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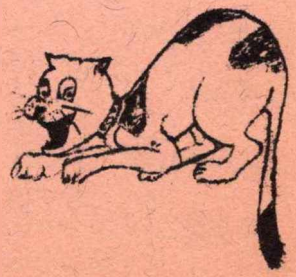

Edward C. Connor
1805 N. Gale Ave.
Peoria, IL 61604
USA

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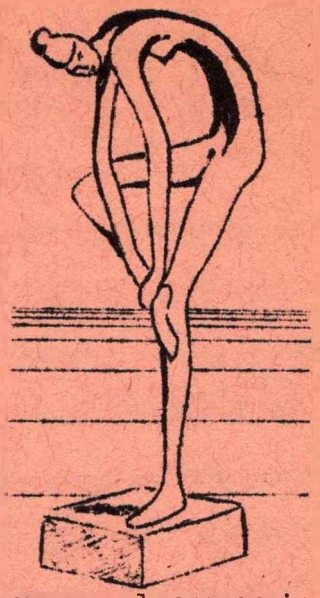
POE-etic

BY

ROBERT CHILSON



Everybody on the fringes of science fiction must be aware of Edgar Allen Poe, if only in a shadowy fashion, or as a raven above the door. "He's the one wrote all the weirdies," we say, "horror stories, but not about ghosts. Like "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Premature Burial." Tales of madness and sickness and -- and degeneration. Yeah, that's it, degeneration. They don't hardly write them like that no more."

True.

But Poe was more than this, and more than a poet, and what he was may help explain why he is invariably included in any list of weird or horror writers -- he even tends to creep into lists of living writers, if there is any carelessness in drawing them up. Poe was great, not merely because of his great, dark, morbid imagination, because of his poetic grasp of mood and incident and word -- but because of the whole force of his mind. It was a mind ice-clear and needle-sharp. It might best be described as an icicle sharpened to a point.

For example -- I have here an ancient volume from the back stacks of the library, titled simply, Works of Poe. It seems to be a complete collection of the stories and poems, and a lengthy -- nearly half the book -- selection of essays.

Anyone who admires Poe the tale-teller or Poe the poet will enjoy Poe the man,

whom we meet directly in the essays. I described him as having an icicle mind, and in his famous essay on Maelzel's "automaton", the chess-player, he demonstrates my point. Having described the machine and also the method by which the chessplayer inside keeps out of sight while the proprietor convinces the audience that they have truly seen everything inside, and that at the same time, Poe gives a list of reasons from which he draws his conclusion or which support it. This list is seventeen items long, not apparently arranged in any particular order -- but it seems significant that the third reason is this purely rational statement:

"The Automaton does not invariably win the game. Were the machine a pure machine, this would not be the case -- it would always win. The principle being discovered by which a machine can be made to play a game of chess, an extension of the same principle would enable it to win a game; a further extension would enable it to win all games," etc.

Writing one hundred years before the coining of the term cybernetics, in the very dawn of the machine age, Poe was able to draw this conclusion. Remember that he had probably never seen any machine more complex than a steam engine, and most machines he was familiar with were no more complicated than a clock. He had heard of Professor Babbage's mechanical calculator. He mentions it in this essay, and declares that if the Automaton was what it was claimed to be, it would be infinitely superior to the calculator, and shows why.

We now know, of course, that it's not so easy to go from making a machine play a game, to making it win. We do know, however, that (just as Poe said) it's much harder to design a machine capable of playing chess than to "extend the principle", or as we say, to improve the program, so that it wins.

I think his conclusion was the product of genius.

Poetry was his usual medium, though. The pleasure of watching a great mind at work can be found in his essay, "Philosophy of Composition", a fairly short piece in which Poe dissects "The Raven" feather by feather and bone by bone, showing exactly how it was created.

He began with the idea of a poem. A poem, as he shows elsewhere, depends on unified effect; therefore there can be no long poems, only bunches of short ones stuck together. (Think that over!) Thus a length of about 100 lines was decided on. Next, the mood. Since, as he shows elsewhere, he believed the purpose of a poem to be the creation of beauty and not the inculcation of morals or the teaching of truths, he dismissed any idea of saying something. Relevancy has no place in poetry, or, he says, passion. Even emotions are best treated elsewhere; beauty comes first.

"When men speak of Beauty, they mean,

precisely, not a quality . . . but an effect -- they refer . . . just to that intense and pure elevation of soul -- not of intellect, or of heart. . . ." And in its highest manifestations, Beauty's tone is always one of sadness, he observes. "Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones."

Here I think Poe has hit on a powerful principle, one inexplicably ignored. Truly beautiful things -- scenery in particular, expecially wild storms -- cause us to ache that we cannot possess the moment and the event.

This principle of sadness appears in what we call "post-coital depression", which would seem to be misnamed. Should it not be described as "exhaustion coupled with melancholy"? -- inability to possess the moment and the event. Post-coital "depression" therefore should be the most "beautiful" part of sex, by Poe's definition. "Not a quality, but an effect." If we spent less effort fighting it, it might be found to be quite pleasant after all. Certainly women complain enough of masculine failure here. How much of it is exhaustion and how much attempt to avoid the melancholy of going to sleep?

Poe was the poet of his time and also the first and best literary critic in America. His essay, "The Rationale of Verse" is -- or should have been -- a seminal masterpiece. He declared that 2500 years' worth of poetic pedants were universally and egregiously wrong about the nature of verse from the basic principle to the higher technicalities. The basic principle, unknown to the prosodists of the time, is that of harmony -- of time. Each foot should have the same length as all the other feet of a line -- even if it has more or fewer syllables.

The ancient prosodists tormented themselves over seeming variations of rhythm. Take the line, Many a / thought will / come to / memory. The two middle feet are trochees -- an accented syllable followed by an unaccented. The first and last, according to the ancients (and moderns, except Poe) are dactyls -- an accented syllable followed by two unaccented ones.

In those days they were called "long" and "short". Poe asked himself, Longer than what? Shorter than what? and realized that they are long or short only in comparison with each other. Thus, short means the half of long. "Thought will" has the length of three short syllables; so does "come to". And so do the other two!

The two "short" syllables in these feet are pronounced in double-quick time; "short" here means the quarter of long. Note that the long syllable remains unchanged. It defines the foot. Poe calls these bastard trochees, and thus the line has four trochaic feet, and the rhythm remains whole.

The principle of time or harmony being as important to poetry as to music,

the idiocy of dropping a three-syllable foot into a disyllabic rhythm should have been obvious -- but the ancients (and, unfortunately, the moderns) seem not to realize that harmony is basic to verse. Violations of it make as much sense as, in music, composing one line in 4/4 time and the next in 3/4.

As I say, this should have been a seminal masterpiece; it should have revolutionized the teaching, if not the practice, of poetry. But it fell on stony ground. I have here Clement Wood's New World Unabridged Rhyming Dictionary, probably the best of its kind, which includes a "complete formbook for poets" and a two-part section, "Versification Self-Taught". No principle for verse is mentioned anywhere. The nearest is this tag: The poetry, as a rule, is natural and effective, in proportion as the natural scansion differs from the metric scansion.

That is, the more different the meter is from the rhythms of natural speech, the more effective it is. (True enough.)

Further, Wood lists nineteen kinds of feet. Yet, "Cesura" is defined only as "A break in a verse caused by the ending of a word within a foot". My dictionary agrees with this but adds a modern usage, "A pause, esp. a sense pause, in a line, usually near the middle." Poe observes that a "caesura" is "a perfect foot -- the most important in all verse -- and consists of a single long syllable; but the length of this syllable varies". The caesura, Poe observes, "is rejected by the English Prosodies and grossly misrepresented in the classic".

Example: Many are the / thoughts that / come to / me. "Many are the", like "Many a" above, is a trochaic variation, this time with two extra syllables, "a bolder variation"; Poe calls it a "quick" rather than a bastard trochee, and the short syllables are the sixth of long. Me is a caesura, in this instance having the length of three short syllables; because this is trochaic verse, and trochees have one long and one short syllable.

Reverting to Wood's nineteen feet, above, with never a caesura, Poe declares most of them purest moonshine: "these remaining feet have no existence except in the brain of the scholiasts." He lists the following feet: Iambs, Trochees, Spondees, Dactyls, and Anapaests, and the Caesura, and says, "All other 'feet' . . . are . . . merely combinations of the (ones) specified."

All of which is sufficiently sweeping. But Poe was misread from the beginning. James Russell Lowell, in his "Fable for the Critics", said:

"Here comes Poe with his Raven,
like Barnaby Rudge--
"Three-fifths of him genius, and
two-fifths sheer fudge;
"Who talks like a book of iambs
and pentameters,

"In a way to make all men of common sense damn meters;
"Who has written some things far the best of their kind;
"But somehow the heart seems squeezed out by the mind."

If Lowell believed that, he never read a word by Poe.

In "Philosophy of Composition", discussing The Raven, Poe had said, "no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition . . . the work proceeded step by step, to its completion, with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem." It is well written. But there is nothing cool or calculating about the effect.

Poe's brain and heart worked together like finger and thumb. And both were bigger than ordinary.

----Robert Chilson.

EDITORIAL NOTES

At this point I find myself a couple of pages short, so I'll try to get in the essentials here and on page 140.

First, the MAE STRELKOV TRIP REPORT, which I trust is being duly attended to by Sam Long and Ned Brooks. Apparently they have no definite information to release yet as to just when available and what the price will be. (They have a lot of other things to do, of course, including their own fanzines.)

However, a card just in from Sam Long (the stenciller) states that he hopes to get the stencils to Ned by Christmas; the Trip Report should be ready early in the new year. (Sam was just finishing GUNPUTTY #1.)

You'll perhaps have seen this in Geis' zine, etc., but Phil Farmer's 3rd River-world novel will not be the tentative "Alice on the Riverworld" he referred to in MT-22; it will be: The Magic Labyrinth. He adds that it should definitely be finished by December 31 (1975).

