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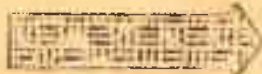
NIEKAS 13
2 AUG 1962

NIEKAS, the nothing fanzine, is published pproximately quarterly to fulfill the N'APA activity requirements of Ed Leskys and Felice Rolfe. Copies are available to non-N'APAns for trade, contribution of material, LoC, or (if you insist) 35¢ the copy (2/6 in England). Send everything to 1360 Emerson, Palo Alto, California, 94301. Our U.K. agent is Graham Hall, 57 Church St., Tewkesbury, Gloc., England. ((Gloc? Well, I suppose our abbreviations look just as strange to him. --FR)) We're not making too much of a fuss about the address bit for all the old ones are still valid in that mail sent there will eventually arrive, but the above is more or less final. NOTE: if you get NIEKAS in trade, a second copy for Felice would be appreciated. Speaking of LoCs, we have been receiving a few from N'APAns in lieu of mCs and we welcome this. If you would rather write a LoC, we will be glad to get it though we do not guarantee to run every word. (despite the inordinate length of Laiskai in N #12 we ran less than 50% of the wordage received.)

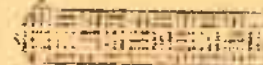
The prices on back issues are: #10 & 11, 35¢; #6 & 9, 60¢; #3 & 12, 75¢; #5, 7, 8, #1. (Has delusions of grandeur, hasn't he?--FR) There were also three "fractional" issues of NIEKAS, 8.9, 9.5 and 10.5, running 6-8 pages each and consisting largely of N'APA mailing comments. They weren't generally distributed, but we have a few extras which completists can have at 15¢ each. I (ERM) know that a few of you are looking for back issues of other zines I've published. Probably the only two worth digging out are POLHODE #3 (the final issue), a sort of predecessor of NIEKAS in that it was a genzine circulated thru N'APA, and I had just begun to get somewhere with it when it died of procrastination. The best of my personal reminiscence/travel writeups made up THE AVENGER, published in July 1962. I would say that none of my other zines are worth the bother it would take to find copies.

Because one of the coeditors mas most ungallantly gone off to Loncon without the other, leaving her without the faintest idea whose art is whose, the art credits may be incorrect or delayed. (That's not what Ed originally wrote, but it's true. --FR) And when I was trying to teach Felice how to use the Gestetner, the blasted machine bit me! Wonder if it recognises her as its new and only master. (Ghu forbid--FR)

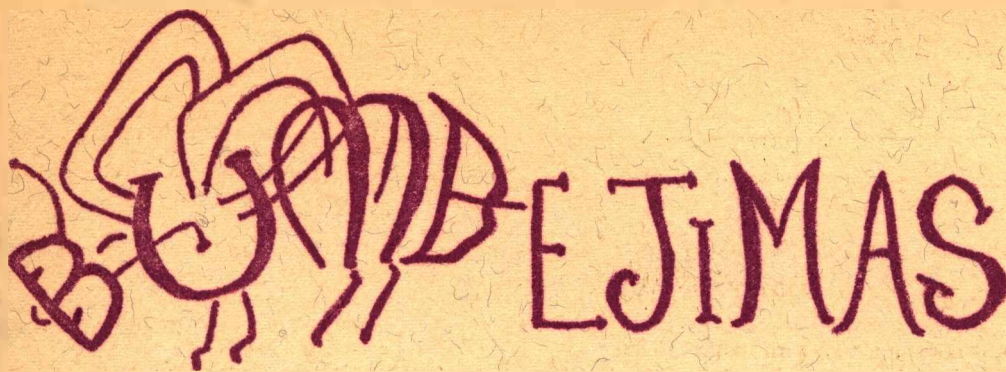
Contents, as usual, are listed on the last page. This has been a Confused Colophon.



NUMBER, PLEASE!



The time is rapidly aporoaching when the Post Offal will consider third and fourth class matter as incompletely addressed if it does not include the Zip Code number. Please take a look at the envelope your NIEKAS came in, and if it is missing or wrong, make a point of noting the correct one in your LoC. Even before this edict goes into effect, it will be to your advantage for us to have this -- the PO really uses it.



THE COVER ON NIEKAS II

has aroused a lot of comment from the readers as to its meaning and source. Well, I just heard from Jerry Page that the drawing had been done on commission for use by him as the cover of SI-FAN #5 in order to illustrate a feature symposium on Vardis Fisher and his "Testament of Man". And there most definitely was no connection between this picture and Andre Norton's works for Burge does not like her fiction (a member of a pitifully small minority!). SI-FAN #5 was never published because of mundane commitments like a hitch in the army.

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE BRAG SHEET?

Why has it gone out of style? On several occasions I had a copy of a recent book with me and was discussing its author with some one, and when I turned to the title-page to find the list of his other works it wasn't there. I find it rather strange that this should have been dropped.

GOSH!OWOBOYOBOY!

So the Mariner photos are in and Mars is nothing but a moon with a tenuous atmosphere. There was a lot of sighing for Barsoom and such at the Little Men's meeting right after the rest of the photos were released. Well, never having read anything by Burroughs I didn't sigh for Barsoom, but for the world of the Martian Chronicles, Heinlein's Red Planet, Miller's "Crucifixus Etiam", etc.

I just got around to reading the special NASA issue of Missiles & Rockets (dated Nov. 30, 1964) and was quite startled by how far NASA's plans have advanced for a manned mission to Mars in 1985 or thereabouts. The funding is quite low at present, but they have several small contracts going at all times to investigate the state of the art relative to the mission, possible mission profiles, etc. One interesting discovery made in the course of a recent study was that less fuel would be required if the mission went to or returned from Mars via Venus! If the return trip were made via Venus, the mission would take 40 days longer, but a close pass would change the course in such a way that the earth re-entry speed would be quite a bit less than for a direct return from Mars. Thus either the heat-shielding would be quite a bit less, or it would have to use quite a bit less fuel for deceleration. (The main advantage would be in reducing the heat-shielding requirements.)

A ROBERT BLOCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

is available from the NIEKAS offices. (! --FR) This was recently published by Graham Hall and can be gotten directly from him for 1/6, or from NIEKAS for 25¢. This superbly produced booklet has an introduction by Samuel Peebles, a note from Bloch, a chronological listing of all publications, a listing by magazine appearance and various special lists such as anthology appearances, listings of contents of his collections, and listings of his radio plays and television and movie adaptations. (See page 1 for Graham's address; he is also agenting NIEKAS for me.)

THE FANZINE REVIEW COLUMN THISH

is another experiment. For some time I have been trying to get Harry Warner to revive his legendary fanzine-discussion column for NIEKAS, in vain, unfortunately, because of a number of other time-consuming commitments on Harry's part. In the meantime we are giving a try to a standard fanzine review column in order to see how it works out. Comments? (Send zines for review to Ben Solon, 3915 N. Southport, Chicago, Ill. 60613.)

WELL, THAT'S IT

for the shortest Bumbejimas in ages. I'm leaving for New York today, and for Loncon a few days later. I'll try to write some comments and send them back as I travel, but don't count on it. If they do come, I suppose they'll be run as "Bumbejimas Annex".

A BELATED WORD ON THE LERNER AMENDMENT

In general, fandom depends on good will for operation, requires it for smooth operation. Clubs and organizations might have complicated and bureaucratic constitutions and bylaws, but if most of the members don't support them there is no way they can be enforced. The few times these (practical) matters were taken to outside authorities to effect enforcement, such as the lawsuits resulting from the '57 Loncon plane charter/WSFS Inc. business, all parties involved lost quite a bit of fannish prestige. This, I think, involves an instinctive recognition of the fact that in general the legalistic mind is incompatible with fandom.

This brings up the matter of the Lerner amendment and its consequences. I have no idea whether it has passed or not (I'm writing this in Paris on August 18), but I do hope that it hasn't passed, for that would simplify everything.

I believe that today N'APA's relationship to the N3F does it only a very little harm, and that certain benefits probably more than make up for it. Initially we lost a number of potential members because they were reluctant to join the parent organization in spite of some interest in "the new APA". Today I think very few people in one or more of the older APAs would be interested in expanding their APA activity in our direction, whether or not we were associated with the N3F. The only loss comes when minacers with marginal interest in N'APA and no interest in N3F decide to leave. Occasionally they are missed, as when Frank Wilimczyk left (his minac was better than the activity of many enthusiastic members), but generally they aren't -- especially when the group has a waiting list as it has had the last few years. On the other hand it gains quite a bit from the non-fanzine fans in the N3F who decide to give it a try. Some, of course, don't work out, and quit after a while, but others do, and quite well. I believe we have gained a number of fine members we would not have had otherwise, thanks to our association with the N3F.

As for benefits and such, in the early days it brought some people, such as F. M. Busby and the several Angelenos, into the parent club, who then saw the fine job Ralph Holland was doing and revised their opinion of the N3F upward by several notches. Today this no longer happens for several reasons, but the N3F benefits, for it thus has one more functioning activity for its members.

As for finances, the N3F provides no money for any of its activities, but leaves it up to the participants to raise their own funds. (I have more to say about the expenses of committees, but will save that for What, Neffer? #2.) The N3F dues are too small for anything else. APAs got along on parcel post rates in the past, and can do so in the future. Unless something else came up in a year or so we'd have to return our dues to the original \$2.00, but we do have about \$100 in the treasury which gives us plenty of time to experiment.

I remember, back when Belle Dietz became OE with the 5th mailing, we gave this matter considerable thought. One thing considered but not done was to bind the whole mailing, in two or three volumes if necessary, with a Habakkuk-sized stapler, perhaps with file-folder covers, and send it book rate. That might well work now. What we did saved less money but was easier. For those who lived far away we broke the bundles up into two parts weighing less than one pound each so that they could be sent 3rd class, which was somewhat cheaper than parcel post. (For short distances, parcel post is cheaper or virtually the same.)

So, you see, I feel that it is slightly to our advantage to remain a part of the N3F; but this page is mainly to prove that there is no overpowering reason to leave. I am going to the trouble of writing this because I want us to remain a part of N3F, and feel that the attempt to split away is wrong and that indirectly it will do N'APA considerable harm whether it goes through or not.

It is wrong, for N'APA was established as an activity of the N3F by the directorate almost six years ago, and I don't feel it is right for us to break away. Though there is no way to enforce this, we have no legal right to break away. Technically we can take no major step without the approval of the Directorate, but all is really up to the OE. If he decided to break away simply by accepting non-Neffers as members, the rest of us could do nothing about it except quit in protest or ignore those "members". On the other hand all the votes in the world could not force the OE to accept non-Neffers, if he didn't want to.

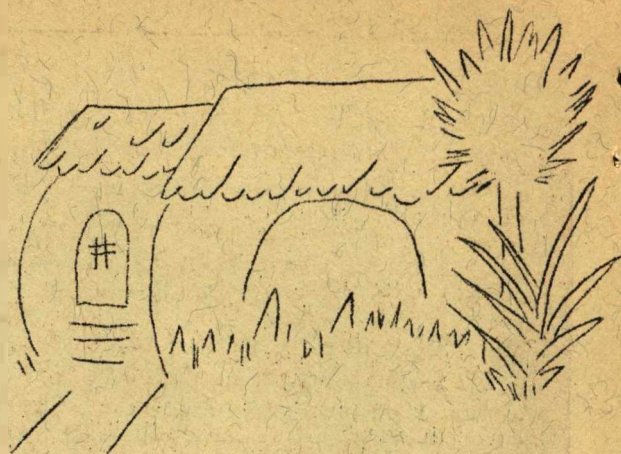
The relationship of N'APA to the N3F has had a long history. When the group was first founded there was much discussion of such things as constitutions and the like... so much that a number of people got turned off on the whole deal. Naturally the matter of the relationship to the N3F came up and people like Pelz had loads of fun baiting the 103% Neffers by threatening to get a resolution passed separating us from the N3F. As a result of this, when Belle Dietz became OE she had an amendment to the constitution passed which broke up the... 6th?... article into two parts, one of them being that neither the preface nor that subarticle could ever be changed. This pretty well killed off the argument on that topic except for a few comments on what would happen to N'APA were the N3F to fold up. This is where the jokes on "dissolving the N3F" originated, to a large extent. When Lichtman became OE two years later he rewrote the constitution, greatly simplifying it so that it could be printed on one page. (Under Belle it was about two pages plus quite a few special operational rulings from her.) One of the simplifications was the removal (illegal) of that special clause, but none of us said anything for we thought that the matter was a dead issue and could not come up again. How wrong we were.

Anyhow, back then there was some bitterness on the part of the 103% Neffers because of the baiting, and I expect more bitterness all around because of the Lerner amendment. Somebody will get mad or disgusted with the way things go, no matter which way it is, and others will get disgusted with the bickering. That is why I am afraid this business will do considerable harm.

Anyhow, these are my thoughts on the matter... that it is wrong to separate from the N3F, that I personally don't want for us to do it, and that I am afraid that this whole discussion will cause a lot of trouble and harm. Excuse my disorganized ramblings, but I wrote this in bits and pieces over a period of several days while waiting for trams, waiting to meet friends, on the train from Paris to Frankfurt, etc. I should second draft it but simply don't have time.

mayhem hou

S e



COLOPHON DONATED BY PAUL MOSLANDER

"From the Inner Darkness sprang a flood of nameless things best left ungrokked of, and they but the cringing lackeys of the Lord of Mayhem, he of whom the ancients spoke as Garsh-gank-gammon-eldrog-mieirgog-mulog -- 'Cupbearer-of-the-dregs-of-slovenly-fatigue'." There we are, that sets the proper mood.

Mayhem House now has a garage full of ink, paper, Gestetner, light table, lettering guides, SAPS mailing, and other assorted possessions of Ed's (including his VW, which, contrary to popular opinion, does not have a 007 license number). There are also two monstrous IBM typers in my room. Most of this paraphernalia is intended to help in the publication of NIEKAS, though I'm not sure what part the SAPS mailing is supposed to play. We won't mention the large stack of paper and ink in the living room. Joe brings it up frequently, but I won't mention it.

CONCOMMENTS

The Westercon was strange this year, but nice. It wasn't quite the same, with the Andersons, Al Lewis, Ron Elik, and all our other European travellers absent; and the lack of Blake Maxam's usual extraordinary costume/characterization was one of my worst disappointments. Blake's costumes are Phenomena which every fan should see once before he dies. (Every year, of course, is preferable.) But I had a ball anyway. That "poor little girl who has to put out an enormous fanzine all by herself" act is most useful...

"Van Arnem," howled Meskys, "Unhand my coeditor!"

You could write a whole conreport around people who weren't there, unfortunately. In balance, however, there were the New York people; that was a real treat. And Roy Tackett is irrevocably exposed; he's not an ogre at all. (Remarkable how many illusions of that sort were dispelled at Westercon -- and in case you're wondering, this typer has no end-of-line bell.) In fact, the only benefit of the absence of my favorite people is that I met so many other favorite people.

They tell me the program was good, too.

IN THE FIGHT BETWEEN YOU AND THE WORLD, BACK THE WORLD

Might as well get the bad news over with. I will not be teaching in Santa Cruz this fall. Matter of fact, I will not be teaching, period.

Those who know me (or have noticed how much time I spend talking about teaching in these pages) are now sitting with their mouths open, NIEKAS dangling from slack hands, asking, "What happened?"

I wish I knew, gang. A nice, simple answer would be very comforting right now.

The first six weeks of education courses weren't too bad, once I got over my usual state of orbital rage at being dealt a poor teacher. I even began to see that the criticisms I'd been prepared to level at ed courses en masse were applicable to any badly taught course; maybe all ed courses are badly taught, but I wouldn't make book on it on the basis of my sample of two. My math profs would have been surprised,

perhaps, at my willingness to challenge the instructor on questionable points -- in math I'm frequently too talkative and sometimes a nuisance, but hardly belligerent. Still, it wasn't serious.

Then the six-week session ended, and the four-week session began -- the one in which, as we were bluntly told the first day, the interns were to learn to survive in the public school system.

The first day we were introduced to the concept, "the essential hypocrisy of the profession". Our instructor elaborated and expanded on this idea until I was so angry I got up to walk out. She backed up a bit, and I subsided. By the next day I'd convinced myself that she was off her nut; no business is that paranoid except Madison Avenue.

During the next week the point was made over and over. We were told;

Never trust your fellow teachers. Stay out of the coffee room.
Never confide in or ask advice of your principal.
Never touch a child, even kindly.
Never drive a child home.
Never be alone in a classroom with a child.

And so on, quite literally ad nauseum.

It is an ugly picture of the profession, and I fought it. Every time it was brought up I challenged the instructor, and I wasn't taking the trouble to be polite about it -- which is a pretty good indication, right there, of how violently I reacted to this "essential hypocrisy" bit. My attitude soon became that the instructors might wash me out of the program, but by God they were going to give valid reasons for this paranoia, or else admit they were talking through their collective hat. (Euphemism...)

They gave reasons.

We spent one day just listing pressure groups: the ACLU, the John Birch Society, the NAACP, the anti-school-prayer people, the pro-school-prayer people, the pro-and anti-sex education people, Calif. Superintendant of Public Instruction Max Rafferty (all by himself he's a pressure group), and dozens of others. Keep all these people happy or lose your job. Newspaper clippings were brought in every day. E.g. The husband of a San Francisco Spanish teacher socked some other man in the nose. So she's teaching driver training next year -- and she can't drive. She has become a "controversial figure", you see, and they can't fire her except "for cause", so she's being pressured to resign. Well -- one incident I could disregard, but one a day, in the slow season?

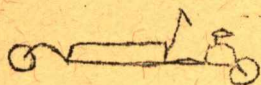
The second Monday morning, things blew up but good; one of the instructors made a statement that was so far off base I couldn't even be civil to him. During the next several hours I churned the whole thing around, and came to the appalling realization that these people weren't expressing their opinions -- which could have been ignored -- it was clear that they weren't approving these things. What they were telling us was reality for public school teachers. Further, it was obvious that I couldn't accept this kind of reality, or ignore it, or live with it in any way. I'd have fought it as long as I was in teaching -- which, with my ...er...rather positive way of putting things, would have been about two months.

There are plenty of people in public school teaching whose integrity is unquestionable. I know many. (Most of them are quieter and less explosive than I am.) The last thing that's needed is another condemnatory article about education -- we already require of our teachers a contradictory perfection -- and I hope this won't be taken as such.

