.

And among other things, we probably have a local reputation as brawlers now, for while that ivy was raging, I looked remarkably like someone had blacked my eye and knocked me down. The surreptitious stares in supermarkets and whatnot were really funny.

Buck got an employee's discount on a desk "weather station", ~~or~~ some such brand name: thermometer, barometer, and hygrometer. Now I no longer have to function as a living weather gauge. My sinuses are very sensitive to pressure and humidity, and I'm usually able to tell when one or the other is extreme. But of course, I don't have dials.

Now I'll know how bad to feel.

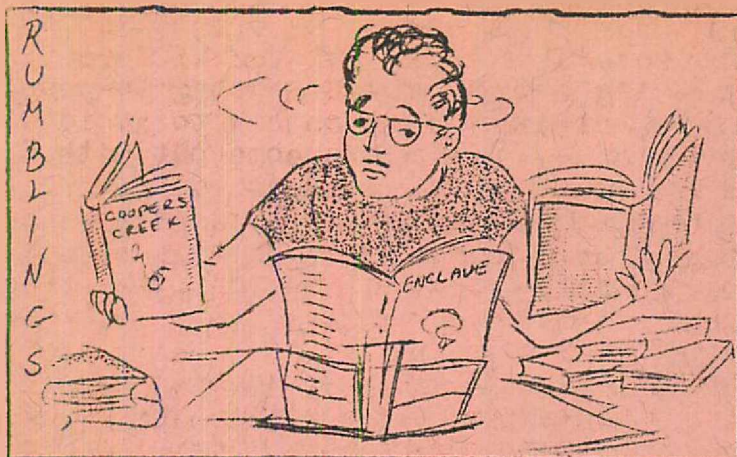
I am a naive sort. I had been wondering about the Kennedy half dollar -- curious why I hadn't seen any. Perhaps they were slow trickling into this backwoods area. When I received one in change at a local store, I saved it for Buck. He pounced on it with delight, saying he'd been afraid they'd all been snapped up by collectors. I had assumed when they issued a half dollar that this would be the new U.S. half dollar and pretty soon they'd all be this sort, with occasional interspersing of old Liberty and Franklin halves. Just don't understand coins, apparently.

Canadian fan Derek Nelson stopped by for a visit this week, too -- and this was one thing that at least made up for all the other things going wrong. He drove in on a blue Honda, much to Bruce's delight (we had to keep a sharp eye on him to prevent joy riding, "just pretend" style).

We spent an enjoyable evening discussing politics, US and Canadian, history, US and Canadian, banks and coinage.....etc. Nelson describes himself as anti-American and pro-American at the same time, which is better than being completely against the usually bewildered American tourist. I get the impression a great number of American tourists feel like the millionaire who thought he was being kind in donating a fiver to a visiting relation, only to hear himself bitterly berated for being "patronizing and a snob".

Maybe next year we'll get to do some more donating... for this year, we make do with homegrown humidity.

JWC



I don't know if it will look that way or not, but this was a terribly mixed-up issue. One of the results is that the promised Klein and Ellik letters aren't included. (Next time I'll try and pay attention to what I'm doing. Of course, if we run Terry Carr's column next time, we may not have room for anything else.)

We got enough response on the Vance essay so that we will publish it, one of these days. We'll let you know price and publication date

when we establish them. It won't be for a few months, anyway.

Last issue I put in a last-minute notice saying that I was backing Cleveland for the '66 Worldcon again. News received at the Midwestcon made this seem a bit premature. Right now I don't even want to hear about the '66 Worldcon -- maybe next summer I'll decide who I favor. There isn't any hurry, and maybe by next summer things will have settled down.

I see I got a trifle over-emotional about John Boardman in the fanzine review column. (A liberal application of correction fluid may correct this before it sees print.) To be fair, John offered me a pre-publication apology when he learned that I had voted for Breen in FAPA. I rejected it. (That's the worst part of doing anything to favor Walter -- the sort of people who congratulate you for doing it.)

We had a fannish two weeks over my vacation this year. The first weekend we made the Midwestcon, the weekend of the 4th we were in Milwaukee visiting the DeWeeses and Grennells, and in the last week we spent an afternoon and evening with Bob Briney. (The last weekend I spent recuperating, but then on the 18th we drove down to Roachdale to see Joe Sanders.) Midwestcon was very small this year. We spent most of our time wandering around asking "What happened to the Thompsons? What happened to Marion? What happened to Rob Williams?" and so on. All the big name professional writers were either at their conference in Milford, Connecticut, or in Hollywood. The writers attending were renegade fan types like Tucker and Joe Hensley; a terribly undignified lot. Milwaukee was about the same as usual. This was the first time we'd been out to Grennell's place in the daylight, so I got to appreciate the grounds as well as the house. Dean took Gene DeWeese and I out target-shooting, using an Australian training rifle rechambered for .357 Magnum cartridges. I managed a perfect score: I missed the target every time. (I'm going to have to practice more....) Briney and I are both fakefan stamp collectors, so we spent most of our visit in looking over his collection and making trades. (Juanita was busy drooling over Bob's Fancy Expensive books -- he has the sort of library that I'd have if I could afford it, and since he doesn't publish a monthly fanzine, he can afford it.) We also drove over to the secondhand book store in Kokomo. This was the first time Bob had been there, and he provided the perfect description of the place: "Good Lord, it just keeps on going!" It's really a mammoth place. Bob almost didn't get to see it this time, either; after driving around in circles for half an hour or so I stopped and asked directions. For some reason -- subconscious sales resistance, possibly -- I can never find the blasted place.

Recent reading has been largely non-fiction. I got a copy of Deaths Of The Bravos, by John Myers Myers, in Kokomo. It isn't as good as I'd hoped, but it was certainly worth the 65¢ I paid. (It's an account of the western explorers, mountain men, Texas Rangers, etc.) Crest has published Jessica Mitford's American Way Of Death; a bargain at 75¢. I bought the Collier



edition of Harmer's High Cost Of Dying ~~some time back~~, but the Mitford book is much better. ~~It's the sort of thing you go around quoting to people.~~ (Not to mention including considerable practical advice on how to avoid getting stuck for an overpriced funeral.) Then Beacon has come out with E. M. Halliday's The Ignorant Armies, the account of the 1918 expedition in which American, British and French troops fought Communist Russian armies. The author points out that many Americans have never heard of this episode; I'd heard of it, but this is the first detailed description that I've seen. In one respect, the entire affair could have been a rehearsal for our more recent Bay of Pigs fiasco; it was certainly mismanaged to an equal extent, and it contains the same choices. Either it should never have been done at all, or it should have been allotted enough troops to give it a chance of success; the actual policies followed were the poorest ones possible. The fourth non-fiction book perused recently is The Consumer's Union Report On Wines & Spirits. This was also read more for entertainment than for information; I know what liquors I like, and most of them weren't listed in this report anyway. "Few brands of straight rye are sold today. . . The product commonly referred to as rye is generally a spirit blend." Which is a vicious circle; I've had blended whiskey palmed off on me as rye and if I hadn't known better it would have been enough to make me swear off the stuff for life. (Anyway, I don't drink all that much liquor; it costs too much, I don't get any particular "kick" out of it, and if a social event requires liquor to make it entertaining it isn't worth going to in the first place.) A slightly belated birthday present was Cooper's Creek, by Alan Moorehead; the account of an early Australian exploring party. Very good, as are all of Moorehead's books which I have read -- I have read, and own, 5 of his 16 books. An amusing note concerns the atrocious "primitive" paintings used on the dust jacket and frontispiece. I read all the way thru the book wondering why those things had been used and what sort of historical relationship they had to the story. Finally, in the "Note" at the back of the book, Moorehead thanks the artist for suggesting the idea for the book, "as well as for his permission to reproduce here some of his splendid paintings". I guess it's all right to pay off your friends with a little egoboo, even if it does make your book look a trifle odd.

I finally, and with much difficulty, ran down a copy of issue #5 of THE MAGAZINE OF HORROR (and I can visualize dozens of readers out there asking "Why?". Because I enjoy Lowndes' editing, and because I'm a collector, that's why.) Distribution is remarkably odd; it isn't available in either of the two large newsstands I visit, in Warsaw and Anderson, but it's carried by a little place in North Manchester; a small room tacked on to the side of a grocery. A couple of issues even showed up in Wabash. I had to give up and order Airmont's latest pb -- Day Of The Giants, by Lester Del Rey -- from Richard Witter. For some reason I've always liked this hoked-up bit of Norse mythology ever since it first appeared in the old FANTASTIC ADVENTURES as "When The World Tottered". Partly, I guess, because it's the only story which presents Loki sympathetically, and Loki always did have more appeal for me than the rest of the loutish Norse gods.

The perils of small cars: the paper recently printed a photo of a VW which had been washed into a St. Paul, Minnesota, storm drain by a flash flood, and recovered by a couple of skin divers in the Mississippi river. You won't see anything like that happening to a Buick.

Budrys mentioned that his article in this issue is doing double duty; it was written both for YANDRO and as a "training manual" for Playboy Press. (So if you want to cash in on those fancy checks they hand out up there, study this one.)

With luck, we might get the next issue out in two or three weeks, with all the material that was crowded out of this issue for one reason or another. With more luck, I might get my correspondence caught up. RSC



# I Dont Write Fanzine Reviews Any More

DICK LUPOFF

Has YANDRO turned into an NYF-type journal of advice to aspiring authors? I'll join the parade of people writing on this topic, although I don't really think any aspiring author will learn too much from this article. Maybe you'll find it entertaining, at least.

Oh, for the sake of YANDRO's aspiring author readership, let me introduce myself; the Old-Timey Fan readers know me already and can skip this paragraph. For somewhat over a year now I've been the editor of Canaver-al Press. CP issues hardbound editions of the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs; at least it has for the past three years. Right now we're expanding to take in other (and living) authors. At least, that's our hope. Frankly, things are Tough. We have found out from bitter experience what we knew all along anyhow, but had no power to control: that when a book is available in two editions, one selling for \$3.50 and the other selling for 40¢ or 50¢, most people will buy the cheap edition. I hope CP doesn't wind up in the bankruptcy courts, but those paperbacks make things Tough.



All of which leads to the first lesson of book editing, especially hardbound book editing: when you buy a property, see to it that you control the property. You don't have to own subsidiary rights, but you must control them to make sure that the author doesn't sell 'em out from under you and leave you sitting with a high-priced edition while everyone buys the pb.

