



YANDRO

#85 february 1960

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ARTWORK

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The lack of artwork is, along with the size of the letter column, due to the Tucker column which arrived after the issue was all planned and mostly stencilled. We could have postponed it, but we didn't want to. Thanks to everyone who offered to get us Speed-O-Print Sovereign stencils. We'll take one of you up on this some time. At the moment, however, we have plenty. In an effort to get a discount, I wrote to the company and inquired about prices, mentioning that I usually bought 5 quire at a time. Two weeks later a large package, containing 5 quire of Sovereign stencils, arrived, along with a bill for them at retail prices. So; since we needed them now, I wasn't going to send them back, but when these are finished I shall accept the offer of one of you kind people who said you could get them at a discount.

"I passed Howlong, Wahgunyah and Corowa, calling at each place to buy stores, and in four days reached Yarrowonga after a battle against a stiff headwind on Lake Mulwala." ...R.H. Morrison, WALKABOUT magazine



Eventually I, too, will be a gen-yoowine anti-folk music fan annoyer, my most recent acquisition being a guitar.....I've plunked away on the piano since I was tall enough to get at the keys, but somehow or other I never got around to studying any other instruments.....of all the various stringed instruments, the guitar was the only one with a tone to appeal to my piano-trained ear....I have a feeling my methods of chording on the thing are a bit unorthodox, and even more frustrating is

trying to transpose my piano chording to a stringed instrument.....my favorite keys are the ones most difficult to finger.

Today, the 29th of February, I must renew my driver's license...being a perpetually novice driver, I am always afraid I will be asked to drive again (I barely passed the original test), although generally Indiana law merely requires a written exam and an eye test. The written exam doesn't worry me; before acquiring an operator's license I held several dozen beginner's permits, each one requiring the same written exam, and I almost know the questions and answers by heart. The eye exam may be more touchy - the last time I knew my actual vision rating was six years ago, in college, when I was 20/200 - it's considerably worse now and optometrists in this area don't believe in correcting to 20/20. Still, I've always been skeptical of snellen charts as an adequate test for driving vision - it would seem some measure of side vision would also be in order. I have a very wide angle of vision (a fuzzy angle, true, but wide), and I'm sure we all know people who pride themselves on sharp vision and never see the car approaching from the side road till it's right on top of them. There is also, of course, the entirely separate faculty of actually seeing things, rather than looking at them. I suspect art training would enhance this ability, in teaching the viewer to grasp configuration, angle, etc., in the briefest of glances. This stands me in very good stead in being able to read street signs at rather startling distances (particularly startling considering my vision).....now about it, Dan, Reg, Bjo, et.al., - do you find yourself seeing things others don't see?

I find myself possessed, during the past year or so, of a rather peculiar enthusiasm - I have become inordinately fond of books involving navy vessels at war, preferably books about the U.S. Navy in the second world war. I suspect part of this is a discovery of something in print that historically occurred during years when I was too young to fully grasp, but was old enough to sense its events and implication. But why the navy, of all services? I cannot swim, have no desire to swim, and loathe boats, floats and all other devices that put me in a position where I might come in danger of being drowned - in my dreams, night-type, I dream I can swim in the same never-never fashion that I dream I can fly by flapping my arms: both activities are equally impossible to me. There is undoubtedly a Freudian indication of something or other here, because the branch of naval service that fascinates me more than any other is the one most subject to the end of death by water - the submarines.

And well, until next issue - plunk, plunk

.....JWC



The letter column got cut rather drastically this time. Tucker's column came in after we'd already begun stencilling the issue, and we decided it was too topical to delay. So the letter column got cut. (This is, naturally, also the reason for the rather heavy emphasis on stiff criticism in this issue. We have some more coming up - an article by Redd Boggs in the next issue, in fact - but we'll try to keep it down to one critique per issue from now on.)

Joy Clarke's letter in this issue is described as "semi-open" because it wasn't addressed to me -- but I got a copy, and it was addressed "for publicity" to several other fans. It is published verbatim, even though I consider the language a bit strong in some places. The internal squabbles of the WSFS have made me (to borrow a quote from Abney Rotsler) sick to the point of being ill; I think it's about time for the organization to be officially buried and forgotten if possible. (Along this line, though; if it is possible to officially disband the organization now, then it was equally possible to dissolve it a year and more ago when a vote at the Solacon asked for it. If Kyle and Raybin hadn't been more interested in thwarting each other than they were in doing their job, Joy's letter would never have been necessary.)

A note to letter-writers: my correspondence is about to be changed drastically. In the past, every person who wrote a letter of comment on YANDRO either had it published or received a personal reply, and often both. (Aside to new editors -- this is a dandy way to build up a huge amount of comment without having to promise free fanzines for letters.) At any rate, this affair is now going to stop. Letters of comment will no longer receive personal replies. I don't like to do this, but something has to go. The time I have to work on my correspondence course in electrical engineering expires this year, and I am going to finish that course. Since I can't work 8 hours a day, help publish a monthly and a quarterly fanzine, write occasional material for other zines, go bowling one night a week, visit relatives, spend some time with Bruce, read about 15 magazines and half a dozen books a month, plus an average of 30 or more fanzines a month, study a college-grade correspondence course, and write letters to everyone, something has to go. Letter-writing was chosen as the most expendable. If you keep commenting, I'll try to include most letters in YANDRO -- and, of course, once the correspondence course is finished I'll start replying in person again. The moratorium on letters should last about 6 months.

I finally got around to reading "Atlas Shrugged" by Ayn Rand, which is one of the most exasperating books I've ever encountered. I don't object to propaganda, especially when I agree with the basic philosophy, but Miss (?) Rand's assertion that everyone who builds or invents something is automatically a noble creature who spouts philosophy at the slightest provocation -- or even without provocation -- and is incapable of an evil thought, is ridiculous. What makes the book exasperating is that the story itself is so interesting that I had to finish it, despite gobs of sophomoric philosophy and the fact that I didn't give a damn what happened to any of the major characters.

RSC

THE WAILING WALL: THE NEW AMAZING

a column by ted white

A Postscript which the editor has transformed into an introduction: Some of you may be unfamiliar with this column; others will recognize it as a continuation of my column from VOID. I cannot claim the title as my own; I came by it by default when Carter Little stopped doing fanzine reviews under this heading and someone had to step in for him. Since then I have used it as a place to delve into an unhurried review of almost anything I cared about -- fanzines, a particular issue of a prozine, books, and in this case, a story in a prozine. The editor willing, it will continue from time to time in YANDRO, until VOID is revived, or I grow tired of it, or perhaps, or perhaps it is struck down by an Act of God.....TEW

I'd like to make a nice, bold, positive statement: I think that AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION STORIES is, by and large, publishing the best science fiction in the magazine field today.

That is a pretty unqualified statement, but I think it is a deserving one. If it also has more than its share of shock-value (or, as "Rene DeSoto" once put it, "shlue"), it is because fandom's ingrained emotional response to AMAZING for better than twenty years has been, "AMAZING? Crud!"

The simple fact is that when, in 1938, Ziff-Davis took over AMAZING from Teck and old T. O'Connor Sloane, the company policy was simply and firmly fixed: put the mag out on a good lowest-common-denominator level, and make sure it sells. This policy was doing well for THRILLING WONDER, another drastic reversal, and for the new PLANET STORIES, the magazine which capitalized on comic-book formulas like no other mag before or since (well, that isn't quite true; Charleton's short-lived FANTASTIC SCIENCE FICTION was written and illustrated by comic-book hacks). Ziff-Davis told Ray Palmer what it wanted. Palmer produced it. In spades. But before we condemn RAP out of hand, let's remember that with OTHER WORLDS he made several sincere bids for quality, backing them whenever possible from his pocketbook. Another point to consider is that Ziff-Davis did not rescind that policy when Palmer quit. Howard Browne, a high-quality mystery writer of the Hamnett-Chandler school, took the magazine over without noticeable improvement. Likewise, the change to Paul Fairman made no difference. Except for AMAZING's short period of ersatz respectability (which was never free from taint -- a la "Mars Confidential"), its policy, as laid down by Ziff and Davis, has always been one of sell 'em to the kids.

But changes have come about. The original Ziff died in the early fifties, and several years ago Davis pulled out and purchased Mercury Press, which he renamed Davis Publications. He now publishes EQM. And Ziff-Davis has come into the hands of young William Ziff. I know nothing about Ziff except for what I've heard -- that he has shaken the company up a good deal, and brought about a number of changes.

One of them seems to be in AMAZING's policy.

It began none too conspicuously, with the addition of Marion Bradley and Bob Bloch to the line-up of regulars, and with the reappearance of other, unmissed names. Then there was EESmith's serial, and the Asimov issue, and pretty soon we were seeing, on the cover of a single issue, "Asimov, Sheekley, Bradbury", and there was a short novel by Poul Anderson.

