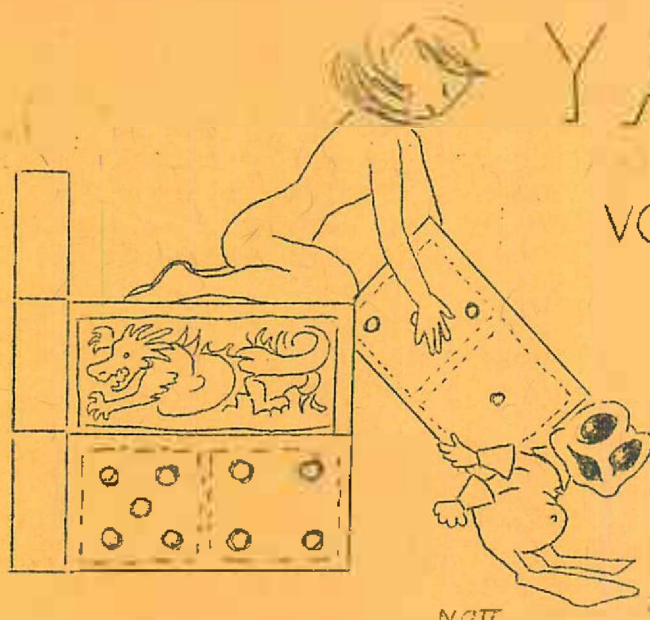


YANDRO

158





YANDRO 158

VOLUME XIV NUMBER 4

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(and we just lost ground again)
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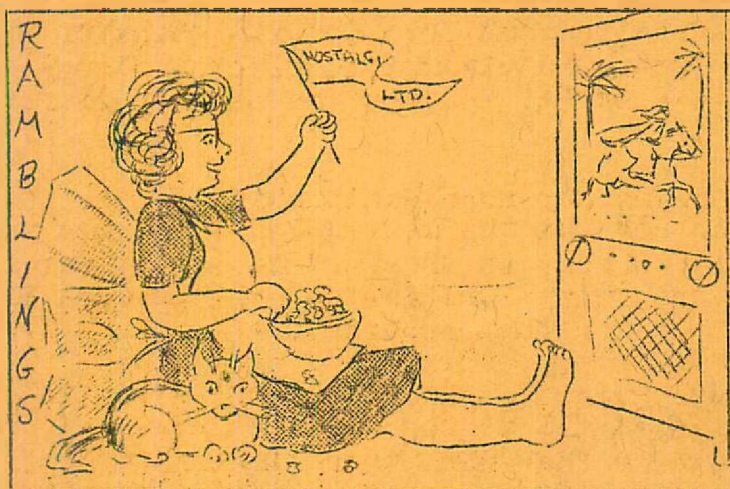
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Louis, Missouri - Chairman, James N. Hall, 202 Taylor Ave, Crystal
City, Missouri. Write him for information.
Midwestcon #17, June 24, 25, 26, Carrousel Inn, 8001 Reading Rd,
Cincinnati, Ohio 45237 - \$1 membership fee (pay on arriving at com-
mittee suite) - banquet - no other formal program



There's no particularly valid reason for this issue being late, nothing valid in the acceptable-to-you-out-there sense. Put it down to spring fever on my part - that's as accurate as anything. Combination of nice weather and nice guests...I wasn't at all inspired to lean over a hot light-scope and ben-gay my biceps at the Gestetner.

Nice guests were Chicago fans Alex Eisenstein and Phyllis Kleinstein. Phyllis plans to

drop the "Klein" and substitute the "Eisen" soon. Remember what I said a while back about marrying fandom? If some future fannish historian insists on a numerical designation, maybe he can call it Binary Fandom?

The nice weather may not hold - frost warnings out tonight. I'm trying to think of something we can rig for smudge pots out in the orchard... not that I'm so crazy about pears, but it makes such unusual wine.

We're not too sure whether to send Lin Carter a thank you note or a ticking package for his review in If. It brought in scads of sticky postcards, gooey quarters and requests for issues - and each issue is another 30 odd turns of the heavy Gestetner crank (groan), plus assembling, stapling and envelope stuffing. But it also unearthed some budding neos in Indiana... and after we'd thought the breed was dying out after all these years. Now if we can just dissuade them from any ideas of a worldcon in Indiana. We older fans in this state have already run that gauntlet, and it took some pretty firm head-beating and arm twisting before the itch laid down and died. There's no noticeable urge among the old guard to start scratching once more.

I'm addicted to am radio, by which I mean the thing is on most of the day. I don't really listen to it most of the time, it's just there.... mostly for weather and news bulletins and assurance that I'm not really the only person left in the world. (This last is a hangover from being a city girl - peace, solitude and cheeping birds leave me with a sensation like Midnight on the Thirty-First of March...Where IS everybody!)

At any rate the one thing I find most annoying on the airwaves are car ads. VWs aren't bad, and Freberg's Owner Protection Plan-Guardian Maintenance or whatever it is isn't bad. But some of the others...and not just the local version of Madman Muntz, either. "Pre-owned Cadillacs", sure. That makes them better than plain old "used". And fine print broadcasting....big long enticing ad, then (sotto voce): "Manufacturer reserves the right to withhold guarantee on condition of....etc, etc."

And variable speed windshield wipers. What's with this? The ads talk it up like sable upholstery and built-in bars. Our little station cart, a pocket-size 59 American station wagon, has variable speed windshield wipers. The further you turn the knob, the faster they go, and oppositely. So what's all the flag-waving as if this were something the

companies just this very year discovered and out of the goodnesses of their hearts are offering to the panting public? Come to think of it, my mother's '63 Chevvy has only two-speed windshield wipers. I may have reservations about Romney as a politician, but as a manufacturer he made GM look sick.

Camp talk seems a rage increasing, rather than diminishing as one might have expected by now. And I hear some of the most unlikely people using "camp" - I'm reasonably certain some of these staid and proper matrons have no idea where the term "camp" originated, and perhaps it's better for their peace of mind to leave them ignorant.

But I wonder if a number of people aren't confusing "camp" with old-fashioned nostalgia? Comic books of WWII vintage have become camp, but they weren't camp to the kids reading them when they first came out. They were escapism, pure and simple. Of course they were cliché ridden and corny and crude - they matched the mentalities of their 8 to 12 year old readers.

And movies. I cut my pre-adolescent eye-teeth on those glorious pieces of technicolor cotton candy Universal turned out: the Jon Hall, Maria Montez, Turhan Bey, Sabu epics - fantasy after fantasy. They were fantasy, and the viewers knew it. The actors didn't hoke it up because that wasn't the purpose. It was a pretty rotten period and people didn't feel like laughing - they felt like forgetting. I've long since lost track of how many times I've seen "Sudan", my own favorite of that long string of froth. I can still enjoy it, nostalgically. It's corny and pure melodrama, but for a short while I'm again in a darkened theater, I'm young, I'm eating popcorn and I'm forgetting everything but the adventures of the characters before me.

Sometimes I think my contemporaries, by and large, are ashamed of nostalgia, afraid to remember innocence. It has to be presented to them as camp, hoke or something else laughable or they can't permit themselves to enjoy it.

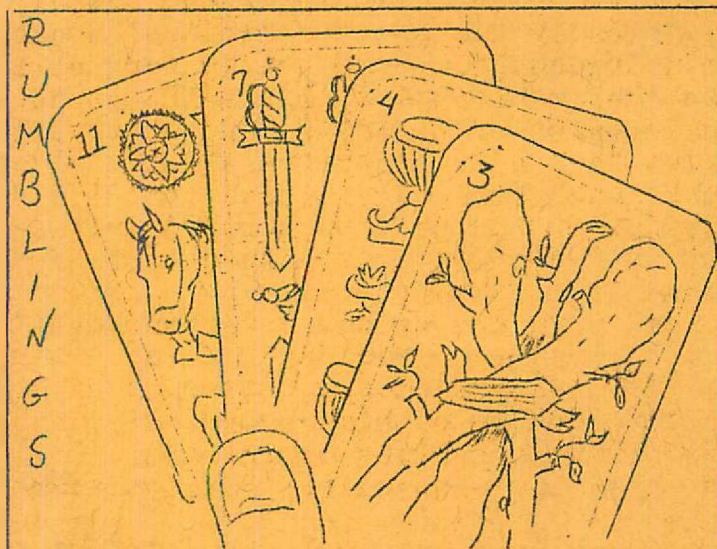
There are enough really bad contemporary films and books to satisfy anyone's urge to snicker. Really, you don't have to dig so hard. I mean during the past year I've even seen a couple of so-called science fiction movies re-run on tv that made King Dinosaur look Shakespearean. Well, not quite that, but competent....on an idiot level, of course. Even Sheckley couldn't top K. Dinosaur's capsule summation of modern ideology: as the cast watch an island-full of innocent dinosaurs blown to smithereens by an atomic bomb the hero's just detonated, he solemnly proclaims: "We have just brought civilization to this planet!"

Batman is kid stuff, really, compared to that.

My penchant for original wall decorations is going to be my downfall. One of Buck's pieces of fannish baksheesh around the first of the year was a large Japanese calendar. Every two months we turn it over and face a different, really different, beautiful full color photo of a Japanese scene. I have a mad urge to rip the thing up and matt and hang everyone of them right now....and they're BIG. Where am I going to get the wall space.

Ceiling hanging, anyone?

JWC



A bulletin from Terry Carr announces the TAFF results: Tom Schlück wins with 83 votes. Other votes are: Eric Jones 39, Pete Weston 20, Bo Stenfors 5, plus a single write-in vote for Len Moffatt (I've sometimes wondered myself if California is part of the U.S.) and 2 votes to hold the funds until next year. So Tom will be visiting the States during the World Convention. Maybe we should have campaigned harder for Stenfors, but I doubt if it would have helped. A good many years ago we helped nominate Ed McNulty, and campaigned for him to the best of our ability.

He came in next to last. (Future candidates take warning.)

After writing the review of Wonder War, I happened to notice that it isn't a new edition; Pyramid is simply sending the unsold copies of the first edition around again. Must have been a lot of them, what? Let's hope they sell, this time. (To outsiders, not fans.)

The April issue of AMERICAN RIFLEMAN contains a fascinating ad. Headed "Wooden Cigar Store Indian (Latex)" it describes how you can buy a "wooden" cigar store Indian, actually made of moulded latex (but with a "sturdy real wood pedestal base") for the modest price of \$98.00. I guess I'm just not up on antiques; I wouldn't pay \$98 for a genuine cigar store Indian (or a genuine Indian, for that matter).

I have clippings. Vast numbers of fans have been sending them in, and some are worthy of mention, and should help to fill up this editorial. In response to my earlier mention of the Hoosier who withdrew his daughter from school because Disney's "Vanishing Prairie" was shown, Irv Jacobs sent a clipping about a Rev. Frederick Tudor, of Encinitas, Calif., who withdrew 3 children from school because the books were full of smut. He complained that Red Badge of Courage contained "cursing and blasphemy and violence" (Juanita comments that it's also one of the most Christian books ever written, but apparently the Rev. didn't know that), and The Ox-Bow Incident is lewd and contains erotic sex. He also disliked Death of a Salesman and Catcher In The Rye.

Not content with clippings, Alan Dodd sent an entire newspaper -- the April 22, 1915 edition of the London Daily Sketch. (Thanks, Alan; after a bit of patching so I could read it without having it fall apart, it went into our historical files.) News items there that you don't get no more: "...the Peshawar Movable Column, under Major-General Young, moved out of Peshawar to protect the menaced frontier." Doesn't that give you visions right out of Kipling and Talbot Mundy, though? And there are little news items about fighting frontiers that are never mentioned in the histories: "German steamer Muanza driven ashore and totally disabled by British steamer Winifred on Lake Victoria Nyanza."

