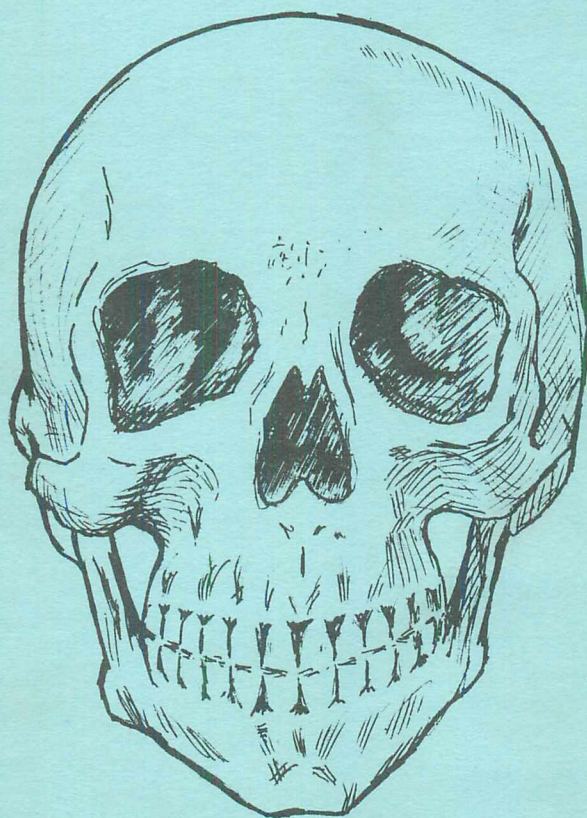


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the  
**MENTOR**

science fiction



41



# THE MENTOR

FEBRUARY 1969

NUMBER FOURTEEN

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Cover Art by John Brosnan

This issue is dedicated to Brian Richards  
for help when needed.

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2.

THE MENTOR science fiction.     MARCH 1969.

EDITORIAL : CONVENTION FEVER.

Over the Easter Holidays this year there will be held in Melbourne the Melbourne Science Fiction Convention. I am not quite sure if this is the latest Australian S F Convention or the first of the Melbourne S F Conventions. Anyway, this is the event of the SF year, when SF fans get together and generally have whopping good time.

Membership is \$1-50 for the Friday (4th), when will be held the auction and discussions. On the Saturday will be held a barbeque and picnic. On the Sunday will be shown a series of films, attendance of which costs \$2-00. Non attending membership is \$1-00.

I've attended the last two Conventions (the one last year was called a "Conference") and I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

In addition to meeting other science fiction fans about whom you have read of in THE MENTOR or have heard of elsewhere, you can meet the Australian S F writers, few that they are. I would not mind betting that fan activity in Melbourne for the next few months will consist of a lot of madly running around in a burst of last minute planning and doing things forgotten, but I do not doubt that this Convention will be the best for some time.

The address of the Convention Secretary is : Bill Wright, 53 Celia St., Burwood, Victoria 3125.

If it is at all possible for you to make it to Melbourne - by car, train, plane or shankes' pony, then do it! You will meet a lot of new friends and have a great time and will never regret it. It will be an Event to Remember.

See you in Melbourne in Easter!

- Ron L Clarke.

\_\_\_\_\_ O. \_\_\_\_\_

A brief note to Mr Wright : there seems to be a few fans in Sydney who did not receive a copy of the Convention notice, such people as Peter Darling, Pat Terry, Zian Wilkinson etc, who went to the Conference last year. I you have any copies left over I could distribute them for you if you do not have the above peoples' addresses.

\_\_\_\_\_ O. \_\_\_\_\_

CORRECTION! This issue is dated MARCH, not FEBRUARY, as on the contents page.

\_\_\_\_\_ O. \_\_\_\_\_

MR. SMITH & DR. LINEBARGER.

- Bruce R. Gillespie.

# I.

The saddest event of the last few years has been the death of Dr. Paul Linebarger, known to the many thousands of his readers as Cordwainer Smith. Few events shock one more effectively than the death of a great writer, who has become nearly as much a part of one's own experience as any of one's friends. The irony of the sadness of Linebarger's death was that he has always been known only as Cordwainer Smith, and only a few people seemed to know his real identity. Other notables have died during the last few years, but, for most of them, the shock was diminished because they died, quite appropriately, in old age. For example, T.S. Eliot had long since written his best work when he died, and he had led a long and glorious career - the best poetry of the 20th century, and some of the liveliest and most influential criticism ever seen in the English language. However, Linebarger's death, for me, had something of the effect of seeing a skier leaping from the high-jump into potentially the greatest jump ever seen, but suddenly dropping straight to the ground, before the crowd's horrified eyes.

During the three years before the news of Linebarger's death, I had been both amazed and bedazzled by the vast increase in both the size and quality of the output of this author. He seemed to be just approaching some resting-place after some of his greatest triumphs, only to prepare to scale much higher territory ... and then, in ASFR No4, and (much) later in the s-f magazines, we learned of the loss of the one author whom most people thought capable of almost infinite improvement.

Because the professional magazines are notoriously incapable of providing sensible, definitive biographies of science-fiction writers, most readers of this review were no doubt very pleased at ASFR issue No 11, the 'Cordwainer Smith Memorial Issue'. The articles that appeared (one each by Dr. Arthur Burns, and Mr. John Foyster, an interview between these two men, and an extremely helpful Bibliography of Smith's works) proved highly illuminating. The 'Cordwainer Smith' mask seemed to have been nearly complete, or at least to the s-f fraternity, and I am sure that many readers were as pleased as myself with an article by someone who seems to have known Dr. Linebarger so well. John Foyster also performed quite a difficult job - gaining some foothold on the problem of assessing Smith's works. As for the Bibliography - I quite purred with delight to find that I have all the Cordwainer Smith works except five, either having read them, or possessing them amongst my unread books. A fan's dream come true!

However, as the authors were all too aware, three



articles and a Bibliography are by no means adequate to account for an author of Cordwainer Smith's stature. Dr. Burns' biography will probably remain the best on Linebarger, but the insights were so fascinating that one hopes for a future book-length biography, either from Burns himself, or from someone else who knew the man. Similarly, I am sure that John Foyster would be the first to agree with me that a vast amount would need to be written to account in any way either for the stories themselves, or for the effect they have had on both science-fiction and Literature in general. To get to the point, I was surprised that there was not a great flood of articles and letters to ASFR both adding to and commenting on the original Memorial articles. These comments may help to remedy the situation.

## 11.

One of the most vexed questions in criticism over the last two hundred years has been that about the relationship of the writer to his writings. How much light does it shed on the works to discuss the author's mode of living, psychological background, reading habits, love affairs, etc? On the one hand we have the clarion call of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the other Romantics that Great Literature can only be written by a Great Individual. This view commenced and still sustains the Cult of the Poet. To write Great Literature, you must have had your cupful of Experience, and any Experience was justified as long as it produced the Good Oil. No particular attitude has been developed to counter this idea, but the evidence of much literary history seems to rule against it. The two greatest writers of the 18th Century, Swift and Pope, were fairly Inexperienced by 19th-century standards, both bachelors, and near-recluses for varying periods of their lives. Many attempts have been made to discredit T.S. Eliot as a poet because his ever-scholarly and prim demeanor seemed to rule out the slightest possibility of his being the greatest poet of the century, whose poems evoke the deepest experiences of the 20th Century as a whole. In another way, many have commented on the quite striking difference in many authors between the quality of their written works and the dullness of their daily habits and conversation.

Judging from Dr. Burns' biography, Dr. Linebarger was one of the great men of the century - possessing a remarkable knowledge and experience of a wide number of cultures, thought-patterns and activities, as well as subsisting for much of his life on only a near psychic will-to-live. At the same time, Dr. Burns, in his article 'Dr. Paul Linebarger' seems to be subtly pressing the view that most of Linebarger's most important experience is evident, somewhere or other, in his stories. However, I would say, that even from Dr. Burns' account, these influences still seem peripheral as an explanation of the heart of Cordwainer Smith's work. This occurs because neither Messrs. Burns nor Foyster seem to adequately explore or account for the

central concerns of his work, or even make clear whether he had any overriding attitudes.

I am most interested in those insights in Dr. Burns' article that vastly helped in my own immediate understanding of an author that I, with many others, have never found obvious nor facile, even in the simplest of his stories. I gained a great deal of pleasure at the thought of anybody tweaking the noses of Australian left-wing academics, as bigoted and self-righteous a race as ever strode the Earth. I would have loved to have attended that lecture on Psychological Warfare. The thought of all those cats, and the man who drank hydrochloric acid at parties (for pleasure?), or even the sobering revelation that the last great flourish of creativity was only made possible because "he'd often write these stories when he couldn't get up and lecture" are all memories evoked by this short biography. However, the connection between the man and the writer seems to be Burns' main concern. In this respect, the following notes are, quite unashamedly, sketched of reactions provoked in rereading the article.

1. I must confess that I was surprised at the revelation of Linebarger's virulent anti-Communism. It was not that I spelled Lenin in one of those word-puzzles that John Foyster ferreted out, or that I interpreted Casher O'Niell as Everybody's Young Socialist Hero. I had however, always interpreted Smith's main attitude to existence, as revealed through the stories, as being close to the Liberal Humanist Tradition so well-beloved of our own left-wing intellectuals. It was not that Smith seemed to have any precise social attitudes, but his extensive understanding of race relations, his backing of "natural", social and emotional impulses against the overreasonable, authoritarian and egoistic, all reminded me of Camus and Orwell rather than any of the famous reactionary writers of the century (Lawrence and Waugh). Burns' reference to the army also puzzled me, as Smith always seemed to me to be one of the few American s-f writers quite unawed by the possible power of the army in a future colonial and/or interstellar civilization. In other words, Linebarger seems to have been far more detached from his private attitudes when writing his stories than anybody suspected. A possible clue may lie in Burns' relation of Linebarger's Anglican High-Church sympathies. In intellectual history, the attitude nearest in emphasis to the Fabian-Humanist tradition, has been the kind of Conservative Humanism of Shakespeare and Donne at the beginning of the 17th century. The emphasis in Donne's famous 'No man is an island' sermon on the balance within the nation, and the necessity for a coherent relationship between the part and the whole, comes very close to the horror of many 20th-century Leftists after the excesses of World War 1, the Depression, and the Spanish Civil War. From what I can gather from Burns' article, Linebarger very much subscribed to this kind of Anglican tradition.