The major change, however, has been mostly with the "complete novels" -- genuine short novels or long novelettes, depending on where your money is -- which have evolved from the first few pitiful Amazing Novels into very respectable science fiction. The trend has been, with a few set-backs, most notably Silverberg's foolish tale, steadily upward, through Bloch's excellent straight-faced satire, "Sneak Preview", to Leiber's recent "The Night of the Long Knives". The Leiber story was a real surprise after his frivolous fantasies (one of which somehow copied an award at the Solacon -- but don't ask me how) and the disappointment of the "Leiber Issue" of FANTASTIC: I think that "Night" qualifies as the best piece of science fiction that Leiber has turned out since his return a couple of years ago to the field.

The point has now been reached where AMAZING, of all the magazines now on the stands, is offering the best, and nearly the only good science fiction to be found.

When I say science fiction, I'm not referring to Randall Garrett's emetic little pieces, nor the frivolous nonsense of Christopher Anvil, or Frederik Pohl. Nearly everything now appearing in the other major sf mags can be classed as unsuccessful humor, in-group satire (ie, Pohl's worthless pieces in GALAXY), sophisticated LADIES HOME JOURNAL pieces (largely in F&SF), or fantasy. The good ol' fashioned, meat & potatoes stuff we call science fiction is conspicuous in its absence. It can still be found in Heinlein's stuff, when he's not lecturing us on the merits of radiation poisoning, and in Poul Anderson's better work (his "Time Patrol" series in F&SF, and "We Have Fed Our Sea"), and in the rare appearances of the "old masters", like Asimov (who seems nowadays to write only "science-fact" articles) or James Blish or a few others.

But most consistently it can be found in AMAZING's long pieces.

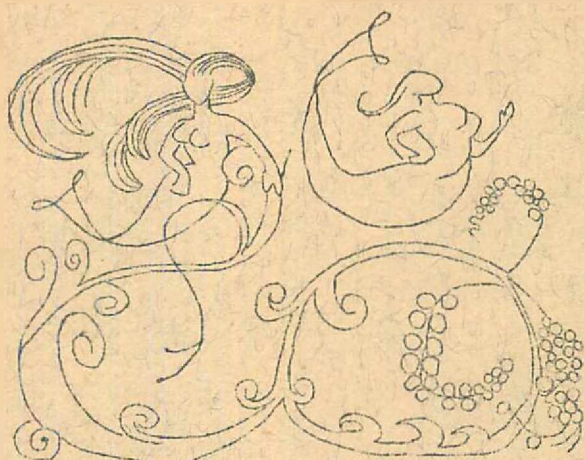
I haven't been alone in noticing the changes in recent AMAZINGS. Bill Evans in SPECULATIVE REVIEW has remarked upon it, and Buck Coulson asked me in a recent letter, "What do you think of AMAZING under the new (well, relatively new) editorship? Seems to me that it's improving vastly." I quite agree.

Buck also said, "I'd appreciate a critique of the current Ward Moore novel in AS. It's so damned symbolic that I got lost somewhere along the line." This month's column is designed to take care of both points.

The novel Buck referred to is Moore's "Transient", in the February 1960 AMAZING. Even viewed in light of the "new" AMAZING, it is totally out of character with the magazine. It isn't science fiction.

Just what "Transient" is I'm uncertain. Fantasy, yes; powerful fantasy. But somehow very much in the "mainstream"; much closer in fact to Robert Lindner's psychoanalytic pieces, and to the two pieces I feel certain inspired it: Alice In Wonderland/Through The Looking Glass, and L. Ron Hubbard's Fear. Actually, it does not belong in AMAZING, but rather in FANTASTIC. Presumably AMAZING's long-story policy required that it go into that magazine instead. FANTASTIC would not have had room.

Nevertheless, "Transient" is nearly unclassifiable. It is not really



an "F&SF fantasy" or an "UNKNOWN fantasy" or anything but just "a fantasy".

AMAZING does not blurb its novels, but does give a brief description in the preceding issue. In its January issue it referred to "Transient" as "the story of a man who is forced to face himself by living his life over again under highly unusual conditions." That last phrase is one hum-dinger of an understatement.

I don't believe, however, that this is a true explanation of the story. "Transient" is a totally allegorical story in which everything

must be evaluated in terms of Freudian symbolism, and in which there is no objective, "straight" action. It opens when Governor Lampley, the protagonist, and "a widower in his earliest fifties" stops his car in a small dying town for some only hinted-at reason, and decides to stay overnight in the badly out of repair hotel. From this point on -- from his decision on -- the objective world merges and disappears into the subjective world of Lampley's subconscious.

What follows are scenes, the significance of which is almost completely masked, revolving around the hotel and dream-environs below it, largely dream reflections of Lampley's past life, through which Lampley moves as a conscious participant.

Apparently Governor Lampley has incurred some deeply traumatic impression in the past -- in some fashion concerning a woman, Mindy, whom he had married, and either childbirth or some sexual occurrence with her -- which has left deep scars; an overpowering sense of guilt and helplessness, a fear of castration, and frustration.

Lampley apparently wishes he could in some way take a woman's place upon an operating table -- it is likely that Mindy died this way. But just exactly what the entire fantasy concerns, just what the pivotal scene in Lampley's life was, we do not know; Moore never tells us. What Moore has done is to create an isolated episode -- the fantasies created by a man in some way obsessed -- without real beginning or end, without ulterior or exterior meaning, and without conclusion. Within this framework, he has worked well, building in a truly subtle fashion a dreamy feeling of unreality which steals over the story within the opening lines. Lampley floats from mundane reality into total unreality, and back again, without any sharp transition, without any breaking points.

At this point I must confess a dichotomy of feelings. On the one hand, I admire this story very much; on the other I am somewhat exasperated by it. Let me explain my reactions to it:

When I began reading this novel, I wondered if I might be reading another Fear, in which the fantasy action is psychological hallucination, masking a mundane, non-fantastic reality. This is very probably so -- less hallucinatory interpretation than simple dream-level subconscious wanderings of the mind, however -- but whatever the case, the author has this time left it up to us. I read through the story, assimilating all the various bits and pieces of seemingly unrelated information, hoping for a key, a magic equation, the key which would unlock the meaning of

the story -- every author provides one somewhere in a story -- and suddenly inject an exterior logic into it. I was prepared to wait until the very last pages, perhaps the very last sentence for it, but I did expect it.

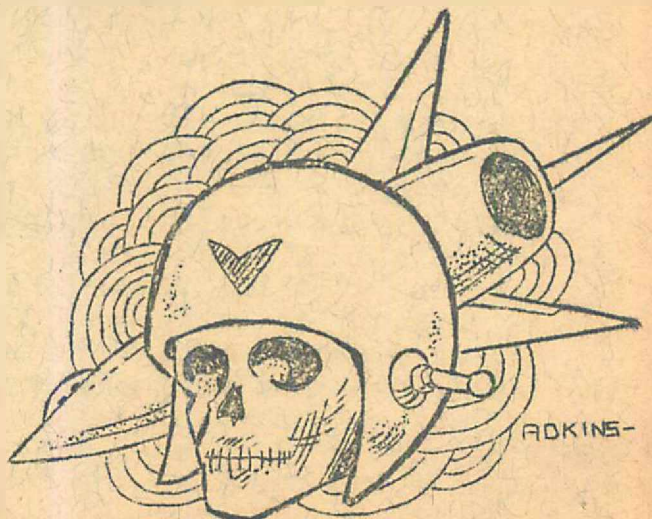
Ward Moore fooled me. If it was there -- other than on a subtle, all-pervading plane -- I missed it. The last few lines puzzled me more than any of the rest of the story.

Thus, I am exasperated that Moore did not "play fair" with me, and tell me what he spent all these pages talking about and around. But I admire deeply the power and depth and richness of symbolism in the novel.

The structure of the piece is a difficult one, demanding considerable skill; throughout, the prose is descriptive and declamatory, and only rarely will dialogue occur -- then only for brief, largely unilluminating moments. This is a difficult style to maintain, as examination of any ordinary story will show. Indeed, action stories are usually based on swift-paced dialogue and little else. A story which nearly excludes dialogue will often drag, and lose its power of characterization and reader involvement. To some extent that has happened here. Without drastically altering the structure of the story, however, I don't see how it could have been avoided.

The fantasies are constructed on a dream-sequence basis, divided into moods and arbitrary chapters. At first the action is restricted to the hotel and its many sub-basements. The scenes are laid out vertically; that is, when Lampley moves from one scene to the next, he does so by ascending or descending a stairway or, more frequently, by elevator. The elevator is operated by the hotel clerk, who plays Lampley's Marley in guiding him to and through many of the scenes. Usually Lampley is maneuvered about by others, passive himself, and largely lacking in will and initiative. After the first several scenes, in which he meets a woman and her grown idiot son -- and learns him to be his own bastard son -- and a lovely young virgin who he falls in love with and then brutally deflowers, Lampley is taken much deeper than on his previous trip down in the elevator; this time the elevator finally becomes a car sliding down an incline, and plunges through a vast department store and finally into a pastoral scene, where Lampley is left.

This is a place (a cavern, Lampley cannot help thinking of it, since he knows he has descended deep into the earth) which forms a natural bowl, ringed by mountains from which pour rivers which feed into a central lake. An overhanging cloud of some sort obscures any sky. Lampley wanders around the plain where he found himself, barefoot with delight, finding all sorts of incurious wild animals, and finally he works his way to the shore of the lake. In the center of the lake is an island, and with a rowboat he finds, Lampley rows out to the island. Here he has an altogether strange affair with a woman who grows from the size of his finger to about four feet tall. Finally, pregnant, she is killed by "barbarians" who invade the idyllic



scene and Lampley is forced to flee into a series of nightmarish adventures.