Strange things can happen to an editor. This past spring, for instance, I had planned to publish two collections of Burroughs novelets. One was to be called "BEYOND THE FARTHEST STAR and other Science Fiction Stories." Call this BFS for short. The other was to be called TALES OF THREE PLANETS.

BFS was to contain the following stories:

"Beyond the Farthest Star" (a novelet from a pre-war Blue Book)

"Tangor Returns" (unpublished sequel to the preceding story)

"The Resurrection of Jimber-Jaw" (from a pre-war Argosy)



"The Scientists Revolt" (from the second issue of Fantastic Adventures)

T3P was to contain:

"John Carter and the Giant Men of Mars" (from an old Amazing)  
"Skeleton Men of Jupiter" (ditto)  
"The Wizard of Venus" (unpublished novelette)

Each book would also contain a short introduction by (blush) myself. There was only one real problem, and that was the story "The Scientists Revolt". And there were two things wrong with TSR. First was that it is a terrible, terrible story. I know some readers have a low regard for all of Burroughs, but believe me, this is incredibly bad even if you're a Burroughs fan.



The second thing wrong with TSR is that Burroughs didn't write it. Ray Palmer did. Well, that's not quite fair. In 1922 Burroughs wrote a terrible detective story called "Beware" which he was unable to sell to anybody. Clever editors! In 1938 Palmer needed a Burroughs story fast, and all ERB had on hand was "Beware", which was not SF. Palmer took it anyhow, revised it to give it a slight stinal gloss, and thus TSR.

My choice, then, was between the original version, which was (1) rotten and (2) not SF; and the published version which was (1) still rotten and (2) not authentic Burroughs. I leaned unhappily toward the "Beware" version.

Then Ian Ballantine entered the picture. He has paperback rights to many of Canaveral's ERB books, including the two Mars novelettes planned to T3P. Oh, I should mention that "Skeleton Men of Jupiter" is a Martian story. Nemmine why, it just is. He does not (or at least did not then, and to my knowledge still does not) have rights to WoV; Ace had published Burroughs' four Venus novels, and would presumably get WoV if/when pb rights were granted.

So TALES OF THREE PLANETS would be a distinct embarrassment for Ian.

He asked us if we could drop the Venus story from T3P. It was too good to leave unpublished, so I suggested that we could put it into BFS, and drop that problem story, "Beware"/"The Scientists Revolt" altogether. We did just that, and changed the name of the book BEYOND THE FARTHEST STAR etc., to TALES OF THREE PLANETS. Now Ace has published BFS but not the other two stories from the book -- "Jimber-Jaw" and "Wizard".

The book that had been planned as TALES OF THREE PLANETS became JOHN CARTER OF MARS, but it was some 20,000 words short of its planned length. Ballantine had an idea. "Why don't you --" nodding to Jack Biblo and Jack Tannen, the owners of Canaveral Press, "have your editor write a 20,000 word introduction?"

"Marvelous," replied Jack and Jack. Their editor sat in a stunned condition. You must understand, gentle reader and aspiring author,



that the editor of Canaveral Press works full-time for a computer-manufacturer editing technical manuals, and is editor of Canaveral Press during lunch hours, evenings, weekends and holidays. He could write 20,000 words but he did not know when.

Some months later the introduction was completed. It ran to 30,000 words. The publishers of Canaveral Press were pleased with it, but felt that it would overpower the book. Could it be cut to say, 5,000 words?

No.

10,000?

It could be cut to 25,000 with ease, to the originally specified 20,000 with difficulty, but no farther.

Could the editor then write a wholly new introduction, of 3,000 to 5,000 words?

He could, but then the book would be rather slim. Hmmm, this was a problem. The secretary of Canaveral Press (she enters the story here only) had a clever suggestion to offer: Publish a slim book.

We checked the sales records of earlier CP books and found that there was no connection between thickness and sales, and so JOHN CARTER OF MARS is now in production as a slimmer book. Still not real skinny. It should be over 200 pages, but it's (shhh!) padded. Buy it to Find Out How.

Meanwhile, what are we going to do with that 30,000 word introduction? If we cannot cut it drastically, can we expand it to 60,000 words or more? We can. We will. We will then publish it as a book All Its Own this fall. We will become wealthy and/or famous. We will write the second 30,000 words of our book as soon as we finish doing a couple of Really Important Things, like writing articles for fanzines. Let us keep our Sense of Proportion, above all.

In the course of researching our book about Burroughs we have made a couple of interesting discoveries. One is that John Carter and his planet Barsoom were, shall we say, borrowed, from two books by a fellow named Edwin Lester Arnold. We brought this fact to the attention of our friend Don Willheim to the result that one of the books involved, LIEUT. GULLIVAR JONES, is shortly to have its first edition under the title GULLIVER OF MARS, with an introduction by (blush) myself. (By the way, those two spellings of Gulliv-e/a-r are strictly stet.)

We have also made some rather curious discoveries about the ancestry of our friend John Clayton, Lord Greystoke. But for heaven's sake, we must hold something back to induce you to Buy Our Book.

But to get on to other authors than Mr. Burroughs and Ourselluf....

The first non-ERB book we bought was SUBSPACE EXPLORERS by Doc Smith. It is an excellent book but had a couple of flaws, one being a weak opening segment and other being an unconscious self-plagiarism from one of the Lensman books. Doc swiftly rewrote the questioned sections, and the book is now completed for early fall publication (I hope by the Pacific). Doc is, in addition to being an absolute titan in the development of science fiction, a complete gentleman and one of the most pleasant associates with whom I have ever had the pleasure to work.

The second book was from Sprague de Camp. It is not finished yet, but again, Sprague has proved most co-operative and pleasant to work with. Ditto other authors with whom I've worked: James Blish, Norman L. Knight (yes!), Ed Ludwig.

I received a manuscript from John Rackham, and had to return it because by that time we were overstocked, and even then exchanged a couple of very pleasant letters with him. Other authors with whom I had rather fruitless correspondences—Avram Davidson, Poul Anderson, Isaac Asimov—were all very pleasant to deal with. And maybe some time....



But there was this one fellow, let's call him Thomas Burton Johnson, which is not his name but is close enough. He sent in a letter introducing himself as the author of some fifty-five paperback originals. Mostly sex novels, a few westerns. He was thinking of doing something Better and had written this very fine Burroughs-type SF novel, which he thought I might like to see.

It was about this future world in which there has been an atomic war, and civilization is wrecked, and these people are trying to rebuild civilization from the ruins. There is this hero, sort of a Tarzan-type, who is sent on a sort of Quest of various artifacts with which to rebuild the world.

It could be handled either as a single novel, or as the first of a long series. Should he send the manuscript?

Well, I wrote back and told him that I was glad he'd queried, but that I wished he'd queried sooner, because while the story sounded okay, the rationale of an atomic war was sort of overworked; couldn't he maybe do it by some other means, such as an alien blitzkrieg, for instance?

Back came a package.

It contained the manuscript and a cover letter. The letter took me violently to task. "You and every other New York editor, non-writing type, wants to get his dipsy-doodlers into my stuff," wrote Mr. Johnson. "None of them have made it yet and you're certainly not going to now."

"Listen, if you think the atomic war is overworked. I've been reading about alien blitzkriegs for thirty years. I think the first and best of them that I ever read was in Argosy around 1933..."

And on, and on, and on, letting me know in no uncertain terms that his creative masterpiece was not subject to my alteration, or even to his alteration at my request.

Now I have no wish to play Campbell and lay down a party line. But an editor has a duty, I think, to do more than pick and choose. He has a duty to his publisher and to his writers to work with the writers, trying to get them to make their works the best they can. I had written to several authors and asked for changes and they had made them.

When I told Ed Ludwig that I thought the happy ending to his book, THE WINE OF VIOLENCE, was contrived, and that I thought the book should be tragic, he replied that he wanted it to be tragic, but had felt constrained to put an arm-in-arm into the sunset ending on it to sell it. He would change it post-haste, and happily. Other authors welcome and are happy to discuss criticism...from editors and from readers in general.

But Mr. TBJ had put me one a spot.

What if his book turned out to be a masterpiece, but with a single severe flaw, the correction of which he even refused to discuss? Before reading the manuscript I asked Larry Shaw and Bob Shea, both more experienced editors than I, what they thought. They both said, "Reject it!"

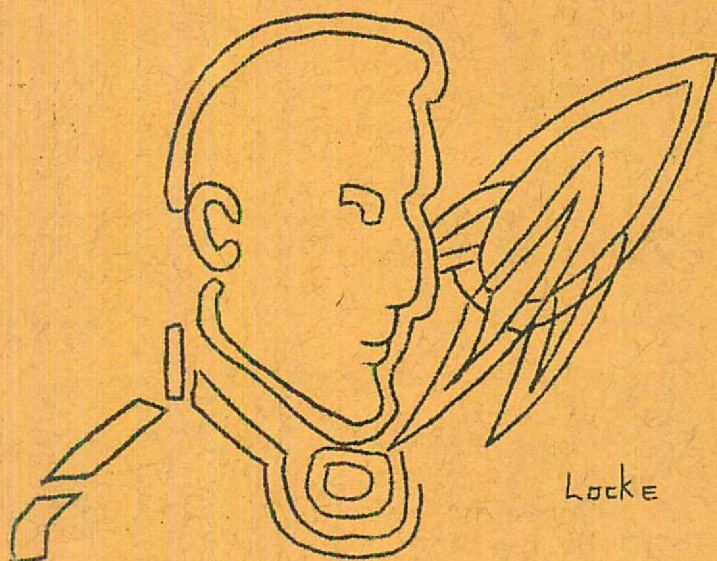
I was still uncertain when I started Johnson's manuscript, called something like "One Ray of Light in the Darkness," but before I'd got very far into it I relaxed.

It stinks.

There is a prologue which I absolutely forced myself to wade through, and then when I got to Chapter I I thought, "I'll forget the prologue and consider this the start of the book." It did not help at all.

Mr. Johnson's book is incredibly inept. The author cannot even construct an English-language sentence. He quotes from fragments of surviving documents -- The Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address -- and he misquotes them. His characters are insufferable bores.





Locke

His idea of a "plot" is to have a group of youths gather at the feet of a Wise Old Man while the W.O.M. sermonizes and catechizes them. If an answer is wrong, the youth is sent away, with an injunction to "Stick around, I may use you for something else."

Presumably, at the end of this selection process there will remain only Our Hero and the Wise Old Man, and the W.O.M. will then send O.H. on his Quest, and the real story begins. But long before reaching that point I gave up and returned the manuscript to the author.

I'm afraid that my letter of rejection was less gentle than it would have been to another author.