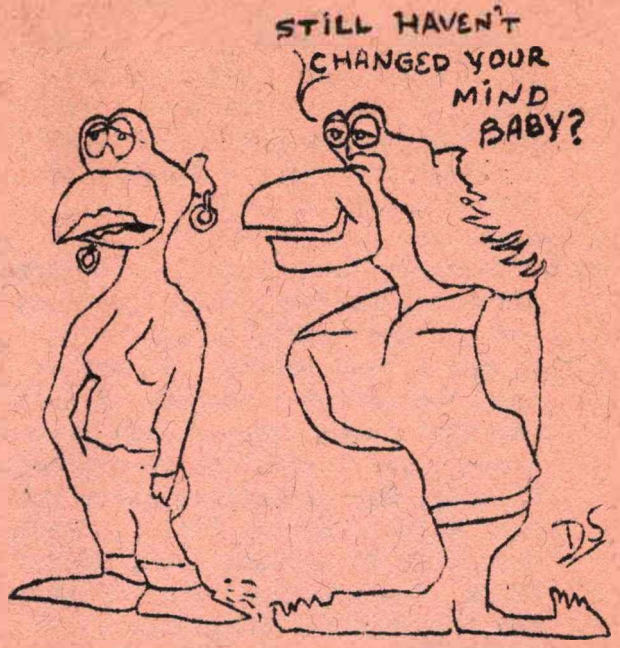
COMING: TERRY JEEVES FOR TAFF: 1977....

Meantime, to subscribe to his long-established fanzine, ERG (Quarterly) you need only to send a dollar bill for 3 issues (or $2 for 6) to him at: 230 Bannerdale Rd., Sheffield S11 9FE, England. (He also trades.) ERG has been coming out on time for a long time, is full of Jeeves' own artwork, and has a miscellany of articles, Locs, etc. Recently a series on techniques of fan pubbing has been featured. Recent back issues are also available and can be had at the same cost.

ANOTHER POLL: RESULTS

by

PAUL WALKER



QUESTION 1: Do you read poetry? How often? Who are your favorite poets?

Paul Walker: Yes, I read poetry occasionally, <u>too</u> occasionally. My favorite poets are e.e.cummings, Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Matthew Arnold.

G. Sutton Breiding: I do not read poetry often enough, but my favorites are Clark Ashton Smith, George Sterling, Yeats, Baudelaire.

Roger D. Sween: Seldom. Favorites: Isaiah, Hopkins, Updike.

Russ Chauvenet: At least once a week. Favorites: Benet, MacLeish, Housman.

Gene Wolfe: Probably about twice a week. Favorites: Browning, Thomas, Francis Thompson, Shakespear, Byron, Christina Rossetti. Old timers, in other words. I read modern poets largely in magazines like 'The Paris Review'. I always read the poetry section in 'The Writer'.

Jerry Lapidus: I read poetry irregularly. Favorites: Leonard Cohen and Vachal Lindsay.

Donn Brazier: I do not read poetry except as I am exposed to it in zines or in contribs to NFFF Mss. Bureau or

to Title. I did read long ago some Clark Ashton Smith poetry I liked; and HPL's 'Fungi from Yuggoth'.

Mike Bracken: I read poetry occasionally and have no one particular favorite, although Shakespeare immediately comes to mind.

Tony Cvetko: No.

Barry N. Malzberg: Occasionally. Sexton, Schwartz, Roethke, Bissell, Eliot (of the Quartets), etc.

Buck Coulson: I read poetry. I have no idea 'how often'; whenever I see any that looks interesting. Several times a year, counting re-reading. Kipling, Martha Keller, Henry Herbert Knibbs, Berton Braley, Benet, Josephine Young Case, Poe, Badger Clark, Henry Lawson, Banjo Patterson, Ogden Nash, Longfellow, Masefield.

John J. Pierce: Occasionally, and I want to get into it more — I tend to like Yeats and Vachel Lindsay and Hart Crane, but don't pretend to be really intimate even with them.

Steve B.: I read poetry very seldom. Recently, only when I run across it in zines. I like Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg a little bit; I greatly admired one Andrew Darlington poem in Title.

David Singer: Occasionally, like once or twice a year. So I really can't say I have any 'favorites'. Only ones come to mind are e e cummings and T S Eliot.

Roy Tackett: Haven't really in years. I did when I was younger and thoroughly enjoyed it, but as the years go along... My favorites all date 19th century or before. Omar K., Poe, Byron, Gray, Whitman, Villon, etc. Modern poets who declaim about nothing in blank verse are not really poets.

Philip M. Cohen: Occasionally. No favorites, just favorite poems -- 'Ulysseus', 'Prufrock', 'Death of the Ball-Turret Gunner', etc.

W.G.Bliss: At least every 15 years or so.

Don D'Ammassa: In irregular spurts. Cummings, Byron, Donne, Coleridge, Shakespeare, Leonard Cohen.

Shelia D'Ammassa: Every few months. Sandburg, Frost.

Ed Connor: Occasionally. Poe, and many classicists.

Robert Chilson: I rarely read poetry. Shakespeare is the only thing like a favorite poet I have; mostly I just have favorite poems.

Gil Gaier: Whenever I see it. Robinson, Frost, Whitman, McKuen.

Bruce D. Arthurs: I read very little Poetry, but the stuff I do read is usually by 3 people: Housman, Edgar Lee Masters, and Wallace Stevens.

Steve Simmons: Once a month, but in big bites. Whitman, Housman, cummings, Frost, etc.

Harry Warner, Jr.: I've been in a gener-

ally disenchanted mood for several years, during which poetry hasn't had the effect on me it once possessed. Or my problem might be the dissatisfaction I feel with reading poetry since I've learned how much more effective it is when heard on lp records.

Rick Sneary: Not very often. Kipling, Shakespare, Chesterton, Poe, and Nash.

Brad Parks: No.

Ronald Salomon: Not really. Longfellow, Kipling.

Jan Applebaum: Only in fanzines or when they are included in an anthology.

Mark Sharpe: Once or twice a week. Max Smith.

John Robinson: I read very little poetry. No favorites.

Ray Bowie: Once in a great while. Poe.

Ken Mayo: Not as often as I should, or as often as I would like. Two or three times a month. My favorites include Frost, Williams, Hart Crane, Ferlinghetti.

Kim Gibbs: I have not read much poetry since school, therefore I am not qualified to answer questions 1 & 2.

Richard Rostrom: Occasionally. Kipling, Nash, von Dreele.

Frank Denton: Not often, but when the mood is right. Eliot, Thomas Kinsella, Richard Hugo, Austin Clarke, Dylan Thomas.

Michael T. Shoemaker: I suppose I read an average of about one book-length volume of poetry a month. Houseman is my number one favorite. Others: Dryden, Milton, Browning, Cummings, Goethe, Heine, Morike, Schiller, the most prominent.

Mike Kring: I usually read some sort of poetry during the month. T S Eliot, Leonard Cohen, Abel Parks (who you haven't heard of, but is a personal friend of mine). (PW -- is that a non sequiter or an admission of guilt?)

Mike Resnick: Infrequently. Benet, Kazantzakis, most obscure epic poets.

Hal Davis: Sometimes. Auden, Peter Stevens, Peter Porter, Marilyn Hacker. (PW -- owned a book of Auden's poetry for over 12 years and never liked it until this week I tried reading it backwards. His later poetry is the best intro to his earlier.)

Ed Cagle: No. Never. James Dickey. (PW -- let me get this straight, Ed; no, you never read poetry. And of all the poets you never read, you like James Dickey best. Ah, now I understand.)

Jim Meadows: Occasionally. cummings, Treece, Browning, Cohen.

Dr. Alexander Doniphan Wallace: Every three or four months. Dickinson, Kipling (dynamic flow of language), Swinburne (most melodious of English poets), Browning (the shorter

pieces).

Pete Presford: The word poetry is used rather loosely here. There are many kinds of prose as there are s/f. I read a lot of poetry, and as often as poetry zines arrive. I prefer up and coming local U.K. poets, although Aussieland seems to be producing a good crop of new poets.

Jackie Franke: Virtually no poetry, only that which my eyes literally trip and stumble over and I'm forced to absorb while regaining visual balance.

Peter Roberts: Infrequently. I've avoided opportunities to do poetry courses in favour of prose fiction, so I've little background in the relevant or impt. writers.

Robert Whitaker: Regularly. cummings, Don Marquis, Marilyn Hacker, Dickinson, Clark Ashton Smith. Archy and Mehitabel is one of my all-time favorites. (PW -- ever heard Jean Shepard read from Marquis? Or see Tammy Grimes as Mehitabel?)

John Foyster: Yes, but I don't know how often. I don't at all like the notion of 'favorite poets' but will go for Sappho and Robert Graves.

Craig J. Hill: Edgar Poe and Thomas Disch.

Dave Piper: No.

Terry Jeeves: Poetry -- very seldom read it.

Dave Rowe: I didn't like the poll, too many of the questions seemed corny. (PW -- goddamn limey.)

Leah A. Zeldes: Constantly. Favorites fluctuate. Right now: Yeats, cummings, Crane, Galway Kinnell.

Deborah Goldstein: Lots. I started way back in elementary school. I even am continuing the home-made anthology of my favorite poems, copied as I have time and inclination. Favorites: Kipling, Frost, Sandburg, Jeffers, Lindsay, cummings, et. al. (PW -- Leah, Deborah, and Roberta are members of Wayne's 3rd Foundation who sent me long, delightful responses which I had to cut.)

Roberta L. Brown: A lot. Frost, Jeffers, Poe, et. al. Jeffers is my absolute favorite.

Victoria Vayne: I do not read poetry as a rule at all. No favorites, altho a few stick in my mind -- Eliot's 'The Hollow Men'.

Robert Fenlrich: Once upon a time, but not for years now. Favorite was Elizabeth Bishop.

Eric G. Hackenberg: Occasionally. Housman, Ginsberg, Masters, Frost, Brautigan.

Tom Roberts: I go on poetry binges. About two or three times a year I roam the library like a purposeless ghost looking for volumes of poetry by contemporary poets I have never heard of: I am by nature an explor-

atory reader and prefer finding my own writers. Right now I am making my way -- with pleasure -- through Neruda. I read Concrete Poetry and like most of it. I find that I greatly admire a John Berryman for a while and then discover I have worn him out for my purposes. Then I go on to someone else, become enthusiastic about him or her, and then lose interest.

Paul Anderson: Yes, rarely; Milton and Dryden.

Chris Hulse: Never volitionally. I remember liking Master's Spoon River Anthology....

Carolyn "C.D." Doyle: I don't read very much poetry, one reason being I can't find anything good, another reason being, the ideas in poetry usually aren't developed enough.... My favorite poem is 'The Raven'; I don't have a favorite poet.