At this point, although the scenes grow shorter, and the symbolism stronger, the story begins to lose impact. Both Lampley and the reader are now thoroughly aware that Lampley is living in a dream world, and he has abandoned his last hope for rationality. The scenes become monotonous, as nothing particular happens. The "plot" does not seem to advance; although, in its own subtle, devious way, it does continue to build. The point remains: the initial shock has worn off; the reader now expects what happens to be utterly fantastic. And so it is, and nothing more.

Lampley finds a railroad, and rides an old Model T down it until he encounters a coach, being run by the Clerk. This takes him up to the level of the department store. Here the only science-fictional elements enter the story parenthetically in the form of a railway station staffed by robots, and magazines on a newsstand which refer only to robots, mechanical men, and androids. Lampley explores portions of the familiar gray stone city night and finds the department store -- as well as manifestations of himself, Governor Lampley, in statuary and paintings -- which he enters into and in which he undergoes a series of disconnected experiences, which include at one point his substitution for a woman undergoing "female" surgery.

Eventually he is returned to the hotel, only to be confronted with cases of men sentenced to die whom he, as governor, did not pardon. He undergoes their executions, and is psychically reduced to near-death when memories of the better things which have happened to him, and which he has done -- including touching a unicorn which had approached him freely -- rejuvenate him. He finds, in the same room where he first saw them, the woman with her grown idiot son, his son. He asks her where her young sister, the former virgin, is. She says there was never any such person -- only her. He feeds the idiot without repugnance, tells the Clerk he is no longer afraid, kisses the woman and their son, and leaves. He notices his watch is again running as he gets in his car. "Before getting in he glanced up and down the street and back at the hotel. He had never seen it or the town at any time in his life." So the story ends.

Apparently by the time he has "atoned for his sins" in the dream-fantasy, he has gained enough strength to cast off his guilt and become an effectual person. No longer being led, he directs himself. He has apparently won a major battle with himself.

What that battle was, the circumstances which created it, these are only obliquely hinted at. The basic conflict, the key, is now obvious in a misty way; we know something has happened. But still the understanding of what really motivated the man and his elaborate fantasy is as far away as ever.

The story is a self-contained unit, a tour-de-force of symbolic logic (not all of which I'm sure I grasped -- and I hope the author was not cheating at this, throwing in superfluous material) on a subtle plane. As such, it is successful.

But as a story, an integrated moving whole, it is less so. As I've indicated, sections of the story -- about the whole of the latter third or half, as well as isolated earlier segments -- drag badly. The reader feels he must read to read on, not because what he is reading is intrinsically interesting. The reader becomes immolated by the fantasy content; it loses individual meaning without gaining a greater meaning from the whole of the story.

9

Plus points for "Transient", then:
Some finely written scenes, particularly the pastoral and island ones.
Glimpses of some very clever internal logic.
Excellent characterizations, even of purposefully two-dimensional figures.

Gallingly obscure motivations and rationales, which in the early chapters whet the reader's appetite and entice him onwards.

Minus points:

The last point above, once carried past the point of mere curiosity, now irritatingly important and unexplained, an appetite whetted but unsatisfied.

A lack of any definitive key which might supply a solid basis or foothold for the story -- which might "solve it" for the reader.

How well you'll like the story will, I think, depend on how the above points, pro and con, affect you. If you enjoy an obscurely subtle story which you are left to your own devices to figure out, you'll get a tremendous kick from this. If you enjoy stories which thoroughly explore and exploit dream logic, this will still be your meat, even though the lack of an adequate explanation of the foundations of the logic may be a let-down. (I fall into this class.) Or, if you prefer cut-and-dried explanations, with all the loose ends done up in one neat knot, I suggest you skip the story. It would only infuriate you.

Whatever your personal reaction to "Transient", it will remain quite obvious that the story is an unusual one, a conversation piece -- and a highly unusual one to find in AMAZING. It defies most of AMAZING's criteria, and it insults the so-called "AMAZING reader". Why then did AMAZING publish it?

I think for two reasons: First, Moore probably could not sell it elsewhere. It is a story which defies classification, and most magazines prefer their stories neatly pigeon-holed. A case in point was the early Bradbury, who sold primarily to the low-paying markets which couldn't afford to be choosy.

Second, I think AMAZING's editors seized upon it as a story which would properly jolt from the magazine's readers their long-held image of the magazine. All of the editors' recent efforts have shown a desire -- probably initiated by the new owner of Ziff-Davis -- to destroy the AMAZING stereotype, and to create a new type of magazine out of AMAZING. "Transient" should be a tremendous help, breaking as it does with nearly every established AMAZING-story convention. I think it was printed more for its "unconventionality" and conversation-appeal, than for any intrinsic quality. (Not that I think AMAZING's editors would have allowed a stinker to go through -- the reverse; the story had to be good to overcome the readers' objections to it...) After all, its quality is difficult to assess, but its uncompromisingly unusual, unclassifiable nature is obvious.

Whatever the editors' motives, I commend the results. "Transient" will be a conversation piece, and is a feather for AMAZING's new hat.

A POSTSCRIPT: After writing the rest of this column -- indeed, after sending it off to the Coulsons -- I discussed "Transient" with my wife, Sylvia, who had just finished it. Between the two of us, we came up with a firmer basis for the plot.

Briefly: The Governor has, by impulse, come back to a town he'd once

visited or lived in thirty years earlier. The town has languished in the meantime, progress having detoured around it. (The Governor feels personal guilt for this manifestation of "progress" and "improvement for the state".) It was here, thirty years ago, that he had seduced a young girl and had an affair with her. Later he married another woman, Mattie, who never loved him but would give in to his demands upon occasion. She inspired insecurity in him, and she died in childbirth or through an abortion. (The Governor feels guilt over his relief to be free of her, and may also feel guilt because he took her from another environment or social strata. Her lack of love for him probably resulted in a desire to prove to himself his manhood and virility.) The return to this town triggers the Governor's fears and guilt feelings, and leads him into a fantasy which begins as he enters the town but does not possess him completely until he enters the hotel -- perhaps the scene of that earlier seduction -- at which point his watch stops, and he is in a completely subjective reality. What he actually does in the hotel is unimportant -- perhaps nothing -- because real time has stopped while he fights within himself his past and guilt, and will not continue again until he is again able to face present-time reality. (It would seem that he wandered thru the hotel, though, since the opening and closing portions of his period in the hotel still have bits and pieces of real perception in them.) Once his battle is won, time starts again and he finds himself at his car only a few seconds or minutes later (still in the "afternoon sunshine"). As he enters his car, he expunges all memory of the town and his guilt-ridden past, which has now been quelled, and snaps into present-time as an effectual person. The end.

I have my own doubts about the validity of this psychology; I rather think repression on this scale is hardly an improvement, but the author thinks so, and I won't argue with him.

But I tell you: although the passage of time (even between first and second drafts of this column) and reflection and discussion have all made the symbology of this story more obvious to me, I must still admit that it was initially baffling, a story to be reflected upon, read and then re-read. I think I recommend it. I think I recommend it strongly...

 "I'm glad that Richard Wilson didn't cast Ellay as the lead in "And Then The Town Took Off"; obviously, the city would get no higher than the inversion layer, then would pop back to Earth and bounce."

....Bob Lichtman

 PITTCOON NEWS

from Dince Archer

PR #1 is at last in the mail. Although we know PR #1 is not up to standard, since it was done under adverse circumstances, it seemed best to send it out as it is rather than have a further month's wait.

The in-the-process-of-formation "Burroughs Bibliophiles" will have its first meeting at the Pittcon. Verne Coriell "will do his utmost" to be here. If so, this will be Verne's first con.

Ted Carnell's Pittcon attendance is still under consideration by the Chairman of his company. Business.....

Roger Dard is now our Australian representative. Although Roger expected to attend the Pittcon as fan Guest of Honor, his present health will not permit this. He will, however, send a tape-recording of greetings from Australian fans, and auction material.

Alan Burns took violent exception to "Highway To Oblivion", which was published in our December '59 issue. Below is his rebuttal to the poem. I guess you could call it a reverse.

HOW
WHO
WOULD

H
A
V
E

THO-
UGHT?