----- And those are our Sadder but Wiser words for today.-----

----- When I got back from lunch, one of the things on my desk was Charlie. --Joe-----

THE TRAVELING MESKYS



Got a letter from Ed the other day. He was in Kobnhavn, which I'm told is the correct Danish spelling for Copenhagen. If he can spell in Danish, why can't he spell in English? He describes Tivoli Gardens as a "wonderful cross between Coney Island, Disneyland and Lincoln Center, with beautiful gardens and lights everywhere." "Bicycles everywhere, including freight-carrying ones" (picture above); "milk in 1/4 liter tetrahedral containers; when they serve it they cut off a corner" (any corner?) "with scissors and give you a 1/16" straw." The hotel and hostel prices he quotes make me want to cry -- \$1.95, including breakfast, for instance. I've gotten several other cards and letters from him too -- all about NIEKAS. (And is he going to be surprised!)

And every now and then there's a card from Al Lewis and Ron Ellick. Latest one says something like; "Sorry you couldn't make 50 lb. ((so as to stow away in their baggage)). Summer is hotter here than in Palo Alto. Pity poor us, clambering around on the Acropolis, swimming in the Aegean Sea, drinking Duzu, etc." Pity poor them, indeed. They should live so long.

THE DIMINISHING FANZINE

We have a record NIEKAS this time -- under 50 pages. (Told Ed I wasn't publishing any 80 pp.) Most of the shrinkage is due to the absence of Halevy's Glossary, and a good bit to my laceration of the letter column. (The bodies are buried under our new patio.) I'm sorry about that; but there was nothing else to be done. Tom Gilbert has come up from LA to run the zine off; he's been working steadily for two days now, and today is The End. Still, there are some provocative letters in GINCAS, and I think we've kept the meat. We have several articles which, though short, should bring in lost of comment. Except for the unusually sober editorials, I think #13 is good -- at least it should content people who keep saying NIEKAS is too big!

There are several ways, I'm told, to learn how to publish a fanzine. One can send material to other zines, join APA L or F, join N'APA, etc. This is known as "getting in by the toes first". Or one can put out one's own first issue. This is the "hold your nose and jump" method. But I do not recommend the way I've learned; to be handed a full-grown zine, and learn the use of shading plates and lettering guides, stencilling artwork, layout principles, and Gestetner running all in the space of a few weeks -- and up to a predetermined standard! Oh yes, this method too has a name -- but not one that we can print. Glory be to Tom Gilbert; he is the first recipient and permanent holder of the NIEKAS Hero of the Year award.

THE STRANGEST THINGS GET INTO MY MAILBOX

The other day I got a zine called FANKLE. This sterling (you should pardon the pun, particularly since I had to call it to your attention) fanzine is published by Ivor Latto, 16 Merryton Ave., Glasgow W5, Scotland. It isn't really strange, but being from Scotland, it is unique. It's also very entertaining. Besides all sorts of book reviews, discussions of sf and other ~~sf~~ fanfannish things like that, this issue contains an article with the self-explanatory title, "The Practical Advantages of Slum Living." (Ivor mentions "delusions of grandour", which would seem to carry out the picture of the "dour Scot" in a big way.)

FRED PATTEN is gonna have a helluva time figuring out my page credit this time, since I have rewritten several paragraphs from APA L. 'Bout 1/2 page, Fred.

SEE "PATIENCE" OCTOBER 16 IN SF!

The Marchin' Barnacles

Carl Frederick

Being a continuation*of that epic of the First Punnic War,

A MARTIAN IDIOCY

Smith and Zehrgut saddled their traindeer and proceeded towards the soggy-soiled Martian district capital. It was a dark and cold night in the middle of June-B.**

Smith, asked Zehrgut, as he put on his warm Martian polar cap, Why are Martian cities always surrounded by marshes?

Irrigation, said Smith as he turned his saddle light on high-beam (made by the Satellite Saddle Light Co.)

I see, said Zergut. Where there's folk there's mire.

They were riding along for several hours toward the silicon (colloquial for the Mars worldcon) when they came to a canal, which separated them from the Mare Julius desert. Zehrgut, his arm in a cast from his last encounter with a canal, approached warily. The canal, according to their map was called The Rubicon (not colloquial for the worldcon). Zehrgut urged his traindeer forward with the cry, "The die is cast." The shout startled his traindeer. Consequently Zehrgut was tossed into the canal where he was set upon by a school of fish.

What are these fish called? asked Zehrgut from the water.

They're called piranha.

Why?

Because they ARE piranha.

One half second later Zehrgut stood on dry land staring at his plaster cast which had turned bright red.

The cast is dyed, he said.

* continued from NIEKAS 9

**Mars has two months called June; June-A and June-B. (They need something to rhyme with moons.)



It's red corflu, said Smith examining it.

What do you make of it? asked Zehrgut.

I don't know. We had better consult the world's leading authority on corflu, namely Edmund R. Meskys.

E. R. Meskys, yes. I have heard of him, said Zehrgut. But how do we find him?
By helicopter.

Ah yes, the whirley bird catches the E.R.M.

Just then Zehrgut noticed a field of menacing vegetation advancing towards them.

What's that? asked Zehrgut.

Don't know, said Smith, but we had better get back across the Rubicon where we should be safe from those roamin' legumes.

Smith, asked Zehrgut, as they were riding into town, what are those things?

I don't know, but I detect the handiwork of the insidious agent 2-B.

Agent 2-B?

Yes! The greatest villain in the solar system.

Hmmm, said Zehrgut, we must go to a florist and inquire about these plants. But we had better buy something so we won't arouse suspicion. Where's the florist?

Over there, on the right, said Smith. Behind that big tea store.

Oh, said Zehrgut, I couldn't see the florist for the teas.

They turned their traindeer sharply to the right -- too sharply, for both riders were thrown through the window of the florist shop, causing great destruction within.

This reminds me, said Zehrgut, of that English fan William Bloke who said:

Buyer buyer turning tight
in the florist on the right
What immoral hand awry
could frame this dread catastrophe?

Suddenly a robot came out of the back room carrying a tray with two glasses. Louis Stevenson at your service, said the robot. You would of course like a drink.

Yes? said Zehrgut, but how did you know?

Metal telepathy, said the robot.

Good stuff, said Zehrgut, what is it?

It's asian flu, said the robot.

???

Half oolong tea, half corflu.

Here's to man, said Zehrgut raising his glass, the highest form of life.

They awoke in a small dark room with a TV set and no windows.

I say, said Zehrgut, our drinks must have been drugged.

Yes indeed, said a voice from the TV set, you have been possessed by evil spirits. The screen flickered to life. It showed a face covered by a mask. I am agent 2-B, he said.

What keeps your mask up? asked Smith.

Macking tape, said 2-B.

What foul scheme have you evolved now, asked Zehrgut.

I'll tell you, answered 2-B. I am turning Mars into one big pickle pasture.

Why???

For Monster Blog, corflu and pickle juice, the greatest drink ever.

I see, said Smith, those roaming plants were pickles.

No, said 2-B, they were leguminous plants we plant every second season for crop rotation.

On earth we plant them every fourth season.

Yes, but Mars has a shorter rotation period.

And the missing men? asked Zehrgut.

Collaborators.

And the stain?

Corflu fertilizer. Monster Blog, continued 2-B, First Fandom had no drink like it.

Don't cast aspersions on early fans, said Zehrgut, enraged.

Leave no footprints on the fans of time, added Smith.

Quiet, shouted 2-B, or I'll have you pickle-whipped.

How can you do this? shouted Zehrgut. You will ruin Mars for the sake of a pickle.

A pickle's worth a thousand worlds. And so saying, 2-B began to sing.

The pickle that blooms in the spring fa la
brings a trickle of blog to a fan
add some corflu and any vile thing fa la
one drink when you go on a fling fa la
gives your stomach a mid-summer tan

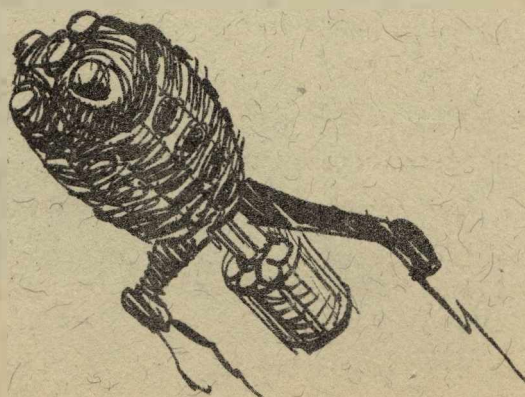
And so during his singing, said Smith to the chief, I escaped and made my way here to Zehrgut's home office.

This is dreadful news, said the chief. But where is Zehrgut? Was he caught trying to escape?

Not exactly, said Smith, recalling Zehrgut's expression as he tasted Monster Blog.

But more important, said the chief, was agent 2-B stopped or did he continue with his fiendish scheme?

(2-B continued.)



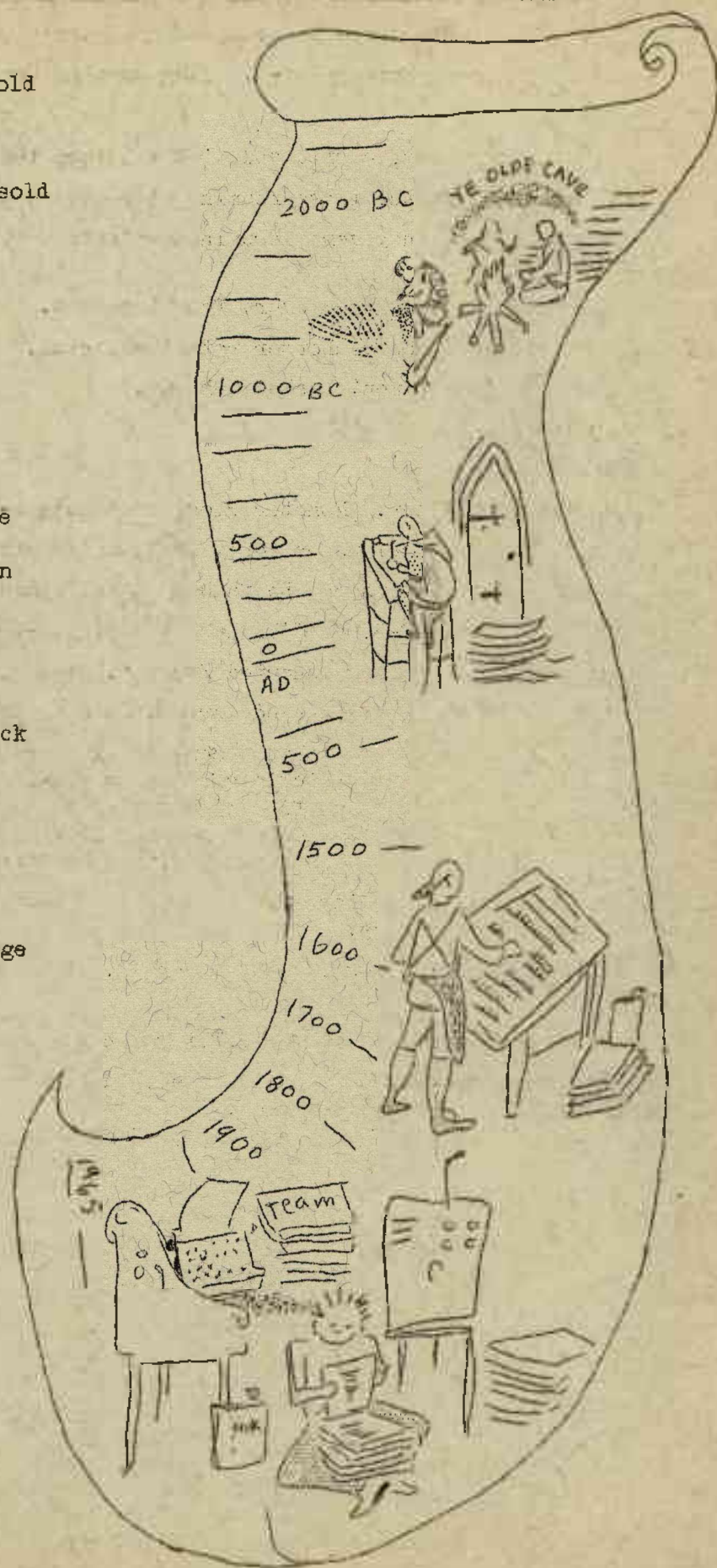
In distant times when tales were told
 in songs and rhymes around a fire
 lived a youth both brave and bold
 who did not care for tales of gold
 or quests for truth or slavegirls sold
 no mundane fare did he desire

Of trips in space to distant stars
 another race that once was man
 who dares to dwell on far off Mars
 of purple skies and foreign cars
 a magic smell from crystal jars
 we recognise this early fan

To pub a zine his very own
 he is so keen his active brain
 does not yet guess he must postpone
 his zine or hand write all alone
 for printing press is still unknown
 and so our fan just goes insane

In distant times not that far back
 as mankind climbs we see the gain
 the printing press we do not lack
 our fannish fiend gets fingers black
 and with finesse becomes a hack
 he pubs his zine then goes insane

So in we drum this modern age
 here fanzines come and fanzines go
 gestetners turn out page on page
 far faster than the eye can gauge
 but yet you learn that at this stage
 the average fan is still gung-ho



EDWARD GOREY: a survey

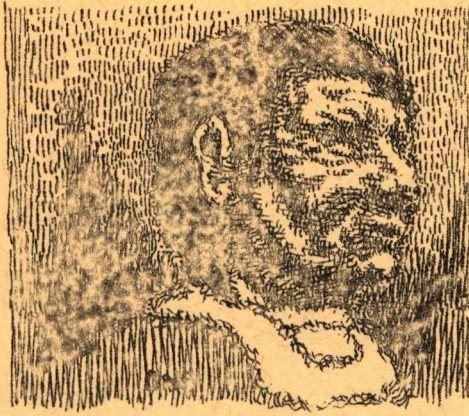
by Andrew Garrison

The work of Edward Gorey, the mad engraver, has achieved some note of fame, though through his superfluity of pseudonyms, it is a wonder; I still don't know if Gorey is one of them. His work may occasionally be recognized on book covers and between them, and occasionally his name, or some other like Ogdred Weary, is appended to it. His fame lies in his ubiquity; everyone who sees one of his book-covers says, "Oh, him... he wrote er painted...that is, he drew the cover of...or did he?"

His fans, however, know that he was written er painted er drawn several books of his own. In them, he is inclined to Goreyness rather than goryness, and his people exhibit an Edwardian stiffness of upper lip that allows them to withstand all sorts of horrors. The children are the most human of all; one sympathizes with them, having seen their overbearing elders and monstrous surroundings. They live in homes through which glide majestic women bearing cyanide, or motorists attempting to administer strange medicines to helpless girls. One does not feel safe reading Gorey; the child who is seen cowering in the corner is staring at a point just behind your shoulder. There are iron stakes driven into the ground at odd intervals in the landscape; the accompanying text gives no account of their presence.

My first encounter with Gorey was The Willowdale Handcar, of which I had heard vaguely, and finally saw in a bookstore. Its alternate title, The Return of the Black Doll is typically puzzling, as I have since found that the black doll had never appeared previously. In its reappearance, it still reappears infrequently; its presence, though, is a grim portent. On the title page is inscribed a cryptic message to the reader: "Afterwards a gold ring embellished with leaves, grapes, etc. was found; inside were engraved IRON HILLS and the letters D.M.G. which last stood for the words 'Don't move, Gertrude'". His The Doubtful Guest is unusual gorey in that it centers on a peculiar beast (something like a penguin with tennis shoes) which comes for a peculiarly obnoxious visit, and "shows no intention of going away". Gorey has, as mentioned earlier, done various works of illustration, the best of which is The Dream-world of Dion MacGregor, the transcript of a number of recordings of a man who talks and weaves strange yarns in his sleep. Gorey was, of course, a natural for that; I can think of no one else who could have illustrated that book.

As far as I am concerned, Gorey's magnum opus is his Vinegar Works trilogy, which has haunted me since I first read it. Its subtitle, Three Volumes of Moral Instruction, brings to mind visions of one of Gorey's children, in one of Gorey's houses, coming across these volumes in the library of an evil uncle, and reading them in horror while the dusk settles and the room grows dark. The "moral instruction" is pure Gorey; one sees him as the dark and mad uncle of his own design. The Vinegar Works consists of: The Gashlycrumb Tinies, The Insect God, and The West Wing; the title derives from the ruins of the vinegar works in The Willowdale Handcar. The West Wing is, I think, the best of these. It has no plot; indeed, no words, but it is most evocative of everything you were afraid of as a child -- dark stairs, lonely rooms in strange houses, things that flit past open windows and doors. When I was very little, I used to be quite frightened of back stairs, usually the flight of them at my grandmother's house. Why, I don't know, but this volume aroused that old aversion. It is exceedingly difficult to analyze the horror of this series of captionless pictures -- all I can think of (and this is inadequate) is the intrinsic wrongness of angles; the walls don't quite fit properly, the stairs are too steep; it makes for the disturbing impression that there is something there that you can't see, but that can see you.



Next (in my preference) is The Gashlycrumb Tinies, which looks like a child's alphabet, until closer inspection of the cover reveals that the gentleman who tends the twenty-six children is Death. Like Salinger's "Jesus Prayer" which can be hypnotically addicting, the alphabet verse herein presented runs unsettlingly through the mind. "A is for Amy who fell down the stairs; B is for Basil assaulted by bears; C is for Clara who wasted away; D is for Desmond thrown out of a sleigh; E is for Ernest who choked on a peach..." Ernest sits at a narrow table, his hair neatly brushed, wearing a look of delicious expectancy. On the table before him is a plate, upon which is a large, bloated peach, and a small bell at his right hand.

He is evidently alone, and one wonders who gave him the peach. "K is for Kate who was struck with an axe; L is for Leo who swallowed some tacks..." Leo sits on a silk ottoman before a huge framed picture of a stormy landscape, in the background of which is a small shrine or temple. He has obviously just swallowed his fateful tacks, and looks as apprehensive as only a Gorey child can. "M is for Maude who was swept out to sea; N is for Neville who died of ennui; ... Q is for Quentin who sank in a mire; R is for Rhoda consumed by a fire..." Rhoda is burning to death in a room of the West Wing, quite independent of her surroundings; nothing else in the room shows any sign of her conflagration, but to one side stands the great earthenware jar that stood in one of the rooms in the West Wing! A psychoanalyst would say that Gorey had a lonely and unhappy childhood; be that as it may, the Gashlycrumb Tinies are too like one's self to be objectively depicted or observed. They are all sad, even Ernest, and all look resigned; even Titus, who flew into bits, looks only semi-interested in the mysterious parcel he is about to open.