Billy Wolfenbarger: Yes, I read poetry... fairly often. My favorite poets include Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Gary Snyder, Sara Teasdale, Clark Ashton Smith, etc.

Hank Heath: Yes, I read poetry. Infrequently. Kerouac & Sonya Dorman.

QUESTION 2: What was the last book of poems that you went out and bought?

Walker: New Oxford Book of English Verse, Poems of Byron, Shelley, Keats.

Breiding: Today I bought 'homestead' (sic) by Keith Wilson.

Sween: New American Book of Verse.

Chauvenet: The Explicit Flower by Louise Townsend Nicholls.

Wolfe: There's Always Another Windmill.

Lapidus: Selected Poems of Leonard Cohen, or of Berthold Brecht.

Brazier: HPL 'Fungi' in paperback.

Bracken: I've never boughten a book of poetry.

Cvetko: The only poetry book I ever bought was in 6th or 7th grade: 'Charge of the Light-Brigade and other Story Poems'.

Malzberg: Summer Knowledge by Delmore Schwartz.

Coulson: Maine Ballads by Robert P. Tristam Coffin (turned out to be a waste of time).

Pierce: Crane's The Bridge (on James Tiptree's recommendation!).

Steve B: The last, and only, book of poetry I bought was 'The Poetry of Rock' ed. by Richard Goldstein.

Singer: I've never bought a book of poems.

Tackett: One of the copies of the Rubaiyat in the late '40's.

Cohen: Holding your Eight Hands by Lucie Smith.

Long: Graves' Collected Verse, I think, but I've checked poetry books out of the library.

Bliss: Poe.

Don D': Selected Poems of Leonard Cohen.

Shelia D': Honey and Salt by Sandburg.

Ed Connor: Poe, his complete works, quite

a few years ago.

Chilson: Fitzgerald's translation of the Odyssey.

Gaier: Lonesome Cities by McKuen.

Arthurs: The only book of poetry I've ever boughten for myself is Master's Spoon River Anthology.

Simmons: A Pocket Book of Modern Verse by Oscar Williams, ed.

Warner: The Collected Poetry of Father Abram Ryan.

Sneary: A 2 volume collection of Kipling story and poems.

Parks, Salomon, and Applebaum: None, except for school assignments.

Sharpe: Touch Me to Sleep.

Robinson: Only for high school and college.

Bowie: I can't remember.

Mayo: A Coney Island of the Mind by Ferlinghetti. It contains 2 of my favorite poems, 'Dog' and 'The World is a Beautiful Place'.

Rostrom: The Space Child's Mother Goose.

Denton: Two on the same day: Kinsella's Nightwalker and Robert Graves' Poems about Love. I also subscribe to and am a patron of Spring Rain, a Seattle quarterly of lyric poetry.

Shoemaker: I've never bought a book of poetry. No need with my father's vast library. The latest addition was a single volume Complete Works of Cummings.

Kring: Selected Poems of Leonard Cohen.

Resnick: Nicolson's King of the Black Isles (2nd hand, as usual).

Davis: Presentation Piece by Marilyn Hacker.

Ed Cagle: The Gentlemen's Alphabet Book. (PW -- taught himself to spell "pickel" in the john.)

Meadows: Wow, a long time ago. Last, only book of poems was 'The Spice-box of Earth' by Leonard Cohen.

Wallace: A year ago. Moment's Monument, sonnets, ed. by White and Rosen.

Presford: Never bought a book of poems as such; I buy only poetry based zines. These are far more interesting.

Franke: I've never purchased a book of poetry.

Roberts: I buy what I like, but I don't know what I like. The poetry I possess is a strange and garbled mixture, mostly writers on the fringes of the mainstream. The last book I bought was a selection from the poetry of William Barnes, the 19th century Dorset poetry: In happy days when I we young/An' had noo ho, an' laugh'd an' zung. I'm attracted by the use of dialect. I'm also fond of Arthur Hugh Clough's work, and a few others like Stephen Crane, Ed Dorn, and D M Thomas (who is an sf fan and a Cornish nationalist -- can't be bad!).

Whitaker: The Illiad and the Odyssey trans. by Robert Fitzgerald.

Foyster: Marilyn Hacker's Presentation Piece (a bummer).

Hill: None or never.

Piper: None.

Jeeves: Never.

Zeldes: The Mentor Book of Major Amer. Poets for class (PW -- a gem.) For myself, Michigan Hot Apples and Kinnell's Book of Nightmares.

Goldstein: The Definitive Rudyard Kipling. I'd been planning to get it when I could afford the $10, but I was in the bookstore, and they had one copy of it, so...

Brown: The World's Best Loved Poems (PW -- eech). The one I'd like to buy is 'Dark of the Moon' ed. August Derleth (PW -- see Goldstein).

Vayne: The required text for English classes in senior high school year.

Fendrich: Selected Poems of Kenneth Patchen.

Hackenberg: A Richard Brautigan book. It was ridiculous. Three lines per page.

Roberts: As a college English teacher I am in the wonderful position of being able to get free most of the poetry I want to read: I sometimes teach courses in poetry and get examination copies from which I choose textbooks. But much more than ninety per cent of the poetry I read is crap, and I would prefer to read library copies and save my money for books I can't get free.

Anderson: ?

Hulse: See answer to Question 1.

"C.D." Doyle: I never have.

Wolfenbarger: Last book of poems I went out and bought was actually some time ago; it was Ginsberg's The Fall of America.

Hank Heath: Modern American Poetry.

QUESTION 3: What is your experience of society's attitude toward poetry, etc, etc.

Walker: As a child, my mother used to read me Stevenson, Mother Goose, etc., but since then I've only known two people who read much poetry besides myself. To the rest, it was irrelevant, except on birthday and Christmas cards. One of my friends, however, did admit he would not be seen reading it in public. 'It's all Oscar Wilde's fault!' he would bitterly complain. Personally, I can not remember ever reading a book of poetry in any place more public than the library.

Sween: Society's attitude? Irrelevant. Self-conscious? Never.

Chauvenet: I am not aware of any social pressure against reading poetry and have never felt self-conscious about reading it in public.

Wolfe: I get motion sick if I try to read on buses, but I can read poetry at a lunch counter without a qualm. Most men (in my experience) think poetry both 'dumb' and 'effeminate'. Women cherish it in secret.

Lapidus: I feel most mainstream society looks down on poetry -- and conversely, that most artistic society seems to be a bit snowed by it. That is, as with much modern art, many current critics tend to be overwhelmed by

incomprehensible material and so call it great art. I would not feel the least self-conscious reading poetry anywhere, but then I don't even feel self-conscious reading sf!

Brazier: My experience, limited, is that poetry is vague, incomprehensible, 'purple' stuff written by 'effeminates'. I would not read poetry in public; but then, again, I wouldn't read paperback or prozines of sf or Playboy.

Bracken: A lot of people I know view poetry as something for priss ((?)) assess only, but I wouldn't be embarrassed to read a book of poetry in public, nor would I be embarrassed to read a novel in public -- it's all the same thing, isn't it?

Malzberg: ----

Coulson: I don't have any experience of society's attitude toward poetry, and I would feel no self-confidence at all about reading it aloud in a locker room between halves of a bootball game. (PW -- was 'self-confidence' a Freudian slip, Buck?)

Pierce: Little of any direct sort. I know that to be 'in' you have to love Ginsburg and his successors, whom I can't stand; while the masses go for Rod McKuen, whom I can't stand either. But I know these things from reading about them; I've rarely had occassion to discuss poetry with anyone.

Steve B: Well, I read fanzines in the Baptist student center, so I don't think I'd feel self-conscious reading poetry on a bus.

Singer: I worked on my high school lit mag, and the attitude there was definitely that poetry was 'dumb', and that those of us who worked on the mag were strange. Yes, I would feel self-conscious reading poetry in public, but then, I would feel a bit self-conscious reading anything at all in public. Sometimes it seems as if the world does not trust anyone who is literate.

Tackett: Not 'irrelevant', certainly. Most mods don't know that word. Generally, I'd say adolescents would refer to it as 'sissy stuff' (effeminate), and adults as 'dumb'.

Cohen: No expecience. I don't think I'd be self-conscious the <u>first</u> time.

Long: Most of society has a dim view of poetry, justified in part by the abysmally poor quality of most modern poetry. Most of those who claim to admire poetry do so for the wrong reasons. No, I would not feel self-cons.

Ed Connor: Elements that adhere to such attitudes are not worth bothering about. Self-conscious? -- No, no more than usual for such a situation.

Bliss: Dunno.

Don D': Poetry is considered effeminate or just dumb, but I wouldn't be self-conscious reading it in public.

Shelia D': I have never encountered any

of the negative attitudes you mention.

Chilson: That it is effeminate and weird, as if the reader had a skewed mind. No, I would not feel self-conscious about reading poetry anywhere.

Gaier: Most think poetry is irrelevant or intellectual or quaint. No.

Simmons: That poetry is even weirder than sf. But only self-conscious if people make cracks, and then not very.

Warner: Unawareness that it exists. Not self-conscious.

Sneary: That it is 'nice, but I don't enjoy/have time for it'. 'Irrelevant' would be closest. If I did it at all, I would likely make as much a show of it as possible.

Parks: That gushy stuff.

Salomon: 'effeminate, etc.'? -- No. But maybe I speak to the wrong part of society.

Applebaum: 'High-hat intellectualism', ivory tower stuff. I would probably feel somewhat self-conscious, although at present I've never done it. That's not to say I don't ever feel self-conscious in public because I have read gothics and a few romances on the bus. Those draw stares.

Sharpe: 'Huh?' reaction. Not self-cons.

Robinson: There isn't much in the way of good poetry these days. No great poets. No markets to speak of. Songwriters do better these days.

Bowie: No experience, no self-cons.

Mayo: That it is rather worthless and a waste of time. I would never feel even slightly self-conscious about reading poetry on a bus or at a lunch counter. I have done just that.

Gibbs: I feel that society accepts poetry as it accepts the mystery novel. Except for a few major figures in both fields nobody really cares much about it.

Rostrum: Justified contempt: contemporary poets are too busy with abstractionism, free verse, and Left Wing politics to bother writing anything the public might find entertaining, so the public ignores them. Not self-conscious.