2. In my notes, I have two headings: "Appreciation of Survival",



and "Psychological Warfare". Obviously these two are closely connected. One hears tales, not always highly substantiated, about the ability of man to survive under extreme pressure, but one feels that in Paul Linebarger, we had a man who must have done this for many years. From his appreciation of survival tactics (his "persuasion of human frailty" as Dr. Burns expressed it) seems to have stemmed Linebarger's humanity - his realization, deeply-felt in contrast with many other s-f writers, of just how difficult the universe will be to humanity when we finally spread out within it. Also connected with Sr. Linebarger's own problems, we are shown how far humanity can be pushed without actually expiring. This is the feeling that gives great power to stories like PLANET NAMED SHAYOL and DRUNKSCAT, as well to all the stories of planforming. These stories define human courage under stress even more exactly than do, for example, many of Conrad's sea stories.

3. Just a comment on the cats. I cannot say that I picked up the story-references as a whole, before I read Dr. Burns' article. However, if you want to think in animalian terms, Smith's stories certainly cannot be called "doggy". Rather than gallumphing around, making a great noise over nothing, with its tongue hanging out altogether too obviously, Cordwainer Smith's work exhibits all those marks of restraint that characterize a cat. Nearly everything in a Smith story bespeaks restraint, efficiently deflating the obvious and accentuating the subtle pad of perfectly formed feet. Perhaps we should be most grateful for any s-f author whose work can be expressed in animalian terms in the first place - a large proportion of science-fiction, like other popular writings, could be only be described as "well oiled machines".

111.

The introductions to some of the longer stories from Galaxy (ON THE STORM PLANET, for example), as John Foyster says, tell the whole story in the first few lines, seemingly taking the whole flavour from the rest of the story. Previously, I could not work out why Smith gets away with it - that is, why Smith seemingly breaks every rule in the s-f writer's book, but constructs stories that are in many ways far better than any of those who stick to the rule. The answer to many of these problems seems to lie in Dr. Burns' observation:

(Paul Linebarger) once said that Cordwainer Smith was a "pre-Cervantean" - the stories are like cycles of medieval legends, without the Aristotelian beginning-middle-and-end of classic tragedy, but certainly without the same structure as transposed into the modern novel, which Cervantes began. They are legendary cycles of the future, rather than future history, and were meant to be connected with and consistent with each other on the legendary and not the historiographic model.Ø



This is the key to the most difficult aspect of Smith's work : often he seems downright ignorant of the elements of 'story-construction', but at other times he dodges around within the limits of the conventional narrative as deftly as any other s-f writer. However, if one keeps in mind the peculiarities of the epic or medieval legend, then Smith's procedures become quite obvious. The method of composing used for the old legends almost guaranteed that the narrative would be either very simple (like Smith's CRIME & GLORY OF COMMANDER SUZDAL), or that an originally simple story composed by a single storyteller would, in the course of centuries, become laced with a great collection of twists, turns, and addenda. Even more commonly, as with the King Arthur and Robin Hood stories, and Smith's work itself, an originally homogenous tale might collapse into a series of stories that originally had the same background, but, by the time they reached print, had come to coexist on a multitude of temporal and physical planes. I don't think it is to Mr. Foyster's credit that he missed the significance of the sentences quoted above - they seem to adequately clear up his own queries about the consecutiveness and relationship of the Instrumentality stories. If, as Dr. Burns postulates, they are not 'future history' but 'legendary cycles of history', this would explain the lack of exact chronological order in the stories. The important thing about Smith's work is not that the stories share a chronological history, but that they share the same total legendary world. I think ALPHA RALPHA BOULEVARD is the first in the series chronologically (with the possible exception of MARK ELF), and in fact is set several thousand years previous to the other C'Mell stories, but it would not matter in the least if somebody disagreed with me. The important thing is that all the stories obviously fit within Cordwainer Smith's order of things, if not within the Instrumentality Lords' history books.

Another of Burns' best insights occurs in his second 'article', the interview with John Foyster, although he hinted at it in the first. Talking about Linebarger's entire method of thinking, and especially his approach to fiction, Dr. Burns says:

Ge wasn't a systematic thinker. In some senses, once he'd made his point there was no sense in elaborating it, he went on to something else. That's why I think his stories fall short of being major literature ... he didn't have that kind of consecutive mind.<sup>1</sup>

In the stories, this is at once both obvious and puzzling. Linebarger's non-Aristotelianism seems to have been far more basic to his personality, than simply as an attitude useful when writing stories. From what Burns says, both Linebarger's approach to personal problems, and to the imaginative work of Cordwainer Smith, prevented him from writing the intricately suspenseful novels of the detective author, or, in s-f, of people such as Isaac Asimov and Philip Dick. At the

1 ASFR no.11, p.17.

same time, of course, this inability to build plot-systems has enabled him to see around the many chinks in the 'normal' mid-20th-Century way of writing, thus opening the way to a view of reality quite unobtainable by any other author. As might be expected, science-fiction, insofar as the field has been guided by Campbell and Gold, has always been the exponent of the 'logical' result. In recent years, many American authors and a whole new breed of experimenters in England have seen fit to follow the new paths into the English language, first explored and mapped much earlier in the century by novelists and poets such as Joyce and Eliot.

However, few s-f readers were prepared for the complete dismissal of formal logic which characterizes some of Smith's stories. I remember being greatly surprised in 1962 to find the formal 'plot' of THE BALLAD OF LOST C'MELL has been deliberately deleted. In this story Smith does not even follow the usual ballad form, (ie. much of the story left out, but the essential bones left). Instead he wrote a ballad, not narrating events, but tracing concisely and exactly the emotional relationship between the Lord of the Instrumentality Jestocost and the underperson C'Mell, and the consequent tragedy. As this relationship was most important at its beginning and at its conclusion, Smith simply leaves out the 'middle'.

Also, Smith does not merely exchange one older logical system for a new, almost equally restrictive system, as have many mid-century tired old 'revolutionaries', but varies his approach with each story to gain the exact effect required. I confess that, at the time, I was quite disturbed by the change of feeling from the beginning of ON THE STORM PLANET to its end, and yet, Smith never fully backs the first part, the exciting narrative of the ride through the planetary storm. Before the chase starts, he liberally litters the early narrative with some of the ambiguities of the 'victim' T'Ruth. The transition from the ride to the nightmarish sequence within the girl's house (which is, as we have now been shown, probably a textbook example of Psychological Warfare techniques), fully involves elements of both parts, and the end shows us the complete foolishness of Casher O'Niell's original quest. Although Smith's language changes quite markedly between these two parts (from the rapid-fire narrative technique of most s-f writers, to some of Smith's own most beguiling, infuriating and genuinely illuminating language), his 'logic' of the ballad and the legend, is sufficiently maintained to combine the while into an unexpectedly harmonious whole. However, I have been attempting to point out that without Mr. Burns' remarks, I am sure that I, and many other readers would have never been quite able to tie down the essence of Smith's elusive technique, in this story or the others.

#### 1V.

I want now to discuss John Foyster's contribution. I generally find John's articles 'stimulating' - a polite word meaning that I nearly always thoroughly disagree with him, but



wouldn't miss a single one of his articles. Having been 'stimulated' to jot down a mess of levelling criticisms on John's 'Cordwainer Smith' article, I must admit that he did a good job in many respects - the possibility of a truly great article on Cordwainer Smith may be almost gone, now that the author himself is dead. We seem to have few real clues from his own lips, and, as Dr. Burns has suggested, there must have been a vast amount of mental background to the stories that will always elude us. For all that, there are some of Mr. Foyster's judgements which I think I can refute on the basis of the stories themselves, as well as Linebarger's own explanation of his work as 'pre-Cervantean'. For those who might be peeking on this conversation (quarrel?, riot?), it might be helpful to reread John's article in ASFR No.11, as space will not allow me to requote much of it.

Firstly, I do not agree with John's affirmation that 'there are few writers of s-f of whom it can be said that their work needs not exposition. But Cordwainer Smith revealed himself so completely in his writing that any attempt to explain, to describe, is redundant.'<sup>o</sup> As I have said previously in this article, most Smith readers for years have felt a strong yen for some explanation of their own feelings towards the stories. The temptation of reviewers and blurb-writers has been either to describe the stories in exactly the same way as other s-f, or to come out with the same meaningless burbling praise that greet writers of the Ray Bradbury-Roger Zelazny type. A happy exception is mentioned by John in his article - Robert Silverberg. With tongue in cheek (I hope) Silverberg reviewed THE PLANET BUYER in 'Amazing' June 1965, by postulating that Cordwainer Smith might have been an alien from the far future who was casually dropping tales of 'future history' as he might have told them in his own time. Despite his provocative intentions, Silverberg's short article remains one of the best things to have appeared in a pro. magazine on Smith. Firstly, Silverberg expressed a feeling of many of us - that no culture you can think of, seems capable of producing a writer as indefinably alien as Smith. Our 20th-Century world as a whole seems not to be able to account for such a viewpoint. Secondly, within this framework, Silverberg makes some of the most sensible remarks that appeared before ASFR's own Memorial Issue. He is certainly correct in his assessment of Smith's grammar. Smith's 'astonishingly flat declarative statements' can be difficult to swallow, as is his syntax which is 'odd and often distorted', so that 'in every way, there seems to be an alien mind putting the words together'. A reader's adaptation to the style only comes with familiarity. No doubt many readers newly starting the Instrumentality stories will simply give up, like the redoubtable young 'lf' reader who dubbed all Cordwainer Smith stories as 'lemons'. Therefore, with the exception of those who have already despaired, the rest of us must be thankful to the few people who have genuinely tried to examine his work.

However, I think John Foyster has gone too far to the other extreme in asserting that, behind the strangeness, the stories are entirely 'modern'. Quite frankly, it makes no

difference to me that Linebarger inserted acrostic and verbal jokes into his work, whether about Kennedy and Oswald or not - his stories are still not about the modern world in the way that the extrapolative works of Arthur Clarke or Isaac Asimov are. Sometimes an allegorical interpretation can enlighten a Smith story - modern drug problems are prefigured in Smith's brilliant use of stroon as an instrument for maintaining survival in impossible conditions (the Old Norstrilia stories. The most horribly brilliant form of torture ever imagined by any writer comes in PLANET NAMED SHAYOL. Race problems (the Overlords, the true people and the underpeople) are handled brilliantly whenever they occur in any of his stories. And yet, despite these points, the stories are still so esoteric that they comprise events in a legendary future that can only be perceived through the words of Smith himself. The only stories I have seen which really tackle today's problems, are some of the earlier stories in the collection YOU WILL NEVER BE THE SAME (the dexterous swipe at militant Germany in MARK ELF, for example), and not surprisingly these are the stories of his that most nearly approach the mainstriam of s-f writing.