The third volume is The Insect God, a moralistic tale in anapestic tetrameter. "O what has become of Millicent Frastly:/ Is there any hope that she's still alive?/ Why haven't they found her: It's rather ghastly/ To think that the child was not yet five." So it begins; little Millicent Frastly is spirited away from the park by a figure in a black motor-car; a figure with a tiny green face and two elbows. The mite's parents call in the police, but unfortunately nothing can be done. The book comes to rather an abrupt end, which is not, unfortunately, a surprise.

The Vinegar Works comprises these three books for children, which would, however, disturb them greatly. I would never allow any child of mine to read them until he was well past the nightmare stage. I should note, thought, that they make excellent gifts for the little ones who trample your gardens and overturn your house on Hallowe'en.



TOLKIEN

&

BRITISH
CULTURE

COLIN R. FRY

The thing which strikes me hardest, both about NIEKAS and about some other fanzines, is the impact which Tolkien has had and is having on the -- well, what shall I call it? speculative fiction -- field. I have read THE LORD OF THE RINGS (twice) and liked it very much, though the second time around I noticed some longuets of style which escaped me the first time. In the May issue of New Worlds SF there is a story by Barry Bayley called "The Ship of Disaster", all about elves, which is obviously and heavily derived from Tolkien, by the bye.

Precisely what this saga's effect on the whole broad spectrum of English literature is going to be, or should be, is a question that is giving me some food for thought. Its addicts are by no means all sf readers. Maybe the whole business of Middle-Earth is just a gigantic intellectual entertainment, rather like crossword puzzles and detective stories. Maybe that's all Tolkien intended it to be.

But I can't help feeling that anything which occupies so much of a man's life as the writing of this epic has done, and, I gather, is doing, must at least have something of some significance behind it. Even if only a psychological significance.

Will the Hobbits and the Elves and the Dwarves come to occupy a place in English literature comparable to that of the Arthurian legends? I wonder. One thing at least I know. A friend of mine once said that he thought the main purpose of a writer was to create a world. Tolkien has certainly done that. One hell of a memorable one, too. Who could ever forget the shape-changing Beorn, or Gandalf the Grey, or "Mordor where the shadows lie"?

I think Tolkien has done two main things in his Rings books. He has tapped the roots of North European mythology, and made old legends new again, and accessible to a much wider public than they were before; and he has also, in doing this, uncovered the roots of the European personality. I don't mean that in a fascist way, I hasten to add; fascists think one race better than another. No one is better than anyone else. But certainly different branches of humanity have different characteristics. And in his adult fairy tales, I think Tolkien has laid bare the dreams and urges that pushed European civilisation ahead, or forwards, or sideways, or something, when the rest of the world wasn't developing in quite the same way. Not that that's intended to be a condemnation of either the rest of the world or of European civilisation. But if you want to know what makes a European different from an Asian or an African, you can't do better than read Tolkien. Grey skies and cold mountains have a lot to do with it.

He himself admits the hold which Norse mythology has over his imagination. In his essay "On Fairy-Stories", he writes, referring to the literary influences on his mind during childhood:

"I had no desire to have either dreams or adventures like Alice, and the account of them merely amused me. I had very little desire to

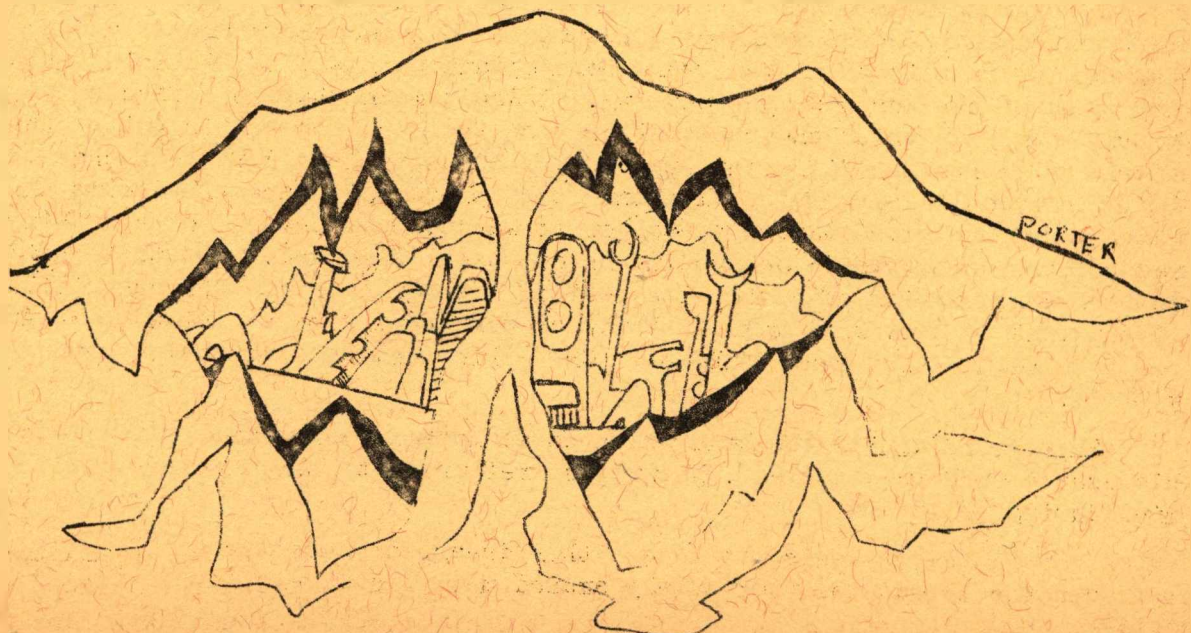
look for buried treasure or fight pirates, and Treasure Island left me cool. Red Indians were better: there were bows and arrows (I had and have a wholly unsatisfied desire to shoot well with a bow), and strange languages, and glimpses of an archaic mode of life, and, above all, forests in such stories. But the land of Merlin and Arthur was better than these, and best of all the nameless North of Sigurd of the Volsungs, and the prince of all dragons. Such lands were pre-eminently desirable. I never imagined that the dragon was of the same order as the horse. And that was not solely because I saw horses daily, but never even the footprint of a worm. The dragon had the trade-mark Of Faerie written plain upon him. In whatever world he had his being it was an Other-World. Fantasy, the making or glimpsing of Other-Worlds, was the heart of the desire of Faerie. I desired dragons with a profound desire."

The reason why this access to the Northern mythos may be a particularly important achievement is that, in another century or two, there probably won't be much difference between the men of different continents (postulating, of course, that The Bomb doesn't drop and nobody releases the Satan Bug). And I think we all know why. Air travel, space travel, increasing intercommunication between different races, cultures, civilisations -- it won't be long before we're men first and Britons, Americans, Russians or Scandinavians last. And, in my opinion, a good thing too.

There's a time and a place for everything. The time for proud little sovereign nations and xenophobic clusters of earth-tillers is past. We're moving out into the Cosmos. "Yahoo!" as Major McDivitt said while he was being x-rayed after his space flight.

However, it is the interplay of differing -- and even conflicting -- cultures that gives a civilisation the breath of life, and possibly, in the "one world" to which we may look forward, there will still be personality differences between Americans and Japanese, say, just as in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland there are distinct differences between Irish, Welsh, Scots, Cockneys, Scouses, Geordies and Brummies (not to mention Men of Kent and Kentish Men).

And the Northern mythos may still be a potent force in world literature. If it is, J.R.R. Tolkien will have played an important role in restoring and intensifying its potency.



THE IVORY TOWER

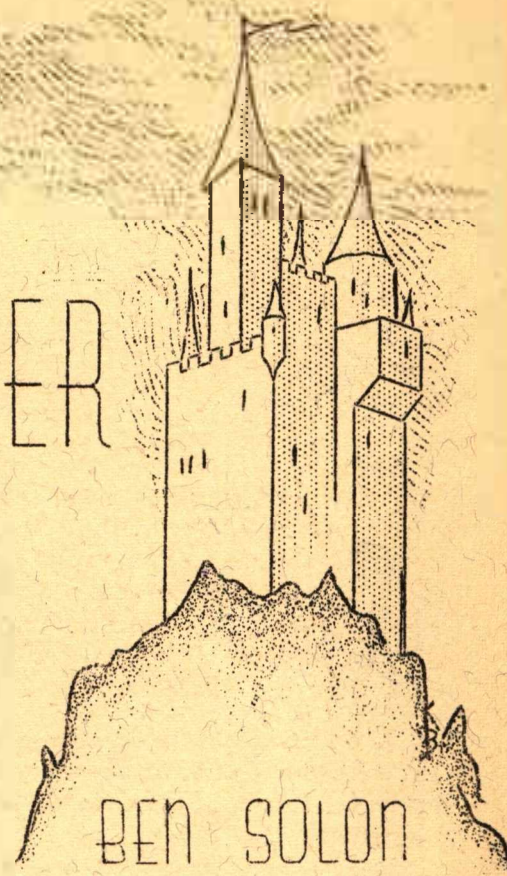
AMRA #s 32, 33 & 34 (AMRA PO Box 9120, Chicago, Ill. 60690. British agent: Archie Mercer, 70 Worral Rd., Bristol 8, England -- irregular -- 8/\$2.00.)

AMRA doesn't come out too often, but when it does...#32 features a defense of Three Hearts and Three Lions by author Poul Anderson which demolishes Dick Eney's argument that the book was based on an illogical premise, i.e., that the hero, a modern engineer, who somehow winds up in an alternate world not unlike that of the Charlemagnian paladins would not fight on the side of the Holy Empire, but rather on that of the Middle World. As usual, Sprague de Camp is present; this time, he's represented by an amusing account of the last knightly tournament, which was held -- believe it or not -- in England, in 1838. There is also another of Ray Garcia-Cappella's "Arquel" stories which is good, but would be better if Garcia-Capella would write a story, not connected fragments. Some poetry -- a Lovecraft imitation by Lin Carter which isn't as bad as you might think, and yet another of Poul Anderson's translations of Old Norse verse -- and something called "An Interview with Conan the Cimmerian" which tries awfully hard (I almost wrote "is awfully trying") to be funny and doesn't make it, round out the issue.

#33 is devoted to a discussion that might be called "How to Build a World". De Camp starts the ball rolling by laying down the ground rules of this sport: don't mix sorcery with super-science; don't have firearms and swords (and other primitive weapons) existing side by side, unless you show that one or the other type of weapon is going out and the other coming in; he backs up his statements with examples from both fantasy and our "real" world. Leigh Brackett and E. Hoffman Price offer variations on this theme; Brackett saying that de Camp's argument is valid, but he should specify culture rather than world. Price's article is more or less a corroboration of de Camp's piece and he gives some examples, based on his own experiences, of how primitives will adopt modern conveniences (weapons) to their own ends. Editor Scithers and de Camp round out the discussion and the former interjects some excellent "comment hooks".

Much as I like AMRA, I have one objection to these long (and, I must admit, interesting) discussions of weapons and world building: what's the point? Each writer has his own idea on whether or not swords and super-science are compatible, and no matter how many times you point out how silly it is to mix them, it's still going to be done.

#34 is back to the more diversified format: there's an article on "Son of Weapons of Choice and Necessity" by Jerry Pournelle which investigates the circumstances under which certain types of weapons would be most useful. There are book reviews: de Camp comments on Larold Lamb's The Curved Sabre and Katherine MacLean discusses a book on zen combat, called appropriately enough, Zen Combat. Roger



Zelazny has an excellent poem: "The Man without a Shadow", but the star of #34 is a transcription of Frank Herbert's Pacificon talk: "How to Build a World".

STEFANTASY #56 (Bill Danner, R.D. 1, Kennerdale, Pa. -- irregular -- trades and interesting letters only)

This is one of those "little magazines" traveling in the guise of a fanzine, but don't let that put you off -- write Bill a letter or send him a copy of your zine or something, STEF is good. A goodly portion of #56 is reprinted from something called -- brace yourself -- THE HORSELESS CARRIAGE GAZETTE. There are also some of Danner's (in)famous fake ads, a couple of excerpts that read as though they had been lifted from the latest issue of KLANSMAN or somesuch. Letters and a Humphreyism complete the picture.

TRUMPET #2 (Tom Reamy, 6010 Victor, Dallas, Texas 75214 -- quarterly -- single copies 50¢, 5/\$2.00 or the usual means beside money)

Most fanzines improve with the second issue, or at least they don't get any worse -- not so TRUMPET.* For instance, last issue, editor Reamy asked if someone would contribute a "chatty, preferably controversial column" and a chap name of Andrew Offutt did. I wish he hadn't. Offutt takes up one and one half of TRUMPET's excellently reproduced pages and says nothing. I assume he's trying to be fannish, or maybe he just doesn't know any better. There are also two short stories: one by Leonora Carrington is very bad and the other by George M. Lewis is pretty good as fan fiction goes. Al Jackson kills two pages with an article on "S F as Cinema" which tells us that Hollywood doesn't give a damn about science fiction. Really? I'd have never guessed. Alex Eisenstein, in "The Iconoclast Iconoscope" utterly destroys "Farewell to the Master" and does it in the best demon knight tradition as well. There are also letters and some fairly good movie reviews -- if you like reviews of two or three year old horror films, that is.

MIRAGE #7 (Jack L. Chalker, 5111 Liberty Heights Ave., Baltimore, Md. 21207. British agent: Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd., Hoddesdon, Herts. -- irregular -- 3/\$1.00.)

MIRAGE is billed as "The Amateur Magazine of Fantasy", but ignore that and get a copy -- if there are any left. The material ranges from a rather long-winded editorial to a first rate article on "The Childe Cycle" by Gordon R. Dickson. In this article, Dickson explains in detail the rather puzzling (to some readers) conclusion to Necromancer and speculates on the future of the "Childe" series. There is also a reprint of H. P. Lovecraft's satire on radio soap operas, which may have been funny during the Depression, but which falls flat today. Alan Dodd has an informative (at least to me) article on Arthur Machen and J. Ramsey Campbell's "Face in the Desert" is certainly no worse than some of the pseudo-Lovecraft stories that used to clutter up WEIRD TALES. Poetry and some year-old LoCs complete the issue.

ZENITH #8 (Pete Weston, 9, Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham, 31, England. U.S. agent: Al Lewis, 1825 Greenfield Ave., Los Angeles 25, Calif. Quarterly -- 5/\$1.)

ZENITH is yet another sercon mag, and a very good one at that. Most of #8 is devoted to letters, and most of the letters are devoted to a discussion of Terry Jeeves' magazine reviews. It seems that Jeeves has been pulling out all the stops in his reviews and the pros that he's been knocking have taken it seriously. I hate to be a spoilsport, but it seems to me that reviews of monthly magazines are pretty much a waste of time in a quarterly fanzine. After all, by the time ZENITH appears, most of us have read and formed opinions of the stories that Jeeves reviews. And I don't think that anything he says about them will have much influence on us. Back to the zine: articles -- an especially good one by Fritz Leiber on the "how and why" of The Wanderer -- reviews of books by Beryl Henley and fanzines by Walt Willis round out the issue.

*The views of the author are not necessarily, etc. I thought TRUMPET #2 was improved.

--Felice

STARLING #6 (Hank Luttrell, Rt. 13, 2936 Barrett Station Rd., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122 -- quarterly -- single copies 25¢, 5/\$1.00 or the usual means without money)

STARLING tries to be fannish but doesn't make it, and that's really too bad, because when I met Hank at the Midwestcon, he struck me as being the type who could put out a good fanzine if he really tried. As it is, STARLING is pretty fair -- not really bad, but not really good, either. If nothing else, it has a locoong lettercol.

THISTLE AND THORN #2 (Creath Thorne, Rt. 4, Savannah, Missouri and Duncan McFarland, 1242 Grace Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio -- irregular -- single copies 25¢, 5/\$1.00 or the usual means besides money)

For a second issue, T n' T strikes me as being pretty good, in fact as a zine of any number it's pretty respectable. Tim Eklund interviews Andre Norton, and does the job as well as most other fan interviewers -- at least he's not too goshwow about it. There's an article, probably the most controversial in the issue, "The Nothing Men", by Dale Tarr which investigates the skeptic mind and does it quite well. Let's have more from Mr. Tarr; Dunk...Creath...? Round-table reviews of books (good idea) and letters which are well handled put the finishing touches on the zine.

YANDRO #148 (Robert & Juanita Coulson, Rt. 3, Hartford City, Indiana 47348 -- monthly -- single copies 30¢, 4/\$1.00 or 12/\$2.50. Also available for trades, but not LoCs.)

YANDRO is a hard fanzine to review, mainly because by the time most of you read this Buck'll have published another issue or two. Anyway, #148 contains the usual YANDRO material: an article by Lewis Grant which proposed a new method of time-keeping, by use of the "Precession of the Equinoxes", an article which is actually a book review, Coulson's caustic reviews of current paperbacks and fanzines (shorter this time because of moving difficulties) and one of the best lettercols around.

LUNA #4 (Franklin M. Kietz Jr., 1750 Walton Ave., Bronx, New York 10453 -- quarterly -- single copies 15¢, 4/50¢ -- this issue is 30¢ because of the extensive use of offset.)