That anyone
could find

a highway to oblivion. I have travelled rather a lot of
emit ym ni syawhgi
trats eht ot kcab em ekat neve smos

but I always find it rather a reasonable method of procedure to go
forwards.
don't you

Now
poetry
shouldn't
be
something
written
by
a
bunch of
whacks

vegetating
necrofungously
in damp cellars

Poetry should be something rather beautiful to read
shouldn't it

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A DODDERING COLUMN

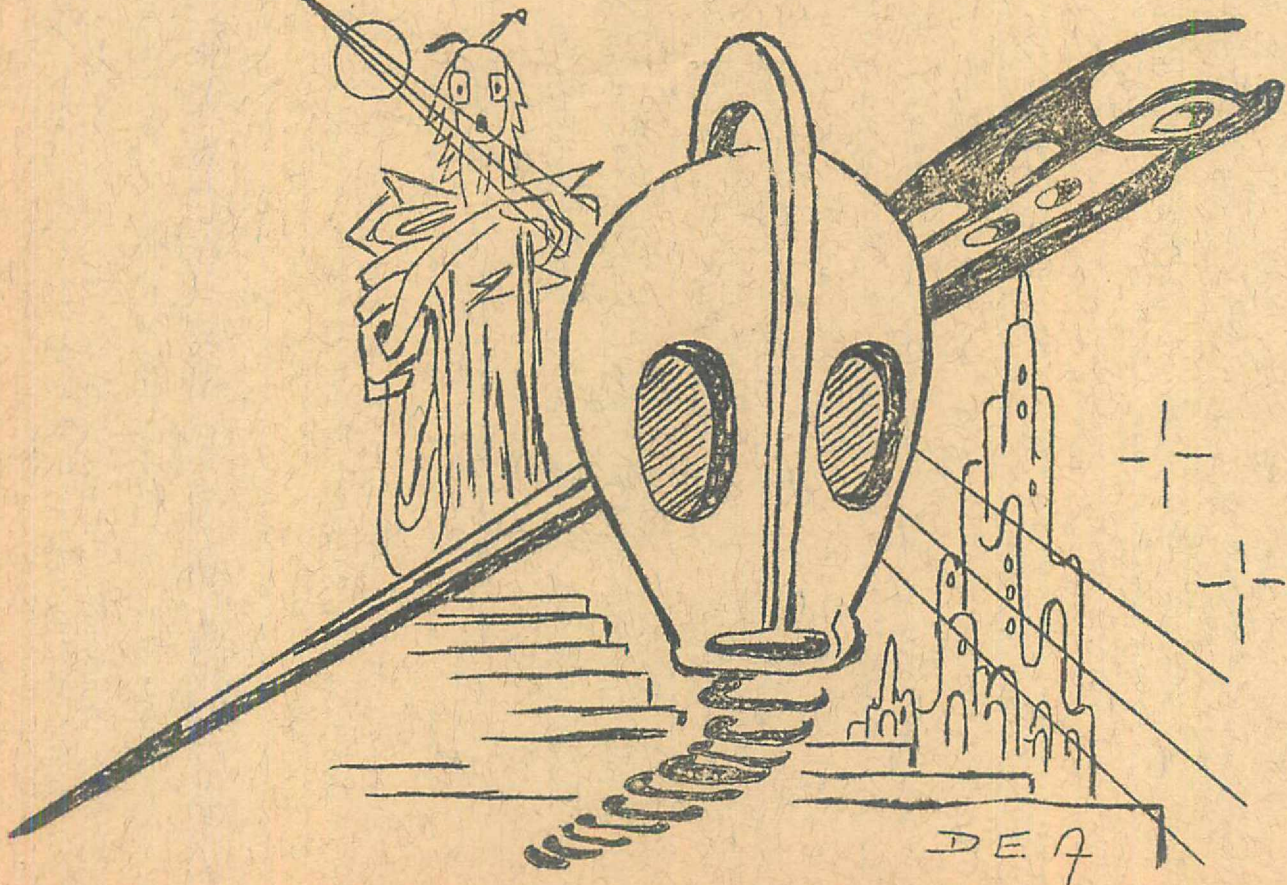
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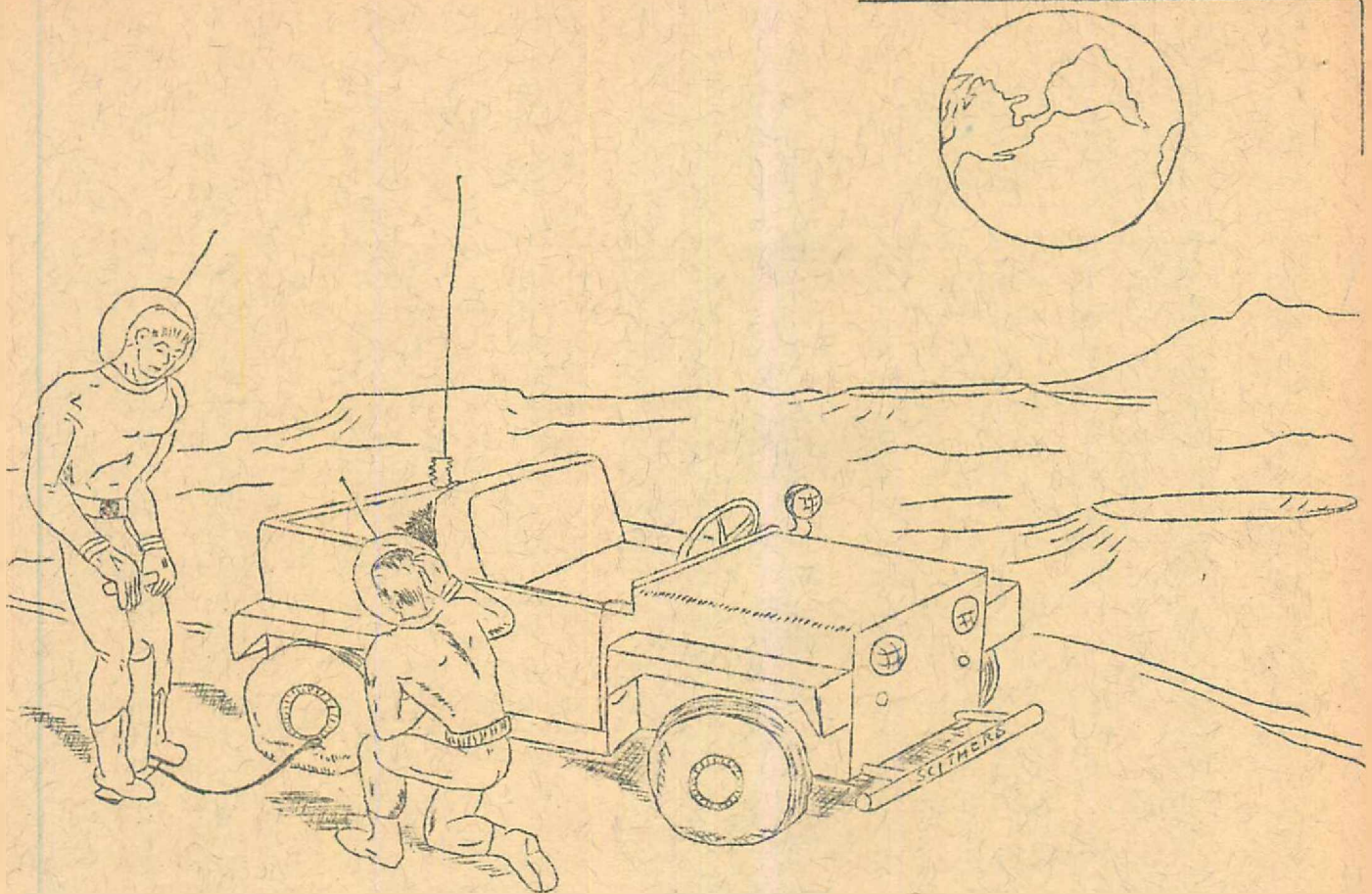
alan dodd

"It is better to have travelled hopefully than to have arrived", said Neville Shute in his autobiography, "Slide Rule", and now this best selling author, who died recently from a stroke, is finally at the end of his journey. And what a journey it was, to be sure.

Neville Shute Norway was born in Ealing, London, and was sixty when he died in Australia near Melbourne -- still fighting. A few months prior to his death had seen the film version of one of his best successes, "On The Beach", which I reviewed for this magazine some time ago. Shute did not care for producer Stanley Kramer's distortion of his story of the last days of the human race after a nuclear war. The film was simultaneously premiered in capital cities all over the world, including London and Moscow, yet Shute refused to even attend the Melbourne premiere and until the day he died he was still complaining of what had been done to his story by the film makers. In the past all his filmed stories such as "Landfall", "A Town Like Alice", "No Highway", etc., had been filmed only by British studios, but "On The Beach" had gone for a larger price to Hollywood and Stanley Kramer. He never forgave them for what they did to his book. Those who have read the book and seen the film too will know the reasons why. Perhaps this may have been a contributory factor in his death -- no one can be sure.

Shute was not only an author -- he was considerably more than just that in his long and varied life -- he had been a mathematician, engin-





eer, scientist and pioneer and he had always been intensely interested in heavier than air craft and the rigid airship. He was in actual fact at one time a top man at DeHavillands and built the airship R100 in opposition to the government airship R101 (he flew the Atlantic twice in the former model).

His first book was published in 1926 and he was soon writing all the time even though his first really great best seller "Landfall" was not written until 1940 when he was a lieutenant in the R.N.V.R. Within the following years his pen flowed fast and prolific and he was soon earning as much as \$250,000 a year but in 1950 the crippling English taxes which claim super tax starting at \$6,000 a year, made him leave England, his home all his life, for a place near Melbourne, Australia. More novels, thoughtful and moving, followed in rapid succession and many were made into profitable British films. In one book at least, Shute proved his powers of prophecy. "No Highway" dealt with metal fatigue in planes and preceded the great Comet disasters from the same reason.