My next point at issue with John Foyster is mainly theoretical - I am not sure that we even mean the same thing by Literature. If Mr. Foyster means Accepted Literature, then I am afraid Cordwainer Smith has not yet made it, and probably will not until he gets good reviews for a British edition in the London papers, instead of s-f prozine reviews using 'Ace editions. Ace do a magnificent job for science-fiction, but they seem

little read by Right People in the Right Circles. Aside from this point, I find Mr. Foyster's point confusing. In one paragraph he says that SCANNERS LIVE IN VAIN makes the literary grade because it first started a trend in 1943 towards characters both 'lifelike and human'. In the next paragraph, the claim rests on the basis of Smith's 'imagination, his style, his freshness.' On theoretical grounds, I would say that Mr. Foyster is more correct on the second point than on the first. Science-fiction was only just beginning an uphill climb from a wartime slump in 1943, but Smith was only one of many new writers who injected genuine literary quality into the s-f of the 'fifties. The quality of a work, for me, does not rest purely on the respective merits of such elements of its construction as Plot, Characters, Description, etc. As Mr. Foyster points out later, the claim of a work to literary merit ultimately lies in the quality of the line-by-line prose. In this respect, Smith has put down many fine lines indeed. His consistency, lucidity and the width of reference contained within that 'alien' language can range from the merely 'stimulating' (you don't know whether he is pulling your leg or not) to the hauntingly taut and beautiful (the best parts of the long stories, and nearly all the very short stories). At times, of course, Smith was a Romantic in the classic sense, placing the logic of the emotions above the logic of much of science-fiction writing, and he could be, (although in mercifully few instances) painfully sentimental. I



have never quite forgiven the totally inappropriate ending to THREE TO A GIVEN STAR which was, in essence, one of his best stories. Still, the great Romantics (Wordsworth, Keats and the rest) made the Halls of Fame, with patches of writing much worse than any of Smith's, and with insufferably more sentimentality. My own private theory is that, if Literature continues to move in the cycles it has been inscribing during the last four or five hundred years, a future return to Romanticism could lift Smith's work to the Pinnacle of World Critical Acclaim.

Insofar as Smith's characters are important: Mr. Foyster may find figures like C'Mell and Casher O'Niell develop in texture and scope from story to story, but personally I find such much-used figures only become more diffuse. Some of Smith's lesser characters, such as the 'Dead Lady of Clown Town', and Rod McBan, certainly have a personal raison d'être, but this is mainly because they are confined to but a few stories each. C'Mell appears in numerous disguises, ranging from a 'girly girl' in BALLAD OF LOST C'MELL, to the effective and mysterious rescuer in ALPHA RALPHA BOULEVARD. Casher O'Niell, despite the complexity of his experience in three or four stories, remains the s-f 'hero', the cipher-like eternal 'survivor' of practically every science-fiction story ever written. Casher O'Niell has his advantages, of course. Like such characters in all the other stories, O'Niell provides a window, a neutral viewpoint for the reader, so that, by the use of the s-f cliché, Smith the author comes closer to the reader's viewpoint than in most of the other stories. (Conversely, Smith is at his most elusive when directly narrating as the 'story-teller', using more 'personalized' characters). Therefore, although I am never able to regard Characterization as a question of the first magnitude I must disagree with John Foyster, and say that this is not a strong aspect of Cordwainer Smith's work. Again, Dr. Burns' interview probably provides as satisfactory reasons as any - if Linebarger was always 'enriching' his stories, 'bringing in more and more detail', and generally adding to the diffuseness, then, as mentioned previously, he never could work up his stories from a first principle as strong as a Main Character.

If the characters in Smith's work are not the 'stars of the show', then the worlds they inhabit most certainly are. We are told little of the physical workings of Smith's universe, which might annoy some. However the totality of the stories impresses upon the reader a sense of homogeneity and familiarity with this universe, that has probably not been equalled in science-fiction (the only serious challenger would be Asimov's Galaxy of The Foundation). Mr. Foyster quite nicely brings out most of the problems in dealing with Smith's universe. Is it really homogeneous, or are the stories really more separate than we had thought? Both Silverberg and Foyster discuss the important question of Smith's verisimilitude - are we really told enough basic facts to gain an imaginative hold on these worlds? Or, are we told just enough for each story, although never enough

to gain an idea of the whole territory of the Instrumentality. Foyster is quite right when he says that Smith never resorts to the kind of detail employed merely to 'make it all seem real'. One could tartly remark that no good writer resorts to such a device. In the best of Smith's stories, the language is so contracted that exactly the right amount of explanatory detail is allowed. However, Smith's work would be rather stale if this was the only use he made of his prose. In THE GAME OF RAT AND DRAGON, for instance, Smith expertly introduces the whole situation of pinlighting and the terms of conflict, in very little space. However, if the story was only a precise exercise, such a feat would be wasted. In actual fact, pinlighting and planforming, the Rats and the Dragons, fight out one of the tensest, most deeply felt battles in the genre, and all in about ten pages! Every action occurs in the minimum possible number of words, but these are the most appropriate for each action. In the longer stories, Smith often approaches his point far more leisurely, but even in these stories, few words are wasted. Instead of making the same number of events occur in a larger number of words, Smith simply packs in more events. This seems to lead to diffuseness of intention, but in most of these long stories (especially ON THE STORM PLANET) the underlying intention remains inviolate. Smith is able to gather up the random threads into a rich and memorable weave that has precise meaning. Therefore, the question of Smith's "worlds", his idea of reality, comes down to a question of style.

The simplest way to approach the problem of Smith's "total universe" is in terms of Linebarger's self-defined 'pre-Cervantean'. Not wishing to repeat myself, I simply say that most of John Foyster's doubts would evaporate if he were to remember that the status of the formal reality, the social and scientific history, is of little lasting importance to Smith - these are tales, told not by a mother to her children, as John suggests, but by the tribal story-teller to the whole social group. The essence of a legend is not in its historical veracity, but in its reality to the psyche of the hearer, the story's ability to account for a racial past. Smith's future history lasts an extremely vague ten millerium, but the stories are told as if several thousand years after that. This completes the explanation of Smith's choice of detail - the details are those necessary to the individual psyche, not details accounting for historical events. Of course, Mr. Silverberg might answer that we still have little idea of how Smith the story-teller imagined his future audience - one often feels they have little kinship with Earthbound 20th-Century Western man. In this context, it is more correct to say that the story-teller is coaxing the memories of his audience rather than telling them a story - hence the widely referential introductions to many of the later stories. Someone who is more familiar than I am with Linebarger's work on psychological warfare might be able to trace the exact methods the writer employs to instill in his readers a "memory" that they cannot possibly have. Smith's reasoning seems to run something like this: a person's experience



is retained in his memory ; good writing attempts to communicate a lively experience; therefore a good way to do this is to instil in the reader a transplanted 'memory'.

Perhaps I had better leave Mr. Foyster fuming, muttering such insults as "misrepresentation!" and "slander!" At least I think we agree on the basic problems in talking about the Cordwainer Smith stories at all - the "alienness", the simultaneous homogeneity and diffuseness of the entire universal picture, the elusive logic and the even more elusive centre of the beauty of the art. I disagree with him on certain of the more immediate problems, but I think such disagreements can only help in getting at "le fond du probleme"

V.

Having wasted many of the Noble Editor's precious stencils, I now find that I have only hinted at my principle reason for adding to the efforts of Messrs. Burns and Foyster. Most of the above discussion concerns those aspects of Smith's style that are most puzzling. However, I don't think either article succeeded in describing Smith's basic intellectual concerns - what his stories are centrally about, rather than just how they are unique.

Probably the best of the Cordwainer Smith stories is ALPHA RALPHA BOULEVARD originally from Fantasy & Science Fiction, and now reprinted in many sources. My own text, for the purposes of this article is the 1963 Regency paperback YOU WILL NEVER BE THE SAME (See Bibliography in ASFR No.11). As Dr. Burns noted in the interview, this story is based on the intellectual Romantic tradition (that is, not your maiden aunt's favorite reading matter, but the Romantic School that flourished in England and Europe at the beginning of the 19th-century). Smith uses the same method as many of the Romantics, forging a central symbol in the story which will focus into one image all the events and concerns that the author wishes to illuminate. The most effective examples occur in the work of Victor Hugo : the cathedral that gives its name to NOTRE DAME DE PARIS, and the Tourgue castle in QUATRE-VINGT-TREIZE. They are physical symbols of a more complex human conflict. Similarly, in ALPHA RALPHA BOULEVARD, the boulevard itself ("the ruined street hanging in the sky") provides the focus for the Reawakening of Paul & Virginia (names from a French Romantic classic) as they attempt to become human again. Readers may still be tempted to puzzlement : Smith sees no reason to explain why the boulevard hangs in the air without struts, he gives no real idea of what it was like before the Reawakening, and, as usual, he pares his detail so finely that we learn no "facts" beyond those concerning the immediate experience of the main characters.

This has been discussed before. In a story as finely written as BOULEVARD, however, it is a ludicrously insufficient exercise to account for the story in these terms, ie in terms of style alone. Again, I would ask, what is his story about? What are the central conflicts that engage our attention? Perhaps

in no other story has Smith been so insistent on sticking to a central idea instead of wandering into other fancies. In the first paragraph, for instance, we read that the Rediscovery of Man was initiated by the Lords of the Instrumentality because "the nightmare of perfection had taken our forefathers to the edge of suicide." In the next paragraph we are told that "everywhere, men and women worked with a wild will to build a more imperfect world". Later in the page:

Now I knew anything could happen. The safety devices had been turned off. The diseases ran free. With luck, and hope, and love, I might live a thousand years. Or I might die tomorrow. I was free.Ø

Meanwhile the detail of Paul's reawakening is all of the sort we call "normal" human activity - he is the first man to "put a postage stamp on a letter, after fourteen thousand tears", and he "took Virginia to hear the first piano recital". However, these details, replete with life and vigour, are laced with images of death that seriously undercut the mood of euphoria that the narrator, Paul, wishes to instill within himself.

Smith develops this germinal conflict in several inter-related directions. Firstly, he explores some of the ambiguities associated with the seemingly simple notion of "humanity" - he brilliantly captures the vertigo of his hero, Paul, caught in a process of "rehumanization", full of pleasure in the hopes aroused by the Awakening, but as yet quite unable to take on the full responsibilities, pleasures and dangers embodied in that hoary old cliché "the human condition". "Death" and "fear" are as yet meaningless words for him, and therefore he does not yet fall prey to them. On the other hand, his betrothed Virginia, is presented as fully approaching an understanding of what it is to be human - she learns the meanings of "fear" and "death" at firsthand, and Paul is left alone at the end of the story, still not having discovered his human identity, and still to fully partake in the experience of living. In using the figure of the mom-comprehending observer as his story-teller, Cordwainer Smith simultaneously creates one of his best suspense stories - everyboby else in the story comes to comprehend the significance of the Abba-dingo, the mysterious relic of a past age of humanity, but the "narrator", and the reader with him, discover the facts only in the progress of the events themselves.