Then there was the lady who wrote in telling me that she had written six novels, and I could have any of them that I wanted. I didn't want any of them. Maybe they were good, though. They just weren't stf. But can you imagine someone writing all those books and never marketing one?

And I suppose every publisher in the world receives slender volumes of sensitive verse from maiden ladies in the midwest and/or California. I don't even read 'em any more. Err, to tell the truth, I never did.

Then there was the creator of the most famous continuity hero in the history of fiction, who got shafted out of his rights and is to this day a slave on the payroll of the publisher who took his creation. You know whom I mean?

He wrote and suggested that Canaveral Press subsidize him so he could quit his job writing for that publisher. Then he would sit home and write a new series of continuity-hero novels for us that would make him famous anew and rich to boot. I wrote back and suggested that he keep his job, and send me three chapters and an outline of the first book of his proposed new series, and if that looked good we would give him an advance and if the book was successful we would consider a second, and so on.

Back came a box of manuscripts half a foot high.

There were screen treatments and scripts for unmarketable comic strips ("Angela, She Came From Heaven") and unmarketable short stories and outlines and fragments. But no outline-and-three-chapters, or at least I haven't been able to find such in that treasure chest.

But I still have it, and if the author doesn't demand it back immediately I am going to go through it all, really, Real Soon Now. Maybe right after I finish my book. Maybe there will be something useable. Maybe there will even be three chapters and an outline.

The other day I got my very first "Dear Sir: Do you think I should try to become a professional writer when I am older" letter. I guess this means that I have arrived.

My reply to the youngster was: "Of course. Everyone should."

-----  
I remember the old days in Galilee, when even a carpenter's kid could grow up to be Jesus Christ.

.....Dean McLaughlin

-----  
I hear the Clevation Committee has asked Anse Hatfield to be chairman...



# NOTES ON STORYTELLING

by

algis budrys

The previous discussion in these pages concerned itself with the original paperback suspense novel as it was constituted some five years ago. Since then, of course, the James Bond story has heavily influenced the field, to the extent that narrative detail--what kind of fast car pursues the villain; who tailored the hero's impeccable evening attire; which room of the most exotic casino in the world is stained with the good friend's blood--has become more important. More important with it has become the Fu Manchu touch--the introduction of not-quite-believable technology, only a hairline past the common technology of the day (or a baroque distortion of present technology, such as Dr. No's armored-car flamethrowing dragon or the naval periscope from the Istanbul sewers to the baseboard mousehole in the Soviet embassy). Added to these are Bond's Simon Templar personality slightly cut with essence of Spillane, as if the scientist who bred the Saint's giant ants had gotten Sebastian Tombs and Hoppy Uniatz partway melded in a rosewood matter transmitter. The result has its roots in all these sources, as do Matt Helm and the earlier Shell Scott, and the whole school can be related back through Sax Rohmer and Leslie Charteris--and Eric Ambler, and Geoffrey Household's Rogue Male--to John Buchan, E.W. Hornung's Raffles, and even the antiscientific, misogynistic fiddling viper of Baker Street, who got the warms only for fallen women. But all that is only persiflage; within actually narrow limits, the plots and their twists remain much the same; whether the current preference is for lemon twist or a mint garnish, the basic mixture is always nearly as before.

I still cannot tell you why, except that this is the way the readers want it--and, perhaps because of a universal human attribute, is the way writers feel it best. It therefore behooves would-be commercial writers to be knowledgeably aware of it.

Understand me, now; we are neither discussing nor excluding art. We are discussing a particular kind of literary creativity called storytelling, which constitutes the major bulk of day-to-day activity among working writers. This form of activity may or





may not be intended primarily to make money. Certainly the majority of even highly-paid writers would not write if there was no some sort of continual satisfaction in it for them. Some are compulsive writers; some consider systematic hackwork an art form in itself, perhaps the same sort of art that popsicle stick skyscraper models might be. Some genuinely believe there is no higher literary art, and that such prose expositors as are called "literary artists" by the book reviews are in fact emotionally-overwrought postadolescents writing for the grandest school bulletin of them all. Some, especially in recent years with the model of Graham Greene before them, take the commercial story for the base on which to construct "genuine" novels which might be called paracommercial stories... The range of motivations among writers is wide. The public, however, does not seem to care a fig; writers are constantly discovering that their most devoted readers do not buy the finished product for any of the reasons that created it. And, of course, it is the "literary artists" who frequently make more money with one book than an average-good, medium-popular, securely entrenched storyteller can earn in a lifetime's good living. There is nothing more interesting, to a man who has been called a shameless hack more than once or twice, than the sight of a literary artist assiduously cashing in on his one slim book with personal appearances on TV, autographing parties, lecture tours, ephemeral magazine "featurettes" printed for the sake of his byline at high prices and, ultimately, the Hollywood scripting and story-consulting job, or the fiction editor's berth on some prestigious masthead.

Please understand me again--all I am saying is that some of the damndest things turn out to be commercial writing, for the damndest reasons, and no mere human being can presume to judge the Universe in which they occur. If, however, you reading this are interested in a systematic approach to the problem of writing for sale, then it is time, and past time, for me to abandon all this personally enjoyable commentary and proceed to the business of explaining how I believe it can be done, with some attention to why it should be done.

Original paperback novels are of course only one aspect of this whole artifact, and at this point we double back to the basic handful or bricks; the elements without which no piece of writing is a "story" by strict craft definition.

These are three. A story must have actors, the actors must have actions to perform, and these actions must occur on some stage. In the jargon of the trade, what we are talking about is characters, plot, and locale: John struck Henry in the arboretum.// With a mighty convulsion of his muscles, John lashed out. Henry, reeling under the impact of the flashing fist, fell into the ailanthus.// The blow was short, sharp, and immediate. John hardly seemed to have moved at all, but Henry lay sprawled against the yielding trunk, which bent gradually under his weight so that he slipped lower and lower, his limp hands trailing into the ferns.//

And so on, through greater and greater elaborations, variations in prose technique, scenic details, &c.// Struck, Henry reeled; sapling ailanthus yielded; Henry sprawled, and all this while John seemingly moveless stood. Why?//

And so we come to rationale; the reasons why John and Henry are the way they are; the reasons why John struck Henry; the reasons why they are where they are. I believe the accurate overall term for this is "story line," or alternatively "storyline," as distinguished from "plot" or, perhaps, as from "plotline." Some of these jargon distinctions are obscure, and/or vary from region to region; script writing



for example, has its own terminology using some of the same terms as well as others, and the terminology varies from East Coast to West Coast scripting, as well as from TV, radio, and motion picture writing. For our purposes here, there is a distinction between plot and storyline, plot being the pattern of action, storyline being the pattern of motivated action.

The rationale of character is called characterization. Who is John, what is he, that Henry should be struck by him? And who, and what, is Henry?

The rationale of plot is called plotting. Where is John now, what has led him here to strike Henry, and where shall he run to?

Plotting and characterization together are the simultaneous cause and result of motivation. Why is John such that he struck Henry? What purpose, what need, has slung Henry upon the insubstantial frame of the Tree of Heaven, and when John flees on his further pursuits, will Henry follow in tears or laughter, should Henry follow at all?

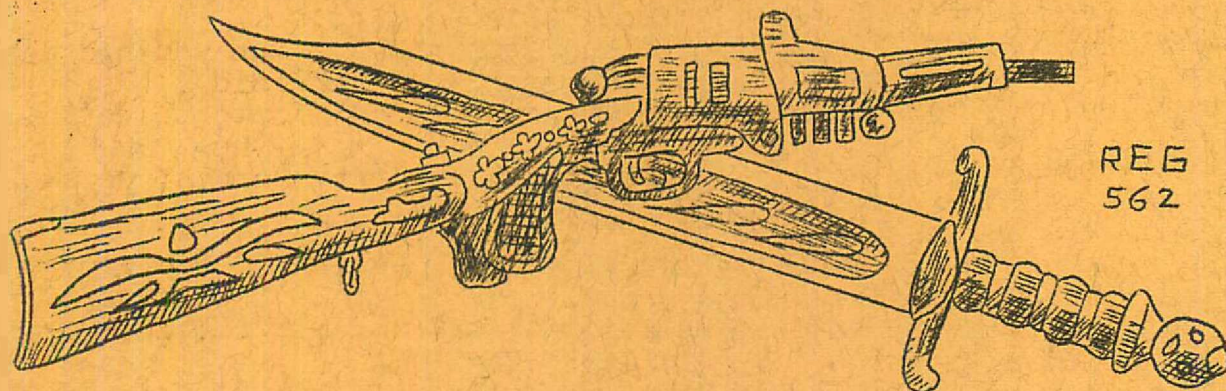
The rationale of setting, or locale, determines a story's "category." If John struck Henry in the Martian arboretum, we know what kind of story we have here; we know which markets will consider it for publication, and we know who will read it. In other words, incidentally, it is an organic part of storytelling, not mere peddlary, to have one's audience and market well in mind; without these things having been decided beforehand, a completed story is theoretically impossible.

Simple "John/struck/Henry/in/the arboretum" has stopped being an easily diagrammed structure of nearly independent segments. What we have now is a three-dimensional webwork with the beginnings of the multiple cross-connections and various but, ideally, balanced tensions on which the facades of the story will be hung. It is really still simple; at no stage does it become truly complicated; like the step-by-step illustrations in the instruction booklet for wiring a hi-fi component kit, the diagrams grow increasingly difficult to follow when looked at cold, or from the middle toward the far end, but in actual practice the kit is wired, the component usually functions, and most of the actual work is simple, in fact sometimes tediously so, and for the even moderately practiced hand, much of the work is automatic and the relationships are established un- or sub-consciously.

It is time now to talk about what is a "practiced hand" and thus to include the writers we all know who simply sit down at the typewriter, tap out a lead sentence, and then settle back in a sort of appreciative detachment, reading what they're writing as their fingers do the rest of the story seemingly out of thin air.

Well, a practiced hand is a writer who is past his first half-dozen or so sales in reasonably close succession. If making the first sale is traditionally, and correctly, known far and wide as a difficult enterprise, making the second, third and fourth is equally, though differently, difficult. There is such a thing as the one-story author--the writer who has somehow gotten hold of one story so unique that he is able to write and sell it despite a variety of personal incapacibilities which will subsequently prevent him from ever writing a saleable story again. There very definitely is such a thing as a writer who is so overcome with the various effects of his first sale that he subsequently renders himself incapable of continuing. And there are many writers who suffer from these conditions to some degree, so that they sell only at widely-separated intervals. It is a sad fact of life, discovered by all neophyte professionals, that one sale does not entitle a writer to full membership in the professional freemasonry. There are very few functional social barriers between the usual author





of a dozen published stories and the usual author of several hundred. But some professionals have very much taken to heart the fact that every season sees its flock of promising rookies, and its rookie-of-the-year, who may never be seen again after the first snowfall except as increasingly pathetic nuisances at parties.