From his pen flowed "A Town Like Alice", "In The Wet", "Round The Bend", "Requiem For A Wren", "The Far Country", and of course "No Highway" and "On The Beach".

His publishers, Heinemann's of London, automatically ordered a print of 100,000 to 150,000 copies of each of his new books, for they knew they would sell them. No doubt in March 1960 they will do the same for his latest book and last one, "Trustee From The Toolroom", which tells the story of a two thousand mile voyage across the Pacific in a small yacht.

This was the last trip Neville Shute was destined ever to make.

Strange Fruit

FANS AND ETHICS (A. Vinç Clarke, "Inchmery", 236 Queens Rd, London, SE 14, England) I really should save this for the editorial, but I have a habit of forgetting things that I intend to editorialize on. This circular is a reply, more or less, to Laurence Sandfield's attacks on Inchmery, which were made in his column in NORTHLIGHT. If I were to put out a circular titled "Fans And Ethics", I don't believe I would include quite all the material and insinuation that Vinç does, but that, for once, isn't the point. Vinç feels that since one Inchmery fan, Sandy Sanderson, is running for TAEF, criticism of the group should be answered (in case some uninformed fan, hearing no reply, should decide that the criticism is true and he'd better not vote for that nasty Sanderson fellow). Now God knows I don't have any particular love for Sanderson, but it's about time that somebody advised fans that they should never, never, never take one fan's opinion about another fan. If you have little chance of getting to know the fan personally, then either get as many opinions as you can, or read what he writes and form your own opinion. (This isn't possible with everyone, but Sanderson has been putting out a fanzine chock full of his personal opinions for better than a year now, and it gives a far better idea of him than Sandfield does.) If you received the issues of NORTHLIGHT with Sandfield's anti-Inchmery columns, you should by all means get FANS AND ETHICS for the other side.

NEW FRONTIERS #2 (Norman Metcalf, c/o General Delivery, Tyndall AFB, Florida - irregular - 30¢, 4 for \$1) Fandom's newest photo-offset zine, much in the tradition of DESTINY. Material has been strictly serious so far. In this issue, Poul Anderson explains his reasons for wanting science in science fiction and the science included in his "The Enemy Stars", Bob Olson details his reasons for his enjoyment of reading and writing science fiction, and Stanton Coblenz deplors the lack of ideas in modern stf. There are also book reviews, fanzine reviews, a letter column, and an editorial. Reviews are okay; nothing extra. The letter column could be quite lively; I think I forgot to write in my rebuttal to Terry Carr, but maybe somebody else did. At any rate, Terry opened the doors to several interesting argu...er, discussions. Covers of NF will be by Morris Dollens. I don't think I like the idea of having all the covers by one artist, but as long as the editor wants it that way, Dollens is a good choice. The only faults that I can see in the mag are that it is a little dry in spots, and perhaps puts a bit too much emphasis on how good the good old days were. But those should disappear in time -- maybe Norman will even get Tucker to write an article on the scientific theory behind his famous short story, "The Princess Of Detroit". The mag is probably worth your 30¢. Rating....8

AURA #9 (George Seithers, Box 3-682, Stanford, Calif. - irregular but frequent - 20¢) The magazine of Conan and Heroism. L. Sprague deCamp writes on female pirates, Albert E. Gochtner discusses the gods encountered in the Conan stories, Reginald Brathor has a brilliant article on

the objections to using illustrations in sf and fantasy magazines -- it's wrong, but it's brilliant, anyway. -- Grace Warren provides a poem titled "I Remember Conan" (I take it she's an elderly type), and Ray Capella writes about how much of a real-life he-man Conan is. There are also letters, an editorial, and a hilarious limerick by Ted Cogswell. Part of the fun of Conan fans seems to be inventing outrageous explanations for the occasional goofs Howard made in his barbaric geography, religion, history and so on. It's incomprehensible to me, but some people seem to obtain great joy from it. AMRA is also photo-offset; artwork isn't up to par this time, unfortunately. Rating....9

HABAKKUK #1 (Bill Donaho, 1441 8th. St., Berkeley 10, Calif. - irregular - no price listed) Donaho has, in the last couple of years become a Fabulous Fannish Character. Everybody (or at least everybody except me) seems to think that he has a wonderful personality, so 12 pages of the Donaho personality should be well worth getting. The cover is lovely, though it won't mean much to anyone who doesn't get APE. Contents include comments on fans, cats, dwelling places, mescaline and Nevil Shute, plus a few fanzine reviews. Interestingly written, though I don't think I found a point of agreement with him in the entire magazine. I hope he keeps publishing. Rating....5

BHISMILLAH! #1 (Andy Main, 5668 Gato Ave., Goleta, Calif. - bi-monthly - 10¢) But, he says, emphasize the fact that, instead of money, he prefers fanzines. Trades, like. Nice reproduction; material is a little thin. The editor is asking for contributions. The first installment of Andy's fannish saga is interesting enough, though I wish he'd put the entire thing in one issue; there is an article by Les Gerber, a rather bad piece of fiction, and an editorial. Rating...2½

GUMBIE #1 (Steve and Virginia Schultheis, 477 Woodlawn, Apt. C, Springfield, Ohio - irregular? - first copy free; if you like it you pay 15¢ for the next one) Well, actually, you pay for the first issue, after reading it, in order to receive the next one. Confused? Ask for a copy of the first issue and let Schultheis explain it. Contents include a long, rambling editorial, faan-fiction concerning Califandom, and comments on (as opposed to reviews of) fanzines. Rating....6

WRR Vol.2 #3 (Blotto Otto Pfeifer, Jr., 24304 59th. W., Montlake Terrace, Washington - irregular - free) The rats are beginning to desert the sinking ship; according to this issue, Weber and Pfeiffer did the publishing from Canada. (I don't know how they got it back in the country; I thought better of the US customs service.) They're getting outside contributions now, too; fanzine reviews by Bob Lichtman, an article by Ted Pauls, and a very good article on the "Ten Most Wanted Inventions" by a "local Femme-fan" named Varda Pelter. (Where do all these west coast fannes get those names, anyway? Varda, Djinn, Bjo; who thinks of these names, and Varda they get their inspiration?) Letter column, too; fans are actually commenting, and some of the comments are actually printable. To sum up, I'd say that WRR is fandom's answer to MAD. Rating.....6

METROFEN #3 (Les Gerber, 201 Linden Blvd., Brooklyn 26, N.Y. - irregular - 10¢ or 3 for 25¢) Even the editor isn't sure whether this is an

official club organ or not, but it's still designed for the neo or fringe-fan more than for the fannish group. New material includes information on New York club activities by Ed Meskys and Larry Ivie, and a long fanzine review column by Gerber. Reprint material by John Berry and Harry Warner is good, as usual, and probably new to most fans -- new to me, anyway. A good mag for the purpose. Rating.....5

PEALS #3 (Belle Dietz, 1721 Grand Ave., Bronx 53, N.Y. - probably quarterly - 3 for 50¢) The contents page says July 26, 1959, but my copy just came last month; either Belle or the post office is behind times. Christine Moskowitz discusses mescaline, Les Gerber has a column on "books of the past" (some of his choices make me feel positively ancient), there's a poem by Bob Kvanbeck and material by Belle and Frank Dietz. Some of the comments are a bit outdated by now, unfortunately. Belle's description of French plumbing is undoubtedly the best thing in the issue and I shall regard it as a fannish classic; but the mescaline bit is probably more significant, pertaining as it does to fandom's latest widespread discussion. Rating.....5

EXCONN #7 (Bob Lambeck, 868 Helston Rd., Birmingham, Michigan - irregular - 10¢) Mostly a pleasant, unexciting magazine. Editorials are good, and the letter column seems above average for the newer zines. A Conan story by Joe Casey doesn't seem to be much worse than any other Conan story; not being a Conan lover, I am no judge. Peggy Cook has a pretty cute feghoot and George H. Wagner provides a scrap of verse. Offhand, I would say that the verse is presented simply as an excuse for the almost full-page illo which accompanies it -- unfortunately, poor reproduction of the illo makes the page a total loss. Too bad; it looked like the artwork might have been well done, and other illustrations in the zine are reproduced quite adequately. One of those unfortunate happenings which plague editors; it's always the best material that doesn't reproduce properly. Conan fanciers may think the issue is great stuff, since Casey's story takes up almost 1/3 of the mag, but my rating is.....4

FANAC #52 (Ron Ellik, Apt. 6, 1909 Francisco St., Berkeley 9, Calif. - bi-weekly? - 4 for 25¢ - co-editor, Terry Carr, British Agent, Archie Mercer) According to a letter from Ron, FANAC is not primarily a fannish newsletter, as I've been calling it; it's primarily a West Coast fannish newsletter. Correction noted; the West Coast seems to encompass about half of today's fandom, at that. Parties, stf writers going to jail, fans becoming poltergeists, more parties, TAFF ballots, pro news; all sorts of news in this issue. (Incidentally, SPACE WORLD, the mag edited by Otto Binder, has been on the stands for a couple of weeks now, along with SHOCK, a reprint horror mag from the same outfit.)