Bob Briney sent a Rosicrucians ad for "Immortality Without Death", which, as he notes, is the best kind.

Dodd sends a more modern Daily Sketch, concerned over the fact that a British guided missile system has been sold as war surplus while it is still classified as "secret". Ah, the easy life international spies must lead in Britain!

Larry Shaw sends a batch of reviews of "The Oscar", the recent movie that Harlan Ellison screenwrote. Hah!

Derek Nelson sends a batch of anti-American clippings from Canada; most of them seem to be objecting violently because the National Hockey League refused Vancouver's bid for a franchise. (Some are on more serious subjects, such as US regulations on American-owned business in Canada -- the writers feel that these are an invasion of Canadian sovereignty. Well, I say if we buy the damned country we have a right to operate it. Right? Right.) However, Canadians seem to be much like US citizens; they'll put up with our economic infringements, but by God we'd better not trifle with their sports! That's the emotional reaction that authors are always telling us is more to be trusted than logic.

Dodd again, with an ad: "Have Fun! with one of our Shrunk Heads". Don Thompson sends a batch of clippings from the Sugar Creek, Ohio, Budget: "Amos Petersheim seems real well again. Sleeps better at night." Even with reporters hanging around to check up on him, apparently.

Anonymous clipping here headed "Berry And Willis Sworn In".

And I believe Phil Harrell sent the simple headline: "Dragon Loses Permit".

I have literally scores more, but that's a sample of the sort of thing I get in the mail. I believe it was Walt Willis who first made the observation that to a fan, the arrival of the mailman is a momentous event. (Having a fan on his route is probably pretty momentous to a mailman, too.)

Gregg Wolford mentioned that he considered some of my fanzine ratings "unfair", particularly mentioning my rating HAVERINGS equal with AUSLANDER and FEENWLOOT higher than QUIP, plus my giving a high rating to TRUMPET. He does have a point; most fans would probably disagree with those particular judgments. So let's take a look at my rating system and see if we can't kill another half-page.

The main problem in reviewing fanzines is that their contents vary widely, not only in execution but in intent. HAVERINGS and AUSLANDER, for example, are published for entirely different reasons (except, of course, for the basic reason that the editors are a little dotty). So they must be judged, not only on how entertaining I find them, but on how well they perform the job they are supposed to be doing, and whether or not other fanzines perform the same job more competently. Ideally, by this system, the descriptive passage of a review should tell what the fanzine is about, and the rating should tell how well it succeeds in its purpose. However, there is no such thing as an ideal system in human endeavors. For one thing, this system would give HAVERINGS a "10" rating, as it's undeniably the best "fanzine review fanzine" in existence, being the only one in existence. For another thing, like everyone else I have prejudices. I really do make some efforts toward objectivity, but I feel that it is more honest (and definitely easier) to simply state my prejudices and let you compensate for them, rather than pretend to be totally unbiased and objective. (Nobody is totally unbiased and objective; critics who say they are are merely trying to impress their readers. It's a noble objective for a critic to strive for, of course -- but then I never said I was noble.) Anyway, I strive in my modest way to judge fanzines by what they attempt as well as how well they manage to circumvent my prejudices.

Thanks to Spanish fan Luis Garcia, I have me a Spanish deck of playing cards. (This is the deck described by John Sack in Report From Practically Nowhere, and I've wanted one ever since I read the book.) Suits are clubs, swords, cups and coins. Biggest surprise -- because Sack had not mentioned it -- is that there are only 12 cards to a suit. Facecards are king, knave and page; women don't seem to rate very highly in Spain. I think they're fascinating.

RSC

SEEKERS OF TOMORROW

REVIEW BY

ALEXEI PANSHIN

SEEKERS OF TOMORROW, by Sam Moskowitz. World Publishing Company, Cleveland, 1966, 441 pages.

At first one thinks simply that Sam Moskowitz is a man who deserves compassion. He has an abiding love for science fiction and no talent for communicating it effectively.

SEEKERS OF TOMORROW (along with its companion-piece, EXPLORERS OF THE INFINITE) is his monument to his love, and like a vegetarian's

fifty-foot plaster representation of a rutabaga the result is hideous evidence of the earnestness of his affection. One might be inclined to pity the poor vegetable-lover, but stronger

and different emotions would be called for if some misguided company turned out full-scale replicas and the damned thing didn't look like a rutabaga anyway. SEEKERS

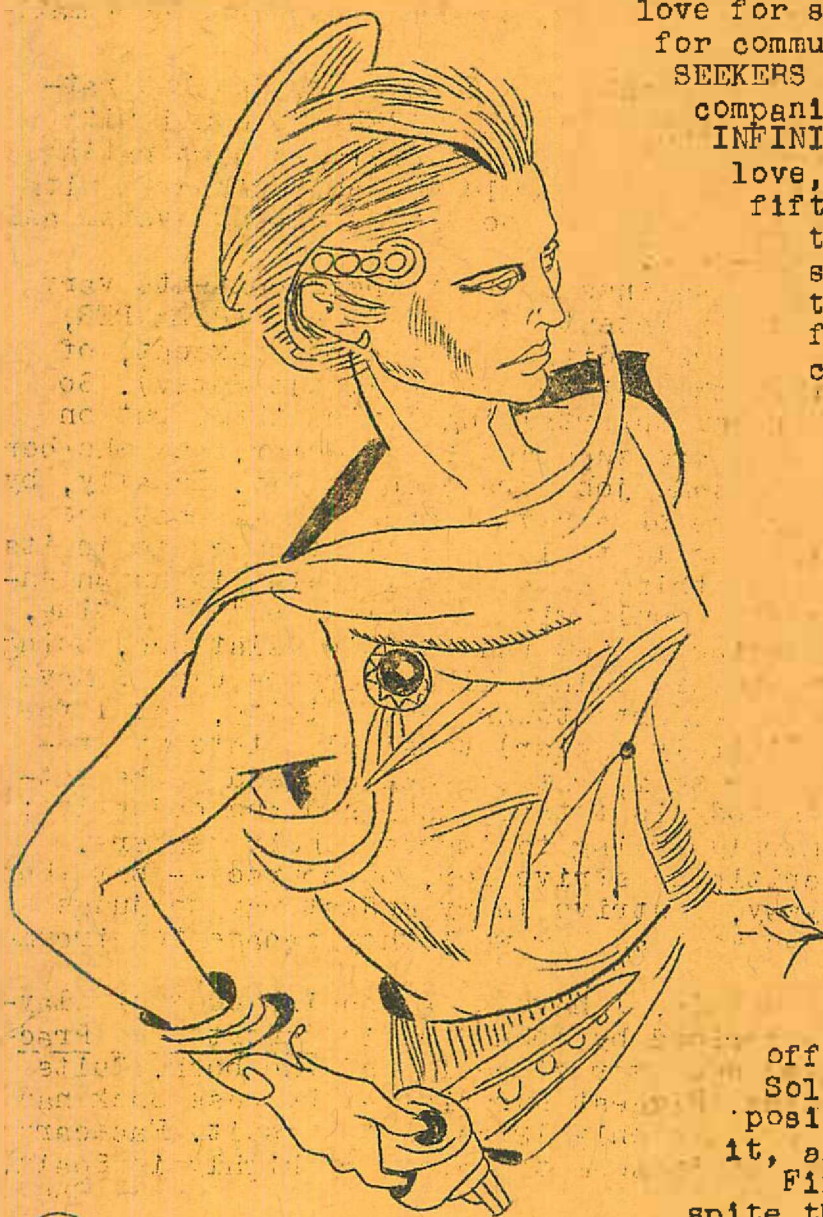
OF TOMORROW is concerned with science fiction since 1940. It is abominably proof-read, ineptly written, and filled, moreover, with incredible judgments, odd omissions, and outright errors.

Start at the top.

Moskowitz has no ear for the English language - his prose is eternally

off-key, most often glaringly so. Solecisms, mixed metaphors, pomposity, poor grammar - you name it, and Moskowitz' prose has it.

First page of Chapter 1: "Despite this, the imagination of the



science-fiction world stagnated within the confines of our solar system until 1928, when Edward E. Smith's The Skylark of Space lifted mental horizons to the inspiring wonder of the galaxy." (Read that over for flavor two or three times.)

Page 61: "First used for duplicating valuables, it accidentally copies fiancées and police officers: a frolic that has made it a frequently anthologized favorite." (This gives us an interesting choice - a machine that is frequently anthologized or a story that duplicates fiancées.)

Page 49: "The 'Hugo' is the science fiction world's synonym (sic) for the 'Oscar', a cast metal space ship awarded annually at the World Science Fiction Convention, to the fields (sic) outstanding contributors." (I'll bet you didn't know that the Oscar was a science fiction award.)

The proof-reading in the book is unforgivable. So many names are misspelled - Cele "Lolli" (in a note of appreciation!), Charles D. "Harnig", "Asimox" - that when one reads a name one isn't sure is wrong (is there a "William L. Hamnling", or does Moskowitz mean "Hamling"?), one suspects the worst. And names are the least of the typographical errors. Pick any page - if you can't find a typo or a sentence that makes you cringe, you aren't half trying.

I wouldn't be surprised to learn that Moskowitz was Kantian: he lives by maxims that he would make universal constants. He takes his own questionable opinions, backed by no stated evidence, doubles or triples them for effect, and makes them presents to the world:

Page 213: "Men have become famous because they introduced a single new word to the language. A.E. van Vogt is a good example." (Why be modest? - a great example.)

More important, however, is that Moskowitz doesn't even get his facts straight in far too many cases. "Asimov", for instance, does not mean "winter wheat grower" in Russian, as Moskowitz asserts. Heinlein never wrote a story entitled "Delilah and the Spacemen's Rigger" (though he did write one entitled "Delilah and the Space-Rigger"). Since 1926, many a year has passed that has not seen a score of stories by Edmond Hamilton appear in the science-fiction and fantasy magazines (I suspect this was one of those cases where Moskowitz tried to say three things at once, and only succeeded in saying one thing, and that wrong.)

Taken as criticism, SEEKERS OF TOMORROW is worthless. Moskowitz' unsubstantiated judgments generally miss the point (he calls The Star Beast "an 'alien pet' story"; he says, "Vonnegut is excellent raw material unfortunate enough to get started in the better magazines instead



of learning his trade in the pulps. He needs discipline, practice, and considerably less smugness. He increasingly /increasingly over what?/ strikes notes of freshness which promise much, but he doesn't /sic/ the whole damn thing is strictly /sic/ often deliver." In the paragraph before this one, he says Player Piano is "an antielectronic-age /sic/ Utopia /sic/" that lacked originality.)

But the greatest part of Moskowitz' criticism lies in ascribing purported influences or hypothetical influences for stories:

Page 128: "Other stories that may well have influenced his handling of the two major plot situations in The Day of the Triffids were Seeds from Space by Laurence Manning (Wonder Stories, June, 1930) with its intelligent plants grown from unknown spores, and Edgar Wallace's short tale, The Black Grippe, from the March, 1920, Newnes' Strand Magazine, in which the entire world is stricken blind for six days."

Page 262: "Daniel Keyes' Hugo-winning short story, Flowers for Algernon, could well have been inspired by Pebble in the Sky."