Denton: I wouldn't feel self-conscious reading poetry in a public place, any more than reading sf, but reading poetry usually requires a more quiet atmosphere. The general public knows little about poetry and tends to think of it as woman's reading and generally irrelevant.

Shoemaker: That it is irrelevant and <u>old-fashioned</u>. Among people favorably disposed toward it there seems to be a general lack of understanding and deep appreciation of what it is and how it works. Not self-conscious but I rarely do this because I prefer to read poetry aloud.

Kring: Coming from the southwestern region of Texas -- society regards poetry as effeminate. Yes, I'd feel a little self-conscious reading it at a lunch counter. Upbringing, y'know. (PW --

downgrading, I'think.)

Resnick: Not self-conscious.

Davis: I wouldn't discuss it with my co-workers casually. They'd probably find it somewhere between 'irrelevant' and 'weird'. Not self-cons., however.

Cagle: In my experience, society's attitude toward poetry is virtually non-existent.

Meadows: Irrelevant, and most likely boring, but often that is because it is presented in a boring manner. Knowing a lot of people who listen to rock, folk, and other forms of so-called popular music, I noticed them getting very interested in some of the work of songwriters who had gotten good at doing something with lyrics.

Wallace: Irrelevant is the best clue. It is likely that more people read poetry than Sf, a very large portion under compulsion. Almost any town has at least one poetry society (mostly women members) centered around the library, meeting perhaps once a month. Probably they read a good deal of home-grown poetry. My experience is that even small-town libraries have a small shelf of recent verse.

Presford: You could insert the word S/F Fantasy in place of Poetry here, all three seem to bear the same sort of tags. If you can be an S/F fhan and read fhanzines anywhere, reading poetry on a bus or in the public loo, is no problem a'tall... (PW -- many fans responded similarly on this last point.)

Franke: Irrelevant. Not self-cons.

Roberts: Not self-conscious, but the only possible reason for not reading it easily in the open is that there's a hint of superiority and a suspicion of one-upmanship in flaunting a book of poetry -- I've seen that when I was at the university. I suppose that's some comment on society's reaction.

Whitaker: I only discuss poetry with people I know like poetry. Incidentally, the more intelligent the woman, the more interesting she is bound to consider you if she knows you read poems. (PW -- Remember Cole Porter's 'Brush Up on Your Shakespeare'?)

Foyster: I don't feel self-conscious reading anything -- not that I can recall.

Hill: Response impertinent to this guestion (sic) because society is impertinent.

Jeeves: Society -- indifferent. Read on bus if I wanted to.

Zeldes: A few friends, mostly scientific, knurd-y types have used the word 'dumb'. But not self-conscious.

Goldstein: My experiences have been pretty good. Most of my friends read poetry (as well as SF and other strange things.) The 'outsiders' I encounter usually seem to think I am typically female, obviously reading love poems; they never really look to see. Not self-conscious, but there was a time

when I had Kipling's Barrack-Room Ballads with me, and I got some strange looks, but that was probably because I was trying to figure out if they would make nice filksongs (out-loud).

Brown: Since I'm female, poetry is supposed to be my favorite reading matter; after all, all girls like poetry, right? (PW -- the sissies!) However, if a few of my male friends were to read poetry in a restaurant in Detroit, I'd consider them extremely brave; men who like poetry (around here) are suspected of also preferring little boys.

Vayne: I don't care what people think of what I am reading on the subway. Some SF books have pretty horrendous covers and I'm used to weird looks for those.

Fendrich: 'Society'? What's 'Society'?

Hackenberg: Disregarded by most. Not self-conscious.

Roberts: My impression is that the people I meet on busses and at lunch counters do think someone who reads poetry is pretentious: he is reading it because he wants to think of himself as literary. I live in a small university town, however, and no one notices if I am reading poetry. I used to read poetry on street cars and busses but often concealed the volume behind something. It is all absurd, of course. People spend millions on greeting cards and admire the verses, they buy and give as gifts copies of Gibran's The Prophet, and they like the lyrics of popular songs: they seem to love poetry so long as no one calls it poetry. I can't blame them much: so much nonsense has been written about poetry by pretentious people -- many of them poets -- that I would distrust it too if I had not read a lot that gave me great pleasure.

Anderson: Tolerance mixed with amusement esp in regard to the 'modern' stuff that passes.

Hulse: I don't know about society's opinion of poetry but I know that mature and reasonably intelligent people would not think a person who read poetry in public tetched. (and, yes, I think there are a lot of reasonably intelligent people Out There).

"C.D." Doyle: Society seems to consider poetry something for the intellectuals, too 'deep' for them. If a man is 'caught' reading or writing poetry, you automatically expect him to be fey, or something. If I read any poetry in a public place, it would probably be because I wanted to meet other people interested in poetry. If that was the case, I wouldn't feel embarrassed.

Wolfenbarger: I read poetry on a bus, at a lunch counter, while I'm meditating in a rest room, wherever; I'm also liable to write some in places like that. Society's attitude toward

poetry sucks. What more can I say?

Heath: Whether I'd feel self-conscious or not is irrelevant. If I felt like doing it, I'd do it. A short while ago I was sitting in a bus station reading Dhalgren.

QUESTION 4: Name a story or novel (not necessarily sf) that you read and did not enjoy, but that you feel (for whatever reason) you did not do justice.

Walker: Le Guin's 'Left Hand' and 'Lathe', MacDonald's 'Lilith' and 'Phantastes'.

Wolfe: MacDonald's 'Phantastes'.

Lapidus: 'And Chaos Died' by Russ -- I think there's more than I was able to appreciate.

Brazier: Farmer's 'Riders of the Purple Wage' and Salinger's 'Catcher in the Rye'.

Cvetko: Harrison's 'Project 40'.

Malzberg: Damnation Alley.

Coulson: The Fifth Head of Cerebrus which I just read.

Pierce: One I didn't mention last time is Lindsay's Voyage to Arcturus -- to me it was interminable and wrong-headed in everything it had to say. Yet people I respect like C.S.Lewis and Colin Wilson swear by it. Perhaps it takes a particular spiritual turn of mind to enjoy it.

Steve B: That Hideous Strength by CS Lewis.

Cohen: Islandia.

Bliss: Gaesh. Is that possible? -- somebody reading all the way through something they did not dig?

Don D': Magister Ludi -- Hesse.

Shelia D': Giles Goat-Boy.

Chilson: Moby Dick. A great book, but poorly built.

Gaier: Mann's Death in Venice.

Arthurs: Lord Jim.

Simmons: Sartre's Nausea.

Sneary: Maybe, The Brother Karamazov.

Parks: The Gods Themselves.

Salomon: An edited version of one of the Foundation books by Asimov.

Applebaum: Beyond Apollo. I felt that according to its acclaim (and award), it is a good novel, but I had to force myself to read through it and so did some skimming and some reading without thinking about what was on the page.

Sharpe: The Bible.

Bowie: The Foundation Trilogy. I feel sometimes that I may not have tried hard enough to grasp the significance (if any) of TFT.

Mayo: Return of the Native by Thomas Hardy.

Gibbs: A few of the sf classics: Coming Attraction, Night, and Surface Tension.

Denton: James Jones' Go to the Widowmaker. I was so disgusted with it that I pitched it into the garage and went hunting for something similar to LotR which I had just finished. Ha, what did I come up with? Andre Norton. (PW -- I liked Widowmaker. I liked Merry Month of May. Boo, Denton!)

Kring: SiaSL.

Resnick: The Dispossessed. Every critic, plus my wife, has gone bananas over this book; I find it rather dull and tedious, with very pat arguments. They must have found something in it that has thus far eluded me. (PW -- maybe you just don't care for bananas.)

Davis: Picnic on Paradise by Russ. Told it was worth reading. Surprised the hell out of me, the writing quality did, since I like her criticism so much.

Cagle: Giles Goat Boy. (PW -- only Thomas Pynchon understood that one, Ed.)

Meadows: Puck of Pook's Hill by Kipling. I was only 10 at the time, and it went right past me.

Wallace: The Authorized (King James) Version.

Franke: The Bible. Bruce Catton's Lincoln books.

Roberts: Straightforward realistic novels. I simply don't agree with the virtues of mimetic realism in literature. That's not just, of course, but I'm under no obligation to be just.

Whitaker: Dhalgren. Fascinating, disappointing. I was interested, and dulled to death.

Foyster: The Dispossessed. The Golden Bowl, Henry James.

Hill: none or never.

Piper: Fourth Mansions, Lafferty.

Jeeves: The Hobbit.

Zelides: The Man who Folded Himself by Gerrold.

Goldstein: Cooper's The Prairie.

Brown: The first Conan book.

Vayne: TEFL. I tried to read it after coming out of the hospital after an operation and I was still dizzy from painkillers. Thus I found it incomprehensible. Maybe it really IS incomprehensible but I wouldn't know and I'm not brave enough to try to read it again.

Fendrich: The question should read 'what is the last book that I read that did not do justice to me!'

Hackenberg: Foundation.

Roberts: A brief letter in SFE a few issues back persuaded me that I had never read Soviet sf properly. I find it difficult to read The Great Gatsby: I have read it five times and only one of those experiences was good. I feel that I have never given proper attention to The Tale of Genji, which is reputed to be one of the greatest novels ever written and which I have got part way through on four or five occasions. I find Hardy's novels boring but suspect I am approaching them improperly.

Hulse: The Dispossessed, by gad. I lost interest in it about 3/4 through, but I think I was just not in the mood to read the book. I...was interrupted.

"C.D." Doyle: I find it hard to understand or 'get into' Dune, or anything by Tolkien, or Gerold Kersh.

Heath: Dhalgren.

QUESTION 5: What book that they 'made' you read in school still makes you grit your teeth whenever you think of it? What similar exp. turned you against what writer?

Walker: None, but I resent the awful abridged versions of 'The Odyssey' and 'Tale of Two Cities' they made us read: A friend of mine still rails against George Eliot for 'Silas Marner', and another was turned against Conrad for 'Heart of Darkness'.

Breiding: Dickens, Shakespeare, George Eliot. Luckily, my teachers didn't do any lasting damage. True, I haven't read any Dickens since then, but I've no aversion to him, and I'm quite sure I will read at least some of his work (sometime). Same applies to the other two, maybe. I would LIKE to read Shakespeare. I hope I will. Eliot I'm not concerned about one way or another.