Rating.....8

HOBOBLIN #4 (Terry Carr - distributed with FANAC) A two-page review of the 100-page issue of CRY. Carr is doing about the longest fanzine reviews around now; the readers who occasionally suggest that I should lengthen mine should by all means get FANAC and HOBOBLIN.

SPACE CAGE #1 (Lee Tremper, 3858 Forest Grove Dr, Apt. A-3, Indianapolis 5, Indiana - bi-weekly - publisher, Jim Lavell) This is what happens when you start mimeographing meeting notices; pretty soon you start

adding fanzine reviews and then things keep getting worse, and... Anyway, this is mostly of, by and for the Indianapolis Science Fiction Association; this issue contains fanzine reviews by Lee Tremper and a meeting notice. It will get bigger though.

THE MONDAY EVENING GHOST #1 and 2 (Bob Jennings, 3819 Chambers Dr., Nashville 11, Tennessee - monthly, so far - 15¢) Sometimes I wonder about the sort of people who purchase fanzines. One of the best items in issue #1 was the editor's essay on "How To Mark A Deck Of Cards". In the second issue he mentions that several readers objected -- on moral, not literary grounds. I suppose that's the risk you take when you publish for the serious constructive fan, rather than the faaaan. They're probably the same readers that Bob Leman complained about after his first issue. Both issues are mostly written by the editor, though a few other people manage to get into the act in #2. Quality is about what you expect -- what I expect, anyway -- from a first issue, and the second issue shows about the expected improvement. The editor is interested in stf, rather than fandom, and in modern stf at that. He dislikes both faaaans and the sense of wonder. Rating....2

MACROCOSM #1 (Lee Collins, 1375 El Corto Drive, Altadena, Calif - no price or schedule that I can find) A more ambitious first issue than most, with 56 pages, 3-color dittoing, and material by at least 6 people (I think, though with all the pseudos and the fact that Paul Stanbery is the only one I've heard of before, it's hard to tell; the stuff could all be by Collins and Stanbery). The artist, Rob Bishop, is quite good (except, apparently, when he tries to draw cowboys); some of the repro is good and some is slightly smeared. The emphasis here is on serious art; there is an article on Walt Whitman by Ferne Black, reviews of classical records by Paul Stanbery, a history of the monorail and an article on "mystery monsters" by George Spangler, an article on painting by James Nastasia, some poems, fiction, and a couple of "science fillers". On the whole, the material is better written than one might expect; the editor seems addicted to polysyllablism, Stanbery tends to write such long involved sentences that the reader forgets what he started out to say, and the "mystery monsters" article is pretty much a rehash of Willy Ley and recent magazine articles, but -- the writers are all capable of expressing themselves intelligently, which is a trifle unusual in a first issue. The pretentiousness can be overlooked; this time, anyway. For serious-type fans only, though. Rating.....4

PSI-PHI #5 (Bob Lichtman, 6137 So. Croft Ave., Los Angeles 56, Calif - co-editor, Arv Underman - 20¢ - quarterly - British Agent, Ethel Lindsay) An annsh, and a nice thick issue; but unfortunately the largest single item is a con report. Complete with the same page of photos that I've seen in 5 other fanzines. However, Walt Willis has a perfectly hilarious bit about stf editors dowsing for stories, which is worth the price of the issue. Rog Ebert contributes some quite damning -- and accurate -- comments on GALAXY and stf in general, Les Gerber rambles more or less entertainingly, Alan Dodd writes on Morocco, and Jean Young contributes a thing. There is a good lettercolumn, two editorials and some entertaining filler. Rating.....6

"Optimism is a way of life."Optimist Club literature

SPHERE #13 (P.O. Box 212, Atlanta 1, Georgia - irregular - 19¢ - Joe Christoff, publisher) Another con report. This one by Bill Conner, accompanied by a full-page illo by Emsh and a set of con photos which, if not quite as clear as the set that has been shown in all the other zines, is at least different. Still another con report (by Ray Beam!) is promised for next issue. I am beginning to dislike Christoff; surely he can find something to publish besides con reports. Conner seems to have done a good enough job; frankly, I skimmed the thing. He digresses somewhat at one point into a discussion of stf vs. tv, which at least is more interesting than con reporting. Bob Lichtman has a very good short story, and there is a combined editorial-letter column. Artist Don Christensen does a fine cover and some mediocre interiors; he does nice aliens, but isn't so hot on people. Recommended to people who enjoy reading con reports. (I don't enjoy it.) Rating.....4

SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES #46 (John Trimble, 280½ White Knoll Dr., Los Angeles 12, Calif. - monthly - 20¢) Con report again. Bah. At least, this finishes the one in SHAGGY, so they can get on to better things. Ron Ellik has one of his best "Squirrel Cage" columns (now that you're out of the MZF, Ron, how about me getting you a membership in the Indianapolis Science Fiction Association?) Ed Cox parodies Kuttner's Hogben series; very nice. Lichtman reviews fanzines, Johnstone writes humorous? minutes and I have a humorous? controversial article (which Trimble dragged out of my by main force. Ma-a-an, has that boy got long arms!) Nice reproduction; nice artwork -- what there is of it. Rating.....7

The following is a semi-open letter from Joy Clarke, dated Feb. 18, '60

"I have just read Dick Ellington's OMPA mailing comments. In these he states that, provided I (personally) pay for the dissolution of the W. S.F.S., Dave Kyle will thereupon carry out the orders that were given him so long ago at the Solacon.

"While it is not, therefore, my place to pay for work ordered by the Solacon and while the Solacon - run and advertised as a W.S.F.S. convention - made more than sufficient money to carry out this job, I intend to call the bluff.

"I have made arrangements with my bank to transfer the sum of \$4.00 (four dollars) to the funds of George Fims Raybin, to be paid to David Kyle immediately upon his effecting the final dissolution of the W.S.F.S. as previously ordered in 1958.

"I understand that the full amount required for the dissolution of the W.S.F.S. is \$5.00.

"However, since Kyle has already disposed of certain W.S.F.S. property, for which he received the sum of \$1.00, I am forwarding to him, via George, only sufficient to make up the total of \$5.00. I trust the dissolution will be performed now speedily and efficiently and without further procrastination.

"It seems to me to add insult to injury to expect one whose money was lost at the 1957 Worldcon through Kyle's prevarication now to pay for him to carry out orders given him by the Solacon. However, rather than have his nauseating display drag on any longer, I am paying the money for the dissolution of the W.S.F.S. I expect to hear that it has been dissolved - and I expect to receive that information within a very short while. (signed) Joy Clarke"

A DORIC COLUMN

THE SIRENS OF TITAN : *a rejoinder*

COLUMN BY bob tucker

Ted White, you are an old fuddy-duddy; your marriage to that Florida blonde has prematurely grayed your skullbones; you ain't got no sense of humor and your sense of wonder is slipping. But alas, the greatest crime against fankind is your critical blast at Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s novel, The Sirens of Titan (Dell B-138). I suspect you have caused unknown thousands of browsing fans to turn aside, to not buy or read the book, to sneer at its outrageous cover blurbs, and to move along to Captain Marvel Comics or some other decent piece of literature.

You have robbed those thousands of fans of an experience, sir. The Sirens of Titan is to be read and marveled at.

I, in my turn, urge them to ignore your criticisms and at least sample the novel, to dip here and there among the chapters and try to catch something of the Vonnegut spirit, something of the fresh writing approach (Fresh? Well, it has been done for hundreds of years, but seldom in science fiction.) But no sampling will satisfy a reader as to theme, characterization, or plot content; nothing you have said or I am saying can provide that -- they will have to read every last word and then throw the book across the room in disgust, as you have done, or laugh madly and put it on the shelf for another reading, as I have done. Whether or not a man enjoys this book will depend upon his frame of mind, and his attitude toward science fiction. I urge the potential reader to at least start it, for it is a rich experience; at worst, the reader has lost only 35 cents and an hour or so.

And I think I know the cause of your disenchantment. You found the book "a whopping big satire." It isn't. It is much too broad for satire; it slays too many sacred cows in science fiction. Sirens is a whopping big burlesque, a burlesque of science fiction, using one of science fiction's most trite and time-honored themes to express itself. It is space-opera, based on a grand, outrageous deus ex machina turn of plot. In spades. It is the deus ex machina twist that should end all such twists. And it is delightful burlesque. True, the book contains many, many deft and pointed satirical shafts pricking the course of the narrative, but the overall viewpoint is one of burlesque. The use of man-made structures to spell out messages for aliens is somewhat familiar, is it not? Vonnegut uses the erection of the Great Wall of China to send a message to his stranded alien. (I wonder if Vonnegut ever read Captain Future?)

My only fear is that some sleepy reviewers, somewhere, will seize upon this book as typical science fiction (or worse, dub it "mainstream" fiction) and give it the sort of treatment that On the Beach received a few years ago.