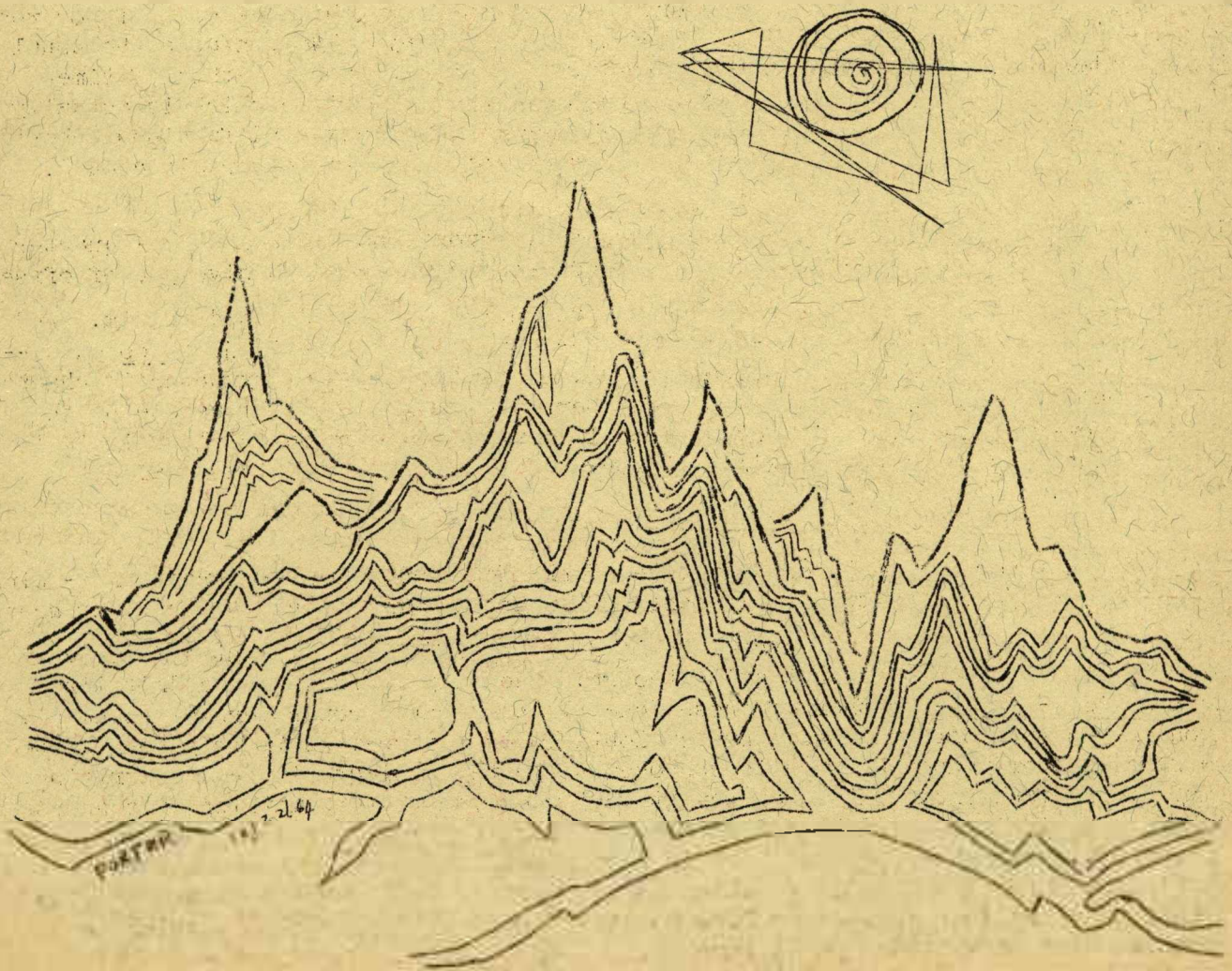
Hannes Bok fans, rally round -- here's an entire fanzine devoted to him. And while I'm not an especially gung-ho Bok fan -- some of his work is just too cute -- I must admit that LUNA #4 is a welcome sight. There are several sympathetic character portraits of Bok by Richard Lupoff and Gerry de la Ree, as well as one by the editor. However, the issue is not so notable for the written material as it is for the reproductions of some of Bok's best work -- a good deal of which is almost unobtainable.

ALGOL #9 (Andy Porter, 24 E. 82nd St., New York, New York 10028 -- irregular -- single copies 25¢ or 3/\$1.00 or the usual means if you don't want to lay out the long green)

ALGOL purports to be the successor if Dick Lupoff's late, lamented XERO, and well, it almost makes it -- not quite though. The only thing that I didn't like about AL is -- yep -- another of those "chatty, preferably controversial columns". I wonder, is Andy Offutt a pseudonym of Robin Wood or vice-versa? They both write the same kind of nonsense which is supposed to be the ultimate in fannish writing. I may be old fashioned, but I was taught that when you write something it's supposed to have a beginning, a middle and an end, but from the looks of Wood's column, I guess I'm wrong...The rest of the material is pretty good, especially rich brown's "Terwilliger, the Fan Machine", which is fan writing as it should be and all too often isn't. Another feature is Dick Lupoff's book reviews in depth, which is something else that fandom needs more of.

no glossary of middle earth

Due to the pressure of his research work, Al Halevy has been unable to prepare an installment of The Glossary of Middle Earth for this issue. For this reason, NIEKAS #13 will not have a foldout.



from DIANETICS to SCIENTOLOGY

An Absurd Book Review by

Ray Nelson

For a 'Pataphysician*', the most important phrase in the whole of L. Ron Hubbard's writings is to be found near the bottom of page 36 of Dianetics: The Original Thesis.

Here, where he outlines the idea of the "Tone Scale", he states that in the process of treatment of Dianetic therapy, the patient goes through a well-defined series of emotional states. Hubbard gives numbers to each of these states, and "tone four" is the number arrived at by a patient who is cured of a given aberration.

Then Hubbard says, "If it (the aberration) vanishes without attaining the laughter of tone four it can be assumed that the individual's basic engram has not been erased" (i.e., that he is not really cured).

Here we see that Hubbard, in his earliest writing on the "new science of the mind", had already recognized what the 'Pataphysician' calls the "Laugh of Liberation", the special kind of laugh that the 'Pataphysician', when he is functioning in the role of mental therapist, also aims at producing in his patient, and which, it is said, also is produced in Zen Buddhism at the moment of Satori.

Hubbard here, very wisely, makes this special kind of laugh the test of success or failure of his whole therapeutic program. I say "wisely", because the "cosmic laugh" is the foundation on which the entire rather ornate structure of 'Pataphysics' is built, and 'Pataphysics' is the science.

This book, Dianetics: The Original Thesis, is the first tentative manuscript on Dianetics, and was written in 1948. It is interesting to compare this early work with Scientology: the Fundamentals of Thought, a relatively recent work of Hubbard's, published in 1956. There is surprisingly little change in the content of Hubbard's thought. There is, however, a marked change in tone. The Original Thesis takes as its first axiom, "survive!", with all the jungle associations this word has come to

*Pataphysics is a philosophy of the absurd, perhaps the first and greatest of a long series of philosophies of the absurd, such as dadaism, surrealism, pop art, existentialism, the Theater of the Absurd, and camp. It was originally worked out by the French playwright, novelist, poet and philosopher, Alfred Jarry, around 1896. Since its first appearance in Jarry's play "Ubu Roi", 'Pataphysics' has enjoyed periodic revivals and has exerted a continuous influence on French literature and art, and, to a lesser extent, on the art and literature of the whole world.

'Pataphysics' postulates, like existentialism, a world which is, in itself, meaningless, amoral and absurd. Unlike existentialism, however, 'Pataphysics' does not react to this world with "nausea" or "fear and trembling". Instead, it leaps joyfully into the very heart of the chaos. The 'pataphysician', like the zen madman, child or animal, finds a new freedom, a new joy in living, in the world just as it is, not in spite of the world's absurdity, but because of it.

Thus it is that 'Pataphysics', like existentialism and Zen Buddhism, can function as a form of psychotherapy and in this role can provide a basis for the criticism of other forms of psychotherapy, such as scientology, Freudian therapy, Jungian therapy, etc.

imply, and thus the author himself would have to be classified fairly low down on his own emotional tone scale, around one or two ("From one to two is the range of antagonism, including suspicion, resentment and anger.")

In other parts of Hubbard's writings from the Dianetics period, this same antagonism, suspicion and resentment is repeatedly displayed, usually directed toward practitioners of other "sciences of the mind" than his own.

However, when we turn our attention to Scientology: the Fundamentals of Thought, we cannot fail to notice that the defiant revolutionary of Dianetics has become, in Scientology, downright playful. The 'Pataphysician, observing this, can only suspect that between the writing of the first and second books, Hubbard himself experienced the "Laugh of Liberation".

He says, for instance, "Originally the dynamics read 'the urge towards survival as --'. As the science developed it became apparent that survival was only an apparency and only one facet of existence." He has, in other words, all but set the fundamental basis of his "original thesis" quietly to one side and taken an entirely different tack.

The new tack is one that must have come as quite a shock to the more fanatical followers of the "original thesis", but one which a 'Pataphysician could not help but approve of.

It is, simply, "Life is a game."

The "new science of the mind" has become, not a means of survival (dead serious), but a way of improving the ability to play games.

Hubbard states, in his usual arbitrary way, "Rule -- all games are aberrative, some are fun." It is clear that the choice of games is going to be made on the profoundly 'Pataphysical basis of how much "fun" they are.

However, Hubbard states that any game is better than the "no-game condition". He states this because he needs to say that one thing is better than another in order to keep his own game going, since it is logically necessary to say that one thing is better than another in order to justify the need for change, the need for therapy.

Even though he believes that all games are aberrative, still he backs fearfully away from the no-game condition. Like the Existentialists, he discovers with "fear and trembling" The Great Empty Hole, but unlike the 'Pataphysicians and the Zen Buddhists, he refuses to jump in.

By the time I write this, he may have gathered his courage and made the jump at last. I think even at the time of his writing of this book, he already realized that satori is a "no-game condition".

There are those who say that Scientology is too absurd. I would rather say that it is not absurd enough, but it's getting there.



REG
643

Danmark

SF Around the World - Part 2

Jannick Storm During the last three months I have been asked very frequently if Danmark has any fanzines, any fans, or knows anything of science fiction at all.

It is understandable that Americans, Englishmen, or Italians ask these questions, but when the Swedes do, then the world sure needs a bit of enlightenment...

This article should make it clear where Danmark stands concerning science fiction stories.

As Danmark has no fanzines it is very difficult to see if there are any fans. Only last Friday I thought that Danmark had only four fans, but then I visited the American writer Harry Harrison who lives here, and he told me he knew four fans too. Assuming that these four fans are not the same ones as those known to me we have eight fans in Danmark, see?

And where do those eight fans get their food for the mind? Mostly from the English and American pocketbooks. Science fiction is not the big kick in Danmark as it apparently is in USA right now. There have been written about twenty novels and some hundred short stories in Danish. And I wonder if most of these are known at the time to any other person in the country but me. Nevertheless I am going to tell you about them.

The first one to be printed, I suppose, was "Niels Klims underjordiske rejse" (The Subterranean Travel of Niels Klim) by Ludvig Holberg; in Latin -- in which it was written -- "Nicolai Klimii Iter Subterraneum". It was published anonymously in Leipzig in 1741, but was translated into Danish the year after. It is a very philosophical story of a man falling through a hole in a mountain in Norway.

He falls down into the inner part of the world which appears to be hollow and contains a whole planetarian system with very strange creatures. First he lands on the planet Nazar in the principality Potu -- that is utopia spelled backwards, nearly. The inhabitants there are trees. They are very slow both in action and in mind. Because of his rapidity and his long legs, Niels Klim (that is the man's name) is appointed as a postman, and this profession gives him the opportunity of getting to know the country. Here Holberg describes his ideal of a state. Potu is an enlightened despotism. Everybody agrees upon nature worship, where you worship the Highest Creature but do not make rules how this creature should be worshipped. There is complete intellectual liberty except for the youth who should follow the advice of old age, etc., etc.

Niels Klim arrives in several strange countries, the description of which contains satire and parody on different European conditions at the time.

From what I have said here, it may be difficult to realize that this is a science fiction novel, but it is. Holberg was using very skillfully the new discoveries within astronomy and has got, for the time, an astonishing description of a solar system.

The novel is strongly inspired by Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" and is not of such high quality, but it is certainly worth reading. It appeared as a serial in "The Arkham Sampler" in 1949, I am told. In Denmark it is not much read. Some years ago it ran as a comic in the Danish communist paper. The retelling and drawings were made by our foremost living satirist, Hans Scherfig.

The next novel appeared during the years 1858-72, written by F. C. Sibbern; "Meddelelser af Indholdet af et Skrivt fra Aaret 2135" ("Informations from the Contents of a Work from the Year 2135"). This is more a treatise than a novel, and I must confess that I have never been able to read more than one hundred pages out of its four-hundred pages. It contains a lot of ideas similar to the communist ones about the ideal state. The story starts with the whole of Europe falling asleep for about forty years, that is all I can say...It is generally mentioned to be a good novel/treatise.

The next one I have come across is a very naive story from 1900, "Guld og ære" ("Gold and Honour") by Otto M. Møller. I think I shall give you the plot so that you can see what Danish science fiction was like at a time when Wells had already written his "Island of Dr. Moreau".

The hero (of the book) Erik Poulsen is working as a chemist at Rønninggaard's glassworks. He discovers how to make gold. (The periodic system is mentioned here in order to make you believe it.)

At first he buys land as he clearly sees that the value of gold will fall. His professor does not believe in his discovery, but a director of a bank is convinced. The hero is then called to the Minister of the Interior, who talks to him about science vs. the welfare of the people. After this he leaves for Germany, as a genius unappreciated in his own country. Here, however, he is called to the Reichs-Chancellor who offers him a king's crown. (Low and mean, isn't he? We Danes never liked the Germans -- although a lot of our literature would not have existed without German inspiration.)

Well, Erik Poulsen says no, and he'd better do that as he is the hero.

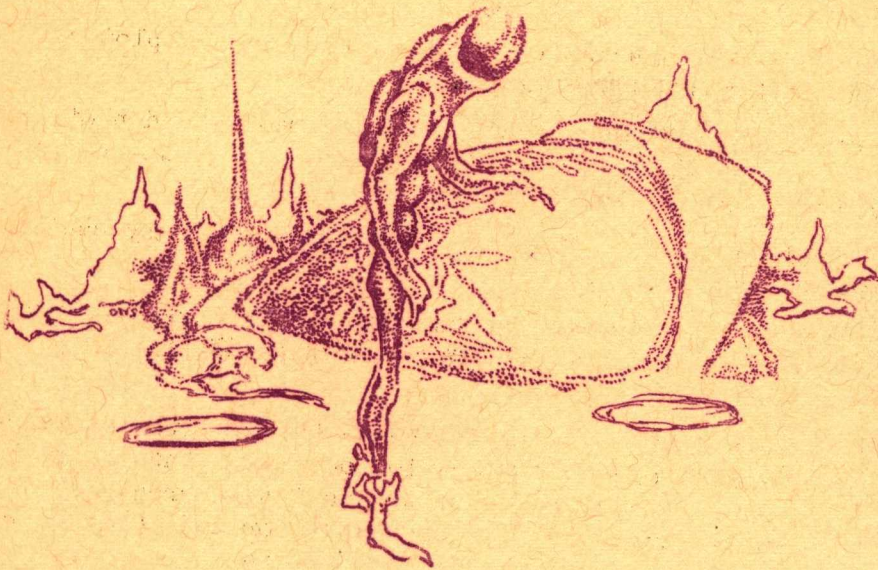
Thrown out of Prussia he travels to Paris, the hotbed of European science, you know. He wants to see the editor of "Journal Chimique" to get his discovery printed, but he is arrested and led to the president who offers him something similar to a crown. Scoundrels everywhere, see?

Then the noble hero, who of course again refuses and is now watched all the time, starts building a ship armed with guns and with platinised hardened steel plates. War-ships are following him everywhere, and it seems as if he has given up his stubborn idea of publishing his discovery, but then he reads a pamphlet by "a German socialist" about the curse of money, and while the reader begins to smell a big fat communist lie, our hero is now determined to publish. He therefore sails away from his watchers, arrives in the Antarctic Ocean, and manages to send letters home describing the goldmaking process. He then carries on to the South Pole which he discovers (!).

On his way home they meet a gigantic English war-ship sailing by electricity which sends out an electro-magnet to catch him.

It turns out that England has intercepted the letters, which involves a raise in all the prices in the world. England itself has grown big and mighty (another scoundrel).

Our unlucky hero, who meant it all so well, is now locked up in an asylum on the Shetland Isles (whereto he should have been brought long ago).



But of course the author has got a lot more up his sleeve. Erik Poulsen blows up the asylum and runs away to the Faroe Islands. Money becomes worthless. England is growing (apparently the author does not like England either). Everything stops. World war. World revolution and so on. The Scandinavian Republic is established. The new means of payment is, of course, land. There are still rich and poor, on land.

From 1900 till 1928 nothing happened in the science fiction field. Then a science fiction

play came out, one of the two only ones, "Landet forude" ("The Country Ahead"). This is a play about the utopia by Jacob Paludan and Erik Eberlin.

An explorer, Clement, wants to go on an airship through the fogbanks to the North Pole to see what it looks like there. And of course he finds a utopia.

The airship in which he travels is paid for by the editor Hessen who has in return secured for himself the copyright of Clement's story. Hessen is a bad, bad fellow. He speculates in sensations. Clement is engaged to the daughter of Hessen, Margit, who accompanies him. There is also a journalist, covering the travel. But the journalist is a bad fellow too. We all know what journalists are like, don't we?

Well, they reach this utopia, and the description of this wonderful, heavenly place, where everybody is nice and good, is rather weak. You can describe hell with a richness of details, but heaven...who knows anything about heaven?

Having found this wonderful place, however, Clement wants to stay there, while the other two just think of all the money they can take in from the tourists, and they go away in the airship which luckily is struck by lightning.

The idyll is saved.

Although the play has its bright moments, it is a bit old-fashioned, e.g. we have a song by the wireless operator.

And now we reach 1932 in which glorious year the Danish equivalent of Arthur C. Clarke, Paul Bergsøe, published "Stjernens skygge" ("The Shadow of the Star").

We here have a professor, Holger Andersen, who begins a research on the star Beta Leonis and gets a nervous breakdown and awakens in the solar system of Beta Leonis on an apparently English estate. He kills the doctor who keeps him in an intellectual prison, but he shows up to be just a phantom. The creatures on the planet are on a far higher level of evolution than the Earthpeople. They are able to send a part of the immaterial parts of an individual to the Earth (by the way, the people on the planet say "up to Earth", which shows you that the author has been thinking while writing). Here these parts take root in some young human being and grow together with his psyche. They lie there as a subconsciousness and may -- if they fall in the right places -- create geniuses.

The inhabitants of the planet want to use Earth as an intermediate station to reach farther out in space. The technical age of Earth is due to some of these experiments which went wrong as it showed up that the human beings were more interested in material than in intellectual things.

As the book is not translated I should perhaps tell you the rest of the plot but I do not want the whole article to consist of plots merely.

This novel, however, is probably the best of the old ones. It has a good plot, it is told in a vivid style, and it is not against scientific knowledge. I understand from James Blish's article in "SF Horizons" #1 that this is very important.

The same year we got a Nazi inspired novel, "Diktatur" ("Dictatorship") by Paul Drachmann. It is not worth saying one word about.