Sween: Silas Marner. But I was never turned against any writer.

Chauvenet: 'Hard Times' by Dickens, and 'Turn of the Screw' by James. I could never like James' convoluted style.

Wolfe: I loved everything I was make to read in school, have never been turned against a writer, but I know that many have.

Lapidus: 'Great Expectations' by Dickens, and as a result, cannot stand either it or Dickens in general. (PW: Obviously, you have never seen the David Mclean film!)

Brazier: Shakespeare.

Bracken: 'True Grit'. As for a particular author, Hemingway or Shaw.

Cvetko: Shakespeare's plays. I don't like Shakespeare, and I never did, especially when they forced us to read that crap.

Malzberg: Silas Marner.

Coulson: Silas Marner.

Pierce: Barchester Towers. I still cringe at the thought anyone could be interested in the next Bishop of Schmishop, or Dean of Schmean or whatever it was.

Steve B: The Immense Journey by Loren Eisely.

Singer: I H*A*T*E*D Silas Marner! And Billy Budd. And Dicken's 'Great Expectations'.

Tackett/Cohen/Connor: None.

Bliss: Dang near all of them. Lousiest was the high school lit text which featured Robert Benchley's dullest.

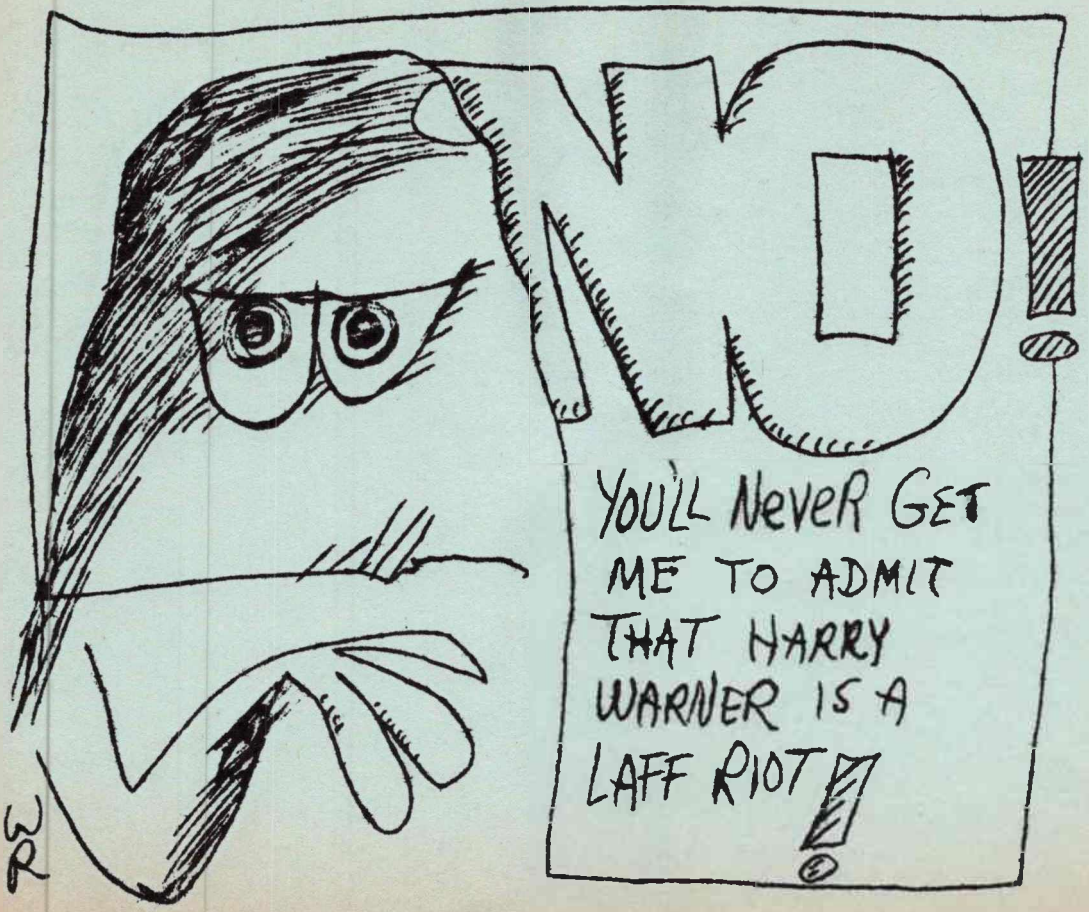
Don D': Silas Marner, but I never allowed this to turn me against the rest of Eliot's work, some of which I enjoyed.

Shelia D': None. I am probably the only person alive who enjoyed Silas Marner. (PW -- Wrong, Shelia. My brother liked it, too.)

Long: Silas Marner.

Chilson & Gaier: None.

Arthurs: Great Expectations. God, how I loathed that book! I wasn't alone,


NO!
YOU'LL NEVER GET ME TO ADMIT THAT HARRY WARNER IS A LAFF RIOT!

YOU'LL NEVER GET
ME TO ADMIT
THAT HARRY
LUNDBERG IS A
LEFT WING

though; at the end of the year, the class got together and staged a book-burning of their copies. Since then, I've given a couple of other Dickens' books a try, but never managed to get beyond the first chapter or two before beginning to gibber, drool, and throw the book against the nearest wall.

Simmons: Silas Marner.

Warner: School reading assignments were delights without exception. The only thing that might fit is Caesar, if you count the excerpts which I hated as Latin assignments.

Sneary: None.

Parks: John Gunther's Death Be Not Proud, a really crummy book for a kid of ten.

Salomon: War and Peace, War and Peace, War and ....aaargh!

Applebaum: Lord Jim. Also Herman Melville.

Sharpe: None really.

Robinson: Silas Marner.

Bowie: The Illiad.

Mayo: I will never be able to even think of Ethan Frome without looking about me for a safe place to retch. I had the same experience with Thomas Hardy.

Gibbs: I can not think of a single writer that was forced upon me in high school that I now regret. In fact, if they did not force writers such as Steinbeck and Shakespeare on me I may never have been introduced to their work.

Rostrum: Catcher in the Rye.

Denton: I enjoyed what we had to read in school: Hawthorne's Seven Gables, Scott's Ivanhoe, Dicken's Two Cities. (PW -- I expected more people to mention Ivanhoe. When I was in Jr. High it was assigned reading for seniors, and famous among former students, I believe. I dreaded having to read it because I assumed it was 'hard' in the sense of being 'old-fashioned' with lots of description, but when I became a senior, it had disappeared from the classroom. In Victorian days, Scott was 'sf' to young readers. I wonder if anyone on this whole list has ever read him voluntarily?)((Yes, the Editor of this fantome, E.C.C.; I hunted for years for uncut editions of his works, but it seems that all I ever run into is The Abbot, which I already have!))

Shoemaker: Silas Marner, A Tale of Two Cities, have biased me against these 2 writers. A forced reading of Tennessee Williams' plays has, I think justly, biased me against his work, which is total crap, no better than soap opera. (PW -- A Soapsud Named Desire!)

Kring: Where I went to school, we didn't have any book we 'had' to read, but there was our loverly Reading Appreciation Book for English Class. And we waded through Macbeth which I still hate. And for that reason, I have never liked William Shakespeare.

Resnick: I'll never be able to appreciate Joyce in general or Portrait/Artist in particular after having both rammed down my throat at the University of Chicago about 15 years ago. (PW -- as long as you had Portrait rammed down your throat, you should have gone on to Finnegans Wake which is set in Finnegans' stomach.)

Davis: Giants in the Earth by O E Rolvaag. Dull, endless waste, lotsa ellipses. Dull. Then I had to teach it. Convinced me teaching was a waste for all concerned. In college, we had to read Tom Jones, all of it. Force-feeding War and Peace and Women in Love wasn't bad, though.

Meadows: No great dislikes, but I don't think Hemingway and Camus were all they were cracked up to be.

Wallace: As of maturity, I appreciate those things I was forced to read, or even memorize.

Franke: Silas Marner! My stomach tenses just typing the title. Charles Dickens novels were ruined for me because of school.

Whitaker: The Rise of Silas Lapham and Yankee From Olympus and the Ox Bow Incident. After the term was over, I sat around and ripped them to shreds and flushed them down the school toilets, plugging them.

Foyster: No answer (PW -- I assume that means none which is an answer.)

Hill: Anything by Jack London.

Piper: Conrad's 'Four Tales'.

Jeeves: Stevenson's Kidnapped.

Zeldes: Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge.

Goldstein: Shakespeare, Tolkein.

Brown: Can't face the Narnia series by Lewis because I've had Out of the Silent Planet shoved down my throat by several people, including my former minister. (PW -- suggest you gargle with LoTR three times a day. If condition persists, see your librarian.)

Vayne: Great Expectations in high school, and I still think that is a lousy, unrealistic, etc. book.

Fondrich: Silas Marner, forever!

Hackenberg: No such book. They no longer force students to read.

Roberts: Silas Marner. Willa Cather's My Antonia.

Anderson: The Old Man & the Sea.

Hulse: Being made to appreciate Shakespeare in the ninth grade. Yuk; I hated it; I was bored! I studied him in college and was completely enchanted. Fortunately I had 10 years in which to mellow.

"C.D." Doyle: Never happened.

Wolfenbarger: None that I can think of.

Heath: None. If the book got to be too much for me, I'd either skim it, or get hold of & read synopses.

QUESTION 6: What was the last story or novel you simply couldn't understand?