This is not in fact an instance of snobbery, though of course some people may gladly seize the excuse to practice it on respectable and intelligent individuals who just don't happen to be the right color inside their heads. It is the professional's reaction to the would-be fellow craftsman who has never owned his tools or has pawned or lost them. There is a direct parallel for this behavior throughout the skilled trades generally; an auto mechanic is expected to bring his own kit, and to have it stocked with the appliances necessary to the job he has signed on for. Only one exception is made to this automatic—and nearly helpless—process of withdrawal from the "semi-pro," and that exception is made for the writer who has successfully, over the years, "let the story write itself." That is, to the apparently empty-handed mechanic in whose presence engines spring to life of their own accord.

This figure is a recognized phenomenon in professional writing. He is a distinct personality-type—actually, I can think of two, one in the great majority, just offhand—whose finished product is generally indistinguishable from that of the conscious craftsman, but who, either bolsterously or very quietly, expresses great contempt for discussions such as the one we are conducting right here. I am not referring to the literary figure who sneers at hacks—this is a horse of another type—but to the working, steadily-earning writer who simply has something in the back of his mind that automatically produces saleable stories popular with the same people who buy the stories of the conscious workers. I make no attempt to explain him. I suggest he may intuitively be going through precisely the same processes undergone by his equally rare polar opposite, the man who has to cover reams with notes and actual diagrams before he can turn to Page One of his manuscript. But this suggestion sounds like a cop-out to me. It may be valid, nevertheless; in either case, that sort of individual cannot be learned from, and does not need to learn. He has left this essay at some very early stage and is fulminating at the waste of space this piece represents. I wish him well; I envy him; and you and I must go on, because for us there is no royal road. It isn't enough to plot, characterize, set, and rationalize—not



ordinarily, though professional writers will limit themselves to these elements from time to time. Consider this passage:

John faced Henry in the arboretum. Here was the man who had despoiled his sister on nine planets and countless asteroids. He felt his massive chest heaving for breath. The muscles of his torso corded slowly into bulging bands of living steel. The bands writhed, and his arms flew up without his conscious will. There was the sound of work-hardened bone and cartilage on the gaming-room pallor of Henry's face. Henry lay entangled in the allanthus sapling, staring glassily up at him...

And now, let us try this:

Scene IV: Henry is discovered on the arboretum set. John steps from behind a fern.

JOHN: "Hole-Card Hank, you've despoiled my sister on nine planets and countless asteroids!"

John strikes Henry, who falls into a tree.

Despite such examples, there are uses for dialogue. As you know, some writers have developed this into so multifarious a device that they have been able to write successful novels using dialogue only:

"Hank! Hank, wait up, God damn you. Don't you move! No use runnin'. I'll get you."

"All right, Jack; so you've caught up with me. What about it?"

"Hank, you lousy bottom-dealing interplanetary bum, you done it to Sis on Mercury. You done it to her on Venus. Earth, Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune. You been to Pluto with her. You treated her like a dog. Now you've got her stashed out in this here arboreetum thing, here, and you're fixin' to do it again. You cut it out! You just cut it out, hear?"

"Same to you, square."

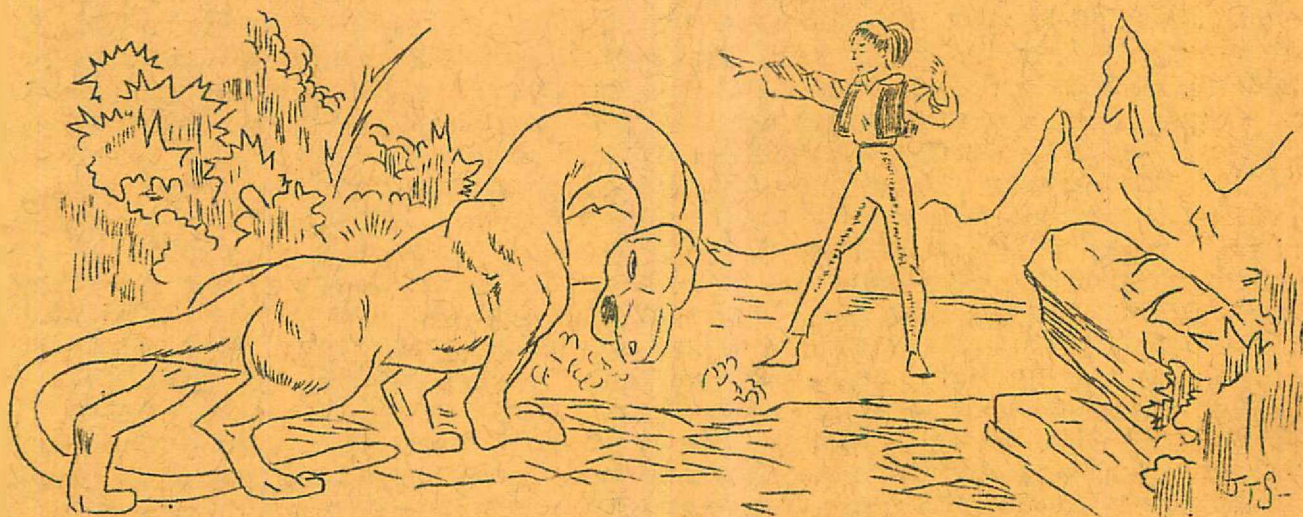
"Take that!"

"Ouch! God damn it."

"There. That'll fix ya. Now I guess I can go back home to Ma and satisfy her you're gonna do right by Sis."

"Wait! Aintcha gonna help me git out of this tree?"

But between the extremes of the writer who uses nothing but dialogue, and the equally rare but real bird who uses none at all, lies the area in which the writer of prose is in fact a playwright.





Oddly enough, I have never seen a manuscript by any writer, except the most conscious craftsman who has evolved his craftsmanship over many years, which did not betray an immediate awareness that prose dialogue is an artificial, working part of a conscious creation. In fact, the mark of the amateur is his artificial-sounding dialogue, as distinguished from the practiced hand's "real-sounding" dialogue which is actually performing even more work than the amateur's plainly is.

There are probably as many estimates of the proper balance between dialogue and narrative as there are writers. This characteristic estimate is normally one of the surest clues to the real authorship of pseudonymous pieces, along with sentence lengths and rhythms, which are, again, a sort of dialogue between writer and reader. But we are talking about an applicable standard here; one which the beginning writer can use until he is ready to modify it to his individual needs. And for those purposes, as good a guide as any is that characters and settings should be described in action and appearance whenever this would be more succinct than doing it in dialogue, and characters should speak those things which can be succinctly expressed in speech. Generally, it is pointless to include "I see you're wearing a brown sweater" in a speech between John and Henry. Generally, no useful purpose is served in narrating that John could see Henry was in the mood to sneer rather than admit to the reasonableness of John's position. And the handiest way to arrive at this running series of decisions is to visualize the characters on stage before an audience; to narrate what the set designer and director have done, and put in quotes what the dialogue director has done, alternating these passages in the order of their importance to the senses of the audience. The audience will see Henry's brown sweater before it hears John speak. It will turn its attention away from the visuals as the exchange between the two characters reaches a climax. It will return to the visual element of the tree as Henry impacts upon it, and the crash of broken branches will come to it an instant later.

You have all heard the good advice about speaking your dialogue aloud to yourself as you edit your copy, and about fully visualizing each scene as you describe it. This need for balancing speech, action, and setting, based on the storyline and characterization, is why this is good advice. Though you may find it easily possible to speak dialogue aloud within the outer silence of your mind.

It is also a good idea to remember that this is not, in truth, an actual play, and certainly not the last bad play you saw in the high school assembly hall; certain conventions of cramped stagecraft, such as the First Act maid who answers the 'phone and conveys the family history while incidentally telling the caller that Mom is out, may safely be discarded for somewhat less condensed alternate techniques.

However, it is also necessary to remember that the ideal play is fully and satisfactorily concluded at the precise instant the final curtain comes down. This goes by the name of "resolution", but in order to arrive at the resolution, certain prior conditions must have been met, some of them before the first word went down on paper.

It is necessary for you--if you are still with me--to have a satisfactory story plan. You must know what story you are going to write, why this story is more worth writing now than some other story, and how it is going to come out. If you know these things, and can keep them under control as you proceed, the right resolution will arrive properly, at the correct time. The number of specific know points in your plan will depend directly on how many complications you plan in the plot, and indirectly on the character and locale elements. The more complicated your characters, and the more characters you have, the

more people will have to be satisfactorily accounted-for at the moment of resolution. The nature of the general locale, the number of specific sets you are going to need, and their physical distribution, must in part be determined by your need to confine your resolution to an easily-seen locale. It is not vital necessary to know all these things before you sit down to write, of course, of few of us would ever write very much. But you had better have put yourself in the way of learning or determining them rather early in the game, or you will find yourself, like at least one nevertheless excellent and successful writer I knew, having to find valid reasons for killing half your characters before you can manage a resolution for the remainder.

Now, all this, like most things about writing for sale, can hardly help but sound more complicated than it really is. (There is, by the way, an excellent out-of-print book, called WRITING TO SELL, by Scott Meredith, which is worth the effort of being looked for or obtained through a dealer. Mr. Meredith is the agent for a great number of highly successful writers, and also offers a manuscript-reading and criticism service on a fee basis. Mr. Meredith is not my agent. WRITING TO SELL is the only valuable book on commercial writing I have ever read.) Parenthetical aside completed, I remind you that you have one great advantage over an intelligent ailanthus tree which might be reading this essay in earnest study. That is your shared humanity with your reader. What seems reasonable and attractive to you will seem the same to a great many other people. What excites you, what arouses your curiosity and draws you deeper into a story, will, if you transmit it, do the same for your reader. Furthermore, once you have arrived at even the faintest glimmering of even one element of what could be a good story; a character, one situation, one scrap of dialogue...almost anything which could subsequently prove to be a functional piece of a genuine story...your brain will begin searching for its significance and its relationship to other things it might know or dream, and your story will begin to snowball into motion. Your difficulty will not be in generating additional plot twists, characters, speeches, or settings. It will be in keeping the storyline from tangling itself in offshoots and false scents. A writer is his own first editor, and let us now go to meet an editor, from the inside.