Ted, you've hocked your sense of wonder: you gave an outline of the plot that may spoil the story for some, but I insist that you turned the plot around to fit your criticism of the story; just as I am about to turn it around once more to further my admiration for it. True, your story outline followed its chronological unfolding from first page to

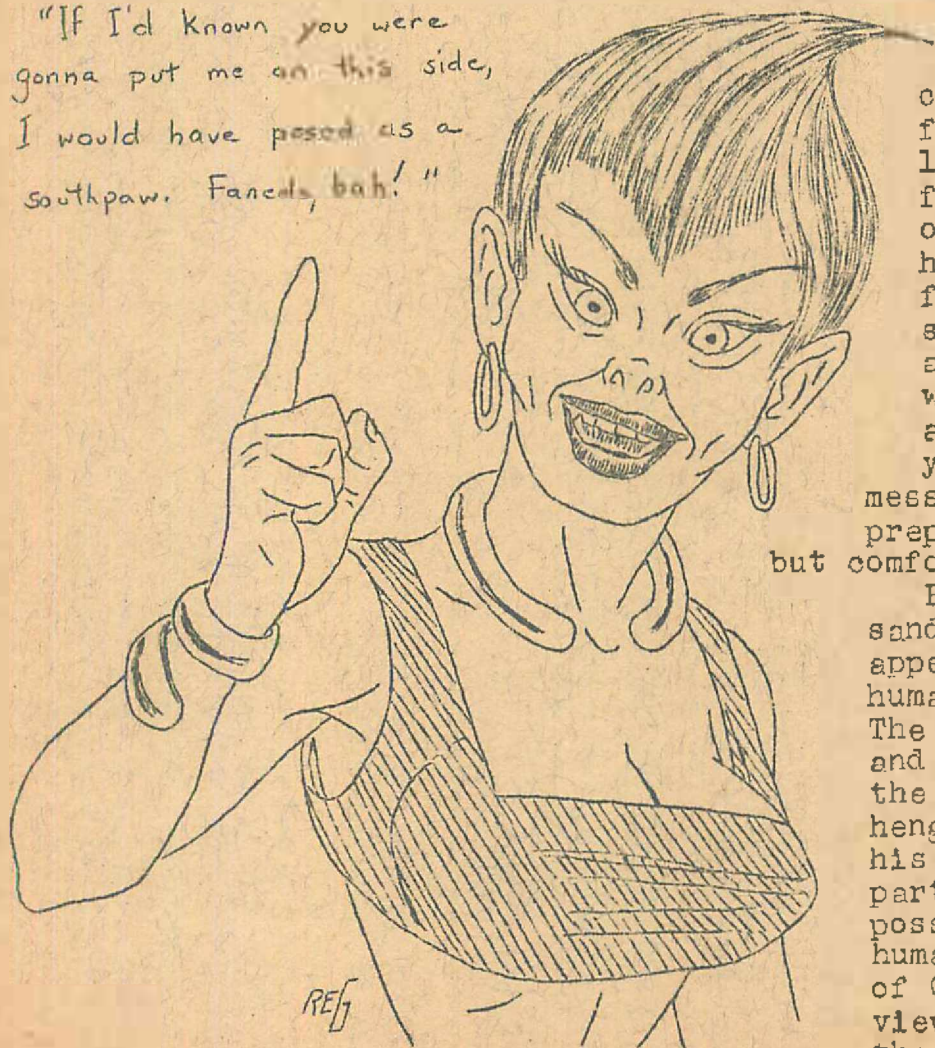
last, but such a review doesn't do justice to the work as a whole, and to what the author had in mind before he started writing that first page. I hold that it is necessary to pause at the end of the book and contemplate the whole, to rearrange the various scenes and events as they were envisioned by the author and by the prime mover of the story — whatever or whomever that prime mover happens to be. It is misleading to say "...the little strip of metal Chrono was carrying as a good luck piece just happens to be the new part." Misleading and unfair, because it didn't "just happen," it was planned that way. A spare part was needed for a grounded space ship, and our deus ex machina (in spades, remember) planned every step that was to be taken to get that part to the stranded traveller.

The burlesque is outrageous, and wonderful, because the great body of the book and all the amazing events in it occurred for just one single, small reason: to deliver that tiny strip of metal to where it was needed. Oh, I love science fiction, I tell you!

My version of the plot, told tail-end first and in jumbled sequence in order to account for the whole:

Thinking machines (robots, if you wish) on a distant world have dispatched a messenger to the far rim of the universe. His sole duty is to find a race of sentient beings and deliver a message. The message is

"If I'd known you were gonna put me on this side, I would have posed as a southpaw. Fancels, bah!"



locked in a capsule he is carrying, and he does not know its content. Enroute to that far rim, his ship develops trouble and he is forced down on Titan; at once, he sends word to his home world and asks for the spare part necessary to get him moving again. Because his home world is now a hundred and fifty thousand light years away, the little messenger settles down and prepares himself for a long but comfortable wait.

Eventually, several thousand years B.C., human life appears on earth and those humans begin to erect things. The messenger watches them and when he sees them build the configuration at Stonehenge he reads to word from his own planet: "Replacement part being rushed with all possible speed." Later, more humans build the Great Wall of China, whose shape when viewed from Titan spells out the message: "Be patient."

We haven't forgotten about you." The walls and buildings of the Kremlin tell him: "You will be on your way before you know it." And still later another building complex tells him: "Pack up your things and be ready to leave on short notice." The little fellow now knows his spare part is practically in his hand, and the first page of the book begins with a sideshow revealing a new, crackpot religion.

The reader follows the unveiling of the religion, the man behind it, the man's faithful dog and his frigid wife, and still another man in far away Hollywood -- a rich, sinful, lusty fellow who believes that "somebody up there likes me" because he is so darned lucky and so damned rich that everything falls into his lap -- including Beauty Contest winners. When the prediction is made that this man and the other fellow's frigid wife will go to Mars and sire a child, both principles are thrown into panic. She buys

poison and intends to kill herself if the wolf so much as moves in the same time zone she is in. He, for his part, takes to writing her shocking letters intended to drive her even farther away from him:

"Hello from sunny California, Space Baby! Gee, I am sure looking forward to jazzing a high-class dame like you under the twin moons of Mars. You're the only kind of dame I never had, and I'll bet your kind is the greatest. Love and kisses for a starter."

That's burlesque, Ted, not satire.

But the prediction comes true, the pair are tricked aboard a space craft and spirited to Mars, he rapes her to make good a boast, they have a son, and the three of them (in their separate ways) settle down on Mars to the grim business of making war on earth. The war, when it comes, is a complete disaster for the Martians, and the few survivors join the earthlings in promoting the new religion which preaches universal brotherhood -- a kind of tarnished utopia, as it later develops. Three of the survivors: the Hollywood lout, the frigid wife and their son are driven into still another ship which delivers them to Titan. And there you have the main essence of the plot. The son hands over his good luck piece which is the spare part necessary to get the grounded ship moving again. He didn't "just happen" to have it -- all the above was created by Deus Ex Machina (in caps, please) to deliver that part.

For me, the delivery was not the climax of the novel. The climax came a fraction later when the patiently waiting messenger is goaded into disobeying orders and opening the capsule which contains the all-important message. Please don't reveal that, Ted. Let the reader have



that one twist for his own discovery.

The 300 plus pages of the book unfold the above, not in the sequence stated here, but in the author's chosen way of telling it. The crack-pot religion has its authentic miracles, with men materializing on certain dates and making certain predictions; the husband of the frigid wife (who appears to be the prime mover) is himself a tool of others, and in the end is defeated when he acknowledges that he is being used; the Hollywood lout who is reduced to a shambling, almost mindless hulk at last finds himself and his true worth when he is marooned on Titan with his mate and his son. And I think the little old robot who patiently waited more than two hundred thousand years for his spare part, and then tore himself into pieces when he read the forbidden message, is the most "human" character in the book.

As for the characterization, which Ted deplors the lack of: what do you require to identify a character in fiction? If you are the reader who expects an author to provide everything, down to a description of clothes and skin blemishes, you will be as disappointed as Ted. But if, like me, you can provide your own characterizations by knowing a person's thoughts, listening to his manners of speech, looking at his actions and reactions, then the author's descriptions are unnecessary. Each of the major characters in this novel came through clearly, particularly the idle robot and the "hero" after he is reduced to a robot-like Martian soldier. (A very good and very clear characterization of the frigid wife is provided by an oil painting hanging on the wall of her new home; the painting, as a symbol, helps to understand the wife rather well, and also serves to delineate the actions of her husband.)

But I emphatically agree with Ted in his criticisms of the "science" in this fiction. Either Vonnegut knows nothing of science beyond what he reads in the papers, or he deliberately distorted everything to add to the burlesque. I suspect the former, for the science is unfunny. Vonnegut thinks that the surface of Mars is solid iron; that Mercury is pocketed with deep caves in which creatures live; that Titan is warmed by inner fires and has a wonderful, life-sustaining atmosphere. He thinks Saturn's rings are razor-thin, and that the sun and Betelgeuse are somehow linked in some constant and exact relationship with each other. I'll go along with his gimmick of a mysterious force-field, the ends of which are anchored in the sun and in Betelgeuse, but I refuse to believe the earth could pass through this field every 59 days as it circles the sun, or that Titan could remain in the field forever because it circled the primary while the primary circled the sun, thus describing a continuous spiral which kept it within the field. Bah.

But please, don't let the whopping "science" prevent you from reading this whopping burlesque. It was fun.