However, the aspect of ALPHA RALPHA BOULEVARD that links it with most of the other Smith stories, is his careful and deeply-felt exploration of the ambiguities pregnant in those two oldest of literary opposites, "naturalness" and "unnaturalness". I have already discussed this aspect of Smith's work in connectuin with Dr. Burns' account of Linebarger's Anglicanism and anti-Communism. Smith's most brilliant perceptions in all his stories are those that reveal how nearly impossible it is to reconcile a diffuse and struggling culture, and barely surviving human beings, with the need to keep in balance with the natural universe, Ø Smith, Cordwainer; You Will Never Be The Same, Regency Books pl15.



that, after all, could well decide the final form of humanity itself. The writer who has previously been most disturbed by the same question was, of course, Shakespeare. Although Smith places himself in quite a different literary tradition to Shakespeare, many of the events in his stories, and much of his language, at least faintly recalls the titanic convulsions which Shakespeare can convey - of nature against itself, of the naturalness and unnaturalness coinciding in practically every part of existence, and Man against Nature. It is the last aspect, especially in *BOULEVARD*, which reminded me at first so much of Tawneyesque Liberal doctrine, as well as Tudor Christianity - the need to come to an agreement with nature and extra-human resources in general, and consequent need for a balance between the general will and the individual will. The Instrumentality have awakened humanity so that they once again acquire "souls" and become human, but at the same time they keep a total control on the new creation, as well as the old, through the use of stroon and the ubiquitous machines. Through all his stories Cordwainer Smith sees through the irony of a humanity that seems to be surviving single-handed against the collective universe, and yet can only do this under the most rigid conditions of exterior-and self control. One is reminded in particular of the highly organized and yet seemingly free society of the Old Norstrilians in the Rod McBan stories. Rod McBan is nearly eliminated because he does not fit within the bounds of his society. Although surviving, he and his whole society are still nearly completely dependant on such "unnatural" features as robots, and stroon. The Liberty-and-Freedom debate is therefore part of the same question, and what could be a more universal problem? It is in this respect that Smith's stories are not the casual jottings of an alien-among-us, but the acute artistic perception of all that "ties the knot that makes us man". It is this aspect of Smith's work that gives him not only an important place within the field called science-fiction, but also within the hallowed halls of all those writings that have truly enlightened the understanding of mankind in general.

Cordwainer Smith can be crude, of course, in his treatment of his main concerns. *THE CRIME AND GLORY OF COMMANDER SUZDAL* comes nearest to fully revealing Smith's view of the natural balance, but by the same token, the story amounts to little more than a tract against such the distorted "unnaturalness" (racial parthogenesis) that mankind may come to assume in his dealings with his universe. Nevertheless, for those interested, *COMMANDER SUZDAL* is a vital key in understanding Smith's whole regimen. In *ALPHA RALPHA BOULEVARD* the question is treated with great virtuosity and imagination. The central symbol, the Boulevard, shows the pilgrims the way to their new life, but with an obviously Biblical exactness, it also "leadeth to destruction". On the way, there are many forms of the paradox - for instance, Macimilian Macht, the priestlike figure who claims to have rediscovered God, shows the way to the Boulevard, which is spiritually necessary to the hero and heroine. He himself only ventures the road in order to ride the dangerous pylons across

the chasm at the top, to feed on the illicit delights of the new sensation "fear". On the other hand, we can see that newly awakened man cannot possibly survive in his self-controlled environment if he does not know the meaning of this same word "fear". This aspect of the Reawakening is enlarged upon in the stories of the Go-Captains and planoforming.

Also paradoxical is Smith's introduction to the problem of the Underpeople - Virginia discovers "pride" in general, and racial pride in particular in her hatred towards the Cat-girl C'Mell, but it is this reaction that causes her to step backward into the chasm at the top of the Boulevard, thus ending her life, and new experience. Paul, who is not yet conscious enough of his "humanity", does not feel the same reaction, and therefore allows C'Mell to rescue him. Nature itself is represented by the telepathic birds, that warn Paul against taking the trip at all, and yet we are already convinced of the compulsive necessity of the trip. One can only show here a glimpse of the engaging complexity of the story, but I think the above description will serve to demonstrate my conviction that Cordwainer Smith, at least in all his best work, is dealing with the most universal problems of life and art.

VI.

However intricately we explain Smith our first problem remains however. Why does Cordwainer Smith choose not to make his universe "easy to read"? He presents a diffuse view of a creation always on the brink of disintegration, maintained through the efforts of a small, mysterious group of the Lords of the Instrumentality, and those humans and Underpeople who choose to survive. The struggle itself makes invigorating and absorbing reading, but we still ask why Smith did not more completely order his creation? From the observations of Dr. Burns, and the thoughts we have from Linebarger himself, we are told the psychological reasons for this view of life, but in Cordwainer Smith's case, we realize the vast gulf between a neat causal explanation for a person's mind, and the enormously complex explanation we must tender for an artist's mind. Smith could not see his way clear to making his universe comfortable for his readers, and indeed he barely invites them to its edges. For him, it "exists because it exists", but this does not make it the more communicable. therefore, he is forced to adopt an enormous number of artistic and psychological ploys to bridge the gap between his creation and readers, fully conscious that if he showed it all, the sight might be too dazzling, and his readers might depart blinded, upset and not a bit wiser and happier for the sight. For myself, I sometimes resent being "protected" in this manner. Hence, such techniques as the story-teller relating some barely-remembered tale to some far future audience. Smith is almost a prisoner in his own magnificent castle, needing to communicate some of his own joy at the beauty of its interior, to the watchers outside, but only through an elaborate series of mirrors. Smith, as he remains alive for us in his stories, shares enough of our viewpoint for the mirrors



to work and for we, the readers, to be suitably impressed and to gain a small part of the story-teller's own enjoyment of the life of his mind. We mourn Linebarger, the man, as we saw that it was likely that far greater stories, showing more elaborate and brilliant areas of the castle of his mind, might have been forthcoming. However, the eternal story-teller, Cordwainer Smith (or, if you will, "Cordwainer's Myth") remains on the bookshelf as one of the most distinguished Men of the Imagination of this century.

- Bruce R. Gillespie.

-ooooooooOoooooooo-

### THE 'PHONE RANG.

by Gary Woodman.

The 'phone rang. Muttering unkind thoughts, Dressler turned down the stereo and rose to answer it. The ringing stopped. Dressler grunted, and turned up the stereo.

Dressler's favourite passage of Tchaikovsky's Fifth was being hammered out by the LSO. The crescendo of the last movement had just begun its undulations past the stylus, and the 'phone rang. "Ah, damn!" hissed Dressler. He ran to the 'phone and as soon as he touched it, it stopped. His eyes glowed.

He reset the record and allowed his temper to be submerged beneath the waves of sound. He grew mellow under the supernal melodies, and slowly slipped down the incline of consciousness into a doze. The stereo switched itself off, and the 'phone rang.

Dressler was awake and at the instrument in one lunge, before consciously registering the stimulus. He grasped the receiver, and the ringing stopped. He ground his teeth.

In bed and angry, he slept fitfully and mostly not at all. The 'phone rang. Dressler let it. It rang, and rang, and rang, as if grateful for permission to do so. Finally he could stand it no longer, and he stumbled out of bed. As his feet hit the cold linoleum, the persistent ululation stopped. Dressler ran to the 'phone stand, picked up the handset and bellowed into the microphone. "Shut up!" he roared. He slammed the set into its base, then thought better of it and crashed the set onto the table. "Fix the bastard," he growled.

A few minutes later, as Dressler drank a chaser to the nembutal, there came a penetrating teeth-shaking whistle. He bared his shivering teeth, sprang out of bed and hung up the 'phone. It began to ring, and Dressler jumped.

Unaffected by this performance, the 'phone kept on ringing. He stood paralysed, apprehension mounting into his throat. He tentatively, cautiously stretched out his hand, whipped it back. He had the thought that if he did not pick it up soon, he would never be able to answer a 'phone again, so he swiped at the receiver and swung it to his face. "Hello...? he

croaked. Fifty volts hissed at him. "Hello?" Emboldened, he shouted "hello! Answer me!" Kiss. He hung up.

The 'phone rang immediately. Dressler jumped, higher. "Bugger it, what do you want? Leave me alone!" Two thousandths of an ampere sighed. So did Dressler, for a different reason. He replaced the 'phone, which immediately began to ring. A wave of cold crept down Dressler's back. His heart nearly stopped before he discovered it was sweat.

Dressler admitted it to himself. He was scared. He dressed, the 'phone ringing all the while. Still shaking but slightly calmed, he picked up his car keys, his wallet and the 'phone. "I'm leaving. Going to a motel, one without a 'phone. Y!got me scared, but not beat. G'bye!" He replaced the receiver, and the 'pone began to ring almost immediately.

He walked to his car, almost grinning. The Morning Star shone like a beacon. He climbed in and started, the raucous rattle of the flat four dispelling the last of his fright. He turned off the ignition, deciding not to go.

The pre-dawn silence was disturbed by a telephone ringing. Dressler shook, and fired up his Volkswagen.

On the road, one eye looking for a motel, Dressler kid grin. He'd have the 'phone disconnected tomorrow. He'd shut up whoever it was.

The eye that wasn't looking for a motel saw a vacancy sign. Dressler swung off the road. The booking clerk accepted his tariff, too bleary-eyed to wonder.

Smiling at the trouble he was taking, Dressler pulled up in front of his room. Now that he thought of it, he could have torn the 'phone from its wires. Ah well, too late now, he reflected. He opened the car door.

The 'phone rang in the glovebox, and Dressler knew there was no 'phone there.

- Gary Woodman.

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#### Notice.

Gwing to the restrictions placed on money transactions by the State Government there will be no further subscriptions accepted for future issues of THE MENTOR. Standing subs will be honoured but any received from now on will have to be returned. That means that the only way a reader can receive THE MENTOR will be for a contribution or a letter of comment.

Sorry, but these Government restrictions .... its almost as bad as the War....



LZ:D - 203:7    The Terran "Heteromodular Vehicle"  
- a supplementary report.

It is possible that man is the most remarkable of the species of terran animal life. Only he has exploited the resources available on the planet to the extent of actually being capable of travelling to other potentially life-bearing bodies in his universe.

Nevertheless he has not as yet escaped the dichotomy of which I have previously written, viz:- that of sense and sensuality he is still only the most remarkable species of terran animal.