In 1938 we also got a good novel and a bad one. Let us skip the bad one and turn to the brilliant novel, "Manden der taenkte ting" ("The Man Who Thought Things") by Valdemar Holst.

It tells us about a chemical assistant who is able to create things with intellectual energy. He wants a doctor to perform a cerebral operation on him so that he will be able to create living creatures. As the doctor refuses, the assistant creates a double to the doctor and this double sucks out the vigour of the doctor and takes over and becomes a very successful doctor, while the real one is reckoned as a swindler.

It is a story about the fear of and the fight for reaching the dream and fulfilling one's own self.

The author's imagination makes this a very good story, and one should think it was much more read than it is; as a matter of fact the book was completely forgotten two months after having been printed.

This year, though, it will be reprinted, after having been sold to England and Germany and Norway. One of our film studios bought the story back in 1948 but has never made it into a film.

From 1938 until 1950 we only have three bad stories, but in 1950 "Det ny slaraffenland" ("The New Cockaigne") by Soya was published. I believe Soya is known outside Denmark, because of his erotic books. Well, not in USA, I suppose, you are so dreadfully puritanical. "Det ny slaraffenland" is a children's book and shows how Soya imagines his ideal state. It is a lovely book with very nice illustrations.

In 1951 appeared the best Danish science fiction novel until this moment; "Manden der huskede" ("The Man Who Remembered") by Eiler Jørgensen.

In the preface the author, who has been travelling for some years in USA, tells that the story is inspired by "The Adventures of Professor Emmett" in "A Book of Miracles" by Ben Hecht. As I have not read that one I am not able to say to what degree.

The book contains the nicest plot ever seen in the science fiction of this country.

Everybody in the whole world suddenly loses his memory. All paper disappears (paper is the foundation of all civilization). Everybody -- except the hero, of course -- believes that he was first created that day.

"The brain had been cleared as a tape, which is inadvertently exposed to strong magnetic influence. Perhaps it had happened in an after-effect of atom-bomb explosions."

The author imagines that God perhaps has been dissatisfied with the ruling race. Perhaps, he says, the ants were once the ruling ones. After the human beings come maybe the dogs.

The hero Pierre tries to gather some people to teach them about the past. But he only wants to tell them about the good sides in order to make a better world. But you cannot re-create the lost civilization without including the bad things.

The dogs shall, maybe, just hunt the human beings back into the trees. --From there they can come down and start all over; the same pas and faux pas, perhaps.

The human being depends on the memory, the civilization to such a degree, that he would never be able to survive a big catastrophe -- like an explosion.

This is a very intricate and philosophical novel written in a poetic and imaginative language (to compare, perhaps a mixture of Brian Aldiss and Frederick Pohl).

In 1953 came "Det meldes fra Sahara" ("It is Reported from Sahara") by Niels E. Nielsen, our only "real" science fiction author. He has written some six or seven novels and about 150 short stories, most of which are no good, alas. Yet the above-mentioned novel is well done, and should be translated sometime. In 1955 he published "Kundskabens træ" ("Tree of Knowledge"), a frightening book about mutations due to radioactive rays, and in 1960 "To sole stod op" (Two Suns Did Rise) about unrestricted atom war. According to Joan Harrison he has had no contact whatsoever with his own time, and that is a great handicap for a science fiction writer, I should say.

1959 saw the publishing of "I guder!" ("Ye Gods!") by Harry Kjeld Meier. This is not a plain story. It is more a sociological research on the influence of money. It pretends to be made in the year of 6958 as a report on the paleotechnical stage of civilization, and it is very enjoyable.

"The paleotechnical state religion gathers around the monotheistic God-figure with the name: MONEY."

"Business is business -- God is God -- God is everything -- Business is Everything, such is the symbol in this text, and its teaching is this: Joy, goodness, respect are beautiful ideas, but where they oppose the extension of Business they must yield, because: Business is Everything."

This article does not pretend to be a complete survey of Danish science fiction but it gives roughly the outlines of our stage of development. We have some translations, of course. For example, Bradbury, Wyndham, Hoyle, Heinlein, or Wells, just to mention some.

This part of the science fiction field, however, must wait until a later article.

One has the feeling that the interest in the genre is growing and it will be a great help when in a year or two we get the science fiction film by Kubrick and Pakula/Mulligan and Truffaut.

--Finn Jannick Storm Jørgensen





OF GODLIKE POWER -- Mack Reynolds

I am an admirer of Reynolds and I had hoped for quite a bit from this book. I read the first installment and thought that this was his best. Then I got the second part, and wished that the USPOD had managed to lose my copy of the magazine. Reynolds started out with a good idea, having a man appear on a radio program with a rather sleazy talk-jockey at the head, and have this man actually be able to hex things. He gets mad at the radio show and puts all of radio out of commission, and then follows with such things as the movies, tv, cosmetics, etc. Reynolds shows the result of a populace deprived of all its entertainment and the near-madness that results, all seen through the eyes of the talk jockey. This gets him to the end of the first installment, throwing in a bit of a love interest between the tj and the Prophet's daughter. This is exceedingly well done, as is the whole beginning. It was a new idea and it was handled well. But in the second part it falls apart. The talk jockey, who is convincingly portrayed as a stupid mercenary slob in the beginning, is so continually the same that he becomes cardboard, with no change, no realization, no consciousness. No one could possibly be that stubbornly stupid in the midst of these calamities. The side characters also slide into caricatures, and trite, badly drawn ones at that. The Prophet, who was a leading figure in the first part, is shunted into the background. The reaction of the populace is just a redrawing of what happened in the beginning, and it gets tiresome after awhile. In fact this seems to be the problem of the whole second installment, that it just repeats the first part. Nothing actually happens until the end, when after a very weak explanation -- an explanation that

seems to go along with the theory that psi equals magic -- a very much weaker ending is given. It seems as if Reynolds just couldn't think of anything to do with the idea he had created. It's a shame.

--J. Sanders

BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS OF RECENT ESCAPES

CUSPIDOR by S. Pitter (Spatterwood & Co.)

A highly original plot in which a college boy answers the 'Help Wanted' ad of a scientist who happens to have a beautiful daughter. He gets turned into a monster, escapes and kills the daughter (who did the turning), frees and marries her mother (who happens to be the scientist), then lives happily ever after. "Cuspidor" contains an unusual variety of material, and can be heavy going in parts. However, if you have a strong stomach, this mixture could prove to be just your cup of tea.

GENERAL SECTA by Lord Elpuz (Simon and Shyster Inc.)

This concerns an alien (Secta) and a huge hospital floating in space. Badly injured in a softball match, Secta will die unless his life can be saved; in which case he will probably live. He is admitted to the hospital at a time when all the regular doctors are out on location filming with Dr. Kildare, so intern 'Chuck' Stones gets the job. He tries all the standard remedies, such as Penicillin, DNA, DDT, DNQ and even Wildroot Hair Oil, until in despair, he sees the alien struggling to reach the water cooler. Realizing that Secta needs water, Stones floods his room as a shock cure. Unfortunately, Secta (composed of 97.3% pure sodium) reacts violently, explodes and destroys the hospital and its inmates. In a final flashing thought, we find that he was after the water cooler NOT for the water, but because having lost his spectacles, he had mistaken it for his pet jellyfish.

This story has panache, verve, and even moustache, and at times even a trace of writing skill is visible through the utter rubbish of the plot. For lovers of romance and medical themes as in Dr. Kildare, there is a marvelous (and very risqué) account of a love scene between two protozoa.

ELDRITCH OF MARLEYBONE by A. Doorlock (Slosh and Co.)

Eldritch of Marleybone, together with Spoonum his bodyservant and Wakko his trusty sword, set off across the mountains of Ekberg in search of Prongle the Furtive (a renegade Flotvian treacle bender) who has stolen Eldritch's pretzel twisting machine. They meet with sundry adventures such as a collating session in Losanjellies and a clearance sale in a bankrupt brothel in Birmingham. In another chapter, Spoonum is caught in the toils of a beautiful blonde temptress, and it takes Eldritch four chapters and seventeen years to get him away from her and their 13 children.

Eventually, they catch up with Prongle and his 90 henchmen as they are about to plunder the treasure of Ulrich the Unstickable. Eldritch draws his sword, Spoonum his cards, and Prongle & Co. their henchmen. Between them, they beat the tar out of Ulrich and taking his treasure and 74 daughters they ride off into the triple sunset over the mountainous plains of Ba-Loni. An ideal Xmas present for the kiddies.

SPACEMAN (A Veri-Rank Production) Cert. R² Running time 100 yds.

Spaceship Commander (John Wain) and navigator (Frigid Baddo) are under orders to take the Rocketship Tuna (plastic model) to the Planet Jupiter (large grapefruit) and rescue Bert Lungcancer (Glynis Johns) from the hairy mob of howling aliens (The Beatles). During the rescue and escape, Wain is shot in the starboard clavichord, and the ship crashes on Mars (Texas). First the water runs out, then the food -- both hotly pursued by Bert Lungcancer. Johns makes love to Wain who eats the grapefruit, and they are rescued by Alaskan space explorers en route from Rigel to Spica while testing a new Bergenholm on a smubbling trip. They escape by modifying a Dean Drive and eventually alert the Terran Space Fleet. Good triumphs over evil and the screen dissolves in a blaze of credit titles sprinkled with obituaries.

INDEX TO THE WEIRD FICTION MAGAZINES by T.G.L. Cockcroft, Lower Hutt, New Zealand
Two parts: Index by title 1962, 56 pages, 17 cm x 24.5 cm, \$2.75, photo-offset;
Index by author, 1964, 44 pages, 17 cm x 24.5 cm, photo-offset; consecutive pagination.

This wonderfully compiled labor of love by T.G.L. Cockcroft should be in the library of every true lover of fantasy fiction. It is a sad commentary on fandom that these two indices have met with almost total indifference. Both parts are available as a set at a price of \$5.00 from most fantasy dealers.

Covered are the magazines STRANGE STORIES, STRANGE TALES, THE THRILL BOOK, ORIENTAL STORIES, THE MAGIC CARPET MAGAZINE, STRANGE TALES (British) and GOLDEN FLEECE. Besides the alphabetical listing of stories and authors, you get the cover artists, pages in each issue, size of the magazine, listings of the number of serials, articles, poems, and pictorial features in these magazines, plus other information. Even more valuable are the separate listings of serials and connected stories.

Since the above magazines were not indexed by Don Day in his INDEX TO THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES 1926-1950, and certainly will not be indexed by Norman Metcalf in his forthcoming index to the post 1950 magazines, Cockcroft has filled an awesome gap in fantasy bibliography. Mr. Cockcroft has informed the reviewer that only 336 copies of the second part were published. It is true that the number of complete collections of WEIRD TALES is small (the one in the Library of Congress is incomplete), being estimated by some fans at no more than a dozen sets extant. This may account for the poor sale to date of this index. Also it would have been better to have put the two parts into one hard cover book to obtain some of the library trade. There are those who might feel that the price is far too high for a hundred pages of bibliographic information, but since this information is nowhere available in as handy a format, this reference work is another sine qua non for the scholar of imaginative literature.

Mr. Cockcroft has also provided an innovation in this field by noting other references utilized in compiling his work. It should dispell the curious notion of some that a reference work arises pristine and new from chaos without preliminary tentative pioneering efforts.

Of the 339 magazine issues covered, those of one magazine, WEIRD TALES, compris 279 of them. The singular importance of this one magazine to the American fantasy literature of the first half of the 20th century is self-evident. Indices are by nature very, very dull reading, but Cockcroft has done such a creditable job in providing different and useful features that older readers of the included magazines will feel "the great nostalgia" just from glancing at the names of stories and the various authors.

This work is amply deserving of hardcovers and Mr. August Derleth of Arkham House might well investigate the possibility of doing so at a future date. Sufficient library sales should result in getting back the cost of production.

This is not the first index of WEIRD TALES, but it is by far the best.

--Ed Wood

AND YET MORE FANZINE REVIEWS

Among the growing stack of fanzines which must (alas) go unacknowledged until NIEKAS is finished for this issue, there are one or two I'd like to mention. First is the Journal of the British Amateur Scientific Research Association, or BASRA: you must join to get it. Partial contents: "Litmus and Related Pigments", "Chladni's Figures", "Factor Analysis in Psychology". Sort of a junior SciAm. Write James Ashe, RD 1, Freeville, NY, USA. Also there's a whole stack of comiczines; JEDDAK, YMR, CORTANA, SQUEEK CHRONICLES. They're all by different people, but you can probably get info about all from Paul Moslander, 1206 31st Ave., San Mateo, Calif. 94403 -- who will hate me, no doubt, for saving stencil room by giving only his name. The zines are remarkably well written and well illustrated -- some of the best ditto I've seen.

--Felice Rolfe

G/N C A S

CHILDREN'S FANTASIES

DICK WEST

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I especially liked the section on "Children's Fantasy Books". Many of my favorite ones were listed here, and many (such as E. Nesbit's books) that I would like to read but never have. Yet there are a number of children's books that I like that I didn't see mentioned.

The nature stories of the late Thornton Burgess are among them. I used to cut these out of the daily newspaper, and Reddy Fox, Little Joe Otter, Paddy the Beaver and the other inhabitants of the Green Forest were childhood friends of mine. Their adventures and misadventures make for simple stories, but they are as fresh and sparkling as the dew on Peter Rabbit's briar patch. And utterly charming. I can still re-read them with delight.

An even better "talking animal" story is Felix Salten's BAMBI. Walt Disney's cartoon version of the story is beautiful, but the original book (which was reprinted in a Tempo paperback about a year ago) is both different and better. I love Disney's cartoons, but he does have an irritating habit of making his characters so damn cute. Salten manages to convey the mysterious, elusive nature of wild animals, and draws a poignant picture of the tragedy of their lives. Disney catches something of this (I think his best scene is the forest fire sequence -- which has no analog in the book); but his deer are as American as Salten's are German (anyone who has seen the film and read the book will know what I mean), and he lacks that stern Northern hardness that is mingled with scenes of tenderness in Salten's delicious book.

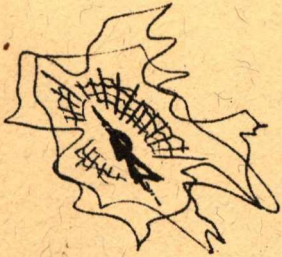
There must be plenty of other good works of children's literature. I wish I could say something about the ventures into the field of Beatrix Potter and E.B. White, but unfortunately the only story by Miss Potter I have read is (as might be expected) THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT, and I regret to say that I am more familiar with Mr. White's essays than with CHARLOTTE'S WEB. I have heard that these works are good, for whatever that's worth.

Another good children's book is THE LITTLE PRINCE by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, the enchanting story of a child who leaves his asteroid home to visit other planets, including Earth. Part of its intent is satirical, but it probes human foibles in a manner that is both gentle and funny, and the death of the Prince at the end is a deeply moving scene.

Strange, I don't see Kipling's JUNGLE BOOKS mentioned in that article. Doesn't Mowgli count as fantasy? And Rikki-Tikki-Tavi is one of the best of the "talking animal" stories.

All my life I have loved Carl Barks far too much to let his marvelous stories go unmentioned in any discussion of children's literature. My experience would be the poorer without such adventure comedies as A CHRISTMAS FOR SHACKTOWN, LOST IN THE ANDES, THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, or THE GOLDEN FLEECE, to name a few of his finest tales.

I can hardly leave this topic without striking a blow for one of my favorite writers, C. S. Lewis. I am fairly well-read in his works: in his Christian apologetics, his romances, his literary criticism. I like the rest of his output so much that it is surprising I don't care more for the Narnia Chronicles. I have read only one of these (THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE), which I like, but only mildly, compared to my passion for the rest of Lewisiana. However, I haven't the slightest objection to his Christianity; what I don't like is things like Father Christmas popping up in Narnia, and the tendency to cuteness (sometime I must try to define that word; at present it is little better than a tag for an unpleasant emotion). I can't agree that children are in any dire danger of having their characters warped by Lewis's preaching. I think you'll find a book is not a cause but an occasion of such a change as Mr. Walstead fears. If the child happens to be of a religious bent (and I suspect this would be due less to his reading than to other environmental factors, such as the example of his parents), then reading about Aslan may push him along the route to becoming what Mr. Walstead calls a very religious person. But he would bend that way in any event; if Lewis had not furnished the occasion, something else would have. Similarly, if a child is not of a religious bent, the death and resurrection of Aslan would delight him as an example of the marvelous, but not of the numinous. No one can tell how things will work out. No effect is rigidly permanent, either. When children are young and have their lives in front of them they tend to drink in experience uncritically, but eventually some selectivity must come. With me, things accepted as a matter of course in childhood came in for a lot of questioning and revision in my early teens, and it seems to be a fairly common experience that everybody finds confusion in conclusions he concluded long ago-o (or whatever the words to the song are). Even the very religious child that Mr. Walstead mentions may grow up into a sceptical atheist. At any rate, C. S. Lewis was certainly not a close-minded fanatic, and it would be surprising if his works bred anything remotely resembling such.



The more I ponder the expression "sword-and-sorcery", the looser it seems as a name for a literary type. The "swords" part suggests a heroic age, or at least a pre-machine age (or non-machine age?) world in which men can be splendid barbarians and noble savages (or just barbarians and savages without the qualifying adjectives). It conjures up the sort of world in which you see castles and sacked cities and Forests Perilous and the prow of pirate dragonships cutting a path through the wine-dark sea. "Sorcery" can only indicate strange powers beyond the normal ken of man, what is vaguely called "the supernatural" (of course whether the author believes in it literally, or believes in it only as a symbol, or does not believe in it at all, he must treat it as a part of Nature in his story.) This conjures up a world of witches and devils and eldritch enchantments, of the Green Knight picking up his head and riding out of Arthur's court, even of strange creatures like giants and dragons.

But, even so, how good is "sword-and-sorcery" as a description of a literary type? It tells you that a tale has these two elements in it: nothing more. That is something, of course. The term works pretty well for, say, the Conan stories, since about all that's in them is swords, sorcery and conflict (and that's quite enough!). But it is pitifully inadequate when applied to, say, Homer, Virgil, Malory, Spenser, James Stephens, E. R. Edgison, or Tolkien, since there is so much else in them besides sorcery and swords. MacBeth features all the swordplay and all the sorcery that anyone could want; but to call it a sword-and-sorcery play does not seem quite the best description of Shakespeare's tragedy. The term does have meaning, though. I think it would be more meaningful to call LORD OF THE RINGS a prose epic than a sword-and-sorcery tale, but both terms do tell us something about what the work is like.