Like any other reader, an editor can have only accidental insights into a given writer's motives or methods, and usually has no interest in them. He is concerned only with what can be found in the actual manuscript itself. If he is a senior editor, and his duties include maintaining good political relations with writers and keeping close contact with them, he may indeed have an abiding interest in their personalities, but even then he will close the door on that compartment of his mind when functioning as a reader of manuscripts. It is his job to determine whether or not a piece of prose is really a story, and once that has been decided, whether it is a satisfactory story. As the editor of a commercial publication, he will rarely think in terms of "good" or "bad", though he will lapse into this sloppy idiom when actually discussing the story. When thinking about it, he thinks in terms of "useful" and "useless", and his grasp of degrees within these opposing categories will be precise.

All right not--presupposing a commercial publication for a general audience--that is, presupposing ninety percent of all publications--what things the editor considers most useful will be these, and in this order:

If his is a category market, is the story in his category?



Does it compel his interest from beginning to end, engaging his attention immediately and resolving itself satisfactorily?

Why can't it be either bought immediately or bounced summarily?

This is the order of importance, and it is the last question, and the manner in which he arrives at useful solutions to it, that makes the difference between editing and working in an editorial shop. If stories were either good or bad, there would be a better excuse for the generally low scale of editorial pay. The fact is that most stories fall somewhere in between total uselessness and an acceptable degree of usefulness, and therefore much of an editor's time is spent in examining the story and testing it against an additional set of standards; asking of himself the same questions that the author should properly have asked of himself before considering the job done, or, even more preferably, before sitting down to commit the story to paper.

The basic standard definition of a useful story might well be:

A narrative, complete in itself, containing an immediate problem of importance to the reader, and culminating in a dramatic, valid solution to the problem through a continuous series of increasingly interesting steps.

This definition, we might note in passing, is nearly as applicable to nonfiction as it is to fiction, and translates easily whether your narrative is in verse, on stage, or on film. But it does require some further definition of individual terms.

"Complete in itself" simply means that the main title for your short story, novel, serialized novel, trilogy, tetralogy, or Five-Foot Shelf, should describe some one package which can be seen to have a beginning, middle, and end.

"An immediate problem" means both a personal problem and a problem which makes itself manifest early in the story, before the reader's initial interest has been lost. In fiction, by far the most common way of personally interesting the reader is to give him a protagonist he can strongly identify with, and then impose the personal problem on the protagonist. The protagonist can be a hero or a villain, but he has got to possess attributes which will connect with attributes the reader finds within himself and either wishes to see magnified or is afraid of, or both. One of the common cries about commercial fiction is that the writers always work to please the reader. This is both the concealed whole





truth and an obvious half truth. "Pleasing," in the phrase "pleasing to the reader," is properly defined as "possessing the quality of responding to pleas; to be in accord with the secret wishes of the suppliant irrespective of his expressed desires." In commercial fiction with villain protagonists, "pleasing" is a frequent antonym for "desireable."

"Culminating...through a continuous series of increasingly interesting steps" is usually accomplished by plotting the hero along a chain of increasingly dangerous and discouraging situations, each of which proves in the end to have represented one real step forward toward the "dramatic, valid solution to the problem." Drama does not have to be melodrama; it does have to be an onstage happening of manifest importance and proper intensity, in accordance with the storyline, at whose conclusion the previously stated problem is clearly solved or the villain is clearly defeated.

John, having followed Henry across the Solar System and through the hideous perils of the Martian wastes, finally intercepts him as the result of unremitting determination, good deduction as to his whereabouts, and advantageous use of John's inner resources.

His fist impacts on Henry's jaw, and Henry falls down and does not get up. In the next, and final scene, John's sister will see Henry for the bluff he was, and return with John to the bosom of their family. Or Ahab and the whale will meet at last, and the Pequod will go down, and only a coffin, and a man, will be left bobbing at the center of the fading ripples.

When an editor encounters one of the majority of stories that cannot be bought or bounced immediately, and which therefore must be thought about much more efficiently than any story at either of the extremes in this range, he cannot stop to go into motivations or other extraneous matters. The day is hurrying by; the retailer is waiting for the finished publication. The wholesaler is waiting for his bundles so he can throw them on his trucks. The national distributor's warehouse crew, circulation manager, comptroller, traffic manager and promotion director are waiting. The freight car is waiting at the printer's siding. The binding machinery is waiting. The presses are waiting. The engravers and typesetters are waiting...and every one of them is drawing pay while the editor ponders. In the case of a national publication with two million newsstand readers, a subscription list of half a million, four regional editions carrying a total of three





Full pages of advertising at thousands of dollars per page, each placed against a guarantee of audience and on-sale date, every ticking second is the further onset of disaster. Even for a pulp magazine damned near hand-printed on old butcher paper and produced in a total run of 35,000, the disaster is equally real to the publisher though the fallout radius will not be as great. Accordingly, the editor rapidly but methodically takes the story apart, searching for the absence of any of the vital elements and qualities defined above, or for weaknesses therein should they all be present. On his findings, he bases his decision to now bounce the story cold, bounce it with a note, bounce it with a letter, bounce it with a letter suggesting a revise at the author's own risk, accept it on the condition that certain specific revisions will be made, or accept it outright with the proviso that minor repairs will be made in the shop. Where revisions are made, they will be evaluated purely in terms of their usefulness, not in terms of the writer's feelings.

This is the professional writer's life, with all that it implies--the need for discipline, for an acute self-critical faculty, and as much of a tolerance as he can develop toward editorial foibles which may seem, or may even be, stupid. It is also the professional editor's life, with exactly the same implications and exactly the mirror-image of the heartache potential in changing another man's work. It is not, popular opinion or surface appearances to the contrary, a free, unfettered life lacking in care or the need for devoted courage. It is also not mechanical or otherwise crass, but of this I have never been able to convince anyone whose opinion was to the contrary. Nor is commercial writing necessarily the best and most valuable writing of all, though I have not had much luck with the partisans of that position, either.

And all this long, long while I have said nothing about the need to understand the language in which one writes, and the need to use and transmit its felicities on behalf of the story while avoiding or transforming its weaknesses. This faculty, like intelligence, is necessary to editor and writer alike, but I have come a fair way down a sorry path to discover that they can never be acquired or taught, and can be schooled only by those who have them and possessed their potential at birth.

-----  
If ladies from Los Angeles are Angelenas, are ladies from Las Vegas  
Veginas? .....Lewis Grant (naturally)  
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## EXCELSIOR

by Raymond F. Clancy

I climbed to the top of Everest,  
I sailed in a free balloon;  
I rode a kite in the days of Wright,  
And now I'm off to the moon!

-----  
Welcome thy neighbor to thy fallout shelter. He'll come in handy if you  
run out of food. ....Dean McLaughlin

# GRUMBLINGS

Dick Lupoff, 210 E. 73rd St., New York 21, N.Y.

Just a quick note that I was going to put on a postcard until I discovered that I'm all out of postcards; just as well, more room here:

(1) Alexei Panshin suggests that THE NIGHT SHAPES was a parody by James Blish of the Jungle Stories story; he also asserts that it has two oddly-matched halves. Both of these assertions are explained by the fact that THE NIGHT SHAPES was originally two stories, rather casually smeared together to make the book. And where did the two stories originally appear? Right, Jungle Stories. One ought really to do a little checking; one need not be an intimate of Mr. Blish to get this information (although he did tell me in the flesh), one need only read the fan press. It was all told in Shaggy a nissue or two back...by me.

(2) Mr. Panshin mentions P.J. Farmer's THE GREEN ODYSSEY, a book beloved of mine, and I'm glad that he does. But in citing sources, Mr. Panshin might be interested to learn that Mr. Farmer's rolling land-ship is an exact copy of a rolling landship called The Fortuna in a book by Robert Louis Stevenson's son-in-law, Lloyd Osborne. Mr. Osborne's book, THE ADVENTURER, appeared in 1907.

[The fact that Blish's stories appeared in JUNGLE STORIES does not invalidate the idea that they were parodies; Poul Anderson used to regularly write parodies of PLANET STORIES yarns, many of which (perhaps all of which) appeared in PLANET. Incidentally, a fair share of the story was told in BANES 8 and 9 -- by myself and Blish. RSC/

Durk Pearson, 22305 Frederick Rd., Chicago Heights, Ill., 60411

Please give me the official address of the Clevention Committee. I want them to carefully define what they mean by "cause", and promise to stick to it. Right now, they could bar Breen because they are not certain that he is not a child molestor. Before I again support Cleveland in '66, I would like to have them publicly define cause.

Damnation, CRY has died. Just a little while ago, BANE passed on. Don't you dare fold at #175.

RE: John Boston and THE SPIRE. Being from MIT, I have yet to hear of a Bishop who could afford to build a Spire as high as architects and engineers could design it.

So science has caught up to sf in many areas and even passed it? I agree, it's sad, but true. The information explosion (my yearly scientific periodical bill is about \$75 and would be more if I had the money) and the dearth of journals that can be comprehended by someone not already conversant with the field (with the very notable exception of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN), and the accelerating progress is leaving many sf writers far behind. If many scientists and engineers are incapable of keeping up, how can sf writers be expected to do it?



Some science articles have titles that sound like sf or fantasy. For example, in the issue of PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS that came this morning: "Self Consistency of Higher Symmetry Universes". The remainder are merely obtuse: "Some Remarks on the Ninth Pseudoscalar Meson", "High-density Behavior and Dynamical Stability of Neutron Star Models", "Pulse-shape Discrimination on the Gamma Ray Pulses from  $F9(d,n\gamma)Na^{20}$  Observed with a Lithium Drifted Germanium & Gamma Ray Spectrometer", etc. These are typical titles.

Part of a solution to the problem might lie in scientists who like sf collaborating with those who can write fiction, something that I'm willing to do. For example, did you know that you can change the value of  $\pi$ , even make it rational, with equipment that you have lying around the house? While I can write technical material (I've had stuff accepted for publication), I can't write fiction (my characterizations and dialogues are worse than stinking), and somehow I am too lazy to do the work necessary to learn. Anybody want hot technical data? Incidentally, Bill Osten, in ALEPH & OMEGA, edited the hell out of the Bureau of Slick Tricks and Wiggles, and forgot half of it.

Boardmen's motto:  $S = E \times H$ . Sometimes the  $\Delta$  is so low that heat rather than light is the radiation. If he were a black body, there would be far more heat than light at any reasonable temperature (and if the temperature became unreasonable, radiation burns would result), but he is a good editor, not a black body. That's the way the Reg-gie poles.