Walker: The Egoist by George Meredith.
Sween: Finnegans Wake.
Chauvenet: Man in the High Castle by Dick.
Lapidus: 'Totenbuch' by A. Parra (y Figueredo) from A, DV.
Brazier: There have been so many, none sticks in my mind. I don't care to work at a story.
Bracken: The Deathbird by Ellison.
Cvetko: The Man Who Read Equations by Kris and Lil Neville.
Malzberg: Something by Gene Wolfe in 12/71 GALAXY. He cleared it up for me tho.
Coulson: Fifth Head of Cerebrus.
Pierce: By the time this appears, it will probably be Dhalgren. After all, even Pohl couldn't get it, and he published the thing.
Steve B: I guess I missed something in 'The Fifth Head of Cerebrus' judging by the things reviewers have said about it.
Cohen: So many that the 'last one' is irrelevant. 'The Drum Lollipop' by Jack Dann, 'The Enemy People' by K M O'Donnell come to mind.
Long: Arrive at Easterwine by Lafferty.
Don D': Finnegans Wake.
Shelia D': Absalom, Absalom by Faulkner.
Chilson: I avoid ambiguous fiction; if I read such, I quickly forget the details, including title and, mercifully for them, the author's name.
Arthurs: The Ascending Aye by Gordon Eklund.
Simmons: Gravity's Rainbow.
Warner: Ubik.
Parks: The Sodom and Gomorrah Business by Malzberg. It was a fun little killer of a book, but it had no point, like Malzberg wrote it just to clear the crap out of his system.
Applebaum: Malzberg's writing in general.
Sharpe: 'Clone'.
Robinson: I'm wading through Dhalgren. Maybe I'll figure it out. I was a bit lost with Bester's The Indian Giver but enjoyed it tremendously.
Gibbs: Bodies by Thomas Disch in Quark 4.
Denton: John Fowles' The Magus. But I loved it. Existential as all hell and I never have understood existentialism. (PW -- Frank, your answer is pure existentialism.)
Shoemaker: 'Totenbuch' in A, DV.
Kring: The Players of Null-A.
Resnick: Sue me, but my answer is The Beast That Shouted Love, etc.
Davis: The segment of And Chaos Died in F&SF.
Wallace: Dhalgren. Still unclear why it is SF. Classical parn.
Franke: Ayn Rand's The Fountainhead, one of Joyce Carol Oates' novels.
Roberts: On four occasions I've penetrated Stapledon's First and Last Men, each time getting a little further. One day... (PW -- as W C Fields used to say, if at first you don't succeed,

try, try again. Then, give up. No point in making a fool of yourself.)

Foyster: Trout Fishing in America by Richard Brautigan.

Hill: Leiber's The Wanderer.

Piper: 5th Head of Cerebrus by Wolfe.

Jeeves: If I can't understand the first two chapters I don't read any more.

Dave Rowe: The use of the word 'last' puts in a factor of randomness that invalidates any significance in the question. (PW -- goddamn Limey.)

Zeldes: The Wanderer by Henri Alain-Fournier.

Goldstein: Dahlgren.

Brown: The Einstein Intersection.

Vayne: TEFL and Geo. Alec Effinger's 'What Entropy Means to Me'. Not to mention nearly everything in the New Worlds paperbacks, Clarion, and Quark, and...

Fendrich: Dhalgren. I loved it.

Hackenberg: Ballad of Lost C'Mell.

Roberts: I don't want to be coy about this, but I never feel I really understand any book very well. I do reach a certain stage where no one asks me questions about it that I cannot answer or I simply lose interest in the book (in asking myself questions about it)... But you have in mind, the kind of book that leaves the reader wholly baffled -- if a book baffles and intrigues me I re-read it a couple of times and eventually reach some kind of tentative hypothesis about it and that satisfies me in some way.

Anderson: Gravity's Rainbow.

Hulse: Currently I'm working my way through Gravity's Rainbow for the third attempt. I'm succeeding, too. I have to take it a section at a time for I've found that each section has to be taken as a whole; each section leads into the next. It can't be read lightly.... The last one I simply didn't understand was Tinker, Tinker, Soldier, Spy. I didn't finish it, either.

"C.D." Doyle: Sex and/or Mr. Morrison, by Carol Emshwiller.

Wolfenbarger: One of the New Wave stories.

Heath: Dahlgren.

QUESTION 7: Name a book or story that you read twice and disliked as much the second time as the first -- and explain why you read it the second time.

Walker: Stranger in a Strange Land — I couldn't believe it was as bad as I thought.

Lapidus: I will Fear no Evil — I didn't believe Heinlein could write that bad a book. I was wrong.

Brazier: 'Riders of the Purple Wage' by Farmer. I was bound to discover why the story won a Hugo And concluded that fans were starved for sex, which the story was full of in transparent symbology. As well as scatology symbols

Bracken: I don't think I ever read a book twice.

Cvetko: I've never read a book that I disliked the first time.

Malzberg: In the Enclosure by Barry N. Malzberg. I had to read galleys.

Coulson: Silas Marner. I re-read it because it was in the textbook and it was less boring to read it again than to sit and twiddle my thumbs. Not much less, but less.

Pierce: I manage to avoid this, except skimming for research.

Steve B: The Martian Chronicles. A class assignment.

Cohen: Wolfling by Gordon Dickson. Disliked the superman philosophy, but the second time I wanted some nice fast-moving power fantasy to kill time.

Bliss: I Am Legend by Matheson. Read it a second time because I was convinced there was a better way to do it, and there is. I'm writing it now.

Don D': The Egoist by Meredith. Re-read it during a passion for Victorian novels to see if my opinion had changed with age. It hadn't.

Shelia D': None.

Chilson: Moby Dick. Everybody agrees it is a great book. I've tried to figure out why.

Gaier: The Book of Revelations. I thought I'd been too young to understand it 1st time.

Arthurs: Empire of the Sun by Weiner in A, DV. I forced myself to read this again because I thought that there must be some sense to it. I shouldn't have wasted the effort.

Applebaum: Ballard's Terminal Beach. The story appeared in 2 different anthologies so I read it twice.

Sharpe: The Glory Game, and the reason I read it again was I thought no book could be that rancid.

Mayo: I would never, even under pain of torture and death, read twice a story that I did not like the first time. (PW -- if you have read 1984, Ken, you know what to expect in Room 101.)

Rostrum: The Last Starship from Earth. Heinlein had a blurb on the back cover.

Kring: SISL. I read the stupid thing twice. A lot of people, who had taste similar to mine, had said it was a very good book.

Resnick: Frankenstein. I found it unreadable as a teenager. Recently decided to see if either the book or the reader had mellowed with the passing years. We haven't.

Davis: You out of your mind? Well, see A. to Q. 5.

Wallace: Heinlein's Beyond This Horizon. Found it worse than I had thought.

Franke: Tried several times to find something to like about World of Null-A.

Foyster/Hill/Piper: None, never.

Zeldes: The Red Pony by Steinbeck. I had to read it for class.

Goldstein: Tolkein, again. The LotR. Friends kept saying it was so good.

Brown: I Will Fear No Evil. Couldn't believe it was as bad as I thought. It was worse!

Vayne: If I dislike something one time I don't bother with it in another.

Fendrich: Never happened.

Hackenberg: I don't re-read books I don't like.

Roberts: The Foundation Trilogy. I've read it three or four times and it has never impressed me. I introduced it into my courses in sf for its historical importance but had to drop it after two or three attempts.

Anderson: see 6; I like to either finish a book or classify it as not worth the effort.

Hulse: I can't remember the last time I re-read anything. I have too much to read....

"C.D." Doyle: Anne McCaffery's The Ship Who Sang. There just wasn't enough there. It was a cute idea, but I think there should have been more. I've heard that Anne is a really good writer, so I thought the least I could do was read something of hers.

Wolfenbarger: Can't think of it offhand.

Heath: Hasn't happened - yet.

QUESTION 8: Name one book or story that you tried and failed to get into after at least two or three earnest attempts. Name one you tried — and succeeded -- at finishing and still admire.

Walker: Tried and failed: Return of the Native - Thomas Hardy.
Tried and succeeded: Nova by Delany.

Sween: T&F: The Book of Mormon.
T&S: Tristram Shandy.

Wolfe: T&F: Master of Middle Earth.
T&S: The Last Western.

Lapidus: T&F: The Final Programme, Moorcock, or The Last and First Men, Stapledon.
T&S: Earth Abides.

Brazier: T&F: Ringworld, Niven; The People, Henderson.

Bracken: T&F: Patron of the Arts, Rotsler.

Malzberg: Part one, no answer. Part two, The Word for the World is Forest.

Coulson: Any of several J G Ballard novels. Can't recall any that I had to struggle through and came to like.

Pierce: Never tried that many times to get into one and still not succeed. But Conrad's Nostromo and Victory I had to start over on after getting sidetracked the first time, and now I admire them.

Steve B: ----

Singer: Toffler's Future Shock. Just couldn't go any further than 40 pages. Pynchon's V.

Tackett: Le Guin's Left Hand of Darkness. Not more than a couple of chapters.

Cohen: Mistress of Mistresses. Lewis' Till We Have Faces.

Connor: Bug Jack Barron. None.

Bliss: Done. All latter day Heinlein.

Don D': Closest I can come is Pychon's 'Gravity's Rainbow' which I started several times, finally read through, and found very disappointing.

Shelia D': Gravity's Rainbow. Middlemarch by Eliot.

Chilson: Plato's Republic. The beginning was fun, but Plato goes off the rails early on and it gets harder and harder to stay interested in his elitist 'Republic'. I still admire Perelandra.

Gaier: Cabell's Jurgen has been my cross. I can't get into it.

Arthurs: A Tale of Two Cities. After a false start or two -- Nostromo; I loved it.

Sneary: Titus Groan. By His Bootstraps.

Parks: Icerigger by Alan Dean Foster. Read the first 10 pages over and over, but when I finally got past them, I loved the book.

Applebaum: Two or three attempts to finish Durrell's Nunquam, Shiel's The Purple Cloud, Merle's Day of the Dolphin, but I did not admire any of them.

Sharpe: Binary. The Dispossessed.

Robinson: Four tries before I got through Stranger in a Strange Land. The first 70 pgs. were the hardest. Still haven't gotten past pg. 50 of Watership Down, and the same goes for LotR.

Bowie: The second try got me through the Hunchback of Notre Dame, thus I did not miss out on that macabre downbeat ending.

Mayo: After repeated attempts, Dracula. I never did finish it. The same is true for Kerouac's On the Road.

Gibbs: I kept putting off Nine Princes in Amber. I was taken in by the cover of the paperback, making me think it was a more traditional fantasy than it was.

Denton: Talbot Mundy's Om: The Secret of Ahbor Valley. A friend and I both bogged down in the same spot (within a page or two) but once past that it ran beautifully to its conclusions.

Shoemaker: At 15 I tried, and failed, to finish the Inferno. At 18, I tried again and finished the entire Divine Comedy, and I regard it as one of the best things I've ever read.

Kring: Almost all the stories in A, DV. Keep retching. Doesn't help the binding of the book at all. The one novel I struggled through and still admire (having read it now 3 times) is The Einstein Intersection.