Page 202: "They, appearing in Unknown the same month, was an incisively effective piece, reminiscent of Mark Twain's The Mysterious Traveler." (Even with the proper title on the Twain story, the only possible reason for making the comparison that I can think of is that this is one Twain story that Moskowitz is familiar with and so he is throwing it in to see the ripples - on page 350, Moskowitz says that a Robert Bloch story, "Funnel of God", "reminded the readers of the defiant negativism of Mark Twain's despairing The Mysterious Stranger." Which readers? Did it really? Look at them ripples.)

If you want biography and a certain amount of bibliography and you are willing to take a chance on errors, and you can overlook the God-awful writing, go ahead and buy SEEKERS OF TOMORROW. But my opinion is that it is a flawed rutabaga.

BY THE GOLDEN RIVER

by Mathew Drahan

By the golden river look away,
And see not the fair land that you've betrayed.
Hang your head and hear silence.
Throw mocking laughter sailing,
And cry that torment might leave;
That the depths of love might loose,
And the specter fade away.

To faceless, grieving night go
Forever hearing, "traitor".

EXCERPT FROM THAT BRILLIANT
HOLLYWOOD PRODUCTION (OR WAS IT)
"RETURN OF THE GIANT WATER LOUSE!!!"
JAPANESE ?

..... scenario by GENE DEWEESE

The scene is a briefing room in a scientific laboratory. The Chief Scientist is explaining his Theory concerning the gigantic creatures which have eaten most of Los Angeles and San Francisco. "Those things on the screen," he is explaining a slide projection to the audience, consisting of other Scientists (including his Lovely Daughter) and various reporters (including the Lovely Daughter's Boy Friend), "are normal, everyday water lice--not particularly harmful, though uncouth. They are, as you might gather from the name, mostly water, which is the cause of all our trouble."

He pauses significantly and thumps the floor to indicate to the projector operator (the Cloddish Comic Relief) that the next slide should be shown. "A Hydrogen Bomb, lady and gentlemen! As you know, the chief ingredient of the H-bomb--as it is affectionately known to us in the 'know'--is tritium, or 'heavy-heavy hydrogen, the basis for 'heavy-heavy water'."

"Now my Theory is this: In one of the series of tests over the past few years, there was a side effect, producing, somehow, a great deal of heavy-heavy water out of the ordinary sea water in which the bomb was exploded. Radio-active heavy-heavy water! Now, this double-heavy water couldn't float, of course, being heavy, so it sank.

"Living near the bottom of this section there is a particular type of furry octopus which is afflicted with lice. For some reason this 'heavy-heavy water' affected the lice immediately, changing them into 'heavy water lice'. They gained weight and grew tremendously until they had devoured the furry octopi they had been living on.

"Once they had eliminated this food source--and, of course, being radioactive as well as heavy, they discovered no other sea creatures would let the lice near, and they were too fat and clumsy to sneak up on anything--they had to search elsewhere.

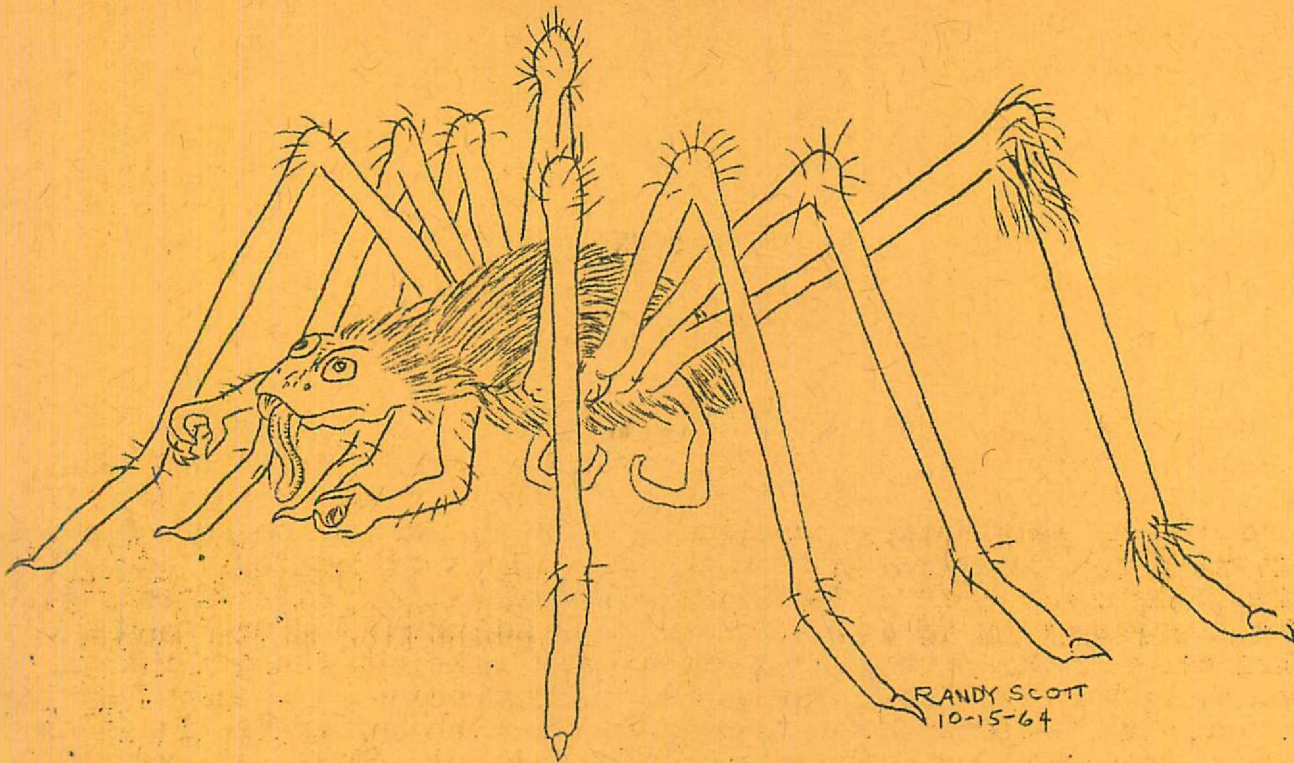
"Elsewhere turned out to be Los Angeles. There they got a great meal with a minimum of effort--the Dodgers were playing a home game to a holiday crowd--then holed up for a hot day in the L.A. storm drains.

"Now my Theory for Their Destruction is this: Since they are water lice, basically, our only chance is to dehydrate them!"

A hushed, awed silence falls over the room. One could hear an octopus hair drop.

"And now I'll turn the briefing over to the expert we have called in. Dr. Murchly has been head of the Research Department of the Acme Powdered Egg and Milk Co. for fifteen years. Dr. Murchly..."

"Before I give you my plan, let me explain 'dehydration'." Doctor Murchly thumps the floor for the next slide. "If you will examine the



word on the screen, you will first see 'de' which means 'not'; then 'hydrate' which means, for all practical purposes, watery. And finally--this is the most important part, so pay attention-- 'ion'!

"Taking them all together, they mean 'taking away the watery ion'.

"My research department has been recently experimenting with something which may revolutionize the dehydration business: An 'anti-ion'. Wherever these anti-ions are present, no normal ion can exist--they destroy each other. We have this down to a point where we can produce these anti-ions artificially in a powder form. Now each anti-ion, in powdered, concentrated form, is equal to a great many thousands of normal 'watery ions', so I have calculated that for 10,000 water lice, each weighing about a ton, perhaps three tons of anti-ion powder would be needed."

"If I get the go-ahead, I could have this produced in a matter of days..."

(The rest of this manuscript, found in some old ruins, is lost. The only evidence is that the last page has water-stained louse-tooth markings all over it.)

UNTITLED VERSE

My stomach is a caged beast
That's used to being fed.
It prowls around inside of me
And rumbles at my head.
My head's a bitter, bloated bird
That's perched upon my shoulder.
It peers about with beady eyes
And keeps on growing older.

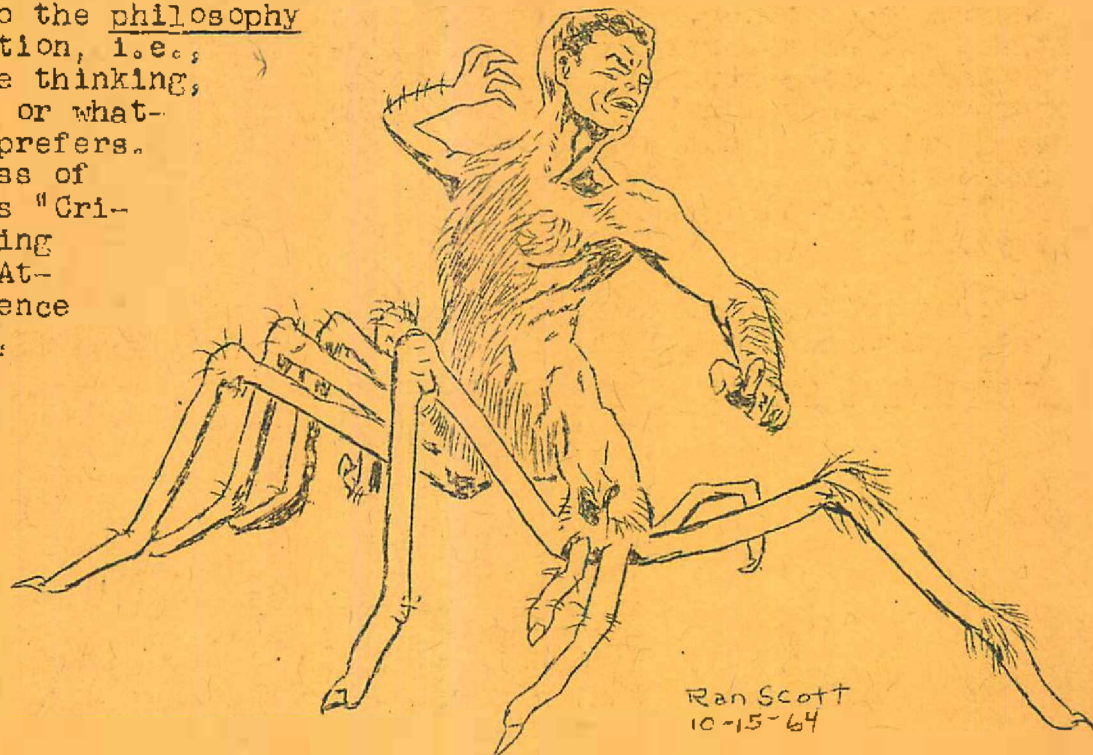
Kingsley Amis:

A Practical Nightmare

--- article by ---STEPHEN PICKERING ---

Judith Merrill described Kingsley Amis' flagrant *NEW MAPS OF HELL*, (Harcourt, Brace, 1960) as a "volume of considerable arrogance, ill-considered opinion, and unconsidering slovenliness of research" and its author as a "British humorist with pretensions to critical judgment of science fantasy." (YEAR'S BEST SF #5) And similar altercations against Amis were quite prevalent, although P. Schuyler Miller was maudlinly delighted with the book as was Arthur C. Clarke; on the other hand, Damon Knight noted that "what particularly fascinates me about the book, however, is its vivid demonstration of how much any critic is at the mercy of his own bias. To Amis, although he perceives and respects other values, the main thing about science fiction is its satirical quality" (*Fantasy and Science Fiction*, June 1960).