It was a typical Illinois country town. The highest building was the grain elevator towering beside the railroad tracks that bisected the town, and the next was the church steeple, with the town hall being a squat red brick building of insignificant altitude. Kerosene lamps and plastic picnic jugs were placed side by side in the window of the hardware store, along with fishing tackle for those who liked to haul carp out of prairie streams.

A few buildings were unoccupied. As I drove along on my motor scooter, I spied a store with the gilt letters

"Magazines" in the window. I stopped to

examine it for sf or comics. It

was an old un-

painted frame

building, dark

and dusty in-

side. Then I

saw them. The

Marvel Family,

Captain Marvel

Jr., and other

treasured com-

ics behind the

glass. I walked

in, past the

shelves of pat-

ent medicine.

Wandering about,

apparently dis-

interested in





anything except escape from the July sun, I passed an ancient soda fountain that had not been used in years, and saw some turn-of-the-century Westerns on a table. There were more old comics. A low, nearly unintelligible-with-age voice creaked, "May I help you?" The man was as old as his stock, none of which appeared to be of the last decade. Fearing that he had some idea of the value of the comics, I offered him a nickle a piece, "since they were used". He replied that they were a dime, since he could return them for a refund. I purchased all those available. He claimed to have no more in back or elsewhere, and as thoro a search as I could make without disturbing him revealed no more. As I left, he told me to return, since he would be getting more in. That was two years ago. Since then, I have visited that aged store many times, and have obtained many comics--mint condition. I know not whether he

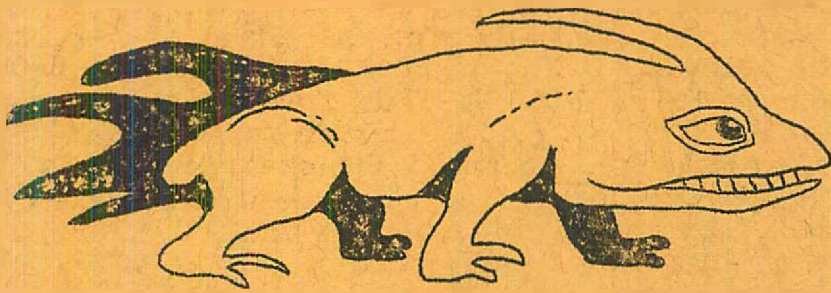


is senile, or perhaps thought he could fool me with the story of returning the unsold comics to the dealer (most likely both), but an irrational suspicion lingers that perhaps he is obtaining those comics, comics that don't look used, from a dealer somewhere and sometime.... No kidding, it's true. Then there was the store from which I obtained over 100 comics (mostly DCs) from the early forties, mint and nearly mint, for 25¢ each...

Thank Foo for Andre Norton, in quality and quantity. 'Tis good that she is not in immediate danger of dying and does not have a D.Sc which could make popularized science writing much more profitable. She deserves a Hugo. What about a special Hugo for Doc Smith? I think that he certainly deserves one! Any ideas as to how I could increase the possibility of this occurring someday?

[I can't give you the official Clevention address; I'm not even sure it has one, and with members getting mad and resigning right and left I'm not even sure who the chairman is. (It was Joe Fekete last week, but I won't guarantee anything for this week.) Anyway, there is certainly plenty of time to make up your mind. If I was running the Cleveland bid, I'd fire any committee member who said another word about Breen for the next 18 months. RSC Well....if you're passing out technical plot gim-micks to would-be writers who have lots of characterization and very little technical knowhow, and if you're not in any sort of hurry, you might toss a few plot hooks this way... JWC]





Sharon Towle, 1627 Massachusetts Ave, NW, #102, Washington, DC, 20036

Sf should realize that it may have its own literary goals, which are not the same as those of mainstream literature but are equally legitimate. Some writers seem to have realized this, but fandom

has not to my knowledge, except in one area. Fan plugging for the seriousness of (some) sf usually emphasize its extrapolative qualities. This is one valid goal of sf that it doesn't share with mainstream. Clarke's "A Fall of Moondust", for example, has extremely wooden characters and an essentially trite plot. But it is interesting as perhaps the most accurate guess as to what our first moonbase will be like that can be made now. Not that the virtue redeems the faults -- except that really complex characters or plot would have tended to obscure the description. Here the traditional mainstream goal might have interfered with the peculiarly sf goal; therefore a choice is necessary. This sort of problem, I think, needs to be explored by writers and coherent discussion in the forum of fandom is one place to start.

Also, extrapolation is not the only legitimate goal peculiar to sf. I'll grant everything that Alexei Panshin (you're getting more corny pen-names these days!) has to say about van Vogt, and yet I find his "Sidewise in Time" a very great work of science-fiction. And Isaac Asimov's "End of Eternity" has the most wooden characters I ever hope to meet; but it is also a great work of sf. Why? Because these books made me realize the incredible extent of the universe. They gave me a glimpse of what the word "infinity" means. This goal is not shared by mainstream writing; but is shared, so mathematicians tell me (I'm not one and wouldn't know) by higher mathematics. These books I think (expert opinions would be most welcome) have translated a bit of the wonder, of the "why" of pure math, into words; and I've been told this is a virtually impossible task. And to realize the meaning of infinity, this I think is one aspect of "sense of wonder" that belongs essentially to science-fiction rather than to fantasy or poetry. And here again other fascinating elements, such as good characterization, would have interfered.

[Our next photo-cover is going to feature a picture of Alex Panshin, just so I can point to it when people accuse him of being a pen-name./ I guess my major revelation in sf, which brought home the meaning of such phrases as "the sweep of history" and the fact that we can envision the future (or understand it if we did envision it) came from Clarke's City and The Stars. (DeWeese will applaud that; he's been touting the book to everyone who will listen for years.) It isn't easy to visualize that some day our entire civilization will be dead and gone and forgotten, but Clarke puts it across. It produces a great deal more humility than any mainstream writing can do. (To all those disbelievers; I am too humble, and if you don't like it you can lump it.)

RSC/

Terry Carr, 41 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

I noted in #136 Andre Norton's comment that she wishes Leigh Brack-



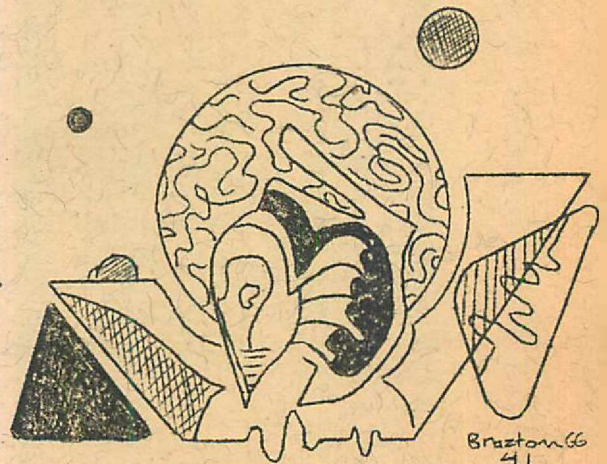
ett's Eric John Stark stories would come out in pb. I agree wholeheartedly with her, and obviously Don Wollheim was ahead of her, because in September Ace is bringing out a Brackett double: THE SECRET OF SINHARAT and THE PEOPLE OF THE TALISMAN. The former is an expansion of QUEEN OF THE MERTIAN CATACOMBS, the latter of BLACK AMAZON OF MARS, both Stark stories from Planet during Brackett's best period. I had the pleasure of copy-editing both these books--a task which is virtually superfluous in her case--and I guarantee that they're both first-rate Brackett. SINHARAT follows the original story fairly closely, but TALISMAN branches out after the first half of the old novelet onto an almost totally different track.

Ted White's hornbook for writers in #137 is pretty good, marred by a couple of minor errors of fact. For one thing, he's wrong in stating that under Scott Meredith's fee reading system, "If the story's good enough, he will market it for you, and will not charge the fee, instead simply taking the standard 10% commission on the sale." On the contrary: He will charge you the fee, whether or not he takes on the story for marketing. The fee is for reading and evaluation, the first steps; if, after that, the story seems good enough for marketing, he'll take it on, and if he sells it he gets the 10% commission for that work. (The fees, by the way, are a basic \$10 for any story up to 10,000 words; beyond that, it's an additional buck per thousand words. If it's a novel, the fee is \$35, unless it's over 150,000 words, in which case the fee's \$65. These rates are somewhat higher than those charged by other agents who read your stuff for a price; on the other hand, as Ted mentions, the Meredith agency seems to be the only one that will actually give you value for your money when the story's good)) I know of one other agent, by the way, who's a real gouger. He'll read your stuff for a fee, and he'll market it if it looks good, but apparently he signs you up with a contract giving him a fantastic percentage of the take. When I was at Scott Meredith, an author who'd been mixed up with this guy came to me, told us he'd sold five novels to Signet and wanted to change agents, but wasn't sure he could because his former agent claimed he still owed him a thousand bucks or so, after already having taken considerably more than 10% on the sales.

The other error in Ted's place is really minor: Gamma's rates are not 2¢ a word straight, but rather between 1 and 2¢. And anyway, it does seem likely the magazine's folded; last I heard, their printer had gone into receivership. That was six months or more ago.

Mike Deckinger, Apartment 10-K,  
25 Manor Drive, Newark, NJ, 07106

Comparing Chester Anderson and Michael Kurman to Lawr Janifer isn't too far from wrong, since Janifer was indirectly responsible for them selling their novel (originally titled MOTHER'S KNEE by the authors) to Pyramid. They are both real, too. Kurman is young and boyish looking, speaks quietly but distinctly, Anderson is older and vacillates unnervingly from serious talk to foolish whimsy. Their "autobiographies" in the book were written by themselves. Anderson claimed that TEN YEARS TO DOOMSDAY uncon-





sciously was a parody involving at least half a dozen top writers. It wasn't intended as such, but he found himself turning it into one. They're now hard at work on another sf novel, not a sequel to this.

John Boston certainly has a problem. He can't decide whether Golding was making Piggy the scapegoat in LORD OF THE FLIES or whether the other characters in the book were responsible. I'm almost afraid to point out that not only did Golding invent Piggy, but he also invented the other characters, and therefore everyone who plays a part is some extension of the author. If Piggy is made a scapegoat then no one else but Golding can take the blame, whether the narrative defines him as one or whether the other boys build him up in their own intellects as one.

I think that most of the present day fans-turned-pro wrote better when they were writing for fanzines. Cal Demmon is probably an exception in one direction. I was never very impressed by his fanzine pieces, and I think even less of the loose, meaningless fragments he's sold to F&SF.