Therefore, in his view, the basic problem to be solved prior to leaving his natal world is that of the conservation of energy. His science tells him that the energy lost in his journey must come from the supply he takes with him. If he does not leave with enough he may not arrive with any left, let alone enough left to return. Most men are strongly enough motivated by a desire to continue living for them to exercise caution and resist any temptation to travel in space.

A few have ignored the contradictions said by their science to be involved in interplanetary travel. They have not all concentrated on the same approach. Hence an exhaustive later survey will be despatched following this brief note on a few main trends of development. "Inertia" is a logical derivative of the terran assumption of "cause and effect". The two basic characteristics of human thought - inferiority and generalisation - previously reported at length, resulted in the deduction of "3 physical laws" from this "principle of inertia". But this was to be expected, since physics specifically and human science (knowledge) generally, are all logically derivable from these two basic characteristics noted above and a working knowledge of the evolution of the galaxy in which Terra is a temporary member. (Terra orbits about a star which will absorb the planet soon). I concluded in a previous report that the terrans do not represent a threat. I do not regard the likelihood of interplanetary travel by them as a sufficient reason to alter my view. As I have noted as nauseam their species will become extinct before they even approach the solution to the dichotomy of life on Terra.

Certain of the species on Terra are specially adapted to movement in one or another of the fluids to be found there. For the purpose of conveying himself via these fluids man has adapted some of these species' modes of travel whilst in the relevant fluids. Only the density of his body has defeated his mimicry of the aerial forms of life. Nevertheless his exploitation of certain of the resources of the planet has enabled him to construct flying machines within which he may travel through the air. These gliders as they are known are very limited in scope. This, heavier machines which do not fly so much as maintain an aerial dynamism, or aircraft are utilised more significantly. Other devices such as rockets and balloons are not as important in the flying field, the former being properly an anti-gravity reaction-device and the latter a low-density flotation device with a scope

almost as limited as that of the glider.

When it comes to the problem of travel in space almost all of these forms of air travel reappear in a new guise. The glider is now indistinguishable in design from the balloon, although a relatively large "sail" rather than an inflated membrane is connected to the gondola housing the human cargo. This is one projected form of the ion-powered device and specifically is an ion-propulsion variant. The output of the central star about which Terra orbits is the projected ion-stream which would propel the vehicle once it was constructed in space. The ion-reaction variant consists fundamentally of an ion-source in the vehicle itself with the stream deflected so as to flow unilaterally out of the rear of the vehicle. One of the laws derived from inertia mentioned above predicts that the effect of this emission will be a forward motion of the vehicle just as with the rocket on Terra. Rockets identical to those used on Terra are themselves projected reaction-devices for use in interplanetary travel. Due to the absence of a fluid in space, aircraft powered by screw devices and jet engines are considered inapplicable.

The motive power for space engines thus falls into only two categories - those which directly propel the vehicle and those which cause the vehicle to move as a reaction to expenditure of energy in some way. Physics designates as a machine any device which applies energy (ie transforms energy into another form, or, "does work"). There are certain forms in which machines can do this. Thus there is the lever, the inclined plane, the pulley, the screw. There are also other forms of energy recognised, among which transformation is possible. These are heat, light, magnetism, electricity, motion, and the various forms of matter recognised as "vibrations of nothing in nothing", or, pure energy confined by itself in a manner symbolisable by nuclear particles, electrons, etc. The nature of the energy itself still escapes the terrans but they have determined by trial and error various chemical and physical means by which to achieve rough transformation among the various forms of energy. They have been fortunate thus far in not stumbling blindly upon any of the processes which would transform their own existences into another form. The likelihood of a physical destruction of Terra is less remote than that of such a discovery.

A recent discovery of a physical transformation process utilising reaction in order to convert rotary motion into unilateral motion has added this process to the list of potential reaction-device space-drives. Although the others are being enquired into in a homogeneous program of general development by one relatively vast agency, research into the requirements of a vehicle utilising the rotary drive is being undertaken on a similar range but a vastly lower scale by a small independent group. This group is attempting to capitalise on the failures of the larger agency and where necessary to develop innovative techniques. Their refusal to accept principles laid down by terran physics where these are derivatives rather than directly deduced from observation has led to their vehicle being designated as heteromomular



by them.

Most significantly this small group has recognised the need for a system of thought entirely distinct from the one developed so far on Terra, as well as their own inability to develop such a system. They intend as an integral part of their space vehicle development program to assemble an agent capable of devising such a thought system, objectively evaluating the present terran system and communicating its conclusions as far as is possible to them. This agent will be housed within the vehicle and will accompany them in their travel through space. Interestingly enough they have no intention of returning to Terra and appear unconcerned as to the successful conclusion of their journey. Their definite aim thus far is superficially at least to leave their natal world before it is destroyed further by its inhabitants.

Nevertheless I have noted that there is confidence in the motive power, etc on the part of the initial organisers of the project. A more comprehensive report on the field will follow shortly.

Editor's note : it is at this point that this fragment of the manuscript leaves off. Further translations are hoped to be published soon.

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A TIME TO LIVE.

by Ron L. Clarke.

"Through echoes of darkness..."

UNITED NATIONS' DIRECTIVE F 7. TOP SECURITY PERSONNEL ONLY.  
OWING TO THE INCREASING LIKELYHOOD OF A SECURITY LEAK DEVELOPING,  
ALL PERSONNEL CONNECTED WITH PROJECT TIMESTRIKE IN ANY CAPACITY  
WILL BE RESTRICTED TO THEIR WORK AND RECREATION AREAS UNTIL THE  
PROJECT IS COMPLETED.

A. SCRENTY  
DIRECTOR, UN SECURITY.

1.

Aaron slid shut the heavy door, excluding the students' shouts. Something thudded against it - a thrown club, Aaron thought. The detector light above the door remained green. If the object had been metal or composed of an explosive substance the light would have glowed red and an alarm would have sounded, bringing the guards. Sighing, Aaron turned and, thumbing open the lock, walked through the inner door. The students, though not officially strike makers, were beginning to show signs of the violence predicted of them.

Continuing through the door Aaron passed along a short

corridor and entered the Observation Room. Through the glassite walls he could see the technicians making a final check of the maze of connections leading to the mirror-like surface of the machine taking up nearly a third of the underground chamber. Nodding to a technician whom he knew, Aaron continued on and into the inner sanctum.

The others were already seated. Breaking off his speech, Hollwood waved Aaron to a vacant chair and continued.

"That is the technique of psycho-history that our forecasters have based their recommendations on. The period of history they have selected as the most acceptable for the operation is in the year 2135. After ten years research into documents and other material which survived the Dark Years they have come up with the node which, they predict, is the point in History that we want." The director stopped as the ground shook with what could only have been the shockwave of a collapsing building. It appeared, Aaron thought, that the Peoples' Union had managed again to bypass the guards and plant a disruptor of some sort against a building's foundations.

Hollwood continued, "The node is a man. He was one of several in that period, who attempted to found a new religion. It was to be based on love for one's fellow man." The director smiled. "If psychology were in existence then he may have gotten somewhere. However, it was not. I will run through the facts as we know them from that period - the facts that survived. He was born, of all things, the son of a carpenter. His father was called Joseph, his mother ..."

Aaron knew the story thoroughly. He had been subjected to it for so long that he could recite it in his sleep, or so he thought. His mind turned to the Observation Room and the machine which rested therein. It had cost nearly a third of the Population Research Organisation's budget. Aaron wondered what the man-in-the-street would say if he knew the purpose of that machine. Born of a desperate world which, if one were to believe the forecasters (and they had not been wrong yet) would come to a sudden end in three days time, it was the last hope of the world government. After the Dark Years following the War, the U.S., thanks to its widely spread resources and manpower, had pulled the remnants of humanity together and started the long climb back to civilization.

Something had happened, though, that the planners had not taken into account. Mobs of citizens had risen against the officials, apparently spontaneously, and had attempted to destroy the only government left. Waves of anarchy had swept the world. News had reached Security H.Q. only the day before that a cache of nuclear weapons had been found. Empty. Blast marks, characteristic of Nylatron, showed along the edges of the five foot thick plasteel doors. Three days the forecasters gave the world before it ended. Three days. Among the teeming billions in America, Security or the police had no chance of finding the missing bombs, though they were trying.



Hollywood's voice penetrated Aaron's thoughts.

"..And so that, is the mission to be attempted today. To alter the Roman Judge's decision and so to change the course of history - for the better." Hollywood's gray eyes swept the assembled staff as he continued.

"I cannot impress upon you too much the importance of this project. It must not fail! If it does, civilization and Mankind itself will die. Forever."

"The main briefing will commence in fifteen minutes. Thank you, ladies and gentleman."

Hollywood was still standing alongside the equation covered blackboard as Aaron filed out with the others.

Following the briefing Aaron called in at Effects to collect his clothes. Stripping, he donned the (to him) smelly robes and headgear of a winemerchant. He looked at the mirror on the back of the door and smiled at the dust coated figure which grinned back at him. Well, he thought, fingering his grafted beard, this should be convincing. It would be just too bad for him, and humanity, if it were not. He wrinkled his nose. Better get used to the smell, he thought, it will get worse.

A bell clanged. Ten minutes - not long enough, he thought.

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UNITED NATIONS DURECTIVE K8. DURING THE HOURS 0900 to 1600, ALL PERSONNEL CONNECTED WITH PROJECT TIMESTRIKE WILL BE CONFINED TO WORK AREAS AS PER ATTACHED LOCATION SHEETS. ANYONE FOUND OUTSIDE HIS OR HER AREA WILL BE BROUGHT IMMEDIATLY TO THE NEAREST UNSEC OFFICE FOR INTERROGATION. GUARDS WILL BE ORDERED TO SHOOT TO KILL ANYONE INTRUDING INTO RESTRICTED AREAS. MOBS WILL BE GASSED IF THEY APPROACH WITHIN 500 YARDS OF THE INSTALLATION. GENERAL CIRCULAR : ALL BRANCH HEADS TO SHOW THIS TO THEIR STAFF AND OBTAIN THEIR SIGNATURES. THIS NOTICE IS NOT TO LEAVE BRANCH HEAD'S HANDS.

A. SCRENTY  
DIRECTOR, UN SECURITY.

2.

Aaron slid through the compact hatch of the Timepod and commenced to check the instruments. The hatch was dogged into place by the automatics and Aaron settled down to three hours testing of various instruments. Finished, he glanced up at the viewer. An amber light on the console under his fingers blinded and another lit up - red.

Five seconds.

The viewscreen showed his world - the last he would ever see of it. No, it was gone. In its place was a stretch of blistering sands. The heat haze shimmering over it caused the rocky hills in the background to waver. There was no sign of animal life or anything green.