And, five years later, Kingsley Amis is still promulgating his own self-styled modes of "criticism," somewhat mellowed, but appears to be a pale and emasculated priest, singing his litanies of illogical reasoning in empty chapels. However much one disagrees with the past genealogies of the history of science fiction before the advent of Gernsback in 1911, once cannot show and aversion to the philosophy of science fiction, i.e., the speculative thinking, extrapolation, or whatever term one prefers. This, regardless of whether Plato's "Crittias" (describing the island of Atlantis) is science fiction or not, makes science fiction/social fiction the oldest existing prose fiction.¹ To paraphrase John Steinbeck, science fiction is as old as speech; it grew out



1. Cf. *MODERN SCIENCE FICTION*, ed., Reginald Bretnor, 1953.

of human need for it, and it has not changed except to become more needed. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Amis does not possess a firm perspective on the trends of literature and society, although he rather ostentatiously assumes that his word is God Spoken Truth.

A recent example of Amis' sometimes apt, sometimes debauchery of reason is in Holiday magazine for February of 1965. The article is "Science Fiction: A Practical Nightmare." And it is a redundant repeat of Amis' other cloistered writings of exasperation, coupled with an often "rational" attempt at viewing science fiction.

Amis, in the Holiday article, points that perhaps due to the "vulgar and sensational" artwork or to the "revolting" writing he first became interested in science fiction. However, as one can see in the articles of Arthur Jean Cox and Leland Sapiro in the early Fifties, pulp science fiction changed, was trammelled, bludgeoned, and shaped by Campbell (whom Amis feels is a crank and a "deviant character of marked ferocity"). However, one ascertains that Amis, with almost nauseating cultural chauvinism, feels that this early acquaintance with Gernsback's anti-scientific, anti-intellectual magazines, gives him undaunted acumen in to the directions, shapes, and innovators of science fiction. In NEW MAPS OF HELL, he wrote: "...the only way to find out about a subject is to study it, not...to sample it merely." But, in the Holiday article, he writes that "the writer's typical concern is with a situation that couldn't arise in the world we know, but is shown arising out of some development in science or technology." This is somewhat lacking in clear and distinct ideas: scientific advance is not a thing, an alienated world differing from our own, and therefore any social trend is going to affect a scientific method of inquiry. And, without lengthy elucidation, we question Amis' assumption that we actually "know" our world, both physical and mental. Amis has not given his subject assiduous thought.

However, Amis' correct premises are surprising in their clarity and lack of gaping generalities. Writing in Holiday, he says: "Science fiction applies its realism not only to what is wonderful, but also to what is disturbing, dismaying, frightening. This is no longer an escapist medium; nobody takes any further notice of little green men from Venus; Buck Rogers is dead. What we have now is a form of writing in which contemporary man can identify and spotlight the various forces that make his life difficult and dangerous. These forces may range from neurosis to the external threats of power politics, but they are all very much of our own day." This is a clear-cut expression of sentiment which has been prevalent since the early days of Galaxy, but Amis stumbles, falls, trying to rise up again, but falls permanently when he incessantly compares jazz to science fiction. Now, at first glance, one can see that sci-fi and jazz have similar purposes; production of moving emotions, effulgent moods, etc. However, they differ considerably in purpose, however esoteric it may appear to the non-science fiction reader.

In NEW MAPS OF HELL, Amis first focalized upon what he calls science fiction writer's "apologist" plea, i.e., the claim by those more astute sci-fi intellectuals that one can trace the history of the field to Plato, More, Swift, etc. "Both emerged," he writes in his book, "as self-contained entities some time in the second or third decade of the century, and both, far more precisely, underwent rapid internal change about 1940...Both of these fields, again, have thrown up a large number of interesting and competent figures without producing anybody of first-rate importance; both have arrived at a state of anxious and largely

naive self-consciousness..." Unfortunately, throughout both his book and article, this slighting tone fails to be substantiated, his criteria are both illogical and inconsistent.

Because of the lack of Faulkners and Hemingways, in contemporary science fiction, Amis feels that he can perpetuate a most calamitous view of the field, whether toward C.M. Kornbluth or John Campbell. For example, in his Holiday article, Amis subtly refers to Campbell's enthusiasm for Dianetics over a decade ago, by saying that "sometimes he /the science fiction writer/ is a crank. He will found or join a 'mental science' cult, experiment with a telepathy machine, dabble in reincarnation. And he tends to see science fiction in some improbable roles, as the destined and early successor to the whole of serious fiction, as recruitment propaganda for the space service. But more often he...regards his chosen medium with appropriate seriousness, delighting in its novel powers yet critically concerned with its aims and standards, making few concessions to sex or horror or sensationalism." The latter portion of Amis' paragraph is logical, but the first portion, again, is pompous and with no elucidation. And as for Steinbeck or Faulkner or Hemingway being absent in science fiction, one must agree and, simultaneously, disagree. Faulkner was a "muckraker", an adulator or a dead generation's lost philosophy, but, likewise, condemning all aspects which are not equatable with Victorian moral philosophy. And Heinlein, quite often, displays even more acumen into social organization than did Steinbeck, and Ray Bradbury is, of course, often compared as the successor to Hemingway's masterful mood pieces and provocative philosophies. We suggest that Mr. Amis study a bit more before he endeavors to set science fiction, or John Campbell, back on their heels.

Despite these many inconsistencies in both conclusions and deductions Amis does make analytical comments on the future of science fiction. In the Holiday essay, Amis feels that "science fiction tackles the large, general themes which general fiction has recently tended either to avoid or to smother and obscure in contemporary social detail: man's loneliness in the universe, his desire for immortality, the parochialism of his values, the hidden power of his animal nature. And its writers are just beginning to acquire the maturity to handle these subjects adequately."

In 1953, Reginald Bretnor felt that the Fifties would see a consolidation, or assimilation so to speak, of both the main stream and science fiction, and felt that the two, formerly differentiated, would be difficult to tell apart. This has become an ostensible trend perhaps more now than before, and, too, Mr. Amis will likely coerce his opinions with more knowledge. And we suggest, for the time being, that he keep his poetry and "comedy", leaving critical analysis to more worthy minds.

INFORMATION BUREAU ANNEX: Bob Smith's question about the ET's who returned Earth's garbage... that was in "The Perfect Incinerator", by Arthur Lambert, SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY, Winter 1942

(...postcard from Don Franson)

/And thanks, Don. I thought the story didn't sound too familiar; I guess I never read it. I don't have too many of the old series of SFQ.

RSC/

Paul Shingleton, 874 South Walnut St, St. Albans, West Virginia 25177, is in the process of re-entering fandom. He didn't ask for free fanzines, but he'd probably appreciate any that aspiring editors might want to send him.

Golden Minutes

THE WEIRDSTONE OF BRISINGAMEN, by Alan Garner (Ace, 50¢) I gave this a rave review when I first read the British pb edition; I might as well repeat it here, especially since this version has something the Puffin edition did not; interior illustrations by Jim Cawthorn. The story is based on a local Alderly legend, influenced heavily by Tolkien, and is one of the best sword-and-sorcery books available, next to The Lord Of The Rings itself. The characters are similar; for Gandalf we have Cadelin, Durathror the dwarf replaces Gimli the dwarf, etc. (Fenodyree the dwarf seems to replace Legolas the elf, but we must have some originality.) The hobbits are replaced by two human children. The plot, though cut down, is quite similar to that of Lord Of The Rings. Despite all this, it's a good novel in its own right. It was written as a juvenile, but then one reason people become sf fans is because they never quite grew up. This is your best book of the month. There is a sequel, which Ace will doubtless publish in due course, but Weirdstone is complete in itself.

THE TIME TRADERS, by Andre Norton (Ace, 40¢) A reissue of the first book of Miss Norton's Time Traders series. As I've said before, her work is remarkably even and it's hard to pick one book which is much better than another (always excepting Witch World) but I enjoyed this somewhat more than the usual Norton book. The background is as fascinating as usual and the plot -- a military operation, time-traveling into the past in the search for secret weapons -- is better than most. If you don't already have it, get it.

THONGOR OF LEMURIA, by Lin Carter (Ace, 40¢) For once, the sequel is better than the original. At least, I didn't spot any major mistakes in this one (but then I didn't find as many in Wizard of Lemuria as Harry Harrison did in his review for AMRA). There are a few little oddities, though. Such as the river which apparently flows uphill -- they start off by falling into an underground river, but "The level of the river had risen steadily without their noticing, and now it burst into the open air of morning." Then there is the time when the villains lose their air-boat (this is the perpetual-motion one that our hero operated at first sight in the previous book) and the Alchemist hisses "We must get it back -- we cannot construct the aerial fleet without the prototype as guide and model." Which leads to another classic dilemma; if one can't copy the original without having the original in sight to use as a guide, how did one manage to build the original in the first place? Strange are the ways of sorcerers in Carter's worlds. Still, it is an improvement on the first book, and is almost up to the Burroughs level. The plot is the usual one; muscular hero is helping beautiful princess to regain her rightful throne from the villainous high priest.

THE KAR-CHEE REIGN, by Avram Davidson/ROCANNON'S WORLD, by Ursula K. LeGuin (Ace, 50¢) Aside from a horrible cover by McConnell, the LeGuin half is a pretty fair science-and-sorcery book. The short story which appears as a prologue appeared in AMAZING STORIES in '64, and Ace duly notes the fact. Remainder is original; scientist trapped on barbarian planet destroys alien warship which is using the planet as a base,

running into all sorts of adventures and Ancient Knowledge along the way. A sort of imitation of Leigh Brackett's Mars, not badly done at all. The Davidson half is a prelude to his previous Rogue Dragon, describing one of the first of the human revolts against the Kar-Chee masters. Avram has the novel form pretty well whipped by now, and this is smoothly done, though the plot has never been terribly convincing, no matter who used it. I mean, after all, we're expected to believe that strong-willed humans can, practically bare-handed, defeat a race of aliens that conquered civilized humanity. (Not only conquered them, but crushed them utterly.) I suppose the basic philosophy is that the noble savage can by sheer strength of will, overcome machine-based civilization. It's popular in these mechanical times, but it isn't very credible. (However, very few sf-adventure stories have really credible plots; this one is no worse than most, and it's handled better than usual.)

WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION: 1966, ed. by Don Wollheim and Terry Carr (Ace, 60¢) Four stories from GALAXY, 3 from IF, 2 from F&SF, 2 from AMAZING, 1 from ANALOG, 2 from NEW WORLDS and 1 from BOY'S LIFE. Not too much new for regular readers (the one from BOY'S LIFE is Arthur Clarke's "Sunjammer", which has been reprinted before), but a good assortment of stories. Exceptional items are "Aparthness" by Vernor Vinge, "Sunjammer", Joe Green's "Decision Makers", Lin Carter's "Uncollected Works", and "The Captive Djinn" by Christopher Anvil (which is pure ham, but my kind of ham). The remainder are average or better in quality. 280 pages for your money, which is a big book by pb standards these days.

GHOSTS I'VE MET, by Hans Holzer (Ace, 60¢) This is Holzer's second book. Since I was unable to finish his first one, I skimmed this rather warily. Seems to be about the same as the first. Holzer tries to be popular and entertaining as well as to convince you of the reality of his ghosts. (and evidently he succeeds with a lot of people) but his style grates on my nerves. Also, when the cover blurb of an occult pb says "authenticated stories", it seems to mean that the author assures you that everything in the book is true. Despite the assurance, I'm afraid I didn't believe a word of it.

SHORT FRIDAY AND OTHER STORIES, by Isaac Bashevis Singer (Signet, 75¢) The cover blurb calls Singer "one of the best writers of fiction in America". Maybe; personally I'll take Avram Davidson. However, most of these are good stories, and about half of them are fantasy. (All of them are Jewish.) My own favorite was "Jachid And Jechidah", based on the postulate that Earth is the Hellish half of the hereafter of angels. (If that's confusing, read the story.) Second favorite was "Yentl The Yeshiva Boy", which isn't fantasy at all, but is a fascinating account of Polish Jews.

THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD, by H.P. Lovecraft (Belmont, 50¢) Though I'm not a Lovecraft fan, I rather enjoyed this. It's the usual story of ancient evil -- in this case, the preserved soul of a Salem wizard who takes possession of the body of a modern antiquarian. However, possibly because he had more space in the novel form, Lovecraft takes a more leisurely pace and doesn't try to overwhelm the reader with horror from the first page. Any long-time reader will be irritated by the utter obtuseness of the central character, but otherwise the plot moves along nicely, with some excellent descriptive passages. Worth reading.

NEW WRITINGS IN SF-5, ed. by John Carnell (Corgi, 3/6) I see that Bantam is reprinting this series here; #1 is on the stands. The books feature

original short stories and novelets. The type varies considerably, but tends to be both closer to the "classical" science fiction type and better written than most new fiction in today's magazines. Even tho they are being reprinted, I don't intend to wait for the US edition; I'll continue to get them from my British dealer. They're worth a bit of added trouble. This particular volume isn't as good as preceding ones, but contains one short story that should become a stf classic; Eric Williams' "Sunout". This concerns the lives of an observatory staff on the last day before the sun goes out -- and points the moral that we are all trapped by our everyday activities.

THE RAGGED EDGE, by John Christopher (Doubleday Book Club, \$1.20) Christopher writes better disaster books than most British writers, but they are still disaster books and they are still somewhat dull, and very much like the disaster books that every other British writer puts out. Critics seem to find a great insight into humanity in them, but I'm afraid that I don't. Not on the dozenth or so repetition of the plot, at least. Mr. Christopher achieves more sexual realism than he did in Death Of Grass, but that's about all -- and it's nothing particularly new, anyway. If you really dig disaster books (like I do alien civilization books) you'll like this, because it's an excellent example of the breed.

MINDBWAP, by Robert Sheckley (Book Club, \$1.20) In an article in the latest ZENITH, Richard Gordon compares Sheckley to Kurt Vonnegut and J. G. Ballard. It seems a valid comparison, especially after reading this book, which seems to be Sheckley's answer to Cat's Cradle. (That is, it is filled with outrageous humor, it parodies anything and everything, and it doesn't make much sense.) The theme is the same one that Sheckley has been beating to death in his last several stories; that "reality" is subjective. Sheckley seems obsessed with the idea that things are seldom what they seem, and I can't think why. The knowledge has been around for years; why the panic now? I can't say I thought much of the book as a whole, but chapters 23 thru 30 contain a beautiful parody of historical novels -- I believe the particular writer being taken apart is Costain, but I've never read enough of Costain's books to be sure. (One was quite enough, and more than enough.) At any rate, I felt that section alone was worth the price of the book (and a good thing, too, since the other sections weren't.)

FROOMB!, by John Lymington (Book Club, \$1.20) Anybody who thinks Heinlein is reactionary should read this. The entire theme of the book is that the world is going to hell in a handbasket and someone should stop it. They don't do things the way they used to -- Bradbury is at least poetic in his maudlin sentiment; Lymington isn't. We should stop spraying insects, eat only "natural" food, stop unGodly scientific experiments, ban the bomb (that's about the only liberal theme in the book) and quit taking pills. I didn't notice anything about fluoridating the water, but then I didn't read very carefully. All of this is set forth in a sort of hysterically frenzied style, like a revival preacher. I was completely disgusted by the entire thing. (And I'm a conservative.)

THE RARE BREED, by Theodore Sturgeon (Gold Medal, 50¢) Bob Briney first mentioned this to me; it's a novelization of a current movie -- one of the new wide-screen westerns. About all it shows is that over the years the western plot has been thoroughly mined out; the lode is exhausted. Not even Sturgeon can make it good, though he does his best and comes up with a book that I'll bet is far superior to the movie it's based on. Even so, the entire book is faintly ridiculous. Be on the lookout for it if you're a Sturgeon fan. Otherwise not recommended.

THE SKYLARK OF SPACE, by E. E. Smith (Pyramid, 60¢) This is Pyramid's third printing of the old Doc Smith classic, and if you don't have one of the previous editions you really should get this one. Not because the story is exceptional -- the writing is pretty awful -- but because it's a science-fiction landmark. This is the novel which launched "interstellar" (as opposed to interplanetary) science fiction. And, if you really enjoy long semi-scientific explanations of improbable gimmicks, there are some beauties here (though Campbell rather surpassed Smith in that respect). And, of course, this book is as old as I am. If it dodgers a little, well, so do I.

THE WONDER WAR, by Laurence M. Janifer (Pyramid, 40¢) I didn't like this one when it first appeared, and Pyramid's second edition hasn't improved it any. It's supposed to be a terribly funny book about all sorts of ridiculous ways of halting combat and confusing the combatants -- it isn't, but it's supposed to be. In practice, it's a rather low-grade farce, the humor being a couple of notches below that of the average tv comedy show. Or the average tv soap opera, for that matter.

THE WATCH BELOW, by James White (Ballantine, 50¢) I realize that almost every sf author has to have a crack at the "Universe" plot sooner or later, and that with all these attempts it's getting harder and harder to come up with anything new. Okay, White has come up with something new. Instead of putting his generations of crew members in an interstellar ship, he's put them in the hold of a torpedoed oil tanker. My disbelief will take a lot of suspending, but there are limits. Not to mention that out of 140,000,000 square miles of ocean on this planet, his alien spaceship (he has two Universe-plots running simultaneously; another first) just happens to land right on top of the tanker in time for a rousing finish. Slick writing, but.....

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THE ORIGINAL FLASH GORDON SERIAL NOW CONDENSED TO FEATURE FILM LENGTH OF SLIGHTLY MORE THAN ONE HOUR, WAS RECENTLY TELEVISED IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA. WHILE PURISTS MAY OBJECT TO THIS DIGEST VERSION, THE FILM EDITOR HAS NEVERTHELESS RETAINED THE STORY THREAD AND MUCH OF THE VINTAGE FLAVOR OF THE ORIGINAL FLASH GORDON SERIAL. THE SOUNDTRACK, IN ALL ITS GLORY, IS A WONDROUS COLLECTION OF NOISES. ALL OF THE OMINOUS MUSIC, THE DEATHLESS PROSE OF CHARLES MIDDLETON AS MING THE MERCILESS, ETC., ETC., HAVE BEEN PRESERVED ON THE NEW VERSION. TAPE RECORDER ENTHUSIASTS MAY ORDER A COPY FROM ME FOR \$10.00 POSTPAID, WHICH INCLUDES A REEL OF GOOD QUALITY RECORDING TAPE. SPECIFY YOUR CHOICE OF QUARTER TRACK OR HALF TRACK RECORDING, 7 1/2 IPS or 3 3/4 IPS.

Irv Jacobs, P.O. Box 574, National City, California 92050

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Grumblings

John Brunner, 17d Frognal, London, NW3,
England

I'm about a third of the way through a new novel on commission for Penguin and I have to get it to a point at which I can safely interrupt myself before Easter because directly after the British convention

ps. I have to go back and do the third rewrite on the script of a movie adapted from a Murray Leinster novel. So you'll forgive me for not being able to sit down and work through the Steinitz-Tchigorin game to see exactly what's wrong with your analysis of SQUARES OF THE CITY.

(I finished the book in May 1960, so it's not what

you'd call fresh in my mind.)

My immediate impression, though, is that what's foxing you is excessive preoccupation with the individual moves. I tried to look at the game in terms of a series of fresh positions, or situations, arising out of each successive move, rather than a string of separate steps. A single move can affect easily half a dozen pieces -- perhaps the man which is moved attacks one enemy piece, is in turn threatened by another, and covers a piece on its own side already in danger, while frustrating a developing attack on its former position and also covering a square involved in yet another potential attack, which it then undermines.

I should have my original analysis of the game somewhere... Yes, here we are. I can straighten you out on that Move 19 which was puzzling you, at least. Bear in mind that the pawn which is now on the Rook file isn't the RP, but the KtP which, as the result of a capture, has switched files. In other words this is Fats Brown. (Tezol is a KP and couldn't have got over to the side of the board.)

I disagree completely with Banks Mebane about being able to recover the game without a key. This is a novel, not a puzzle-book, and the narrator is supposed to be one of the pieces in play; it would have been unconvincing, I think, to give him the godlike knowledge of the total situation at every stage which would be necessary, and telling the story through the viewpoint of one of those in the secret would have removed what small degree of suspense survived my blood-sweat-and-tears adaptation of the characters so that their roles would remain consistent. That was the toughest part of it, and I don't imagine I need to explain why; I had to toss out literally dozens of false starts because I found my plane let me down halfway through the game by making some piece behave inconsistently.

I do find it tremendously flattering that you should have gone to so much trouble, by the way.

The book isn't by any means perfect, though I still think it's closer to "the" chess-novel than its predecessors. In fact I have the spare MS in this room at the moment, back from Penguin (who are going to do the English edition) so that I can iron out a few loose ends. In particular, I stupidly forgot to cover one bad inconsistency: if Maria Posador was a

worried about Tezol's fine, why didn't she pay it herself? There was a reason, and it got lost during rewriting, so I now propose to put it back - Vados had forbidden her to take part in political activities or contribute to party funds on pain of renewed deportation. (I think this is clear from the context, but like you say not everyone is good at getting implications, so I'd better spell it out.)

Thanks for plugging it for the Hugo. I expect the award will go to DUNE this year, but it's always nice to be included in the short list!

/Sorry, but THE GAME OF CHESS specifically states that the Rook's Pawn (Brown) is taken on move 17, as Stratton noted. The only pawn left to be taken on move 19 is the King's Pawn (Tezol), and the move is still shown out of order in SQUARES OF THE CITY, as far as I can see. I agree that one needn't be able to pick out the moves without a knowledge of the original game. For that matter, while I enjoyed trying to puzzle out the moves, I had far more fun in simply reading the book as an adventure novel, before receiving Stratton's article. RSC/

William Danner, R.D. 1, Kennerdell, Pennsylvania

Generous of Tolkien to accept royalties from Ace, isn't it? As you know I don't care much for Tolkien, but I get a good laugh from those professed admirers who spell his name Tolkein...I agree with you about a good many things, but I'm afraid THE SQUARES OF THE CITY isn't one of them. I bought it quite some time ago, whether as a result of your review or not I'm not sure, and only a few weeks ago got it out to read. I found it fairly entertaining up to page 92, where I abruptly stopped. Maybe sometime when I have forgotten my annoyance (if that time ever comes) I'll get it out and read some more, but I doubt it. It seems to me incredible in this age of taperecorders that any author could use as an important plot gimmick something that is utterly impossible, now and forevermore. For, of course, it is utterly impossible to get any information whatever from stationary magnetic tape (except such purely optical information as its color, texture, etc.). Apparently Brunner seems to think that video tape is a sort of super movie film with countless tiny photographic images in its oxide surface. I could amplify, but why bother? It seems so obvious that magnetic tape must be in motion to be useful, and magnetic video tape must have a speed relative to its head that is very rapid. Brunner specifically states that the machine was a professional one and these things have rotating heads and 2" tape running at 15 ips, so that the resultant speed is several hundred inches per second. As the machine slows down picture quality deteriorates rapidly and when it is stopped there is no picture at all, ever, under any circumstances.