Your compilation of outside sf writers, in answer to Norm Metcalf, is a very varied and uneven list, as I'm sure you realize. And most of those you name just dabbled lightly in the field (or many of them, anyway). Nevil Schute was a well established name long before ONE THE BEACH appeared. Pat Frank has frequently written what might be termed contemporary sf, like MR. ADAM, FORBIDDEN AREA, and ALAS BABYLON. These books were sf in the strictest sense, but never promoted as such. And they probably sold more copies than they would have if they were presented otherwise. I never knew that Roger Lee Vernon had anything else published outside an unfortunate collection of original shorts for Signet a few years ago. Ayn Rand is a philosopher, not a novelist. ATLAS SHRUGGED and ANTHEM have science fictional elements, but they primarily (especially ATLAS SHRUGGED) are meant to be a vehicle to promote her philosophy of objectivism. She doesn't write to entertain, but to preach. Outside of THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN, which was an outrageous fantasy, Terry Southern hasn't written any sf at all, unless you mean the collaboration with Stanley Kubrick and Peter George on the screenplay of Dr. Strangelove.

[Of course my list of "outside" sf writers is varied and uneven; "outside" sf writers are varied and uneven. There are even a few good ones. And there are very few "outsiders" who have done more than dabble in the field. (The ones who write sf and fantasy more or less regularly are usually the best ones, also.) Vernon has had a novel published by Amalon--I heard somewhere that since he was a Chicagoan, he loyally offered it to Advent first, and they rejected it. It's as bad as the short stories. I agree that Ayn Rand isn't a novelist, but as long as she keeps writing bad novels I'm going to keep right on classing her as a bad novelist. If she wrote straight philosophy, she might be readable. You seem to imply that because she preaches, her books aren't really sf. If they aren't, then neither is 75% of the present magazine and pb output. THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN is exactly the sort of writing that I see in second-rate fanzines and the poorer issues of MAD. It stunk.

RSC7

# Strange Fruit

Any fan editor looking for a review here and not finding it should try the next issue of DOUBLE BILL. (You may not find it there, either, but you can try.) In the future there will probably be fewer fanzine reviews here, because I no longer have the time to bother with a lot of the fanzines that I'm getting. (No names; editors that I intend to quit trading with will be notified individually.)

DOUBLE:BILL #9 (Bill Mallard, 214 Mackinaw Ave., Akron, Ohio 44313 - irregular - 25¢ - co-editor Bill Bowers, British agent Charles E. Smith) This issue, like the last two, is notable for "The DB Symposium", an 11-question thing which was answered by a total of 72 professional writers. This issue contains the third and final installment; if you missed the first two, write for back issues or wait until the entire thing is published as a giant one-shot, sometime in the misty future. (I don't know whether a date has been set for reprinting or not, but even if it has, don't count on it as definite.) Remainder of the issue includes good book reviews, poor fiction, and odd bits of humor, editorials, jazz columns, letters, verse, etc. The whole thing runs to 77 pages (36 of them being symposium), so if you like big fanzines, here is one. Art and reproduction are both good, and all in all it's quite a bargain at the price. Rating....8

QUARK? #7 (Tom Perry, 4018 Laurel Ave., Omaha 11, Nebraska - 25¢ - no schedule listed) Well, well. Geis is back and Perry's got him -- and can keep him, as far as I'm concerned. I had quite enough of Geis the first time around. However, there is Walt Willis to add luster with his "Harp That Once Or Twice" column, transferred from somewhere - WARHOON? And Joe Pilati is generally good, though not this time. And Perry does pretty well, himself -- come to think of it, QUARK? is one of the most pleasant fanzines I've received recently. Rating....6

PILLYCOCK #9 (John Boardman, 592 16th. St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11218 - no price or schedule listed) This is a Cult zine, and ordinarily I wouldn't review it. However, since he has used part of it to publicly tell me to go to Hell,....

He doesn't like my neutrality over Breen. I don't like his habit of rushing into print with emotional proclamations before bothering to discover the facts, a habit which he has retained all thru the Breen problem and is still doing; there is at least one flatly false statement in this issue.

I've been getting fed up with Boardman for a long time. This is no more than the final straw, but final it definitely is, as far as I'm concerned.

S F ART #3 (Japan S F Art Club, C/O Y. Kaneko, 17 Hatsune Cho, Bunkyo Ku, Tokyo, Japan - price and schedule unknown) This mag is entirely devoted to fan art, good, bad and indifferent. Judging US fan art is hard enough, let alone trying to apply standards to the Oriental product. At a guess, I'd say that Takeo Tanaka and M. Hata are very good artists, with the rest being poor to mediocre. But I don't guarantee to be correct -- if you're interested, write them and find out for yourself.

SWEFANAC INTERNATIONAL #2 (Carl Brandon, Sällskapsvägen 7, Stockholm 48, Sweden - more or less monthly - 12 for \$1) But he'd rather have comments than money. Primarily concerned with Swedish fandom, although there are comments and news items on other European fan and professional projects. There is also a trade page, for collectors. Stapled to my copy was the Swedish-language version, which included a list of Hugo nominees....I know what "bästa amatormagasin" means, but it makes such an intriguing epithet in English. You bästa, you. SWEFANAC is recommended for newshounds. Rating...5



ZENITH #5 (Peter Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham 31, England - quarterly - 20¢ - USAgent, Al Lewis, 1825 Greenfield Ave, Los Angeles) This features lovely multilithed covers, fancy layout (but with a lot of show-thru; that's why we don't use white paper in YANDRO), and a deadly serious approach to stf. There is an article on the "Sector General" stories by White which includes a list of all of White's alien classifications. I should think it would be invaluable to readers who care about this sort of thing; I never could make heads or tails of White's system, but I was never much interested in it, either. There are book and magazine reviews, an article on the British pb firm, Four Square, a list of new books in both Britain and the US, a badly overwritten sample of fan fiction, a fanzine review by Walt Willis, etc. Tops for the issue would be a pseudo-biological farce reprinted from the (professional?) magazine ANIMALS; bottoms would be Phil Harbottle's one-page comic strip made from a Fred Brown vignette. Not an outstanding fanzine, but worth the attention of serious stf readers. Rating.....5

BURI (Marc Christopher, Box 132, Beverly Shores, Ind. 46301 - quarterly - 25¢) Nice multilithed cover. The artist is no Krenkel (he's not up to ZENITH cover artist Eddie Jones, either) but he's not bad. Reproduction isn't too hot; he has greasy ink and a hard-finish paper, which makes for a lot of show-thru. But it's readable, and he claims that next issue will be completely photo-offset. There are a couple of Burroughs articles; Jeremy Barry's is mildly humorous as intended, but Ira Riddle's suffers from an attempt to mix humor and serious commentary (and from the fact that the humor isn't terribly funny to begin with). There is a review of "Dr. Strangelove" which is fairly good (aside from my entire disagreement with the first two paragraphs) and some fiction which is better than ZENITH's without being what you could call good. Oddly, the editorial and the editor's book reviews are the poorest parts of the mag. Marc can be entertaining; he has been, in letters. But he doesn't show it here. I'd guess at a big improvement in future issues, as he gets some practice and gets away from such amateurisms as "each presents his views in a different way", "just about the only .....", and quits counting his contributors as the best in fandom. (Whether they are or aren't is up to fandom to judge, Marc; you just present their material and if it's good they'll win their own reputations and if it isn't nothing you can say will save it.) Not too good an issue, but with a prospect of steady improvement. Rating...3

SKYRACK #68 (Ron Bennett, 17 Newcastle Rd, Wavertree, Liverpool 15, England - 6 for 35¢ - USAgent, me) The British newsletter. British fan and professional news. Often includes riders; this time it's a two-pager from Eric Bentcliffe, mostly concerned with the latest British convention. Recommended if you want British news. Rating....6

ROMANN #2 (Richard Mann - see list of addresses elsewhere in YAN - more or less quarterly - 15¢) Unlike the last issue, there really isn't much here. A rundown on the Hugo nominees by Dwain Kaiser in which he manages to say something nice about almost all of them except the Burroughs entries, a short and rather poor story by A. K. Davids, comments on a N'APA mailing which are too short to mean much to outsiders, a fairly good letter column, and an article on our present moral decay which is sincere but not too terribly informative. All in all, I think I liked the first issue better. Rating...2

SATURA #7 & 9 (John Foyster, PO Box 57, Drouin, Victoria, Australia - for trade or comment - monthly) Don't ask me what happened to #8; it never arrived here. A rather odd fanzine, with even odder readers (including the chap who categorizes anyone with a 120 IQ as a "clever moron". The letter-writer appears to have a 95 IQ and a large dictionary.) Oh; that's what happened to #8; it was sent surface mail and is still on the way, while #9 came via airmail. His chief columnist seems to be a chap known as "370". He opens #9 by saying "do you think any of SATURA's readers are the least bit interested in what I have to say...?" Well, now that he men-

tions it, the answer from this end is "no".

PANTHEON #1 (Burkhard N. Blüm, c/o Bogner, 29 Melibocus St., 6 F-Niederrad, Deutschland - 15¢ in US, British or German stamps per issue) German comments on publishing associations, TAFT, and Walter Breen. Interesting enuf, but not much there to comment on.

ISCARIOT #12 (Al Andrews, 1659 Lakewood Drive, Birmingham 16, Alabama - quarterly - no price listed) Al can and has put out interesting general-circulation fanzines. The last few issues of ISCARIOT, however, have been directed almost entirely to (or possibly at) the Southern Fandom Group. His remarks are still interesting enough to anyone who knows much about the other fans in the group, but the mag is definitely not recommended for newcomers.

BETA ETA ZETA #2 (Bernie King, 237 S. Rodeo Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif. - monthly - 15¢) I suppose that with a little luck it would be possible to read all of this, but it's hardly worth the effort. Main item is a long continued story which precisely parallel's John Boardman's thing in KNOW-ABLE. Bernie says that his is independently invented, and I'm willing to believe him, but the point is that while Boardman's story is pretty dull, this one is much worse. Or at least what I could read of it was worse. I didn't try too hard to decipher it. Rating...1

QUOTE CARDS ANYONE? (Lang Jones, 36 Winscombe Crescent, Ealing, London W.5, Gt. Britain - one-shot - 15¢) An entire 22-page fanzine devoted to a con report. If you like such things, here is one.