Aaron unbuckled himself and clambered out the undogged hatch, dragging a sack containing his meager possessions with him. Grasping the gnarled "wooden" staff they had issued to him in Weapons in his right hand he set off across the scorching sands, muttering to himself in Hebrew. There was a bright flash behind him as the Timepod returned to the future. Aaron did not look back. He tramped on toward the break in the hills that his briefing maps had shown as a pass.

## 3.

"...The mountains are falling."

The cries of beggars could be heard through the court's open windows. Aaron stood by the governor's table, a flagon of his best wine in his hand. The babble of voices rose and then fell. A clerk entered the door and addressed the governor.

"Sir, the priests are here, bringing with them the man they claim calls himself 'King of the Jews'."

"Show them in," Pontius Pilate said to the clerk. As the clerk turned to go Pilate turned to Aaron and said, "I will taste the wine later, Philo. Leave us now, I have a difficult decision before me."

Aaron bowed and withdrew through the alcove behind the governor's chair. He could hear raised voices in the court as he leant against the tapestry. Pilate was asking the man - Jesus was his name - if it was true that he called himself "King of the Jews". Aaron closed his eyes and let his head sink back against the cool stone. Six long months work. Travelling through the arid countryside ; finding the city - largely a collection of stinking mud-brick hovels - and the tedious work involved in bribing his way into the group of merchants who were supplying the Roman governor with food and drink. The meeting with Pilate and the hypnotic drug slipped into the red wine. Years of undercover work with U.S. Security had paid off in enabling him to work smoothly under incredible conditions and to plant the suggestions in Pilate's mind about the outcome of this "trial". It was settled. In a primitive culture such as this it had been simple to anchor the suggestions in Pilate's mind.

The trial must be nearly over.

Aaron moved closer to the draped doorway to hear the verdict in the trial which he had been sent to engineer. Pilate was just finishing asking the priests which of the two prisoners, Jesus or Barabbos, would he release to go free. This was it.



The node that the forecasters had spoken of. The verdict. United Soviets agent Aaron tensed, then relaxed as he heard the verdict given by Pilate. He had succeeded in his mission! History, owing to his intervention, was now changed.

Aaron walked down the corridor and into the bright sunshine with Pilate's last words ringing in his ears.

"I am innocent of the blood of this just person; it is up to you."

And the reply : Crucify him!

-0-

Epilogue : Out in the desert to the west the UN Timestrike Pod materialized and a figure dressed as a beggar swung out...

The End - of the Beginning.

- Ron L. Clarke.

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BREVIEWS.

by Brian Richards.

INTERNATIONAL S.F.    Vol 1 No.2.

U.S. 50¢ A.60¢ (why?)

At the request of your editor and for the entertainment of those who are intelligent enough to like my reviews one welcomes this opportunity to cast an appraising eye over Ole Freds latest effort.

First and foremost one must concede that the mag is better value for money than No.1, which as some of you may remember, was reviewed in THE MENTOR 10. (indeed it would be difficult for any prozine not to be better than No.1.).

Russia is represented four times. France twice and Italy, Poland, India, Chile, Austria and Holland score in with one apiece. There is an Esperanto reprint of considerable age and what is loosely called a Feature.

The cover is one of Gaughan's less garish efforts quite well drawn corn, almost a trade mark of Galaxy Press.

The Mainline Story is the first of the Russian contributions, "The Last Door" by E. Parnov and M. Yemtsew. An extremely well written story about a first contact with an intellect from

"out there", in this case Mars. a poetic, well characterised well developed story which merits a goodly number of superlatives. One must particularly compliment the translator, Mirra Ginsberg, by offering the ultimate praise to a translator : the story might have been written originally in English.

Mention is made that this yarn comes from a forthcoming collection of Modern Soviet S.F. to be published by S. G. Phillips. If this is partly representative of the quality of the collection then the collection as a whole is to be eagerly anticipated.

Once you pass the mainline fiction the rest of the zine fails off into insignificance and the rest of the contents merit only brief notes.

### Russia.

The Island of Crabs      A. Dneprov.      (trans not cited)

Macabre story about five humans who take a "do it yourself kit" to a desert isle and build a small robot "crab" which builds a bigger crab to bite'em and the bigger crab built bigger crabs ad infinitum.

The suspense is quite good and a particularly nice touch provided when an extra large robot kills one of the human observers to extract the metal fillings from his teeth.

The World in which I Disappeared      A. Dneprov      (Ginsberg)

A touch of humour quite rare in SF today, adequate social satire, like the curates egg, very nice in parts.

The Founding of Civilisation      Romain Yarov.      (trans not cited)

Sardonic little time travel story, insubstantial but quite well written. Clearly the Russian sense of humour has broadened considerably in a Westerly direction since the days of Chekov.

### France.

Notes from a Cyclical Housewife's Diary.      Juliette Raabe

(trans Damon Knight)

A study of mental aberation, deserves full marks for trying, but rather poor quality.

Ysolde      Nathalie Charles-Henneberg.      (trans Damon Knight)

A putrid stilted translation of a very amateurish story. Harry Harrison crossed with Phillip José Farmer with a heavy pinch of Gwen Meredith? or Ethel M Dell?

### Italy

Darkness      Alessandro Mussi

A symbolic story turgid with meaningful nothingness and interspersed with pregnant pauses which give birth to unimportance. Very very stilted.



Poland      Heroic Symphony      G. Altow.      (trans George T. Zebrowski)

Not a story at all. A conversation piece between two scientists, one old, one young whilst meeting a returning space probe. Quite literate but one like this every six months is quite enough.

India      Victim of Time      B. Sridhar Rao M.D.

A vignette about the consequences of reversing the aging process in humans. Would have been a wow in "Thrilling Wonder Stories" in 1938.

Esperanto      In 2112.      J.V. Giessy and J. B. Smith.

A time travel yarn which is a quaint reprint from the pre-Gernsback era. It is as good as most of the stuff we see today. The genre has not improved much since then.

Austria      Flowers in his eyes      Claus Felber.

Genitic changes in humans on Altair IV, has some original whimsical horror, one would like to read some more of this blokes work where he has a chance to spread himself a little.

Chile      Meccanno.      Hugo Correa.

Mad scientist revenge with large tobot :yeee-eeech.

Holland      Der Heisse Kosmonaut      Gust Gils

Hot stuff this, which by the way was the subject of an editorial Boob in that it was not indexed on the contents page in my copy. (Another example of Twonks disease) This hilarious little yarn, the shortest in the book, is most enjoyable, quite idiotic.

Feature      The Coming of Age of Soviet S.F.      John R. Isaac.

(a discussion of Yefromovs "Andromeda")

Mr Isaacs believes this book to be a pivotal point in Soviet S.F. and tells us that he will tell us why but goes on to write an excellent review of the book leaving us in the dark as to why he comes to his conclusion.

Mr Isaacs writes very well. One could only wish that he had made his point but one must protest that is one is going to select a pivot, some mention of prior and subsequent literature is essential - not perhaps full chapter and verse but a general indication that up to this point a state of affairs "a" existed and beyond it stage "b" came into being.

Even so we could use more serious articles like this.

Editorial      Guested by Lester Del Rey.

Writes a fiw serious comments about the intellectual inbredness of English language S.F. writers. Gives us a great deal of food for thought as always when he writes seriously.

28.

Afterthoughts (mine not theirs)

The implication contained in Del Rey's editorial is that English language readers need more contact with foreign language S.F. This is perfectly true and valid provided the sf selected for translation is of reasonably good standard.

A further implication in the same editorial is that "International" provides this needed high standard sf to fill the gap in our reading. Well I regret having to differ but it certainly does not. The whole operation reeks of low budget production and spare time editorialism. Whilst there is improvement in this issue it is only a barely perceptibly improvement and a great deal more work needs to be put into the whole affair before it in any way starts to justify the exorbitant retail price.

- Brian Richards.

-----oooooooooooooooo-----

THE R & R DEPT.

Bruce Gillespie  
Box 30, Bacchus Marsh 3340, Vic.

Dear Ron,

I liked THE MENTOR 11 better than No 12, but both are high standard fanzines. The absence of illustrations is good - it keeps the price down and assured this reader at least very good value for 25¢. The only problem seems to be that your reviewers are not particularly good ...yet? Reviewing needs as much practice as anything else, and the Sydney fans would not have had much of a go from ASFR or any of the other "reviews". Keep 'em at it, Ron. Judging from the comments in ASFR 11's letter column, even Brian Richards has improved greatly since his ASFR days.

No.12. Brosman's story was very enjoyable, and a great deal better than most of the junk F&SF has been serving up during the last couple of years. If the SF market had any rhyme or reason at all, this would have been professionally published long ago. Congrats for finally exposing it. I had heard rumours that John is currently selling novels. Full story please!

Graham's article was interesting, but except for a few new facts, there was nothing particularly original to say. And as for the happily-ever-after attitudes implicit in the article ... all I can say is that Ron cannot have seen 2001. Every source of optimism has its drawbacks. Result - the kind of agonizing ironies that Ron should at least note somewhere in the article.

John Foyster not at his best, but he has read some SF poetry and that is more than can be said for the rest of us. If



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TM.AL.





this is a genre, then most s f poetry is either sloppy s f and no poetry or sloppy poetry and no s f. Thomas's last NEW WORLDS entry was competent second-class poetry and, where I could work it out, competent s f. At least John reads Penguin Modern Poets -useful bloke. And unless there is definite proof, I would say there is no truth in the rumour that D.M. Thomas is Thomas Disch.

Blamey's review is precisely how a review should not be written. Not only does he give the plot away (unforgiveable) but he gives no idea of whether he likes the book or not, or why. Not Good Enough.

Nobody should write contributions to fanzines by tape-dictation, and especially not Pat. More diatribe than commentary, it's still the liveliest thing in THE MENTOR except Brosnan's story. I'll keep reading you Pat. Thousands wouldn't.

\*\* I would like to say again here that anything a LoG writer does not printed to write alongside "DNQ", otherwise I will not take responsibility for any consequences that follow.-RLC\*\*

Thanks for the Histoire de MENTOR. Y'know what - you're younger than I am! I didn't mean that as it sounded, but like Gary Woodman I had presumed that you had been around fandom for a long time (which you probably have anyway). I turn 22 in February, but I feel very junior in confab with such Heap Big Chiefs of fandom as Harding, Foyster and Bangsund (met them all together up at Harding's a couple of weeks ago - most stimulating) Without such experienced backing, the Sydney scene must have its difficulties, tho' you seem to be coping reasonably well. But four clubs! - something will have to be done about that.

- Bruce Gillespie.