Resnick: Still cannot get into Dune, try as I might. One book that I got a kick out of after a few false starts was SaM's The Immortal Storm. Now, one of my favorites!

Davis: 20,000 Leagues etc. Finnegans Wake.

Meadows: I keep trying to make it through Frankenstein. I did finally get through LotR which I kept getting bogged down in, but enjoyed it.

Franke: Davy and Dune I made 2 attempts

to finish. I'm still undecided if Dune was worth it. Davy most certainly was.

Whitaker: Sirius and Odd John, on all counts.

Foyster: Remembrance of Things Past, Proust, is incomparable. Three tries.

Piper: Never.

Zeldes: Overlay by Malzberg & The Hobbit.

Goldstein: Tolkein and That Hideous Strength by Lewis.

Brown: To Die in Italbar by Z.

Fendrich: Tried and failed to get into George MacDonald's 'Lilith'.

Hackenberg: A Time of Changes.

Roberts: My shelves are littered with books I tried to read a couple of times and just didn't have enough interest in to finish even though I had started them because people praised them. The Tale of Genji, for instance, David Copperfield I tried reading no fewer than six times. Faust and Don Quixote and The Devine Comedy are books I learned to admire deeply upon repeated readings.

Hulse: I don't usually give it more than one attempt...(busy).

"C.D." Doyle: I have never been able to completely envelop myself in one of Asimov's stories. He seems to spend a little too much time with technical stuff, how a ship works, instead of what happens to the clucks in the ship. He could have some good plots/ concepts, but I haven't taken enough time to find out. I managed to sweat through that super-long (for me) story, Stranger in a Strange Land, even though I didn't like a couple of chapters, and I've been really glad I did.

Wolfenbarger: Fourth Mansions, Lafferty.

Heath: Dhalgren. Foundation trilogy.

QUESTION 9: Frequently, the blurb, etc.

Walker: I am suspicious of testimonials, inclined to think they are sincere expressions of not entirely objective admiration: friendship, sympathy, ideological support, etc. Frankly, I wouldn't trust any SF writer's opinion: they know one another too well, and are wisely cautious of offending even those they dislike. But I have bought a book on the basis of a testimonial: Nelson Algren's about 'Catch-22'.

Sween: Blurbs honest expressions? No, out of context. Most true? None. Bought on testimonial? Never.

Chauvenet: Don't be silly. Who pays attention to such quotes? But if it were non-fiction and Asimov 'recommended' it, I might look at it more closely.

Wolfe: I can speak from inside on cover blurbs, having written them and asked others for them. They are honest, not favors; of course, the publisher

uses the ones he thinks will sell the book. I would trust Knight, Blish, Leiber. But I've never bought a book strictly because of such a blurb.

Lapidus: Jacket blurbs never influence me one way or another. I have never, or will I ever, buy a book solely because of a blurb. I would probably trust Zelazny, Delany, Disch, Asimov, and Heinlein -- if I have to name names.

Brazier: I've never bought a book for testimonials. They're hokey.

Bracken: I ignore testimonials -- it was sort of drummed into me in a truth in advertising course I had three or four years ago -- 'never trust a testimonial'.

Cvetko: I tend to think cover blurbs are honest. I would probably trust people like Asimov, Niven, Clarke, Heinlein, Laumer, Bova, etc. over people like Ellison, Aldiss and Malzberg because the former write the kind of stories I like to read, but I have never bought a book strictly on a testim'l.

Breiding: I don't know. Perhaps some blurbs are sincere. I've felt that way about Bradbury and Lovecraft's. Some blurbs do excite me. I don't believe I've ever bought a book on that basis alone, though it is possible. But now that I think of it, I'm certain I've bought books I've not heard about or seen before just because of what the covers said to me.

Malzberg: No; they are a professional courtesy.

Coulson: I never pay attention to testimonial blurbs.

Pierce: The best blurb I ever saw was for the original Crest edition of Rogue Moon, unless it was the one for the original Regency edition of You Will Never Be the Same. Most I don't respect, but they can help if they're informational. What I really hate are mainstream books with blurbs from reviewers saying how great they are -- but nothing whatever about the contents.

Steve B: If the writer is really a Big Name, that helps. But I don't recall ever buying a book solely on some writer's endorsement.

Singer: I ignore them.

Tackett: I don't select books on the basis of puffs from other writers.

Cohen: I'm inclined to trust them. I trust Blish and Budrys. With reservations: Anderson, Aldiss, Knight. Never: Sturgeon or Del Rey. But I never bought a book solely on a testimonial.

Connor: It depends on who says what. I trust: Asimov, Farmer, Wolfe. I do pay attention to testimonials as part of a preliminary assessment of the bk.

Bliss: They excite my brain to satirize them. I trust: Bester, offutt, and a host more. But never bought a book

on sales pitch on dust cover.

Don D': Favors. I would never buy a book solely on a testimonial, but I trust Knight and might pick up a book I would otherwise have overlooked because of his recommendation, like Murder in Millenium VI.

Shelia D': I ignore them. They frequently give the plot away.

Chilson: Favors of low moment. I would trust writers who like the same books I do. It may be a factor, but I go more by the author's name, or by reviews.

Gaier: Back scratching. I tend to trust those writers whose names rarely appear on blurbs.

Arthurs: Generally. I judge a book by 1) the author's reputation, or 2) by its cover. They say you can't judge, etc., but I've come across some of my favorite books because it had an eye-catching cover.

Simmons: Honest. Knight. Yes.

Warner: I put no faith in blurbs and rarely read them.

Sneary: Honest favors. Boucher. But generally meaningless.

Parks: I think the sayer usually does it for the money, so I wouldn't buy the book cause he said it.

Salomon: With a grain of salt. I trust Clarke, above all, then Heinlein. Never.

Applebaum: Honest, but then again, I may be too trusting. P. Schuyler Miller, Gordon Dickson.

Sharpe: Favors. Asimov. Never.

Robinson: The worst all-time blurb was on the back cover of Sirens of Titan. The most deceptive on the covers of books by Barry Malzberg. I'm a fan of his but I swear that some of the stuff he writes makes the rest of what he writes look like a felony.

Bowie: Honest. P. Schuyler Miller, Sturgeon, Del Rey. Never.

Mayo: I usually ignore them, but when I do pay attention, I believe them honest statements of admiration. Trust: Clarke, Asimov, Herbert. I decided to buy Herovit's World by Barry Malzberg rather than Ursus of Ultima Thule by Davidson because of Harlan Ellison's testimonial on the back cover.

Gibbs: Never. When the sf community is as close as it is, then it is hard to separate personal friendships from their critical viewpoints.

Rostrom: Honest. But I avoid the recommendations of New Wavers. Yes.

Denton: I trust Ursula. That's about all. Never.

Shoemaker: Favors. I trusted P. Schuyler Miller. Never.

Kring: May be honest expressions but by the time they appear on the books, with those mysterious dots between words, I tend to doubt if the words were meant to say what they now do.

In sf, I guess I'd have to say I trust the prominent names in the field (Anderson, Asimov, Ellison, etc.). Never.

Resnick: I don't trust blurbs. If I were ever to be swayed by one writer's opinion, I've always felt that Cliff Simak is the closest thing sf has to an honest men.

Davis: Honest, but they tend to get a bit silly. If Phillip Klass liked it, I'd probably buy it. I bought Hodding-William's Fistful of Delights at Torcon based on the frontcover blurb. I loved it.

Cagle: Favors. Kilgore Trout. No.

Meadows: Favors. Never.

Wallace: Would trust Aldiss, Knight, or Blish -- if I could be sure they were correctly quoted. Trust no pro if review is printed in a prozine. Frequently buy on the basis of a blurb if there is no review available. But only peebies.

Franke: You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. Never.

Roberts: I usually ignore them, but take notice of recommendations in reviews from writers and readers...I respect.

Whitaker: No. Never.

Foyster: I ignore testimonials.

Hill: Blurbs are good if they aren't commercial formulae.

Piper: Never.

Jeeves: Testimonials -- no. Reviews -- sometimes.

Zeldes: I usually don't pay attention at all to cover blurbs.

Goldstein: I trust Ellison, if it's a new writer, though I have been disappointed. Sturgeon, Niven or Clement. Writers whose work appeals to me. I have bought strictly on testimonial -- an adventure that Alistair MacLean said was great etc. etc. It was bad.

Brown: Trust writer's blurbs more than hacked-up blurbs of reviews. Once bought 'Weiristone of Brisagamen' and then noticed the blurb by Andre Norton. I was even more willing to read the book then.

Vayne: Honest enough. I don't buy books on the strength of testimonials, but occasionally on the strength of short summaries. And occasionally I am disappointed.

Fendrich: All lies! I'd trust Lafferty. No.

Hackenberg: I usually trust the recommendations. Does Geis count? Yes, Delany -- Stars, My Destination; Geis -- A, DV.

Roberts: I don't trust the testimonials of writers at all, having been misled so often. Those brief blurbs might just as well not be on the back covers of books for all of me.

Anderson: I pay little attention to them having already bought the book before seeing them.

Hulse: As honest expressions -- but taken

with a grain of salt and a look at the price. I'd trust all the writers on the blurbs of 'Mote'; I bought that book cause of the blurbs (put in S&S ads for the book) and Locus's review....

"C.D." Doyle: I don't pay an awful lot of attention to testimonials, as a story can be just about anything the reader wants it to, and judging by some T's, the readers have read fantastic ideas into so-so stories. I have never bought a book only on the testimonials.

Wolfenbarger: I'm most likely to trust sf writers whom I admire, who speak honestly and openly and write for the love of it (primarily).

Heath: No. Heinlein, Ellison (though I may disagree with him, I trust him), the late P.S.Miller, & Poul Anderson. Yes, Paingod.

QUESTION 10: How often do you get fed up with sf?

Walker: Today, I go on short-term binges that usually last until I read a new 'Nebula Award Stories' anthology (or the like) and am disgusted into swearing off the whole genre for months. Then a Simak or a Niven lures me back.

Sween: Never. At its worst, it's better than most.

Chauvenet: Every time I finish an issue of Analog. But it wears off.

Wolfe: I never get fed up with sf, having learned to vary it with other types of reading.

Lapidus: These days, very often. In the past two years I've gone through periods where I don't read any sf for months on end. Then I'll spend a month reading no other fiction -- before getting satiated for a while. I guess I get really fed up four or five times a year.