MICKEY #5 (John Kusske, Jr., 522 9th Ave. West, Alexandria, Minnesota - more or less quarterly - 10¢) The parody of "Atlas Shrugged" isn't bad -- considering that one can't adequately parody a 1000 page novel in 3 pages of fanzine -- but a more humorous item is his account of taking one of Rand's books to school. The kids' reactions are so typical of society; it's all right to read (or do) anything at all, as long as one is enough of a hypocrite to pretend to be shocked by it. (But I'm surprised at anyone who can read more than one Ayn Rand book. I couldn't; even when she has ideas that I agree with -- and she does at times -- they're curdled by her writing style, which is inferior to that of the average neofan.) Right here I might as well mention OUT OF THE SPITTOON, a one-shot put out by Kusske, Fred Haskell, Gil Lamont, and Frank Stodolka; apparently to prove that Haskell is real and my assertion that he was probably a pen-name of Dennis Lien is a vile canard. (I notice that Lien didn't take part; in fact, I don't think he's spoken to me since I made the statement.) Of course, if it comes right down to it, I've never met Kusske, Lamont, or Stodolka, either..... One-shots, like first issues, are almost invariably bad. This one, while not as good as most fanzines, is pretty good for a one-shot. Even funny in spots.

ALGOL #6 (Andrew Porter, 24 East 82nd. St., New York, N.Y. 10028 - irregular - 15¢) Big improvement in reproduction; this is one of the few spirit-duplicated fanzines which is not only readable but which uses color work to good effect on the illustrations. Material isn't bad, but it isn't too good. An article by E. E. Evers is interesting mostly because he lists Robert F. Young among the "excellent but esoteric" writers. Robert F. Young writes sugary fiction exactly like the SATURDAY EVENING POST used to publish 20 years ago. Reviews are pretty good; fiction isn't so hot.

Rating.....4



# GOLDEN MINUTES

Last issue I promised a report on whether or not The Hopkins Manuscript, by R. C. Sherriff, is as bad as I remembered it. It isn't -- but then, it isn't particularly good, either. What I did not appreciate at age 12 or so is that Sherriff was extremely adept at writing about people. His characters are the sort of people who live down the block; well-intentioned, a trifle vain, and not overly bright. He gives the impression that this is actually the way real people would react to a crisis. Unfortunately, the crisis they are reacting to is ridiculous by any standards. In a remarkably ill-informed introduction, John Gassner paraphrases the old canard that because the author has not bothered to make his science plausible, he is not writing mere science fiction. This is hogwash; an implausible background does not prevent a story from being science fiction. It merely assures that it is bad science fiction. If Sherriff had pitted his characters against a more commonplace crisis, he would have produced a good, if not outstanding, mainstream novel. When he rings in a moon which hits the earth and then collapses like a giant soap-bubble, then he is writing nonsense. Because the book does have good qualities, I'm not dissatisfied with the price I paid the Doubleday Book Club for it, and if it comes out in a paperback it will be worth picking up. But anyone who pays the full hardcover price is either a collector or a masochist (come to think of it, are those really two different terms?)

A book which does come very close to being worth the hardcover price is A Century Of Great Short Science Fiction Novels, edited by Damon Knight and published by Delacorte Press at \$4.95. This is a fairly big 370-page book, containing Stevenson's "Strange Case Of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", "The Invisible Man" by Wells, Karel Capek's "The Absolute At Large", Heinlein's "Gulf", "E For Effort" by T. L. Sherred, and "Hunter, Come Home" by Richard McKenna. Both of the "classics" have been out in pb; "The Invisible Man" has had several printings by at least two companies, but the only pb edition of "Jekyll" which I recall is the one I have, put out in 1941 by Pocket Books, Inc. In both cases it had been several years since I read them, and I was happy to be reminded that they are both exceptionally good stories (particularly the Wells epic). "Gulf" is one of Heinlein's poorer efforts; it has always read to me as though he got tired after about 45 pages and finished it off in a hurry so he could get at something more interesting. It's also been out in pb, tho not recently. Sherred's "E For Effort" is one of the best science fiction stories ever written; it's been anthologized several times, but if you don't have it already it's worth making considerable effort to get. I'm not sure just why "Hunter, Come Home" was selected. It's a good story, but no more and no less so than a dozen others I could name. If I'd been doing it, I'd have picked something by Poul Anderson or possibly John Brunner to represent the moderns, but I wasn't asked (possibly because the publisher felt that Knight knows more about stf than I do). Capek's novel is the story that makes this anthology worth while. According to Knight, this is its first publication in this country since 1927, which is longer than it should have waited. I suppose I'm charmed partly because of the idea of producing God as the waste product of a manufacturing process, but I should think that even the devoutly religious would appreciate Capek's point that our present society could not possibly tolerate the actual presence of God in the world. Not even the churches, as presently constituted, could stand having him around permanently. I don't



suppose that many fans are actually going to pay the full price for this book, but presumably Dell will bring it out in paperback eventually. In the meantime, pester your friendly local librarian; any decent library should get a copy. And if you ignore everything else, at least read the Capek novel.

Juanita found Taboo while looking over the sex books at the Anderson news stand. (Why was she looking at sex books instead of me? Well, mainly because she's the one who keeps up on the pen names of our friend who writes the stuff on occasion.) This is published by Novel Books, Inc., 2715 No. Pulaski Rd., Chicago 39, Ill. (Address included in case you can't find it on your local news stand.) It's priced at 75¢, which is pretty steep for 120 pages, and it contains stories by Charles Beaumont, Robert Bloch, Harlan Ellison, Fritz Leiber, Nelson Algren, Paul Neimark and Ray Russell. The blurb states (ungrammatically and incorrectly) that these are stories "which no publisher would touch". Bloch is more careful in his introduction; he says that "no commercial magazine" had ever dared to print his yarn. This is undoubtedly correct, but an earlier version did appear in NEW PURPOSES #9 and in his Advent book, Eighth Stage Of Fandom. The current version has been extensively rewritten -- and cut. (I wonder about these outfits that make a big spiel about their complete freedom and then publish slightly expurgated stories.) It's still an excellent story, however. Russell's story has also appeared before; I read it somewhere, but I don't recall where. Possibly F&SF; it's that type. According to the publishers, it has been rewritten and impurgated with controversy. Maybe; not being able to locate the original, I can't tell. It's also good, even though the final kicker is terribly weak. The only really shocking story in the book is Leiber's, but he makes up for the others by laying it on with a trowel and producing an excellent modern horror story. Ellison is writing with his guts instead of his head again, Neimark has a good story, Algren has a remarkably bad one (it not only has a weak punch line, it doesn't have much in front of it, either), and Beaumont has a fairish story which doesn't belong in this sort of collection at all; it would be more at home in the SATURDAY EVENING POST, with its message that underneath it all we're all pretty nice people. Maybe it was the only "race" story they could get. Oh yes-- only the Bloch story is fantasy, with the Russell a borderline case and the others strictly mainline. But you do read mainstream fiction, don't you?

Damon Knight has another anthology out in Tomorrow X, a 50-center from Gold Medal. This one includes Heinlein's "The Roads Must Roll", McKenna's "The Night of Hoggy Darn", "The Sources of the Nile" by Avram Davidson, and "No Woman Born" by C. L. Moore. (And here is why McKenna is suddenly being anthologized; he wrote The Sand Pebbles. I'd forgotten. Remarkable what a Harper Prize will do for one's resale possibilities.) The Moore story is the best, but also the most familiar, having been anthologized several times already. "The Roads Must Roll" is early Heinlein, which is synonymous with excellence. The blurb refers to Davidson's "polished, elegant style". It's all of that, and it's a good story, but it isn't the sort of story that I particularly like. Too much polish and style and not enough story for my taste (but then I'm an unregenerate pulp reader). McKenna turns out the most unsympathetic lot of characters I've encountered in months. I assume that the reader is supposed to sympathise with their strivings, but before he finished I was cheering on the aliens and hoping for the complete extermination of the heroic humans. This sort of thing is irritating as hell, because McKenna does have talent and I keep wishing that he'd do something with it that I could enjoy.



Pyramid's two latest Green Door mysteries are After The Verdict, by Anthony Gilbert, and Cold Poison, by Stuart Palmer. They are remarkably similar in some respects; the central character in each is the beautiful but willful young girl who as the story opens is about to marry the charming cad instead of the 100% true-blue boy friend. The detectives are also somewhat similar; Hildegard Withers is a motherly type busybody, and Arthur Crook is a fatherly type busybody. From there, we come to a parting of the ways. The Palmer book is hardly a classic of detection, but I spent a couple of quite enjoyable hours with it. I couldn't finish the Gilbert book; after getting approximately halfway into it, I decided that I didn't really care who did the murder, or why, or if he wiped out the entire cast before the finish. I believe that Gilbert is the more popular writer of the two; from the evidence here, I couldn't possibly guess why.

After a long drouth, featuring reprints of their earlier good collections mixed with remarkably bad horror anthologies and novels, Ballantine has come out of it and issued some original paperbacks which are worth reading. Best of the lot is Fritz Leiber's A Pail Of Air. The title story may be scientifically impossible, but it's one of those things which sounds terribly authentic while you're reading it. I'd mark it as one of the best sf stories ever written. "Coming Attraction", "Nice Girl With Five Husbands", and "The 64-Square Madhouse" are all excellent (though I suppose the fact that I enjoy chess is partly responsible for my appreciation of the latter). "Bread Overhead", "Time Fighter", "Pipe Dream", "Rump-Titty-Titty-Tum-Tah-Tee" are all amusing nonsense, and "The Beat Cluster" is readable. This leaves only "The Foxholes Of Mars" and "The Last Letter" on the debit side of the ledger, and you can't win 'em all. (And if someone questions why I downgrade Sherriff for scientific implausibility while commending Leiber for it.... I don't really care so much whether or not a story is scientifically possible - after all, nobody can say in advance what will be done and what won't be. I want the author to convince me of his plausibility while I'm reading the story. Leiber does; Sherriff, scorning mere scientific accuracy, doesn't even try.) Close To Critical isn't up to the standards that author Hal Clement set in Mission Of Gravity and Needle, but even slightly inferior Clement is good stuff. As usual, the aliens are far more human than the humans. (Clement's critics claim that he can't envision a truly alien mentality -- well, neither can anyone else, if it comes to that.) Inside Outside, by Phil Farmer, is an odd sort of book. Bob Brinsey commented that the author changed his mind halfway through as to what he was writing about. The book gives the impression of being full of loose ends, but when I got down to checking I couldn't find anything which wasn't explained. A lot of it isn't explained very satisfactorily, but there's an explanation in there somewhere. The trouble is that a lot of the explanation rests on these off-stage alien immortals, who appear to be all-powerful physically and a bit cracked mentally; step-children of Azathoth, no doubt. All of these books are priced at 50¢, which seems to be standard these days.