\*\* "Experienced backing"? - RLC. \*\*

S.A.P.2 Ron Keeley  
H.M.A.S. MELBOURNE.

Dear Ron

I enjoyed reading your 'zine in general, and the story by John Brosnan (The Remarkable Miss Zee) in particular. Humour in sf is a rare thing to me and it was most refreshing to read. I would very much like to see more of Brosnan's work. R.E. Graham's article on the joys of computerised living was also good, although most of the concepts he mentioned have been previously covered by many authore. Harry Harrison even dreamed up a most plausible method of 'sticking up' a computerised banking service!

'Report on the Terran Situation' left me cold. Maybe it was too involved for my meagre brain, but I received no lasting impression, except of a string of nice sounding words which did not seem to fit together as anything tangible.

And I think the writer was a runaway computer!

- Ron Keeley

30.

Michael O'Brien,  
158 Liverpool St., Hobart, Tas. 7000.

Dear Ron,

TM 13 arrived in my mail today, and I thought I'd better write toute suite (that's french, y'know) since I didn't LoC No.12 at all.

Three cheers for John Brosnan! He writes the funniest fan-fic I've ever read. His story about Miss Z in your last ish was really fantabulous. APA-A: I'm planning to join with the next mailing if I can get Gary Woodman to run off my stuff for me. Am seriously hampered in fan-ac thru having no, nought, zero, none duplication gear except a typewriter. (Why am I complaining? A lotta fans ain't even got dat).

Foyster's "SF versus Life" was rather hard to follow, even allowing for the mishap along the way to the presses. Gary Woodman's story is good, though nothing much really happens.

"Happiness is a full letterbox"? You poor misguided RonL, all those letters have to be answered you know!

I liked Bernie Bernhouse's piece on Dissidence. I might mention that one fan in the US has a secondary fanzine devoted entirely to politics .. it's called (would you believe it?) "It Aint Me Babe!" I didn't understand Michael Black's piece at all. As the hippie mob would say, it turned me off. By the way, did you see that thing in the WSFA Journal last year; somebody wanted to rrplace the term "hippie" with "zwilink". But BB is right - many fans would rather correspond than meet. As Horace said, "You may blot what is written, but the spoken word can never be recalled."

Harker's satire was rather funny, but at the same time a little cruel. 2001 is in town; I'll probably go see it this weekend. Alex Robb is a Tolkien fan? Give me his address, and I'll put him on the mailing list for the ATS' CARANDAITH (if there ever is a No.2).

I agree with Gary - BARBARELLA isn't much as SF, but it's pretty good taken just as entertainment. The Special Effects and the Music are AOK, and Miss ~~Fonda~~ Fonda is nice to look at.

An Australian SF magazine? Hmmm.

- Mike O'Brien.

---

John Tipper,  
74 Sir Joseph Banks St., Bankstown 2200.

Dear Ron,

Good to see such a publication as THE MENTOR; I didn't know that such a thing existed until I saw No.13 at ABB'S Bookshop. Pretty good value for 25¢. How about classified adds to help up revenue (SF books, films etc). Must do something about that cover!

Keep up those film reviews as its good to see someone



giving unprejudiced reviews of sci-fi films,

- John Tipper.

---

Mick G. Tierney,  
14/68 Illawarra Rd, Marrickville 2204.

Dear Ron,

Had I been reading 'Playboy' I would have enjoyed "The Humanity Doll" immensely. Well-written, and with a point Hugh Hefner dwells upon. But I was disappointed to find it in THE MENTOR. I realise all the stories cannot be SF but surely the line can be drawn somewhere? If I missed the SF angle, my apologies to Mr Brosnan.

- Mick.

---

David Gray,  
22 Tuckett Rd., Salisbury, Brisbane.

Dear Ron,

Following the 'Cult' of the Teenager closely one can only assume that once having attained the great age of thirty the only thing to achieve is the old-age pension. So it's a young peoples world where they get high wages and higher cost of living where they have tremendous opportunity and educational facilities; for the time being.

Through no fault of my own I have now reached the great age of 38 yrs with a wife and three teenage sons so I am used to being called 'Square'. I am also used to those famous words 'Big Deal' being applied to most of my wise sayings. So I expect similar compliments after the next paragraph.

Wise-words to follow:- "Would those writers and authors who use common swear words please explain why they find it necessary, do they think it improves their style. Perhaps they would also like to send in pornographic drawings for reprint to help turn THE MENTOR into a Girlie mag. Sex and swearing when it appears naturally in a story is OK, but our modern friends superimpose vulgarity to enhance (?) the story. If the reader will not take any notice of your magnificent story unless it is injected with obscenity - why bother."

It is expected that when one reaches twenty-one, one is a hell of a lad, is a know-all and always in strife, always protesting about or against something, but never before have we seen such uproar by students who haven't a clue. Two years in Uni. and they want to run this mud-ball. It is admitted that one cannot get a good government position as a Filing Clerk without a Bachelor of Something or Other, but the real education comes later. Which brings me to ask why are the Moon Astronauts middle-aged squares (there's hope for me yet), why does NASA pick middle-aged family men, is it because they are mature, stable, reliable, intelligent and experienced, not young graduates whose only

experience is in sexual athletics. I hear you say "When I am young I am inexperienced, by the time I get the experience I'm too tired; like the young bull and the old bull.

Ua ordinary folk don't stand much of a chance of going tp the moon yet but someday in about one hundred or so years we will want migrants to help colonise some planet many light years away. And I know that the authorities will still be looking for middle-aged married men with a variety of experience, I know one chap whom I'd like to take along. This man has had experience in survey work, timber- felling, building construction, worked as a stockman with sheep and cattle, has been a silk-screen printer, a bill poster, Gold Prospector. He has stood for Parliament, lectured on socio-economics, organised charity concerts and in his spare time is a scoutmaster.

The almost lack of experience of Uni students in mature understanding and their usual supreme confidence that they know all the answers often leads to their being used by more experienced but less educated people. The opinion expressed by mature observers points out clearly that student demonstrators know that something is wrong in our Society but they have no clear idea what this is; or what should be done to change this situation. The mere fact that these demonstrations have occurred through-out most of the world can only lead us to one of two conclusions, either student demonstrators are like sheep, or it is well organised action by more clever people than they. It takes much time, money and effort to organise on a world-wide scale, and the same formula can be applied to the big increase in drug addiction amongst young people.

Now I see a distinct connection between demonstrations, drug addiction and the vast increase in pornography. Much have I learned from SF, including many reasons why and how masses are manipulated. One absorbing book was concerned with the complete lack of rain on earth, and how the public was manipulated whilst the cream of society escaped to the poles to live on the melting ice. One method that the authorities used was pornographic shows on TV and sexual license as was the latter encouraged in England during WW11. This was done to take their minds away from the real issues. Now I will add one more distractor to the scene, the Vietnam War, recognised by top brass as a 'wrought', a giant 'War Games' as was the Korean War.

Bread and circus is a bit old hat as we are much more sophisticated, so we have a wider variety, demonstrations to let off steam, pot to quieten our nerves after, pornography to encourage sexual irresponsibility, and minor wars to satisfy our blood lust. Whilst we are kept happy and confused what is really taking shape?

Perhaps if our Students stopped demonstrating and started thinking about what authorities do rather than what they say and spare a thought for those extrememy clever people behind the scenes who started this ... or is it just an accident.

- David Gray.



Bruce Gillespie, ed. S F COMMENTARY,  
Box 30, Bacchus Marsh, Vic 3340.

Dear Ron,

Please - who did write THUS RAVED LOLLAPALUSA? Melbourne fandom is mystified. It's not John Foyster, because he asked me for my guess. It's none of the younger fans, because they wouldn't have managed the occasional pieces of erudition. At the same time, it's a grossly over-exaggerated uncertain sort of parody, and in many ways just inaccurate. We've levelled the field to Brian Richards (the more likely) or Gary Woodman (because he could manage it if he really tried). The best part of the article : I'm thinking of calling S F C the CHOREOLOGOLOGIST (you did spell that correctly?).

\*\* Yes, that's the correct spelling. And what makes you think than one of the "younger" Sydney fans did not write TRL? - RLG. \*\*

The best article in the magazine is Don Herbison-Evans' COMPUTERS ARE ONLY HUMAN. It's one of those marvellous things that tells you facts you always suspected, but never had the evidence to corroborate. I suppose if one had any knowledge of statistical chance at all, it would have been possible to work out the failure-rate scales that Herbison-Evans outlines. But, unhappily, like most people I just do not have this knowledge. And how did you get hold of the article in the first place? (greedy little eyes poised). People who can write well about Science are rare (Asimov is the only really enlightening commentator in the prozines for instance) and an article or three from people like this chap should brighten things up immeasurably.

Foyster's SCIENCE FICTION VERSUS LIFE is odd. He takes a position that is pretty naive, and then doesn't even send up his own naivety. He points to "the world" and then to the "science fiction reader", and then imagines that this hypothetical reader can choose whether to sit on his little platform in space and observe the world, or turn his head in the opposite direction to look at "extra-terrestrial reality". John should have clamped down on this whole assumption of Sarris' original article. Within the kind of absolute terms that Foyster accepts, how is it possible to "alienate oneself from the human situation" when one is part of it, whatever one chooses to do?

The choice for the s f reader, is not even between looking at two different sorts of reality. All the alien environments of s f are reconstituted elements of the author's observation. All s f, all fiction, every scrap of thinking that is done in the world, is an observation and assessment of the human situation.

So : the choice comes down to - how well or badly does the s f author/fan observe the world (or, that part of it that involves humanity)? I mean, there are not even those people whom, as John seems to assume, have the mystical ability to "face the world in which they live squarely and write about it". Art itself, involves the extent to which the world is faced and reinterpreted. The "scientist" of the 13th century was living in the same world

as that of his 20th century descendant, but the world looks so different now because of the vast change in the scientific system and means of observation. I would query however, whether either one of them could claim to "face the world" as if it were an activity practised by all Right-Thinking Man with the same frequency with which they shave in the morning.

But John could answer that there is a difference between trying to observe the human situation, or whatever, and not trying to, i.e. Sarris is accusing s-fers of not realizing the problem exists in the first place. Well, my only answer is that they are not alone in this. I would question whether the writer/reader of the TRUTH newspaper, or the writer/reader of a Crime Club Choice are any more concerned about What Makes the World Move, than the reader of GALAXY magazine.

Therefore, after clearing away those questions - do self-consciously "aware" s f writers and readers, by the very nature of their medium, avoid facing up to the "World" of which they are a part? Do they say "what the hell" to the important issues, and concentrate on relatively minor or cultist concerns?