The works of Ian Fleming, however, are something I agree completely about. I have never read one of them but when "Goldfinger"



came to the Kayton I ill-advisedly wasted a buck to see it. I never saw such an unrelieved long stretch of violence in my life and never want to see such another. It did have a laugh or two, such as the pressing of a large, heavy automobile, complete with its occupant and a heavy load of solid gold (which is pretty damn incompressible) into a small hunk of scrap which was loaded on a small pickup truck without depressing its springs. I decided as I left the theatre never to see another Bond movie or read any of the books. Phooey! But I must remember to look for "Loxfinger".

Well, not quite. Those little portable torches available almost everywhere are very handy little gadgets (I have one myself) but they are not oxy-acetylene torches, which make a much hotter flame than the little propane torches. I've never seen Batman and have no intention of seeing him, but I presume his torch is one that can be used for welding and cutting steel.

Well, I was getting Asf in 1945 and found that Campbell's blurb about "The World of A" was way off base. I thought the story a real stinker and couldn't wade through its sequel at all. I had found van Vogt's previous stories pretty entertaining despite some idiotic descriptions of what were supposed to be current industrial practices, but starting with the A business they became more and more obscure and dull.

/I'm not a gimlet-eyed snob; I own two tape recorders and I never even thought about the idea of stopping a magnetic tape to get a "still" from it. As for the torch, tho; Gene didn't say "oxy-acetylene torch", he said "blowtorch". And I say the propane torch is a blowtorch. RSC7

Robert E. Briney, 176 E. Stadium Drive, West Lafayette, Indiana, 47906

I recently got a copy of SaMoskowitz's SEEKERS OF TOMORROW, and have been reading at it off and on. It is a distinct improvement over the magazine versions of the articles (Moskowitz's catachrestic prose is less obtrusive), but could still stand some editorial work - for example, certain items of information are repeated over and over in the separate chapters. This was fine when the articles appeared at long intervals in magazines, but is very noticeable and annoying in the book version. And for a book by someone who knows and loves sf as much as Moskowitz does, there are an awful lot of misspellings, misquotations, etc. A well-known novel by Pohl and Kornbluth is referred to several times as GRAVY TRAIN... A certain story by Lewis Padgett is cited as "Twonkey;" the leading character in van Vogt's EMPIRE OF THE ATOM is identified as Clare Linn; a Leiber collection is called SHADOWS OF EYES... These are only a few of the items that happened to stick in my memory. There are probably more.

For the past several weeks, the local radio station has been advertising a new radio serial which is supposed to start on April 5th. "From out of the depths of space, from a planet far from Earth, comes that foe of evil...WONDER MOTHER!" I have no idea whether or not it is all an elaborate gag; I mean (of course it's a gag) whether there will actually be such a program. Will keep you informed.

Note to Gene DeWeese: if that was "An Evening with Batman and Robin" which you saw, the serial in which J. Carroll Naish played the evil Japanese spy Dr. Daka (and this is the only Batman serial I know of), then it was not Robert Lowery who played Batman, but someone named (I think) Douglas Croft. Whoever it was smirked a great deal like Lowery, though.

Disliking Howard's fantasies provides no reason for liking his Westerns, of course, but it also provides no basis for disliking them. His

Westerns are completely unlike anything else he wrote.

Asimov's novelization of FANTASTIC VOYAGE is now out (or due soon) in hard covers, at \$3.95. I'll wait for the paperback.

After SHADOW OF FU MANCHU there were two more Fu books which never appeared in hard covers in the U.S., but only as Gold Medal originals. Both are even worse than SHADOW.

Jack Vance's new Ace novel, THE BRAINS OF EARTH, is apparently an original; it certainly doesn't resemble anything I remember from the magazines. It isn't very good, either.

/Gravy Train? Well, fans have been saying for years that stf is going to the dogs... RSC7

Bob Tucker, Box 506, Heyworth, Illinois, 61745

Derek Nelson's article on the shabby state of Canadian-American relations is a splendid piece of work, the kind of work that could profitably be enlarged to cover many more pages than you would care to devote to it. I'd certainly like to read more about the subject and I wish Nelson had the opportunity to publish more.

I was aware, of course, of certain bad feelings between the two countries, probably because fans and fan magazines are more candid (and often more honest) than daily newspapers and magazines, and we have had enough candid Canadian people in fandom to have some knowledge of the situation. I had believed that most of the fault lay with three classes of Americans: the stupid tourists who behave like dolts up there, the equally stupid politicians who behave as if Washington owned the Western Hemisphere, and the grubby gentlemen in the financial world who want to own a piece of every profitable venture anywhere in the world. (And of course, stupid writers in reactionary magazines, like the Post, Digest, and Look, help none at all.)

I think one of the major crises in our future will be the question of a Canadian-American merger. There will be a vast political campaign with posters, propaganda, and vote buying, with every adult from the Pole to the Rio Grande voting on the proposal of One Nation. That will be a bloody day, mark my word. The Canadians won't be the only ones against it -- think of the turmoil the question would cause in the Southern states.

So let's have more Nelson.

Gene DeWeese, 2718 N. Prospect Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53211

Namor in the bathroom? How about the Human Torch in the furnace room?

Now that your Hugo has arrived, I offer you an appropriate interlineation for your lone-time detractors: From page 79 of the Summer 1944 issue of Planet Stories, in Manly Wade Wellman's (who else?) WARRIOR OF TWO WORLDS:

"Forgive me, great Yandro...I did not know."

Just read Brunner's ATLANTIC ABOMINATION. If Hollywood insists on making monster movies, why can't they just follow something like this verbatim? It wasn't real great as a book, but, comparatively speaking, it would be a great movie.

PS: What have you been sending Lin Carter? I see in his column in If (or is it another mag? I don't have it up here with me...) that Yandro is a yellow 16-pager. Mayhap he didn't like your review of his WIZARD OF LEMURIA--or whatever it was called?

PPS: If Briney has trouble accepting Christopher Lee as Fu Manchu,

he must be positively apoplectic now that Henry Silva is playing Mr. Moto...

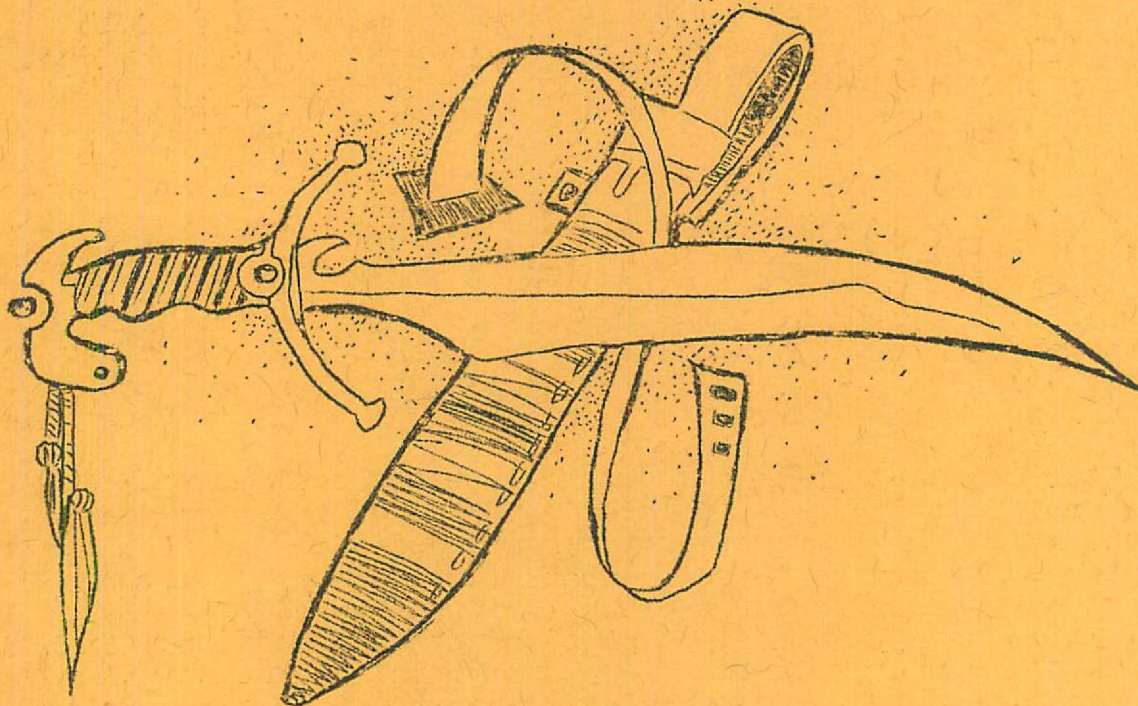
/Carter must be returning good for evil, etc. I didn't give WIZARD OF LEMURIA half the going over that Harry Harrison did in Amra --- so which two fanzines does he review?
RSC7

Willem Van den Broek, 1128 Birk, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48103

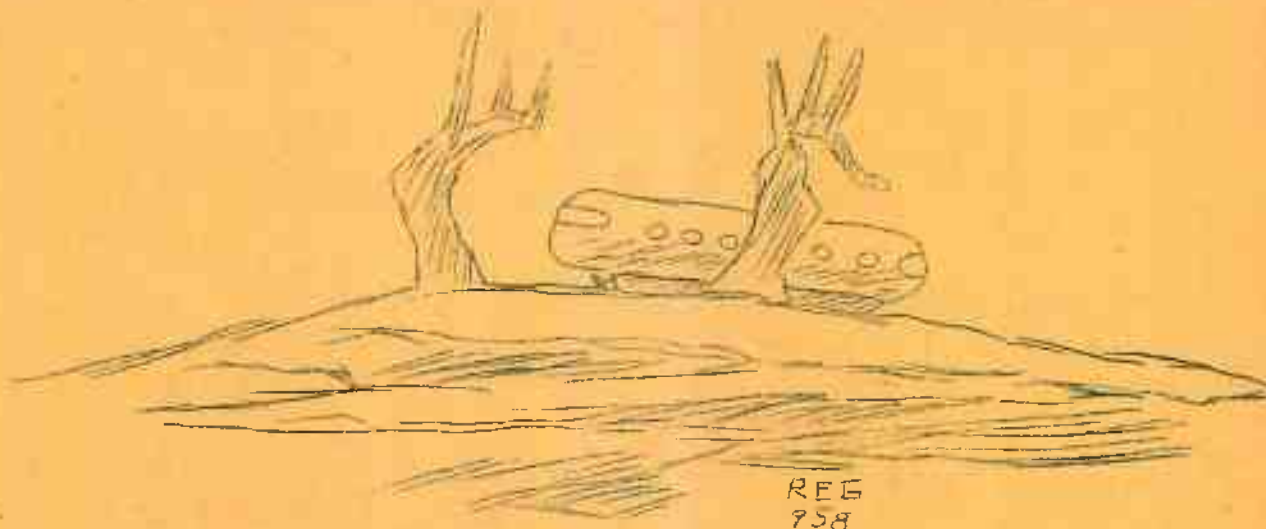
I'm afraid Stratton's article came too late: already struggled through SQUARES OF THE CITY and don't plan to waste any more time on it. Hard to be anything but a letdown after Brunner brags about it in Worldcon speech, Ballantine brags about it on both covers, chess expert brags about it on inside, and Brunner brags again about it in prologue and epilogue. Don't really blame him (Brunner); must have been the devil to write. Still, seems to have a nice fast action to it if you could read through it real quick; trouble is, anything with more than one character in it gets me mixed up, even Pook and Christopher Robin. That's why Halevy's never-ending index has scared me away from the Tolkien stuff.