Ghod bless deus ex machina.

~~What~~ what is so rare as the in*****terlino that isn't there*****?

Most abuses in the world arise from the fear, instilled in us, to confess our ignorance, and from the way we have been taught to accept everything we can't refute. I am prepared to hate even probable things as soon as someone tries to impose them on me as infallible. I love words which soften and temper the rashness of our assertions - "perhaps - somehow - it is said - it seems to me" - and the like.

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne

GRUMBLINGS

MAGGIE CURTIS - I enjoyed "Are Owls Birdbrains?" very much. I think that Roger Payne will, too. As a matter of record, let it be said that Roger didn't say that owls are stupid. Dad did his Doctor's thesis on owls and bats, and when we (Mom and the kids; Dad wasn't along) were in Ithaca last summer, Mom happened to read the TIME (or NEWSWEEK, I'm not sure which) with the article about Payne. She was quite a bit surprised to find that Payne's opinions were apparently so different from Dad's and so she phoned Payne. He said he'd be quite willing to talk with her, and the following day he took her to his experimental lab and talked at some length about his project. It turned out that the reporter had wanted a story and that Roger didn't know that he was in an article until a while after it was published. What he, Roger, had meant to emphasize was that owls can do without visual aid in striking their prey. Roger has been reading POGO since he was about 12 years old and he has no doubt learned from Howland that one must not underestimate an owl. He likes owls and emphasized to Mom that he has no way of knowing whether or not they are stupid. SO, I trust that his honor has been properly upheld, and I did laugh most of the way through the article. Not wishing to tear up my Yanish, I am going to copy the thing and Mom's going to mail it to Roger. She insists that he'll enjoy it mightily. /Maggie liked "The Yawn", disliked the DeWeese article, and liked the artwork. She also mentioned Vanguard Records' offer to disc jockeys; I wonder how well the local radio station pays? RSC/

DAN ADKINS - says he changed his mind about rebutting Clod Hall, and asks that we publish his address. Okay, it's Apt. 2E, 395 Clinton Ave., Brooklyn 38, New York. He also says that if any faneditors want Adkins' art, to let him know.

BOB SMITH - That cover on YANDRO 83 was a dilly, I thought, and the male has the makings of a good leer on his dial! The poetry(?) didn't impress me very much, but then I rarely get het up over any of it. Tucker's column was all but 'fabulous' this time. That book, "An Unhurried View of Erotica" is available here, I think, and I must try and get it! /For new readers, "here" means Australia. ed./ His mention of the Japanese "Pillow Books", or "Makura Zoshi" makes me add that even in Japan nowadays such a book is rare, and in my three years there I never came across one - although there is an abundance of other erotic and pornographic literature. I did hear once that someone was engaged in the mammoth task of compiling the obscene scrawlings that are found on latrine walls all over the world into Ghu knows how many volumes! In Japan, as in many other countries, pornography and erotica is flaunted quite openly on the bookshelves alongside text books, literary works -- and many of them, such as Frank Harris' "The Loves And Life Of..." are indeed literary works themselves.

/Bob also mentions that the "second balcony" mentioned by Tucker is what is called 'up in the Gods' in Australia, and that queer things lurk there. Being a fellow movie projectionist, he probably doesn't include the projectionists among the queer things, but..... RSC/

BOB LAMBECK -- If I can find the words for it, I'd like to disagree with Juanita on ATLAS SHRUGGED. Of course the hero(e)s were (or should that have been heroes/heroine...or something?) smarter, stronger, fearless, etc. They were the last remnants of the embodiment of capitalism plus one-step-short-of-complete-materialism. Ayn Rand wanted to demonstrate the desirability of such an outlook on life/business and set up a slew of characters who had such an outlook, but retained enough of their individual personalities so that they could have some action which could not be entirely predicted by logic. She set these against the Forces of Evil or those philosophies which she considered as such. I'm not sure which side won, tho. At the end, the Lights Of New York have Gone Out and John Galt and friends have retreated to his mountain hideaway. Any sort of organization in the rest of the world has apparently collapsed and retrogression to the Stone Age seems imminent. Hmmm. Re-reading the last couple pages, I see that they eventually set out to carry civilization back to the savages. Good for them.
 /Nuts to them. I've read the book myself now, so I can get in on the discussion, and I agree fully with Juanita. It isn't that I don't agree, basically, with Ayn Rand's philosophy; it's just that I find it hard to get interested in a book when I don't give a faint damn how it comes out. The only emotion it aroused in me was a faint desire to give the heroine a kick in the teeth occasionally. If a woman told me that laying her was all part of a Holy Cause, I'd damned well walk out on her. RSC/

PAUL SHINGLETON, JR. -- "The World of Null-^B" was quite interesting. I -- for one -- never knew it was that hard to do a triple leap. I'll remember that the next time I get on a trapeze. I usually skip over such stuff but read all of that column. Very interesting.

"The Yawn". This belongs in a fanzine? /Where else? RSC/

Ted White's book review was too long. Tho I agree with him about The Sirens Of Titan.

By far one of the most interesting things in ish #54 was Franson's "Song of the Sheet". I read T. Hood's original poem a few weeks ago and Franson's "pome" is excellent. Undoubtedly the best thing in the ish.

Your reviews were nice. Especially the quite truthful one of BB. I'll agree with Ellik -- but remember: it's done just for the heck of it. We're not trying to give anybody any competition. Not that we could, but....

/That's the way YANDRO started. Of course, I think that even at the beginning, Juanita was publishing very good material -- but that could just be because I was writing a good share of it. Paul also liked the artwork, disliked DeWeese's article, thought the letter column was a bit dry, and thinks I should get off the religion kick. RSC/

SID COLEMAN -- "Fire-breathing agnostic". Why, thank you. Although, to keep the record straight, the fire-breathing and the agnosticism are independent. I am not down on the goyim because the Immaculate Conception didn't happen, but because the Albigenian Crusade did. As a friend of mine once remarked, "By their fruits you shall know them".

BILL CONNER -- Well, DeWeese surely fooled me. I think DeWeese planned it this way. He knew that all DeWeese "fans" would be expecting the scientist to win, so he pulled a switch. It was a pleasant surprise.

Ted White's "The Walling Wall" was splendid this time. Oh man! This

Vonnegut really needs a person with Ted's talent to put him down. What trash this boy turns out in the name of sf! It's the kind of stuff that I gag in the first few ghastly pages; it's like coffee which has had too much sugar spilled into it and is unbearably sweet.

MZB's article on circuses and aerialists in particular was interesting to me since I am a circus fan. I am not so much interested in any single phase of the circus as I am in the circus as a whole. When I was in grade school, the urge to run away with the circus used to come upon me every spring when the gaudily painted trucks pulled into the local circus lot and the roustabouts began unloading the fabulous array of poles and canvas. There is something about a tent circus which makes it something out of fantasy. I think this is partly due to the fact that this wondrous city of tents, trucks and trailers suddenly appears in the mundane setting of an empty lot in one's hometown, as though it had magically appeared all of a sudden from the world of fantasy. And then, after it has stayed for its appointed time, it just as suddenly and magically disappears, leaving only an empty lot with peanut shells and sawdust scattered about as the only evidence that it had been there. No, it isn't possible to replace this sort of thing with circus acts on television! Gad! The comparison is pathetic!

DICK SCHULTZ - It was sneaky of you to let Marion Zimmer Bradley use a sf title for that circus article of hers. For another thing, except for the opening line there isn't a single fannish, or scientificfictional thing in it. It would have been a fair article for a literary or "little" magazine, but...in a fmz? Sorry, but it just didn't ring any bells with me. /So why should we stick to fannish or scientificfictional items? For that matter, just what is a fannish item? Mescaline, of course, but what else? RSC/

This James R. Adams is a beginner as a cartoonist (I can tell by the way he draws his characters and backgrounds), but he certainly has a good sense of humor.

Gene DeWeese's story was good enough (or bad enough, if you think of GALAXY the way I do) to merit publication in GALAXY. Which was that up first, by the way? The title or the plot? /Gene, who is sitting on the arm of the couch at the moment, says that the plot came first and that he had half a dozen different titles for it. RSC/

Why do you continue to persecute me? What have I ever done to you? /Written letters of comment. ed./ I refer to the continuing appearance of poetry in YANDRO's pages, of course. Now, there have been better poems in Yandro, and there have been worse. But they continue to be a depressing mediocre, and that is what I hate to see. Either get more of top grade, or leave em in the contributor's own manuscript bureau. Now, Donald Franzen's "parodies" aren't really poor enough to deserve all of this abuse, but he is handy. In fact, it's a li'l better than the average for these pages. Like...Practice, Don!

After reading the outstanding story/article by Don Stuefloten, I have only one thing to say. I'LL RACE YOU TO THE SOUTH SEAS, DECKINGER!

BRUCE PELZ - I greatly enjoyed MZB's column this time -- much more so than usually, even. There are a couple other novels using the circus as a background that I've read: Stewart Palmer's Unhappy Hooligan is one. /Commenting on Stuefloten/ ...there was the native dancer in the black dress - black is the color of death in those parts, and strictly OUT for gay-mad-fun wear.

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