Now we get back to the beginning of my argument. S F writers have no choice but to reobserve, or make original statements about the elements of the world that surrounds them. There's just no other raw material to use. Other artists claim to observe the structure of what they see "as it is". SF writers claim to see the structure "as it will be" or "as it might be". You can write columns about the concept of extrapolation, so I will leave that question.

If you claim to write about what you see "as it will be" or "as it might be", then you must know about "how it is" and "how it has been" so that you can outline whatever aspect of the world you claim to be extrapolating. I would agree with John Foyster anytime that s f writers do not have this requisite knowledge. Primitive s f (most of that published today) is so thrilled with chucking its mind into future/alternate worlds, that it rarely thinks whether this mind has any value so that it is worth chucking. But this horrifying lack, which throttles the wind out of so much s f, does not condemn the whole enterprise. If s f writers were concerned about "rounding off time" by adding a future to our understanding of the past and present, they would be very much more self-conscious about their art.

The actual situation has little connection with this idealistic picture, of course. SF is read by people who are only charmed by the primitive thrill of roaming around paper universes, whose inhabitants prove ultimately nasty, brutish and ugly. But this is a problem of psychology and the book-publishing trade, not of a Definition of S F. In s f, as with most other arts, it's fairly easy to see the kind of paranoias and prejudices and interests that are predominant among its public. Most of this public is not concerned with Perception of Things as They Are. That's life, I'm afraid, John.

John's whole article, then, collapses under its



misconceptions. I've never read anything by Delaney that I've particularly liked, but then I've never read his novels, only a few short stories. If his letters and criticism are any guide, he should be another Henry James. Smith is one of my three or four favorite authors (others being Dick, Aldiss and Asimov), but I don't like him for John's reasons. Ditto - if I ever do run across something of Delaney's I like, I won't like it for John's reasons. Take Smith: I don't appreciate him so much for any obvious or supposed references to *The World 1969* (actually 1948-67) filled with Riots, Wars, Famines of a particular texture and horror. Smith's ability (as I think John was actually saying) is to observe the general texture of the world as he saw it, and then reobserve it in his legendary cosmological structure. The new structure seems alien upon first observation, and it is this alienation which initially attracts. But Smith's universe, constructed of words, may be analyzed by the mind. Restructured back to familiarity through criticism, Smith's world illuminates our own observations. In short - s f writers create "new worlds". We like these worlds because they are "original". In fact, they are not new worlds, but new ways of seeing our world. Often s f writers simply play upon our most primitive perceptions of the world. As long as we realize this, and call much of s f a cozy sort of horror fiction, we shan't be much harmed by it. A few writers manipulate our most sophisticated perceptions of the world, and with these they really delight us, really increase our self-knowledge.

The rest of *THE MENTOR*? The reviews were terrible. I hope you're not "Alex Robb", but there are some things you have to send back with polite little rejection slips, even from a fanzine. I mean: "500 pages which are an absolute joy to read" sticks in your gut if the so-called reviewer gives you no sense at all of what he means. A relation of the plot of a book is not a review, although a plot summary may be used in one's review to have a sense of one's appreciation of a book (as in Bob Toomey's review of *EINSTEIN INTERSECTION* - SFC 1).

Fiction; Pretty bad aswell, but worth publishing - you just may get something good (*REMARKABLE MISS ZEE*), from the collection, and at least people are getting the practice. Very much a Necessary Duty to publish fiction, but somebody has to do it. Also, Woodman does seem to be writing "science fiction" stories (despite cribbing his punchlines), and that's more than Brosnan does in his latest.

\*\* What do you mean, "a Nesessary Duty" publishing fiction? I would rather publish fiction anyday than reviews. -RLC\*\*

- Bruce Gillespie.

Gary Woodman

President, Monash Uni S F Assn., Monash Uni, Vic 3168.

Dear Ron,

Your editorial - most timely. Our APA needs members

like a baby needs meals, but here the meals get something for their troubles too. Anyone that hasn't, join.

Contained in the selfsame issue of TM as John Brosnan's HUMANITY DOLL is a rather depressing and unfavourable criticism of JB's MISS ZEE and, by implication, the writing style of said author, along with the usual crud I write. Friends, I was wrong. I hereby admit it to all and sundry that John Brosnan can write stories in that vein (or should I say artery) as often as he likes, and once an issue is not enough for me. MISS ZEE was good, THE HUMANITY DOLL was at least as good, and I no longer doubt that JB can do it again and again and again, sans nauseum (as the Greeks said).

JOHN FOYSTER VERSUS LIFE doesn't make any more sense than it did when JF tried to get me to publish it. He takes three pages to prove what was immediately obvious ("...Sarris is referring to ....SF readers and writers as a whole."), and loses the train of argument so often that one wonders a) what the hell he is trying to prove, b) whether he knows he is, and c) why the hell he isn't.

One feels that the point was so obvious that Foyster must have had an ulterior motive in proving it beyond the shadow of even unreasonable doubt. Perhaps Mr. Foyster resents the implication that, because he reads SF, he is a little queer, and faintly traitorous for "copping out." on non-fannish life...?

HOMO SYMBOLIS reads as if Ballard started it and Cummings (or ERB or AE Kline or me) finished it. I don't like any of these authors, but I like Alex Robb. Just goes to show that the whole is greater than the parts, like all good things (love, happiness, Drambuie, etc.)

I'm glad to see someone deflating The Great Computer Balloon. Great pains were necessary to do this - too many people believe that computers are the God Saviour & All Saints Hallelujah Chorus. Thanks, Don.

For a change, Bernhouse is right when he equates dissidence with escapism. However if, as he says, Youth is dissenting from and escaping from the violent antagonistic hell-bent society of today, why is it that the entire population of Western Youth (and some Eastern - viz. Czechoslovakia) is up in arms against the society they are forced to live in? Escapism only postpones problems; dissidence creates new ones.

It seems a pity that Michael Black's talent (yes, hard as it is to see, it's there - buried under tons of guano) is wasted on tripe like AMATEUR. It's about time he worked on a story instead of churning one out the day before stencilling.

THUS RAVED etc. is the funniest thing I have ever read. Thank God it's a one-shot; I couldn't live through another. I have the impression that "Herald G. Marker" is our own J. Foyster. I guess he had to have his say - Bangsund wouldn't let him in ASFR 17. A bloody good job, too; but we still don't know why



JF doesn't like 2001!

I have seen one only episode of THE TIME TUNNEL and by Ghu that was one too many. Irwin Allen at his best - that's TTT. He was pissed when he made the episode I saw. They were all pissed - from actors down to water-boy. If you don't count Allen's usual scientific absurdities, inconsistencies and impossibilities, TTT is on a par with those other famous Irwin Allen abortions, LOST IN SPACE and VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM etc. You'd think he'd learn after two bombs - but no, oh no, not our Irwin. Some grosser bumouts - a fuel dump on the moon explodes. Great booming sound, bits of this and that (including, presumably, a man) flying off with acceleration due to gravity about 6 times what one would expect for the moon, flames flickering in the distance. The moonship looks like a Hugo - perfectly smooth on the outside. Any bum knows there are access plates and plumbing and stanchions and clamps and all sorts of junk on the skin of a deep-space ship. Space-suited men looking like store dummies. With He-O<sub>2</sub> at 10 lb/sq in (or whatever it is these days), a suit would balloon out.

These are some of the ones I picked up in a quarter of an hour. There are no doubt others - I have a suspicion that the added mass of the two time-travellers would not affect landing manoeuvres because of conservation of momentum principles, but I can't be bothered working it out. With the science of the rest of the show at the all-time low that it is (even for I. Allen), it's bound to be unaffected. I've had enough - back to those SF cartoons.

Graham Saint is one hundred and fifty percent correct. I endorse every word he says and await the demise of TTT with eager anticipation.

If David Gray persists in sending you such tripe, Ron, I respectfully request that you not print it. There may be some readers of TM interested in the Brisbane group; very well, if the group offers informative items you can print them, without complaint from me.

But when Mr. Gray recounts the past exploits of his group, I chunder. Who cares what they did? There may be some who are interested in what they are going to do; for their sake print on, O Editor. But the long-gone incidents can interest no-one. The ones who were there, know; the ones who weren't, don't. If they want to find out, they can ask D. Gray.

It's no good complaining to us about prices and availability of SF. For a start, we already know, and secondly, what can we do about it? Write to your MP, if you've got them "up here in the Wilderness".

It is not interesting to see GALAXY conducting a contest etc. Politics is buggered up enough with only politicians and students involved; what will happen if SFWA and Fandom turn to politics?

Ron Graham - Gary Woodman's satire is not hilarious.

What I said was (and you obviously did not read what I said before extracting a few incriminating words)"it is extremely unlikely that Germany was at war in 1945 when Brian was there." I do not mind being criticised but I will not be misquoted out of context.

John Zube is fighting a skirmish in a losing battle. I thought Heinlein (THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS) ably demonstrated the obvious, that a revolution must be violent to be successful. History abounds with successful violent revolutions (ones that come to mind are the French Revolution, the American War of Independence, several monarch- changings in English history notably that of Richard II - Henry IV, and a whole slew of African uprisings - colonels revolt on weekdays only, generals revolt on weekends), and the oldest culture in the world persisted for three thousand years, (give or take a week)not without attempts at peaceful cultural revolution since they were all thinkers (this civilization was also shattered violently). Your struggle is laudable, John, but hopeless.

One is tempted to shout boisterously and youthfully that human potentialities deadened by social imprinting were not worth having, and that society stabilises itself by suppressing innovations - the status quo (Blessed Stasis!). Well there - at least I've said it.

I seem to think that since authors must eat, they cannot say anything Important because this is removed by such a small margin from what I do think. What Stules says is correct when used to squash a generalization, but applied to SF it loses impact because it happens so seldom. What he says is true, but I haven't seen it for years.

Julie Day is cast in the same mould as Michael Black - a wasted talent that keeps bumming out. Plenty of valid things to say but said poorly, indeed unintelligibly.

In summation, a fine fat issue - marred by unfortunate typos ( no doubt due to your unfamiliarity with touch-typing).  
\*\*Yeah. -RLC. \*\*

- Gary.

Brian Richards  
50 Shenton Rd., Swnabourne, W.A. 6010.

Dear Ron,

Another beauty put to bed Mr Editor, not much art work, no credit given for the little artwork there was, I quite liked the cover - but that jet? Looked as if it was heading for one helluva thump. Enjoyed John Brosnan's effort, as so many other of his writings, makes one speculate just how long will it be before "big brother" mixes contraceptive drugs with the sodium fluoride in the public water supply "pro bono publico".

John Foyster slides controversy in so smoothly and with such sweet reason that one is strongly tempted to accept all he