Juanita's egg cooker affair practically had me rolling on the floor, a welcome tension relief after several hours of goshawful earthshaking mess in Southeast Asia. Domestic disasters are so hilariously trivial-enormous. Why do you have all the luck? Nothing like that around here except female cat in heat, several unhappy toms making racket nights on end, and now very pregnant cat. Usual stuff in comparison; the course of nature and all that.

Am always glad to see a large "Golden Minutes" dept., for the same reason I like SFReview, which I guess isn't much of a compliment down your way. Somehow putting each book in its own little slot, if even with only a short informal paragraph, gives me an immense feeling of satisfaction. I have a passion for organization, like to see all things



Atom.



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in their places, hate current events which are such a mess. Like Roman history or Middle Ages: emperor here, emperor here, emperor here; Otto, Otto, Otto, Henry, Conrad, Henry. Nice. Nice.

Still can't see eye-eye with you on Tolkien snafu. Sure, Houghton-Mifflin is at fault, but I still don't like the way Ace tried to manage things. I guess I'd like to see everyone be nice to everyone else, and business just isn't that way. Too amoral, that's why I've never entertained thoughts of going into the Capitalistic world very much, even though I have a wheeler-dealer instinct in me which is repressed by revulsion. Ivory tower for this kid I guess; don't like human nature.

/I'm no Middle Ages expert, but I always had the impression that they were somewhat of a mess. Of course, I suppose that now that they are dead and defenseless, historians can begin to tidy them up a bit.

RSC7

Banks Mebane, 6901 Strathmore St., Chevy Chase, Md., 20015

I was glad to get the Steinitz-Tchigorin game used by John Brunner for THE SQUARES OF THE CITY from the article in Yandro #156. I still hadn't found the game anywhere else or completely figured it out from the novel.

When I said that I should have been able to extract it from the story, it wasn't that I thought I was a good chess player (I'm not; I'm just a rank amateur), but I did think that the story should have been written so that any chess player could figure out the game. Of course Brunner didn't promise that; he said in his foreword that the story could be read "by the chess addict with the game beside him for reference." (In that case, the game should have been included in the note at the end of the book. Why wasn't it? It wouldn't have taken up more than a page.)

After studying the Yandro article, I can see where my difficulties came from. It was easy to interpret some of the story action as moves in the game when they were not so intended--for example, the scene in Chapter IV looked on first reading like the advance of both QP; this didn't make sense in terms of chess strategy and it was easy to see from later moves that this was not meant as a move, but such cases made me sometimes uncertain that I was interpreting the actual moves.

Another problem was determining when the two kings castled. Without hurting the story, Brunner could have had Vados and Diaz agree to per-

form some symbolic public action to indicate this. (Although come to think of it, it might weaken the story -- there would have been no logical motivation for their doing so. Still, they were so deeply involved with the game that such action might have seemed appropriate to them.)

I had difficulty in figuring out Caldwell's P-B3 and subsequently Angers B-B2 instead of B-Kt3, and it was only much later that I could be sure of it. White's move 8, Q-K2, gave me trouble too. I interpreted White's move 10, PXP, as happening when Francis was threatened by Lucas and taken off to jail, which is in the proper sequence of moves--he only committed suicide much later, but he had been effectively out of the action from the time of his arrest. I think Brunner should have made that clear in his note.

I did bull my way through to the position after move 16, and then I think Brunner definitely cheated the reader. As you pointed out in your article, Romero jailed Tezol completely out of sequence in the game. From the viewpoint of chess, if Move 17 had been BxKP, then the inevitable next move should have been Maria Posador getting Romero--since this didn't happen, I assumed that either Maria or Alejandro Mayor must have changed position earlier, and I got confused. It was always difficult to decide just when either Maria or Mayor moved, and to which squares they moved. As you point out, the indication of Maria's Kt-K2 is very questionable.

Since the exchanges of the major pieces between move 19 and move 22 were represented quite obviously, I was able to reach approximately the correct position after move 23, although I was uncertain of the location of both Hakluyt and Maria.

Although you didn't mention it in your article, the order of moves 25, 26 and 27 is thoroughly jumbled in the story. This could be defended from the viewpoint of narrative, in that Hakluyt might have learned of the moves in a different order from their occurrence, and that some moves, such as Diaz's K-B1, might never have come to his attention. However Brunner says in his note that "the moves are all there, in their correct order and -- so far as possible -- in precise correspondence with their effect on the original game." This is just not true, and while Romero's jailing of Tezol is the worst out-of-order action, the jumbling 25-27 caused me problems. I wonder if some editorial numbskull at Ballantine could have stirred the pot -- if not, then Brunner must have felt that he was making it too easy, and changed things around a bit.

I reached the latter part of the story uncertain of the positions of Hakluyt, Maria, and Diaz. This made it impossible to follow the exact maneuvering of the rooks. Brunner said that "...support of one piece by another on its own side, threatening of one or more pieces by a piece on the other side, indirect threats and the actual taking of pieces, are all as closely represented as possible in the development of the action." Sometimes he does this very well (as in 11...Q-Q3, when Christoforo Mendoza published an article defending Dominguez, Felipe Mendoza, Maria Posador, and Juan Tezol -- that exactly defined the queen's move), but at other times either the fact of the move or the exact square to which it is made is obscure. Example: At 12...Kt-KR4, it is obvious that Dominguez moves, but from the account the move might have been to K1 as easily as to KR4. I assumed that after Anger's B-Kt3, Diaz went to R2 (I'm glad to see that, according to Golombek, my judgment was good), but that made nonsense of the rest of the game, so I gave up. The various rook moves were not determined exactly enough, to reconstruct, without knowing the positions of the knights and the black king.

All of this is really criticizing Brunner for not doing what he never claimed he was trying to do -- he did not say that a reader would be able to follow the game without knowing it. Nevertheless he didn't do everything he said he was doing, and if he had, then I think I could have followed the game. Oh well, I've spent more time, and not unpleasantly, on this book than on any other novel I've ever read (except Tolkien), so I won't gripe too hard.

The quality of the story completely aside from the chess game is something I can't evaluate. I've read it through carefully twice and skimmed it many more times, but I was always thinking about the chess game. The characters seem to be well-sketched, but I wonder if the action wouldn't seem disjointed and chaotic to someone who was paying no attention to the moves.

/I believe that the events in moves 25-27 occurred in the exact sequence shown in the game. Hakluyt did not find out about them in that order - but then Hakluyt is one of the pieces, not an omniscient observer. I'm going on memory here, but I think this is the section I had to re-read carefully with the moves at hand, and when I did, they checked out. You have to keep track of the fine print, as it were. Frankly, I wouldn't even have tried to reconstruct the game without a knowledge of the moves. RSC7

Eric Blake, P.O. Box 26, Jamaica, N.Y., 11431

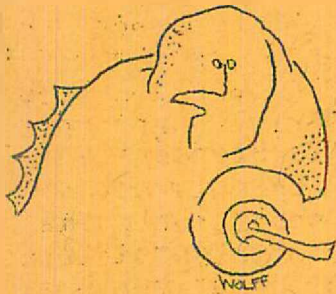
Thank you very much for the issue of Yandro. The reproduction and art are far superior to those of most fanzines. The material is also well-written. Until seeing Thomas Stratton's article "A City Full of Squares" I had not been certain of all the moves in John Brunner's novel THE SQUARES OF THE CITY. The captures, of course, were obvious, but not the moves.

As a player of chess and other board games, I am interested in their treatment in science-fiction and fantasy. The "daddy of them all", of course, is Lewis Carroll's THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS, but there is, more recently, Fritz Leiber's "64 Square Madhouse" and Brunner's book. Are there any other stories with this theme?

I see that in your reviews you include spy and mystery novels as well as science fiction and fantasy. I wonder whether these stories might not be as typical of our time, or more so, as science-fiction. Science-fiction is a consequence of an interest in science among the general public, and spy fiction like that of Ian Fleming or Andrew Garve is a consequence of concern among the general public about Communism.

In this context, I suppose that Sol Weinstein's parody on the James Bond books is intended to make us believe that the Communists are not such bad fellows after all, and that the whole cold war is really very laughable.

/Frankly, I think the idea of viewing every current novel from the point of view of current politics is ridiculous. A few other things are going on in the world, you know. Chess--well, of course, there is Burroughs' CHESSMEN OF MARS. (I haven't read it, so I don't know if it's really connected with chess or not.) I have the nagging feeling there was another chess short story before Leiber's, but I can't think what it was. RSC7



Jo(Ed. note: When answering Brunner's earlier letter, I quoted the pertinent sections of Bill Danner's letter to him, since at the time I wasn't sure that he would be receiving this Yandro. So the following is Brunner's reply to the Danner letter published on a previous page. This sort of rapid rebuttal is not going to become a standard feature of Yandro, how - ever. RSC)

John Brunner, 17d Frognal, London, NW3, England

I am disgusted by this character Bill Danner, as I always am by nit-picking knowalls who decline to believe that the next twentyfive years will bring about changes in their - even their - pet specialty. I cannot write my books to cater for people who refuse to accept any device as feasible which they cannot yet buy at their Friendly Neighbourhood Hobbishop! Damn it, they haven't any business reading SF.

Offhand I can think of not one but three ways in which a single TV frame can (or could) be held for inspection, and since the fact that isolated shots can be visually examined is about the chief advantage film has over b&w television tape a technique for getting around this will probably be in common use within the next quarter-century. It could be done (a) by echoing the appropriate segment of the signal down a delay line of suitable length, or (b) by detouring a section of the tape around an extra playing head which then revolves against the tape. Ted Sturgeon once wrote a story about a guy who could look at things the other way around from most people and solved difficulties that baffled others: A Way of Thinking, if I recall aright - or (c) by the means I assumed to be available to Maria Posador, which is to freeze the image on the phosphor of the screen itself.

If any idiot writes in to say Pegasos have stopping building cars, tell him I know that too, but he should go and look at one of these 8/10ths Cords. Cord also went out of business.

Jim Goodrich, 5 Brewster Drive, Middletown, New York, 10940

At first glance, Boland's cover on Y155 gave me impression that the figures had artificial right arms; the male also reminds me of Napoleon (the emperor, not Solo). Grabs the eye, nonetheless; but Burge's back-cover is more (much) my cup of fantastic brew. Phallic symbolism is more subtle than usual in this type of art. Am jesting! Scott's cover on 156 brought a tear to my eye too. As u know, am a monster lover (not monstrous, please) from way back when Frankenstein first lurched across the sound screen.

Much enjoyed HEG's 1-pager; he must frequent the same bars that I used to in my distant youth. The vomit on the floor could have been the result of Yan perusers retching as the effect of encountering Barr's hungry man. Assure u Stockman's Tales of Torment has no connection with ERBdom; however, I also am curious as to his objectives.

Blessings on your endeavor to get Swann reprinted over here. I did read Science Fantasy becuz of Moorcock, Rackham & Swann.

Damn, I think I lost your letter. Have xchanged a couple notes with Nigel Morland, the editor of the English Edgar Wallace Mystery Mag who is working on a bio of EW, & he reports that his xolnt zine has no connection with the item reviewed so well by Maggie & Don.

/Jim also mentions that he isn't really writing for publication; a statement which will not help him in the

slightest. Fanzine editors are notorious for publishing only those epistles which aren't supposed to be published. RSC/

Dick Lupoff, Merry Hell, Poughkeepsie, New York 12603

Jim Goodrich's reference to my "dismissal" of C. T. Stoneham's Kasper seems to imply that I dislike the Kasper books. This is not the case. Actually, I cheated a little -- I was able to obtain only the first of the two books, The Lion's Way, and based my opinion on it, assuming that the second was of similar character.