FRED HOLLANDER

The first sequel to MR. WICKER'S WINDOW is called THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SEAS. I learned this fact at the Fanquet on July 23, when talking to Larry Niven, the guest of honor, after the formal program. I haven't been able to find either of the two sequels, in fact I didn't know till just now that they had been written at all. I knew they were planned, from the ending of WINDOW, but I had searched and not found. I now renew the search. If they are anywhere near as good as the first book I know I shall enjoy them.

I would like to add a couple of good children's fantasies to the list. The first is THE NINE QUESTIONS by Edward Fenton. This is a very stylized and allegorical work done in a clear and beautiful style. It is the story of a search, and a story of the regaining of a rightful inheritance. As such, it is commonplace. But in the manner in which the story is told, and in the allegories, not to religion, but to some sort of higher conscience and disembodied mythos (by which I mean that the allegories do not tend to one particular religion as do Lewis', but to a more generalized godhead, in this case, actually the father of the hero.) lies the hold it has over me.

The second is A WRINKLE IN TIME by Madeline L'Engle. (Madeline L'Engle Camp). This is more a science fiction than fantasy type children's book, but it, too, has a particular hold over me. Also recommended: THE PHANTOM TOLLBOTH.

FRITZ LEIBER

Grand article by Mark Walstead on childrens' fantasies. Only beloved book I couldn't find in it was THE THREE MULLA-MULGARS by Walter de la Mare -- a remarkably detailed "lost civilization" of talking monkeys described from the viewpoint of three who are seeking to return to it (or rather discover the land from which their father came). The book contains many delightful linguistic (and even metaphysical) touches: for instance, sleep, swoon-sleep (as from a blow on the head) and death are called (A) First Sleep, Second Sleep, and Third Sleep, but also (B) Little Go, Great Go, and Come No More. I need hardly say more than that to indicate that the Mountains of Arrakaboa and the Caverns of the Minimus are well-worth traversing -- Leopards are called "Roses" from their spots (magnificent monkey euphemisms!) while over all brood the warring supernatural forces of Tishnar (light) and Immanala (darkness).

Small addition to section on SF in Italy. SFBC, Via Scalabrini 68, Piacenza, has brought out my THE SILVER EGGHEADS as LE ARGENTEE TESTE D'UOVO and three other quality paperbacks: LA FINE DEL PRINCIPIO by Ray Bradbury, L'IMPERO DELL' ATOMO by Van Vogt, and DODICI VOLTE DOMANI by Asimov. They're also going to do my GATHER, DARKNESS! (SFBC means simply Science Fiction Book Club.)

This day settled in my mind a point which has nagged it for years; widdershins and sunwise as equivalents of counterclockwise and clockwise. In the northern hemisphere the sun in its daily motion from east to south to west is moving clockwise if a person thinks of himself as looking down on these apparent movements from above. (Dunno how this crept in.)

BANKS MERANE

The article on children's fantasies was good, but I want to charge into the Oz fray. As a child, I was more fond of many of Ruth Plumly Thompson's Oz books than I was of those by Baum himself, and I still retain that feeling. RPT was excellent at a sort of sword-and-sorcery type plot and excelled Baum in building atmosphere. Stories like THE YELLOW KNIGHT OF OZ, OJO IN OZ and THE GIANT HORSE OF OZ were done at the very top of her form. THE LOST KING OF OZ . . . and PIRATES IN OZ are also among my favorites. I find much of Baum too "quainty-cut" when stacked up against things like RPT's enchanted medieval kingdom in THE YELLOW KNIGHT or the Valley of the Barons in JACK PUMPKINHEAD IN OZ.

Oz is an empire capacious enough to be varyingly interpreted by different writers, and after all RPT's Oz doesn't differ from LFB's by as much as ~~1/2~~ ((No, no Felice, no personal opinions here! --FR)) J. D. Salinger's America does from John O'Hara's, to use a mundane comparison. Fie to the Baum purists.

JOHN BOSTON

For the children's fantasy discussion; someone might look up a new book, Edward Ormondroyd's TIME AT THE TOP. I haven't read it, but it looks like it might interest some of the participants in the discussion.

SF in Italy was very interesting; please continue the series to other countries. I'd be especially interested to know what American sf, if any, is to be found in, say Yugoslavia or Poland. ((Can anybody out there help us? --FR))

PICKERING GOES TO THE STARS

J. SANDERS

I wish I could go along with Pickering. I am a great believer in the need for space travel. Unfortunately, I can't see any justification for your optimism. Space travel has shown no signs of increasing man's idealism. The only way that we can get space travel is to get the nation behind us, and I have yet to see any group of people of one one-millionth this size act for idealistic reasons. We are going to have to hit pure realism, dirty playing, cheating, swindling, and even murder if we are going to get men into space. So far we have been lucky. No one has died. This can't last too much longer. And if we have several fatalities in a row, there is going to be nothing but extreme action, with the use of every low appeal we can, that is going to keep us in space. It must be done, but kid gloves can't be used. Oh, idealism must be used, but it neither will nor can be used for the whole population.

Also the great changes in man's thinking that you see in man's psychology, I can't conceive of occurring. At least not until we get to the stars. We aren't going to be bringing space to that many people, and while I think it will be a shattering of conceit to those who visualise it, the majority won't.

In a similar vein, while the men who are up there will be suffering the pain and hardship, this will not effect any change on the men on Earth. If the wars we have experienced (and I include all wars back through the Middle Ages, if not further back) have not noticeably changed men's character, if we can still have people willing to sacrifice the country for a dispute of minor significance, then the mere fact that we are in space is not going to cause that much of a change.

HARRY WARNER, JR.

Stephen Pickering's style gets in the way of his material. But he makes some important points and he'll probably shift to a more relaxed manner of writing for fanzines after a while, just as Jerry Pournelle did. I find it hard to believe that fanzines are publishing so little about the exploration of space. Perhaps it's the result of fans' unwillingness to do the things that the great outside world is doing; while newspapers and mundane magazines are filled with stuff about orbital flights and photographs of Mars, fanzines must remain silent on these matters. I know that the Mariner adventure got me more excited than anything we've done in space so far. The only thing that depresses me is the sight of all those craters. It's an unwarranted fear, but I can't help worrying about the danger that everywhere we send cameras in space, we'll get pictures of craters and nothing else of interest. That could be almost as hard on public support for manned space flight as the accidental death of an astronaut during a flight.

RICK LUC

I am much confused by Pickering's "A Space Age Credo". The development of it was, I think, very confused and this may have been what confused me...or perhaps I was looking for more in it than there was. I had read Bradbury's PLAYBOY article and found his rejection of God incompatible with reason and his substitution of man in those very big shoes (nice, jumbled metaphor) a little stretched to meet the pseudo-sopistication that he knew he would have to present to sell to PLAYBOY. Ever wonder why the word is playboy? ((Are girls supposed to be more serious about it maybe? --FR))

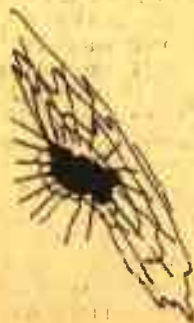
What the articles are trying to say is that to survive in space we need a new idea of immortality, or rather, a new emphasis on an old one, that of racial immortality. And to accept this ego destroying credo we must give man a very noble look so that we can sacrifice consideration of self for consideration of race. Very, very interesting except that it conflicts with something that Pickering objects to. This god-view of man is a more Ptolemaic idea than any of the present theologies. The logical end of this god-view would have to be that man is it. Why? Because of something that Pickering seems to overlook. (I should add that I may be reading the article from the wrong point of view and this may not be relevant to what Pickering says...but what the hell, I'm having fun and that's a good part of my philosophy -- and I think Nietzsche is dead, not God.) This something is that we may not be quite as alone as the author thinks -- what about other peoples Out There in the Great Beyond (the natural one)? If you postulate conditions of solitude (and your article can be taken that way -- and is by me) then I will postulate that intelligent beings will use their reason to come to the same view of their position in the universe as you have and when we meet...We, being intelligent beings will have to throw out this idea of our own self importance. We aren't unique; we are probably very common; and your article is written in a very self-centered way, I'm afraid. But this is because you are trying to predict a future that you have no knowledge of and no concrete facts to base your predictions on.

You have missed the point of religion, Mr. Pickering: it is not an ego soother. There have been too many 'staunch' believers who were extremely intelligent men for you to say this with any authority. They did not think God incompatible with reason and not because they lived before Copernicus and Newton. Nor did they want to live forever and thus joined a religion. They wanted to become as perfect as they could become and thus followed the religion in which they thought they could accomplish this. They were very selfish men -- driven by the same apparent motives as you -- self fulfillment. Their vehicle was different because their interpretation of this idea differed from yours.

MIKE HILLEN

After finishing "Space Age Credo" all I can say is if man can't solve these problems on earth, then how is he going to handle the bigger responsibilities of the stars?

WE HAD SEVERAL OTHER comments of this type: several people asked simply "What'd he say?"; one, Carl Brandon Jr. of Sweden (Whom I suspect is a hoax) says "I'm still not sure of whether he's a great ironic or just an ordinary nut. Then there is Tom Dupree: 'Pickering's article was the best thing in the issue.'"



ED WOOD AND THE MIT INDEX

DONALD FRANSON

Ed Wood criticizes the index for the wrong reasons. Its fault is not that it is incomplete, though that disappointed me too. The story of the boom years is not the story of Astounding and Amazing, but of Infinity, Satellite, Fantastic Universe, the Standard group, Del Rey's mags, ad infinitum to some dozens of titles, some insignificant, some important. As well write a history of classic automobiles, and omit Packard, because it is no longer being built!

Still, this was explained away in the introduction, as there being only time and opportunity to index eight magazines. If the index did what it was intended to do, cover a small portion of the field, Ed's criticism is invalid. But did the index do the job it was supposed to do? No. There are a million mistakes in it. (Well, maybe 800,000.) Thus the index is unreliable, and is only useful if you have the magazines or other indexes to back it up. Many of the errors you can spot instantly, but how do you know how many more there are, beneath the surface? You won't, unless you try to use the index, as I did.

Fakefan that I am, I looked up such names as Walt Willis and Bob Farnham. I couldn't find them, because entire issues of If for 1960 are missing. Others have part of their contents pages missing, but I can't very well go through my prozines, issue by issue, make my own cards and compare them with the publication. But that is the only way to find all the errors in the MIT index. I hope Ed Wood's suggestion to make lists of total stories of authors, number of novelettes, etc., is held up, until this index is redone. It's not a basis for anything, the way it is. In the introduction there is a plea for corrections, but I fear this attitude almost insures that the second edition will be as error-riddled as the first. The only way to index is to be as accurate as possible, then the few errors that still slip by can be caught by the readers. Too many of them and correction is impossible.

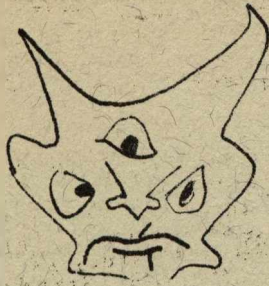
There are not only many errors, but innumerable types of errors. Every kind of mistake known is made at least once; plus quite a few machine-made ones. The stupidity of the machine is beyond belief. (By Isaac Asimov.) ((Typo Don's. --FR)) It doesn't know the alphabet and it can't file. But the excuse of haste implies that this was necessary. Why? What good is an index that can't be trusted? Or, worse, trusted (as the readers, including Ed Wood, seem to be doing) without foundation?

The first rule in indexing is to make sure you have all the material; count the issues first. Then, copy the contents page accurately (only rarely are the contents pages wrong, and those are the errors that the reader might catch -- for instance Skeleton Men of Venus (Jupiter) was taken in the MIT index from the contents page.) Then double-check it. This is the most important thing. It only takes a few seconds to second-glance and see if you made some obvious goof in copying. If you do this, your indexes will be as right as you are; that is, if you don't know anything about what you're indexing, you're more likely not to catch the obvious mistakes you are making before publishing. (Ever see a foreign-printed book in English?) Then the balance of the work done by the machine would be perfect, if the machine too is supervised. I thought there should have been a way to make corrections before stencilling (how in hell could you make them after?). But all this on top of the smug blurbs in sf magazines that now the perfect machine is taking over from the imperfect human... what some people don't seem to realize is that, if you don't watch it, the machine not only does not correct human error, but multiplies it enormously.

Doing it right the first time always takes a little more time. Here was an opportunity to do it right once and for all, but I'm afraid these cards will have to be tossed out and the whole thing done over from scratch. The time taken in being careful could be saved by not listing the page numbers. Ed Wood is not the only one who thinks them useless and a waste of time, and I wish this would stop. The only reason I can think of for the use of them originally, was that some people bound old Amazings by volume, and the page numbers ran consecutively through the volume. (Did you know that the March, 1933 Amazing has 1152 pages?)

I always like to encourage index makers, and didn't want to criticize. But from the viewpoint of a Damon Knight or a James Blish, how else can you improve standards? Bad indexes drive out good. Coulson dropped the thought of publishing another index when this came out (and maybe it is a good one); and I rather think this has cut the ground from under Don Day or Norm Metcalf. I want the second Day Index. I want a second MIT index, if it is carefully done. I'm afraid it won't be.

In conclusion, I still recommend the index (write to Erwin S. Strauss, MIT Science Fiction Society, Room 50-020, 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge 39, Mass.), even at \$2.50, but take it with a grain of salt. Don't assume anything, and it will help you find stuff in a hurry. It may not list everything, but you can always look elsewhere. You have other indexes, don't you? I still have a few Author Indexes to



Astounding/ Analog, F&SF, Galaxy and If, free on request. See if you can find an error in them (besides the one Fred Pohl put in when he changed the schedule of If at the last moment, and Heinlein's serial was listed prematurely.)

This has been a counter-review. Far be it from me to disagree with Ed Wood, the Lone Science Fiction Fan, but he gives the impression that such indexes as this are useful only to the super-collector, who is only interested in minutiae. Actually, they are the key to anyone's magazine library, small or large, and a guide to future anthologists. This is a useful index, even if botched.

PIERS JACOB

Is this Ed Wood (pardon my ignorance) who has been reviewing SF indexes the same Wood who is my favorite SF illustrator (the few times I see his work these days)? Much fan art work and even much professional strikes me as inferior to what I could do myself -- and I have had training -- but when I look at his, I see quality that is beyond my fondest aspirations. But again I wander, and I haven't even named my subject. I've done as much indexing in my day as the next person, and the problems are more formidable up close than from a distance. How much time does it take to index a few missing magazines, once the great bulk have been done? More time, probably, than everything else combined. Those few missing issues are difficult to index simply because they are missing, and if the compiler waits until every one is available, his index will be obsolete before it sees publication. The coincidence of a complete collection and fully adequate time is most difficult. I'm happy to use the Blue/Black-dex, which is available now, in lieu of the definitive Metcalf edition which is not. I don't care how definitive an index may be in conception; if the effort to make it so prevents it from ever being published -- as Don Day's is never to be published -- I can't use it.

BOK AND THE NEW YORK COPS

PETE (or is it Phred?) JACKSON

The bits about Bok were great. I remember what was said vividly but seem to have lost track of who said what, so will just say I was extremely happy with it. It brought out a point upon which I would like to add my two cents. It says, "...the New York police had helped themselves to some of that property and were caught helping themselves to more and had returned... They are a notorious pack of ghouls and corpse-robbers, thieves worse than any they prosecute." I was in New York City for a class trip (wait a minute and I'll get to my point) and my buddy and I decided to ride the tube anyplace. We decided to exit and wound up in Greenwich Village miraculously only a block and a half from my uncle's apartment. When we arrived my aunt and her sister and kids were eating but my uncle arrived and we went to see the remains of a fire down a couple of blocks. My friend is a camera bug and took a few pictures. A cop was interviewing the lady from the burned apartment who had a glass (emptied of you can guess what) sitting on the bumper of the car where he was interviewing her. When it was over she slipped him a few bucks and we left, impressed by what we saw but also a bit astounded. My uncle then told us that there was a group of insurance men that would go into apartments like that and take whatever they chose. They had gained the nickname of The Forty Thieves. It must have been them or a similar group who made off with the paintings of Hannes Bok. It's bad enough when you or I take something but the police are here to protect us from theft or to prevent same. I kinda get to wondering if I'm safe even with protection. A police officer around here ((Danville, Pa.)) somewhere was discharged for doing a bit of poontangling with a young girl and I believe either had to marry her or support the child. Then when the police force needed men, they hired him. Are we safe, Felice? I doubt it. ((I would have to see the girl before criticizing the cop -- a girl I knew in Jr. High, 14 years old, had no trouble passing herself off as 21, and was perfectly willing to go to bed with any nice-looking guy. 'S not hearsay; she told me so herself... She was pretty, too. Cops are human; would you have turned her down? Or condemned yourself for taking her up on it? --FR))

KEN LAZARA

Though I must confess that I had not heard previously of Hannes Bok, I was deeply moved by the tributes paid to him in NIEKAI 11 and 12. I must condemn soundly, however, something contained in the otherwise tenderly written offering by Avran Davidson (NIEKAS 12:53) ((By jing, somebody actually uses our page numbering system! --FR)).

I sincerely regret having to tear apart a portion of an article offered as a tribute to a

fine man, but let the blame lie upon its author. A man in grief over the loss of a friend can, and should be forgiven for his excesses, but they ought not to go unnoticed, nor unremarked.

It is claimed that "the New York City Police had helped themselves to some of (the belongings of Hannes Bok after he died)." This information is credited to "I forget from whom", but let me concede the truth of this allegation with a small clarification. I am certain that the informant meant that certain policemen were the thieves. I cannot imagine the New York City Police filing through the apartment of Hannes Bok for the purpose of taking his property. The New York City Police did not steal anything, but perhaps as alleged by "I forget whom" some New York City policemen did.

It is easy to jump on your New York City Police; to the ordinary citizen of average law abiding nature they are an annoyance -- yet surely an annoyance ready to put his body -- no less precious than yours -- between you and your assailant as they often do. ((Which, I might add, is more than your neighbor will do for you in NYC. Sorry I had to cut your letter, Ken, but space is getting short. --FR))

PKD AND THE I CHING (?)