Actually what I said was the following:

"Kasper, as you would guess, was a feral child raised by lions. He was also the lost heir to a Canadian fortune. Discovered and returned to North America, Kasper would periodically throw off the shackles of civilization and go racing through the Canadian forests, getting back to nature.

"Perhaps to avoid the criticism heaped upon Burroughs for the nudism in his stories, Stoneham had Kasper keep on a suitable modest bathing suit during his atavistic spells, which does tend to spoil the atmosphere of the otherwise rather well done pastiches."

Now, is this a "dismissal"? Perhaps. But in case I wasn't completely clear, let me restate my feelings about the Stoneham book(s). I think they (or at least the first of the pair) are good Tarzan pastiches. The major fault, if fault it is, is the unoriginality of concept. Stoneham simply substituted lions for apes and rewrote Tarzan of the Apes.

But, what the hell, if you laid all the imitation Tarzans of various authors (including ERB!!!!) end-to-end, you'd be able to populate a whole jungle with them.

And I still think that the image of the bestial, leonine Kasper, reverting to utter brutalism, roaring and running through the woods in a swimsuit by Jantzen, is pretty giggeworthy.

Ace isn't reprinting Kasper because Stoneham cannot be located to sign a contract. Anybody who knows his whereabouts might put him in touch with Don Wollheim.

Harry Cooper, 3506 W. Wilson, Chicago, Illinois 60625

I watched around 6 episodes of the Batman and I enjoyed them tremendously. Am still on the lookout for Tarzan 66, but it's good to know it will be out sooner or later. Those Bantam books by Gardner really make good reading and for those who enjoy reading Tarzan it fits the bill very nicely.

/To each his own. RSC/

Bob Briney (again)

For the "useless knowledge" file -- in the 1943 "Batman" serial: Lewis Wilson played Batman
Douglas Croft played Robin

And that's it for another thrill-packed issue, kids. Remember to send in the top of the carton your tv set came in for your very own copy of the Nekromicon, specially abridged by Beatrix Potter for our young enthusiasts. RSC



Strange Fruit

ZENITH SPECULATION #12 (Peter R. Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham 31, Gt. Britain - USAgent, Albert J. Lewis, 4600 Kester Ave, Apt. D, Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91405 - 30¢ each - quarterly) One of the best of the serious constructive fanzines. This issue, for example, is almost entirely book reviews -- the long, meaty kind, not the sort of off-the-top-of-the-head reviews that I do. (I bet some of them are even second-drafted...) In addition, Alex Panshin analyzes the non-fiction of Robert A. Heinlein, and Mike Moorcock defends J. G. Ballard against a critical article from a past issue. The lettercolumn is largely devoted to lit!ry topics. The articles are well-written, without the unnecessary verbiage found in all too many serious articles by U.S. fans. Rating...8

FAN-FIC #2 (David Dewsnap, 4 Eldredge St, Newton, Mass. 02158 - 20¢ - semi-annual) A neat-appearing, half-sized multilithed fanzine. The major flaw is that there just isn't very much in it. An article on super-hero comics degenerates into a checklist of names. One on Merritt stories does about the same. However, there is a good comment on the "science" of Edgar Rice Burroughs, and a letter about fandom being too commercial (!) which might spark some good controversy. Rating....3

GIALLAR #6 (M. Randall Harris, 125 El Monte, San Antonio, Texas 78212 - bi-monthly - 35¢) Devoted to stf and horror films. This isn't a field that particularly appeals to me -- except as a source of unintentional humor -- but it might to you. The reviews seem competent, though I haven't seen enough of the judge them. Certainly, anyone who likes "Day The Earth Stood Still" can't be all bad. Actually, the only negative reaction I had was to the goshwow attitude displayed at times by the editor. ("GIALLAR #7 shapes up to be one of the most spectacular issues ever published.") Actually, this sort of writing crops up regularly in comics and movie fanzines, and probably is a leading factor behind the impression that these fans are younger and wetter behind the ears than they actually are. A note to all you editors who write things like this; either your audience is intelligent enough to judge your mag on its own merits, or your audience isn't worth writing for in the first place. The language of tv commercials is singularly inappropriate to fandom. (And just pretend that this last sentence was in my editorial instead of a review, because it is certainly not directed to Harris alone.) Mimeo-graphy isn't too hot here, but there is a good multilithed cover.

Rating.....5

THE SCARR #10 (George Charters, 3 Lancaster Ave, Bangor, Northern Ireland - more or less quarterly - free to interested people) With HYPHEN more or less moribund, George is bravely carrying on the traditions of Irish fandom. (If I was George I could probably end that sentence with a pun, but I'm not.) This issue is still basically humorous, but it's both smaller and less funny than most. Material concerns cars, stamps, gloves, and Bob Shaw's bicycle.

Rating.....5

SPECULATIVE BULLETIN #9 (John Boston, 816 So. First St, Mayfield, Ky. 42066 - irregular - 4 for 25¢) A newsletter of information on forthcoming books, with occasional reviews of recent items. Worthwhile for anyone who still reads this crazy Buck Rogers stuff.

Rating...5

STUPEFYING STORIES #78 (Dick Eney, 6500 Ft. Hunt Rd, Alexandria, Va. 22307 - no price or schedule listed) Dick has done a Heinlein here, in producing 16 pages of "future history" -- specifically, a political history of the near future. Time will tell how close his prophecies come to reality -- not very, unless he's a lot better than most prophets - but it's an intriguing idea. Rating...6

MANNDERINGS #2 (Rich Mann, 249B So. Nevada, Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota 58201 - more or less quarterly - 25¢) A general type fanzine; material on science fiction, fandom itself, anything the editor is interested in. Primary items are reviews, of books by Richie Benyo and of fanzines by a pseudonym. (As usual, the reason for reviewing under a pen-name -- a singularly repulsive one, this time -- is so that "The reviewer can step out from all the personal considerations that effect him when he reviews under his own name, and at least try to achieve objectivity." Translation - he doesn't have the guts to criticize his friends unless he hides behind a mask while doing it.) When well done, however, this sort of column can become one of the most popular items in fandom. I never quite understood why, but it seems to be the sort of thing most fans love. Mann's reviewer isn't on Ted White's level -- Ted used to get downright nasty in some of his reviews -- but he does as good a job as most fanzine reviewers do. There's an article on Tolkien and psychology that peters out without really saying much; a pity, since it was a fine idea. Rick Brooks comments on some of Kuttner's old STARTLING novelets, but spends too much time on plot-synopsis and not enough on comment and criticism. E. E. Evers' column (I hope it's a column) is probably the best item in the issue. He doesn't really say anything new, either, but he has a fascinating way of not-saying it. Don D'Amassa's article on Charity Blackstock was interesting, as it's a name I've encountered but know very little about. Rating....4

THE WSFA JOURNAL #18, 20 (Don Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Wheaton, Md. 20906 - bi-weekly - \$1 per year via 3rd class mail or \$1.50 first class) Mostly Washington-area news, but with book and magazine reviews and some general fan news. #20 advertises the 1966 Disclave, held May 14 at the Diplomat Motel, 1850 New York Ave, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. These are reportedly great get-togethers; never having attended I can't say for sure. Rating....5

RATATOSK #31 (Bruce Pelz, Box 100, 308 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024 - biweekly - 3 for 25¢) All sorts of fan news, including the fact that we probably waited too long to mail our TAFF ballots. (And after helping nominate Stenfors, too; embarrassing.) Changes of address, marriages, births, lawsuits, etc. Rating...6

TWILIGHT ZINE #16 (Mike Ward, c/o MITSFS, Room W20-443, MIT, Cambridge, Mass. 02139 - irregular - 25¢) Send no more than 25¢ at a time; they prefer contributions or letters of comment (even tho they never seem to publish letters of comment). This is one of the issues in which the humor seems oriented a bit too closely towards MIT; it's sometimes hard for an outsider to figure out what's going on. Even so, this would appear to remain the foremost humor fanzine of the U.S. (largely because it doesn't have a lot of competition). There are some comments on stf and quite a few, this time, on club history, but the major topics are all connected with the university. Rating...4

I have some odds and ends here that I might as well comment on in one glop. CURTIS, CURTIS, CURTIS, CURTIS & CURTIS is gratefully acknowledged, and we'll see you at Cleveland. Pete Weston sent a copy of NEXUS (cir-

culation restricted to OMPA and a "highly select mailing list") Let's hope I've commented by the time Pete gets this. THE OFFICIOUS TNFF is a one-shot produced by Lon Atkins and Wally Weber -- it's a moderately funny one-shot, but my experience indicates that the editors always mail out all the copies of this sort of fanzine immediately, so there isn't a lot of use in reviewing it. Gregg Wolford sends BOROGROVE #34. The Atlanta Folk Music Society, P.O. Box 7813, Atlanta, Georgia 30309, sends a copy of STRAY NOTES, their folkmusic fanzine. This is strictly a one-sheet newsletter; other issues have been much larger. Worthwhile for folkniks. J. A. McCallum, Ralston, Alberta, Canada, sends BROBDINGNAG #35. This is the official bulletin of a postal Diplomacy game and thus of prime interest only to fans who play Diplomacy. However, the editor has been receiving requests for old Diplomacy mags from new players, and offers to pay double the postage on any such mags mailed to him. (Pettit, you should half a dozen or so in those boxes of fanzines you bought from me....) People who want to know more about Diplomacy should write McCallum, not me. I never played a game in my life.

I happen to have received several stf booklists recently; here's a run-down for people who want to know where to buy old books and magazines.

Fantast (Medway) Limited, 75 Norfolk St., Wisbech, Cambs. Gt. Britain
Best place to buy British items; you can pay by check or international money order (the latter should be made out to be paid thru a bank, I believe).

F&SF Book Co., P.O. Box 415, Staten Island, N.Y. 10302

A big US dealer. Complete stock of recent paperbacks; quite a few hard-covers and old magazines. Some foreign items.

Howard Devore, 4705 Weddel St., Dearborn Heights, Mich.

All sorts of odds and ends in books, paperbacks, pulp mags, and associated items. Catalogs extremely irregular, as Howard says in this one: "your best bet is always to see me at the conventions. Usually by the second day I'll even buy you drinks."

Charles N. Reinsel, 120 8th. Ave., Clarion, Pa. 16214

Comic books and knickknacks, plus Burroughs publications. I've never dealt with Reinsel, not being either a comics or a Burroughs fan. His prices don't seem to be any higher than any other comics dealer that I've seen (tho I haven't seen them all, by any means.)

Incidentally, I have dealt with the other three dealers and can say that I've been treated quite fairly by all of them.

AMRA #39 (Box 9120, Chicago, Illinois, 60690 - irregular - 35¢ - editor, George Scithers) We have a postcard here somewhere from George, asking us to repeat that AMRA is not eligible for a Hugo this year because George is a committee member. (A roving member, presumably....committee-man at large?) AMRA's artwork is back up to par this issue (meaning that it's better than anyone else's artwork) with regulars Jim Cawthorn, Gray Morrow, Roy Krenkel and Ray Garcia-Capella being joined by newcomer B.B. Sams. Written material wasn't as interesting as usual, at least to me. Four pages of Lovecraftian verse by Lin Carter followed by 9 pages of the letters of Robert E. Howard. I did enjoy Archie Potts' (?) article on the pike, plus the odds and ends of discussions. And the artwork. (Juanita says he's reused a couple of old illos -- howcome?) I'm sure the major material will be of interest to fans who are interested in Lovecraft and Howard, but for once they didn't move this Unbeliever.

"...you're not devoted to anything and you've got no taste anyway."
(from a letter from one of my best friends.....)

(FIN)