RAY NELSON

The comments on Phil Dick's article on "Schizophrenia and the I Ching" were almost as interesting as the article itself. It would seem that, for full understanding of it, one must either have a touch of schizophrenia oneself or have visited the schizophrenic world with the aid of LSD or some such substance.

LSD, it seems, is now illegal, so those who wish to understand the schizophrenic world, as it were, "from the inside" will have to seek elsewhere for the entrance to it, or risk the frowns of the law. I, myself, no longer need it. The inventive mind of the "head" will always keep one jump ahead of the law. Still legal and readily available are Scottish heather and morning glory seeds, but the best of all methods, from the point of view of living an upright and respectable life while being, at the same time, out of one's F mind, is autohypnosis. Autohypnosis requires time and practice to master, but it is my opinion, based on personal experience, that any effect obtained through the use of psychedelic drugs can also be obtained through the use of autohypnosis, without the aid of any drugs whatsoever.

There are, however, trances and trances. If an exterior operator is used, he should be a permissive one, willing to let the subject drift uncontrolled. Otherwise the effect will be simply the sort of control trance so familiar to us all in the work of stage magicians. The exterior operator simply replaces one's own conscious mind in the control function and, while some rather spectacular stunts can sometimes be performed, the subconscious mind is not allowed to manifest itself very much.

The best genuinely psychedelic trance is not, like the control trance, amnesiac. To be useful to an individual, the insights gained in the trance must be retained, not allowed to sink once again out of sight. L. Ron Hubbard uncovered the best form of non-directive trance in what he used to call "reverie", but I understand that this technique has been largely abandoned by him of late. (Freud also, as you may recall, began with hypnosis but later abandoned it.) This is perhaps because really non-directive operators are so few, and reverie is so easily converted by suggestion into a standard control trance. However, reverie, at its best, features complete recall of all that happens during the trance together with a free flow of information from both the memory and the secondary and "shadow" personalities. Both positive and negative hallucinations can be created in all the senses, and all the senses, including the sense of pain, can be either intensified or switched off. Some degree of direct control of the autonomic nervous system can be established. (For instance, pulse, heartbeat and body temperature can be controlled over such a wide range that it is -- probably possible to literally will oneself to death.)

Better even than reverie is the operatorless autohypnotic trance. Because, in our society, we tend to believe that "I think, therefore I am", many people recoil in horror from this prospect. They feel that when they cease to think, in the usual conscious way, they will cease to be. (The belief that trance is a kind of visit to death is very widespread, from the ancient mystery cults of Greece to the Tibetan lama.) Different people react in different ways, but I have found that, for myself, the best way of bringing on autohypnotic trance is water-watching. Since one of the more characteristic features of the psychedelic trance is the experience of flow, the water, by its very nature, suggests the state of mind desired. I select a patch of water in a flowing stream, allowing the choice of which spot to look at to my subconscious. It is advisable, however, to select a spot where bright sunlight is flickering on ripples. Then I sit quietly and look at the spot, breathing deeply to induce a slight intoxication from hyperventilation, allowing my mind to flow, like the water, wherever it will. This is not as easy as it sounds and may not work the first time. If you allow yourself to become involved in any form of deliberate "not-thinking",

you'll never make it. The first sign that the trance was taking effect was, for me, a change in the quality of color. A certain kind of white color which I have dubbed "Mescaline white" after the drug that first introduced it to me and which Alpert and Leary call "The High White Light" becomes visible. I theorize that the appearance of this color is due to the dilation of the pupils that often (but not always) signals the onset of the trance. There is a general intensification of all colors and an impression of a waving, breathing movement in stationary inanimate objects. The body temperature may change abruptly, seeming to grow freezing cold, but measurements made with a rectal thermometer revealed that the temperature had actually raised to 101 degrees. (These measurements were made many hours later when the impression of cold persisted.)

As the trance deepens, parts of the visual area may black out or grow hazy, but there is no cause for alarm. This is only a transitional stage. The average state is very similar to normal vision, once the full trance sets in, except that objects seem to contain a light within themselves, rather than merely being reflectors, and you may notice a fading out of color at the edges of the visual image.

Most of the changes in the trance world are emotional. You move into a spectrum of emotions that have no names. They are, all the same, not entirely unfamiliar. They are emotions you may have felt before in times of stress, pain, grief, anger, ecstasy, etc., but which are, as the jazz terminology puts it, "something else". The trance world is really the same world as the everyday world, only seen from a different angle. It is not, however, subject to the same laws of cause and effect as our own, for the simple reason that time, as we know it here, is not operative there. Instead there is a sort of infinite connectivity, the synchronicity principle mentioned by Phil Dick as the law behind the I Ching's powers of divination. This is what accounts for the ESP phenomena noted by other writers on psychedelic drugs. In the trance world there are no accidents, no co-incidences. Everything is full of infinite meaning, even such seemingly unemotional things as numbers. It is, for instance, no accident that there are 64 hexagrams in the I Ching, 64 squares on the chess board, and 64 bars in the conventional popular song. Each is a microcosm, reflecting faithfully the world in which we live, the so-called normal world. In fact, every object in the world is a microcosm, the key to the whole.

I have talked to a great many people who have visited the trance world, either through drugs, hypnosis or psychosis, and I have found that each tends to view the trance world through the framework of his childhood religious beliefs. The Buddhist sees Buddha, the Christian sees Christ. In spite of variations, however, some curious consistency seems to emerge. The trance world is unquestionably mystical, and can best be dealt with in the terminology of mystical religion.

To tell you (or try to tell you) more about the other world would only mislead you, because it actually defies real verbalization. I can only recommend that you seek the entrance to the other world for yourself. You will, at the least, learn a great deal about yourself.

Running water isn't the only thing that can turn you on. Op art can hypnotize, as can almost any very complex line drawing. An irregular surface, such as a stucco wall, can turn you on. If all else fails, you can always close your eyes and press your fists against them until the bright lights come and carry you away. (This works best when you have a migraine headache.) Or you can find another way for yourself. Every object in this world is a doorway to the other, slightly ajar.



FELICE ROLFE (I get in here too)

I'd like to add a word of caution to Ray's very interesting discussion. Hypnosis has been shown to be dangerous when used by an amateur hypnotist, and it seems rather obvious that the operator in autohypnosis must be an amateur...

Also, Ray, you say that it requires time and practice to master, and I certainly agree. But most of us "squares" have the impression that practice and application are things that the... well, "escapist," for want of a better word, though it's a poor choice... spends most of his waking life trying to avoid. Then it might not be an accessible method for most of them. Care to comment?

MOME RHYME

Under the people tree, in dark of earth,
Spider men sit and watch the teeming surf.
The webs they weave are grune and purest silk;
Their webs they cast from dunes of sand and silt.

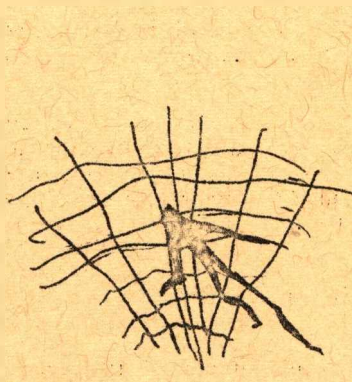
The grobies mome; from wave to wave they flit;
They cut the webs, the sandans spread and split.
The spiders weave again, again, their silk;
With grobies gone their nets are full to brink.

But now when earthlight shines on people's tree
From sight the surf does sink, and turf is free
Of silt and sand. The grasses grow and nube,
And kilties hunt the spider's corpse for food.

Fish scales surf borning sprout, and flowers grow,
Yellow, purple, bright red, and white blue gold.
A wild profusion nubes the colored sward,
And paints from plain to hidden mountain yard.

But now the grobies mome with light, earthlight,
And brighter light, and flash, and spark, and spite.
A bolt goes home; the people's tree is split.
Alas, inside, the world of rune is spilt.

--Paul George



lai^v sh kai

ROY TACKETT
915 Green Valley Road NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

I think the thing that scares me off commenting on NIEKAS more than I do is that there is so much of it. Not just the sheer physical size of the thing but the wide variety of material you include. Something for everyone, yes? ((You should find this issue a little easier to handle, though I hope we've still got variety. --FR))

Like another fine Burge cover. He does go for detail, doesn't he? Excellent, the city in the sea. But I have detected, I think, one small slip. Either the fish in the foreground or the octopus between the pillars is out of place. The fish is one of the DEEP sea varieties -- whose name slips by me at the moment and I'm too lazy to go look it up -- while the octopus prefers the shallows. No matter; as it is it is still a fine picture.

Hey! Where do you get the info on Italian stuff? And how about some addresses for the Italian fan organizations? Please???? ((I dunno -- Ed gets all of that, and... as I may have mentioned... he ain't here. I'll put him to work on it when he gets back. --FR))

MILTON F. STEVENS, 3989 Beverly Glen Blv., Sherman Oaks, Calif.

I could begin by telling you that you produce a fine fanzine, but you have heard that so often that it would be rather redundant and I do so hate being redundant. ((Oh, go ahead and be redundant. --FR)) On reading NIEKAS 12, I discovered that the human eye (or at least my eye) can only focus on micro-elite type for about two pages worth. After that it sort of changes into a horde of crawley little creatures that seem determined to crawl to the edge of the page and jump. ((Ed, please not! --FR))

I will probably be able to appreciate your publication much more when I finish LORD OF THE RINGS. Even if A. A. Wyn and Co. are a bunch of no-good lousy thieves, etc., they did do a service in bringing Tolkien's works to chronically depressed areas such as where I live.

I enjoyed Felice's "Mayhem House" very much. ((Be as redundant as you like! --FR)) "Artificial logs don't float", indeed! The only thing I can't figure out is how I was suckered into reading a string of mathematical whatzitis in the first place, since I know utterly nothing about math. Well, that's not quite true either. In my undergraduate days at Dixie Canyon Elementary, I did master long division along with the other standard bourgeois accomplishments. I also enjoyed Carl Frederick's "The Marchin' Barnacles".

JACK GAUGHAN, 629 Undercliff Ave., Edgewater, New Jersey 07020

Dear Felice,

Avram's article was beautiful. Would to god I could write coherently -- he writes beautifully. Should you see Avram tell him that as far as I know Clarence Peacock (co-executor of Hannes Bok's estate) has most if not all of Hannes' artwork and masks, tapes, books, and what-all -- I "inherited" what he didn't want -- precious toys, etc.

Dear Ed,

So as to keep the record straight -- the error (flying horse instead of pterodactyl) on the TWO TOWERS cover is mine alone. I had to read the last two books of the trilogy and lay out the covers under the pressure of a short deadline -- as a result I could not read them carefully (which I try to do, usually) -- by the time the error was discovered it was too late to change the thing. My apologies to Tolkien people!



DAINIS BISENIEKS, 1033 Pomona, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48103

Saw NIEKAS #11 reviewed in FOCAL POINT. You must be a Lithuanian. Couldn't talk with you; I'm only a Latvian. But your zine's title is NOTHING: I checked the cognate in my Muhlenbach/Endzelin dictionary. The "-nieks" in my name, however, corresponds to the Russian "-nik".

I see you're publishing a glossary of Middle Earth. Hm. I'm sure I would be disappointed in it if it is informed only by Tolkien's published work. How different such a thing by the author would be, even if it had no new information! For it would be informed by all that he knew and was not telling, coming out of richness instead of poverty. That follows from what Hemingway said in the PARIS REVIEW interview. An author has to know everything about his characters and their world, and then to tell only what the story requires. It's a crippling fault of most science fiction that the author does not envision a whole world, only the parts that show in the story. The sets flap when you touch them.

Dainis

BILL GLASS, 20539 Gresham, Canoga Park, Calif. 91306

I'm afraid you have been slightly mis-informed by Bruce Pelz. The following "Book Review in the Subjunctive Mood" is from WHAT SHALL I CALL IT? #5 in APA L 22.

BOOK REVIEW: Fellowship of the Ring: Books One and Two; Penguin, 5/-, 250 and 211 pp., March 1966

Here at last, as announced last August at the Loncon, are the first two paperbacked volumes of THE LORD OF THE RINGS. THE TWO TOWERS and THE RETURN OF THE KING, also split up into two simultaneously issued parts, will be released in May and July respectively (and will also cost 5/- each).

If these first two books are any indication of the quality of the others, Penguin has done a good job of transferring the three volume RING epic into the paperbound format. First, even though some fans seem to disagree, I think that they were wise to split up the volumes into two books apiece. The unwary buyer who plays it smart by getting both books, think "aha; now I can read the the whole story" will be frustrated to find out that, though the FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING is ended, he still has four more books to read, and that's another jolly 20/- to Penguin. I also like the artwork by Cawthorn for the books. Each book has a wraparound cover in colour, the Flight to the Ford for Book One, and the Battle at the Bridge of Khazad-Dum for Book Two. Each book also has a frontispiece; Frodo in the barrow for Book One, and Frodo and Sam at the Mirror of Galadriel in Book Two. Cawthorn has also adapted a map for each book showing only the area traveled in that book, i. e. from the Shire to Rivendell, and from Rivendell to the Falls of Rauros.

Unfortunately, as these are presented as juvenile books (they're really Puffins rather than Penguins), we lose some of the background details. The story's the same, but all that's left of the Prologue is most of the information on the Hobbits (and even then a lot of their history has been trimmed off), and the explanation about the finding of the ring. This will probably mean that, if any of the Appendices are kept at all, the only appendix will be an edited down version of the Chronology of the Third Age, and maybe the calendar and alphabets, if we're lucky.

In spite of the deletion of some of the background material, this is still excellent and I urge you all to get it, if not for yourself, then for someone you think will enjoy it. I only wish it had been out when I bought my copy of THE LORD OF THE RINGS for \$5.00/volume.

As you can probably guess from the "March 1966" date and the "announced at the Loncon" phrase the entire review is of an imaginary edition. I dreamed the whole thing up (before I knew there was going to be an American paperback) in the hopes that some one who read it might become intrigued and pass the idea on to England where someone might actually get the idea to put out such an edition.

I really doubt if this fooled Bruce Pelz (specially since it's his mimeo that allows WHAT? to find its way into APA L, so maybe he was just acting Cult-ish or maybe your signals got crossed or something. But, unfortunately, the British paperback edition of the Ring Trilogy, as far as I know, exists only as a faunching sensation in the brain of Bill Glass.

The cover of #12 and the fold-out are worth the price of admission this time (even if I had had to pay for it), but there were three other things that made the issue worth while: "A Glossary of Middle Earth: Part IIb", "Children's Fantasy Books", and the three more views of Hannes Bok.

Translucently yours

((Very strange; when the news of the Ace edition first broke I discussed it with Bruce Pelz on the phone and he mentioned as a fact the British PB edition and apologized for not mentioning it in RATATOSK, saying something like "---when something is said in APA L I tend to think of it as published and don't get around to repeating it." --ERM))

STEPHEN PATT, 6106 Westcliff Drive, Baltimore, Maryland, 21209

In toto, NIEKAS showed a totally different format than what had been before. The cover I enjoyed; not nearly as much as Anne Chatland's beauteous "My precious! O my precious!" for #6, but not as bad as to be detracting from the zine's quality. Too much detail in black and white, I suppose. The customary editorial lacked punch, but it was rushed, most probably done from mind-to-stencil, and wasn't meant to convey any great importance. Lack of a Contents merely made it more enjoyable; I could read straight thru the zine, a fun thing when reading NIEKAS. ((We put the contents page last. Backwards, that's us. --FR)) "Dreary April" was, like all of Felice's work, enjoyable and readable -- a bit more disjointed than usual, but this only adding to the fun. I noted with glee the MAYHEM HOUSE picture done by DLP -- Dian Pelz, my compliments. ((That was by Diana Paxson, --FR)) The Wonderful Electric Phone Company delighted me. I was laughing for five minutes before my mother asked me if I'd been reading "Over Sixteen" again.

(more)

Bumbejimas, I enjoyed as usual. As to "That Crazy Gilbert and Wazzisname Stuff, Chapter Too Damn Many", there were too many short mentions of discrepancies in plot, etc., that you could've gone into detail with, and enhanced the readability, but didn't. I suppose the added bulk would've been too much for the average fan, but I'm a G&S fan, although as yet unexposed to a live production.

The assorted poetry in this issue was of a higher quality and quantity than usual; I enjoyed all.

As to "Children's Fantasy Books", a bit of abridgement seems to be called for; this might be a boon to some, but a hindrance to most. Abridged, any fan could enjoy it.

I can't work up a decent comment on the GLOSSARY OF MIDDLE EARTH; just that I'd sure like to meet A1 sometime...

"A Space Age Credo". Wha d'e say??

SF in Italy read well, gave information in large amounts, and ended when it should've. More articles like this, and the HUGO will be yours!

GINCAS on Hannes Bok: Finally, Hannes receives some of the tribute due to him for so long. One question; I wonder what the non-fan view of him would be?

Schizophrenia and PKD: the comments ran the spectrum from just commendation to that and addition of facts and/or opinions. Altogether, they seem to be a cross-section of the fannish viewpoing. Good choices, interesting reading.

Taken separately, most of the articles fall in the "good" category, but considering what NIEKAS 11 could have and should have been: bleah!

Sincerely, thy pang

((It must take a very peculiar psychology to consider a zine page by page, explain that you liked almost all of it, and then say something like "bleah" about it in toto. Sorry, Stephen, but I feel you got your money's worth with #11. If you think we should have better articles, write them for us. --Felice))

MICHAEL VIGGIANO, 1834 Albany Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11210

The series of paintings that have been gracing the covers have been excellent. I like the idea of putting the title and issue number on the backcover, and devoting the whole front cover to the painting, or should I call it a drawing; but it looks good enough to be a painting.

Another feature that I enjoy is the Gincas lettercol or discussions. I know that it is harder arranging the comments according to subjects, but it makes for a unique lettercolumn. / And of course you also have the regular long lettercol.

Frederick's writing seems to grow on you. At first I didn't like the column, but now I do. Bastipple Bonk was the best poem in the column. ((We encourage other readers to go Carl one getter -- or worse, depending on your viewpoint. --FR))

(Sound of trumpets) I have finally read the Lord of the Rings. (three cheers) The Ace editions. I enjoyed it, but I still find no use for Halevy's glossary. I wish him luck with it though. It seems like Tolkien glossaries are beginning to be the rage now in fandom. Greg Shaw's fanzine has one on Elvish words. The only thing I like about these glossaries (including the one in NIEKAS) is that they all seem to be fairly well illustrated.

Your series on science-fiction in different countries is a good idea, and I hope you keep it up. "Science fiction fans of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains". That sounds familiar.

There are probably more fans represented in a single issue of NIEKAS by letters, articles, artwork, etc. than any other fanzine. And with the new Review and Comment department there will probably be even more. This is a good fairly original idea, and I would like to see it turn into a mammoth column, sort of the size of the lettercol.

Well, right here it is damn hot. And I mean hot. Also, as you probably know, there is a water shortage here. If it gets any worse I will have to ask fans from all over the country to start sending me water by mail. Imagine having a couple of gallons of water being delivered C.O.D.

The interior artwork (back to NIEKAS now) is always good. I would like to see more artwork by Jurgen Wolff and (I know this is expecting too, too much and I should be shot for asking it) Jack Gaughan.

A funny thing about the Ace Ring series. Here at City College, you can find the books in the regular science fiction and fantasy section; but they are also in the regular book section along with books by Tolstoi and Turgenev. Good company, hah? I heard the books made a big splash at Harvard where there is already some sort of Tolkien cult among the students.

Well, good luck with NIEKAS #13. I guess you have enough troubles already, now that Ed is gone, and you have to do it yourself, without me mentioning that it is number 13.

Sincerely

PETE (or maybe PHRED) JACKSON, RD #1, Danville, Pennsylvania 17821

"Lives there a fan with heart so dead that he can sicken of egoboo?" was a great line. I marked it with pencil for comment and just wanted to say I liked it. It's a good fannish motto but I have so many that they are hard to keep track of; "I can't fariate... I have too many things to do!" "I'll trade with anyone... at least once!" "A Big Name Fan never stands so tall as when he stoops to help a neo" which paraphrases an ad I once saw.

I just purchased the latter two of the Ring series and my father dove into the second after finishing the first and is plodding right along. He's got a better mind than I do and will probably retain the names throughout the series but I will have to make continuous reference to the efforts of friend Halevy. Me dad is not a fan but does oftimes delve into the sfnal occasionally. ((How was that again? --FR)) He seemed to enjoy the first in the series.

Stephen E. Pickering's article was great. I found myself forgetting what I had read and just reading for the enjoyment of reading what he wrote. It was almost like poetry and I can say that Stephen has great talent possessed by few in the fan field. Great. Maybe I ought to read it over for some value. I do remember some of what it was about. Seems he refers to the sayings of Bradbury quite frequently. And from reading it I can safely say he is smart enough to be able to rely on himself for inspiration.

Keep smiling -- it makes people wonder what you've been up to.

Pete (Phred?)

PIERS ANTHON Y

Dear fanzine: Since issue number 8, your colorful copies have been coming in, full of wonderful things I have never quite had the time to assimilate properly. This time I got smart and took you with me when my wife dragged me off on a shopping extravaganza. I managed to read your pages only in snatches -- but when I looked up I found myself at the local back-issue store, where for the first time in a decade I discovered a cache of early 1940's Astoundings, over a dozen of them. Thus is virtue rewarded. The sales clerk insisted that she needed no advice on the value of the magazines, so I finally let her have her way and she sold me the June, 1944 Astounding for twenty cents. Because it came next after a 1965 If so priced, and what difference is there between one cheap magazine and another? I nourished my chagrin all the way home... and settled down to give NIEKAS a thorough reading.

As others have noticed before me, a careful reading of the magazine is not the burden one might suppose. It is of course too much to expect that the editors concern themselves muchly with science fiction; any fanzine, as I see it, represents nature's escape from the rigors of serious SF devotion. But the fine print has its moments of truth.

This matter of D'Oyly Carte: I remember seeing only one of this company's productions -- The Mikado -- but was much impressed by the currency of its humor. I never realized that it was designed to be current. And I sympathize with Ed's Dept. of Wierd Mis-impressions -- but I have the explanation handy. For years I have been tormented by the problem of the disappearance of things I knew had been there, in life as well as Gilbert and Sullivan. For example, I enjoyed very much the song the captain sings in "Pirates" about the tragedy of life always being at sixes and sevens. Why is so much of life of an indifferent nature, neither good enough for real satisfaction nor bad enough to justify a satisfying complaint? But when I inquired the opinion of others, they stared at me with an expression that has become distressingly familiar and demanded "What song?" Some merely failed to understand what I was talking about; others understood, and informed me flatly that there was no such thing in "Pirates" or any other G&S operetta. So I learned to shut up, usually. Yet I remain unconvinced; I am certain that eventually whatever power abolished that song and wiped out every memory of it but mine and erased it from the books -- that power will bring it back again, and suddenly everyone will know it and tell me that the song was there all the time, and refuse to believe that it had ceased to exist for many years. And I won't try to argue, because I like that song. And in similar fashion Ed's vanished joke will reappear in due time, weird but no mis-impression. But no one else will comprehend. ((Either your Power missed me, Piers, or else it is beginning the restoration; I remember the song. Although I'm under the impression it's from Pinafore. --FR))

On Tolkien -- I saw the paperback on the stand, and almost bought it. But I wanted to be sure of the complete set, and this was only the first volume, so I refrained. I myself found THE LORD OF THE RINGS impressive, but by no means the ultimate in fantasy; THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT, Richard Burton's translation, is a work that dwarfs it in both size and scope. Most people, I suppose, are familiar only with the expurgated Lane translation, or timid popularizations; they do not dream of the true magnitude of the original. After three years of struggle -- my wallet against my desire to own the complete set, all 16 volumes -- I have broken down and ordered it. Once that arrives I may never find time to comment on NIEKAS again; I was only in volume 3 when separated from the set, a dozen years ago. ((How about an article on it for us? --FR)) And there's another mystery; there are 16 volumes, and the edition is limited; how, then, does the local library manage to stock 17 volumes? I saw them, neatly numbered one through seventeen -- yet no seventeenth volume exists. This bears further investigation. But I wander, as usual, from my subject; how that I've learned from NIEKAS that Tolkien is not getting paid, I'm not so certain I want the pb edition. Not this way, anyway.

Felice's movie review, World without Sun -- fascinating project. But the mention of unclassified creatures in the sea touches on another pet peeve; why is it that some such creature will be observed briefly, then almost immediately forgotten? Take that huge blubber-creature they picked up in Australia (or vicinity) three or four years ago. It made the national news; the flesh would not wither in flame, the structure was wrong for deep sea, nothing like it ever studied before. Then -- nothing. How could an alienistic monster many tons in weight, plainly available for detailed study, be forgotten so completely? Or was it? Have there been any recent reports? ((Maybe either the biologists studying it simply decided that it couldn't exist -- my apologies to the biologists in the audience -- or, more likely, the newspapers decided it wouldn't sell. --FR))

Fascinating letter by XXXXX. I spent two months in a mental hospital once, though, despite the suspicions of correspondents, I was one of the nuts who attended in order to make a living. Pay was 75¢ an hour, but in my area of the country in 1954 jobs were not easy to come by. It was a most educational experience. I learned the utter truth of the old proverb about the man who may be crazy, but not stupid. I had given up playing checkers because the game was elementary and no one ever beat me. But I tried to help bring depressive or catatonic patients a little more into this world by doing things with them. I sat down one day to play checkers with a patient just coming out of catatonia. He flopped in his seat and his eyes were hardly open; he said no word and I could not be certain he knew what the board was for. He played -- and I got tromped as I had not since the age of ten. Another patient did the same in chess. Oddly, I have never since been much good at checkers, and I prefer to play chess by correspondence so that my opponent can't see me sweating. I have, as a matter of fact, come to be suspicious of persons who are too good at checkers, because I have seen what the personality of someone who can concentrate on a board to the exclusion of all else is likely to become.

I used the words "nut" and "crazy" in the foregoing paragraph deliberately, because this is the language the average person is apt to use to describe what he hardly understands. A person with a mental illness does not run around like a clown making a spectacle of himself. Nine tenths of the time he appears to be quite normal; indeed his aberrations may be no more than an exaggeration of normal qualities. There are mental patients who are actually more stable than a number of normally functioning citizens, but who were victimized by abnormal circumstances. The fact that most mental patients will claim they are sane does not alter the fact that most of them are right. The thing that shocked me most was the realization that if I myself were to be put on the other side of the bars, I would have no way to prove that I did not belong there. My egoism and my occasional irrational fears -- indeed, even my irrepressible creativity -- would convince the typical specialist that I was unsuited to a normal existence. As indeed I am. To me, "normal" today is sick, and it's not just a matter of race riots and

censorship. But once more I wander. What I started out to say was that it is not surprising an admitted institutional patient can turn out a literate and reasonable letter. Some quite intelligent and sober people are incarcerated. I'm not condemning the system, either, because I know that most would not stay reasonable if their freedom were granted; but I'd like to see more such participation by patients.

This will be late for the storm of comment on "Schizophrenia &" by Philip K. Dick (damndest title, but that's the way it reads in NIEKAS II). ((You missed "the I Ching" --FR)) but a thought occurred to me. (I think slowly.) Neither the article nor HIGH CASTLE served to make entirely clear to me the nature of the oracle, yet I seem to detect a flaw, or at least a qualification. The oracle may be assumed to be all-knowing and ready to give out correct information whenever requested. Something like a modern computer. As it happens, my wife is a computer programmer, so I am coming to know something of the capabilities and limitations of these instruments. Yes, the computer can solve the problems of the world, theoretically -- but it is necessary to give it complete and accurate information, and to ask it the right questions. The computer will believe anything you tell it; it has no discrimination, unless the information fed in is contradictory. Which means that it can be only as good as the human limitations and prejudices that accomodate it. The oracle of course would have no such problem, since it already has complete and accurate information. But the other end of the problem is formidable enough; in order to obtain the information you need (as opposed to that you think you want) you must ask the correct question. That is, you must program it, for every significant detail of the question must be spelled out, or the answer will be too general to be meaningful. And that is no easy task. It may take weeks to set up a program that the machine will resolve in minutes. The same handicap would apply to the oracle. In most cases, I would think it would be easier to work out the answer for yourself than to set up the question properly for the omniscient answer.

No this isn't just griping on my part. My wife had to handle an assignment for the computer; write some poetry for a newspaper contest. They wanted to run computer-poetry along with the human entries, you see; nice publicity device. ((Sounds like the Evening Independent. --FR)) But you can't just say to the machine; "Write some poetry." First you must define what poetry is, so it knows what you want -- and if anyone can do that in one sentence, please let me know immediately, because I'm an English teacher and I can save myself a week of sweat if I have a simple but completely feasible definition for my students. My wife was stumped, so she brought the matter to me. I realized that before we could spell out what poetry was, we had to clarify what English was, so that the computer wouldn't come out with sheer rhyming nonsense. (Yes, I know -- that's what so-called legitimate poets turn out these days. I said it was a sick society.) And English is the least reasonable of languages. The computer knew how to spell, at least, which is more than I know, but the rationale of syntax and expression... Well, I dug into my text on structural grammar, which is not to be confused with the confusion that I and other teachers teach in the average school, and this, unlike conventional methods, was sufficient to produce a definition that the machine could understand. My wife translated this into symbolic computerese, and the machine turned out verse at the rate of 650 lines per minute. Of this huge mass, perhaps eight lines were used for the contest. I could have done those eight lines in an hour or so, and even my wife, who admits to no literary talent, could have done the job far more economically than the computer, and the quality would have been better. It took more time and more training to get the answer from the machine than to do it by hand. Yes, of course the machine turned out much more verse than necessary -- but it would have saved only 59 seconds to limit it to the necessary amount. If anybody ever needs a million lines in a hurry...

No, I maintain the parallel holds. The oracle may have the secrets of the universe -- but what is the typical question put to it? The equivalent of eight lines of verse. People don't want the immense service available, and so it is wasted.

Harry Warner, Jr. mentions SPECTRUM, the review fanzine. I agree -- such things would be useful for libraries. But there is one problem; in dealing with fan publications, you must also deal with fan personalities, and this is often not worth the effort. Take my own experience with SPECTRUM, for example; I sent my dollar for a four issue subscription, with a letter explaining that I was working on an index of reviews and might, if the editor gave permission, include those by that magazine, though my index concerned professional reviews primarily. I would have thought that such a request, accompanied as it was by cash, would have been of some slight interest to Mr. Carter. But not only did he fail to reply at all to my letter, he shipped only two issues -- #3 and #4 -- and dropped my subscription without explanation, while giving free copies to "professionals". Now, unless a librarian has reasonable expectation of faring somewhat better than this, there seems to be little point in such promotion.

Colin Fry observes that there are too many SF writers who can't write, writing for people who can't read. Provocative -- may I add to this? I would imagine that I am one of the non-writers those non-readers read, if, indeed, Mr. Fry has heard of me at all. I can't argue the merits of names like Heinlein and Asimov (though I suspect that the person who is bored by them is simply betraying his own shallowness), but I agree that much substandard fiction is seeing print. And, to judge from the letters in goshwow letter columns, the newer fans are unable to distinguish between quality work and hack. I wonder at times about the editors as well. But the rewarding word-rates are paid outside the field, and not too much can be expected for one, two or three cents per word. Those writers who can, gravitate toward markets that show more tangible appreciation, and what is left is, as it were, the reject. How many are like me: literary aspirations, hack skill? I do not turn out inferior fiction because I want to; I do the best I can with the resources I have and the demands of the market. But I think any writer would appreciate specific, informed criticism of his work, rather than the blanket condemnation of assorted Frys. Why don't you, for example, Mr. Fry, make up a thoughtful criticism of the work of some non-writer whose work has disgusted you, and send it in as an article for NIEKAS? ((Hear, hear! --FR)) You might discover that there were merits you overlooked in your first hasty judgment.

L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP, 278 Hothorpe Lane, Villanova, Pa., 19085

Dear Ed: Yes indeed, I should certainly like any and all other issues of NIEKAS containing instalments of the GLOSSARY OF MIDDLE EARTH. I corresponded briefly with Tolkien some months back; the old boy sounded weary, depressed, and averse to penpalsmanship. //When I was in Mexico with Alan Nourse last March, I saw a poster at Tehuantepec, put up by a local airline, reading: PLAY NON-STOP TO ACAPULCO. I wonder if they are reviving an old Aztec custom.

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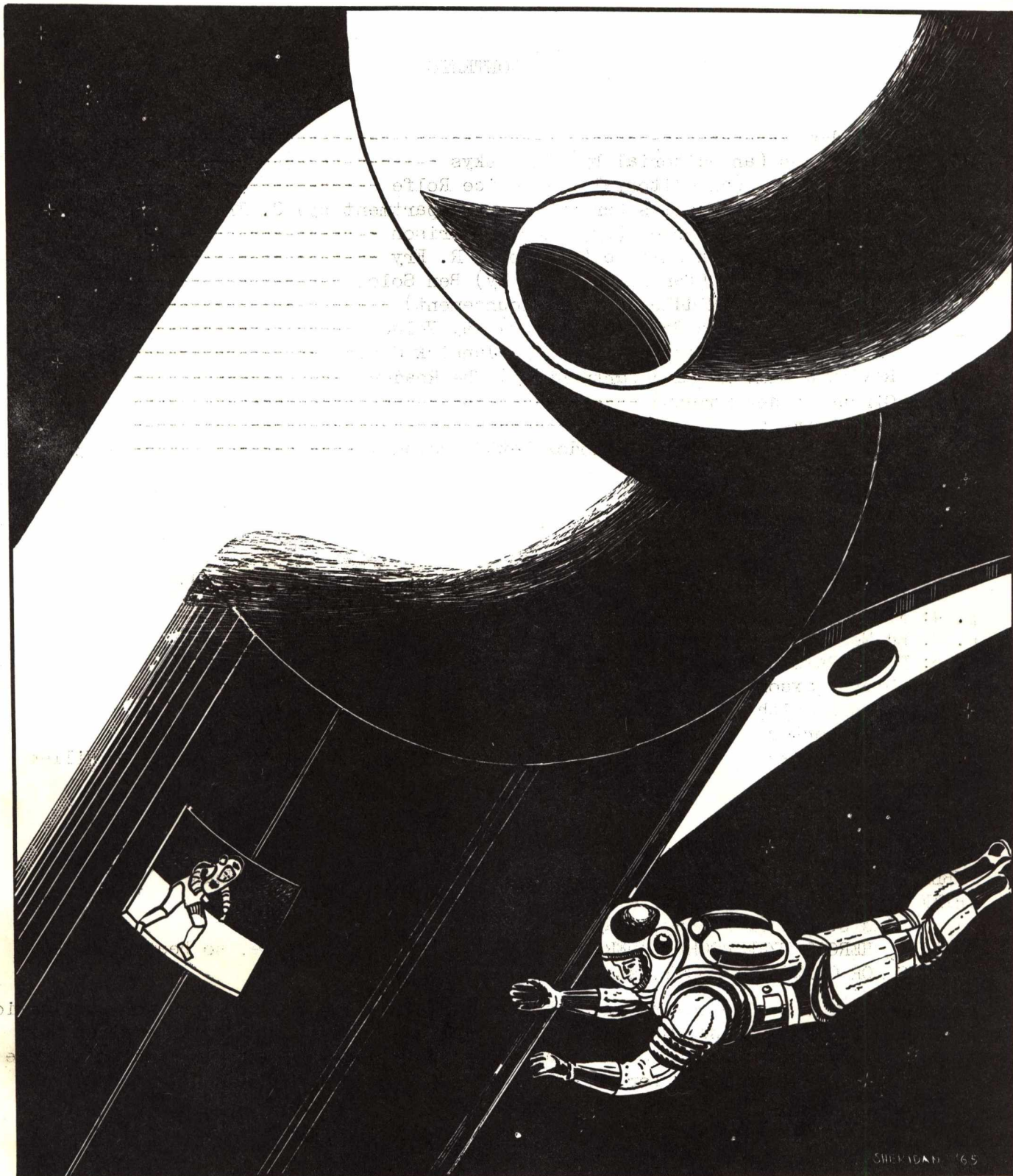
VALIANT, HEROIC TYPE POORFREADER: We didn't have one this time, so bear with us.

HOSTESS FOR COLLATING PARTY, still to occur: Felice Rolfe

As soon as we have the collating party, we'll get a list of collators for publication in the next issue. Also, the names of the artists omitted here will be given next time. There is a 75% chance that the cover is by Jerry Burge, but Ed didn't leave me the info so I can't say for sure.

NIEKAS HERO OF THE YEAR: Tom Gilbert

Don't anybody say it's still too big!



SHERIDAN '65