Brazier: Never. Not as a genre. I did get fed up with non-sf crap such as I found in ORBIT, but the solution is easy: don't buy it. I'm rather happy ORBIT seems to specialize in the stuff I don't like, because it's nice to have the garbage in its own painted container. (PW -- Right on, Donn!)

Bracken: I have never gotten fed up with sf in the five or so years that it has been my steady diet (and the five or more years that it hung on the outer perimeter of my reading diet).

Cvetko: I never get fed up with science fiction, but I often get fed up with speculative fiction, or fantasy, or New Wave, or whatever you want to call it.

Malzberg: I was fed up with sf in 1953 and abandoned it.

Coulson: Never, as a field of writing. No matter how much crap is produced, there are always a few writers I enjoy.

Pierce: I don't get fed up with SF per se, but if there's a drought of good books for a while, I catch up on Joyce Carol Oates or Ken Kesey. Or I'll do the same for a change of pace even when there isn't a drought.

Steve B: Whenever someone writes a story that someone else has already written, and it was pretty miserable the first time. Especially if one of these wins critical acclaim or an award.

Tackett: For years, but I keep reading it because there is still a nugget to be found now and then. I became disenchanted with sf when the literary set took over. I don't really give a damn about the literary content of the story as long as the idea is good.

Cohen: Once or twice a year, when I come home from Cornell and read 4-6 mos. accumulations of magazines and other piled-up sf.

Long: Never. A bit bored sometimes.

Connor: Hasn't happened...possibly because I've always read a wide range of other stuff — fic & non-fic.

Bliss: Oh, but never.

Don D': Two or three times a year.

Shelia D': I don't read enough to get fed up.

Chilson: Recently I almost quit reading my favorite prozine (Analog); it was the only time I ever got fed up since I was 11. But earlier I would go through heavy phases of non-sf reading about twice a year.

Gaier: Rarely, if ever.

Arthurs: Every time I see a new Perry Rhodan taking up display space.

Simmons: Every other day.

Warner: After every third sf story I read.

Sneary: About every five years.

Parks: Never.

Salomon: About 3 times in the past 15 years.

Applebaum: Once in Jr. High, and it lasted four years.

Sharpe: I haven't yet.

Robinson: Never since I saw the truth of Sturgeon's Law.

Bowie: Every so often when it tends to get too preachy.

Mayo: Every once in a while when I begin to feel the weight of the world on my shoulders and I start to regard sf as being somehow frivolous compared to the crap I see around me.

Gibbs: I become discouraged with sf whenever I look at my bookshelves with all the unread books and magazines. (PW -- Oh, do I know the feeling!)

Rostrom: Never.

Denton: About twice a year. A couple of good mysteries usually clear my head.

Shoemaker: Over the last 4 yrs, gradually. I find now that there is so much more real Literature that I prefer reading. I suppose most fans will view all this as Treason to the Cause. (PW -- it happened to me,

too, Mike, and it still does. But beware, when your enthusiasm starts to slip, don't panic and don't rationalize, just let it go and slip away quietly. One day, soon, you will return, your enthusiasm renewed -- for several months.)

Kring: So far, no. Too many new writers coming into the field.

Resnick: With fandom, frequently, never for long. With sf, infrequently. With the potential of the literature, never.

Davis: After I finish Analog.

Cagle: Once per month.

Meadows: I usually lay off for a while before I reach that stage.

Wallace: About three or four times a year.

Franke: Once or twice every five or six years. And it doesn't last too long, thankfully.

Roberts: I became fed up with sf four or five years ago. I no longer read it with an automatic bias in its favor as I used to, and I no longer find that I like the sf field as a genre.

Whitaker: Once a day.

Foyster: Once -- in 1957. Now I only read it for the money. (PW -- You mean, there's money in that???)

Hill: Never.

Piper: Never.

Jeeves: Never. (PW -- how would you guys like a job playing three witches?)

Zeldes: Never, or if I do, it's not a conscious thing. (PW -- she gets fed up in her sleep.)

Goldstein: TV sf always; not movies though. When I buy a book expecting hard-science and get new-wave; with the market in general when I find so much s&s pubbed as NEW! AMAZING! EXCITING! When wonderful books come into print only once every ten years or so, if that, and the hack-written stuff stays in print year after year.

Brown: I don't get fed up with SF, but New Wave will do it to me, everytime.

Vayne: Only when I cannot understand it, like when I'm trying to plow through a New Worlds Quarterly or other such.

Fendrich: I left sf for fairy tales and William Burroughs until just recently. Now, I only get fed up with it after every bad book that I read.

Hackenberg: Very frigging often.

Roberts: Ten or twelve times a year. I think I might almost work out a formula for my dissatisfaction. A very good novel will keep me reading poor novels for some time but eventually I lose my hopes and abandon the genre. After a while I get an sf hunger and try it again. Usually whatever I read in that state satisfies me, and I read some more -- but two poor novels in a row and I turn to something else.

Anderson: After reading a particularly bad book or else after a rash of very similarly-plotted stories.

Hulse: How often do I get fed up with mainstream novels, biography, history...?

"C.D." Doyle: I usually get fed up with sf when a story moves too slow, or is overly long. ('long' depends on my patience-quota for the day.) I occasionally get fed up when the 'meaning' of a story is too deep, and I can't get it. If a writer wants to write a story only he/she can get, that's great. But when you're writing a story for the public, you have to make sure they will get it. ((*Sigh* If only that were true, "C.D."! But as long as publishers' editors accept obscurities, such stuff'll keep coming. --E.C.C.))

Wolfenbarger: Every once in a while.

Heath: About once a decade.

QUESTION 11: What is the finest sf novel, or story, of all time?

Walker: The Time Machine; 1984. And voting for two friends: A Canticle for Leibowitz and The Star Maker.

Sween: Can't say.

Chauvenet: Novel: Odd John, Stapledon. Story: No Woman Born, C.L.Moore.

Wolfe: The finest sf? For me, at least, that would depend on how you define it. To avoid an argument -- 1984.

Lapidus: What the 'hell' does 'finest' mean? Well, it might as well be Zelazny's 'And Call Me Conrad'.

Brazier: Gad! I have a nice remembrance of Rocklynne's 'Quietus', but can't say if this is the BEST of all time.

Bracken: Mission of Gravity, Clement. Second might be Anthony's 'Rings of Ice' (but that one might be only because of having read it recently).

Cvetko: Childhood's End. There's absolutely no hesitation in writing that down.

Malzberg: Of Time and Third Avenue/They Don't Make Life Like They Use To, by Bester. The Last Man Left in the Bar by C M Cornbluth. The Science Fiction Hall of Fame by Silverberg. 'Sundance' by Silverberg. A Canticle for Leibowitz. Rogue Moon. A few others.

Coulson: There isn't any such thing. The most important to me is 'The Green Hills of Earth' because that got me started reading science fiction.

Pierce: Is an apple better than an orange? Some of my personal favorites range from The Time Machine to Odd John to Mission of Gravity, West of the Sun, Way Station, Rogue Moon, The Left Hand of Darkness; or from 'A Dream of Armageddon' to 'A Martian Odyssey' to 'Mimsy were the Borogoves', 'The Little Black Bag', 'The Lady Who Sailed the Soul', 'The Keys to December', 'Nine Lives', etc. -- I'm a hopeless polygamist.

Steve B: I can't narrow it down to one. Moon is a Harsh Mistress, Starship,

Needle, The City and the Stars, The Door into Summer, Davy.

Cohen: Search me. Sam Weskit on the Planet Framingham? (PW -- I wish I'd had the guts to say that, Phil. I loved that one, too!)

Long: Pass, tho SISL by Heinlein would be in contention.

Connor: Impossible to answer. (PW -- Fine friend you are.)

Bliss: The one I'm writing. 'Incident in a Small War' from Trumpet, and Waldo by Heinlein.

Don D': An unanswerable question, but possibly Miller's Canticle for Leib.

Gaier: Herbert's Dune.

Arthurs: The Stars, My Destination.

Simmons: Left Hand of Darkness.

Warner: An unanswerable question.

Sneary: I use to think Slan or Final Blackout was, but nothing in the last 20 years has moved me much, excepting LotR.

Parks: Simple. Biggle's Monument or Heinlein's TEFL.

Salomon: I haven't read it yet, or it hasn't been written yet.

Applebaum: The only one that might possibly emerge as my choice is 'Who Goes There?'

Sharpe: Dune.

Robinson: It keeps changing from decade to decade and not year to year.

Bowie: War of the Worlds, Time Machine.

Mayo: The finest novel of all time is The Last Temptation of Christ by Kazantzakis.

Gibbs: That I have read: Silverberg's Dying Inside.

Shoemaker: The Invisible Man or Brave New World.

Kring: Out of the Mouth of the Dragon by Mark S. Geston.

Resnick: Unquestionably, Stapledon's Star Maker.

Davis: The Country of the Blind by HGWells.

Cagle: Many of JWC's editorials (PW -- no wonder you get fed up with sf 12 times a year).

Wallace: Miller's Canticle. Heinlein's Starship. Herbert's Dune. Asimov's trilogy. The question is ill-put.

Franke: I'm not sure what you mean by the question. My favorite is The Foundation Trilogy. What I consider the Best? Nightfall; Childhood's End; Stars, My Destination. The list is endless.

Whitaker: Sirius.

Foyster: The Burning of the Brain by C. Smith.

Hill: Time Out of Mind by Pierre Boulle.

Piper: Don't know -- my favorite is Mirror for Observers.

Jeeves: Who Goes There? Campbell.

Goldstein: You wouldn't! All I can think of right now is Childhood's End. Story -- perhaps A Martian Odyssey, and More Than Human.

Brown: The finest??? I could suggest

about a hundred, but couldn't give a best.

Vayne: Finest story of all time? Asimov's 'Nightfall'.

Fendrich: The Starmaker. Nothing else comes close. I have come to measure my friends' intelligence by their opinion of this book. (PW -- I thought it was boring.)

Hackenberg: A Canticle for Leibowitz.

Roberts: I can answer this without a moment's hesitation: Stapledon's Last and First Men, which edges out his Star Maker by a slight bit.

Anderson: Gormenghast, Clarke's novels, The Dispossessed, Last & First Men.

"C.D." Doyle: The definition of 'finest' depends upon the individual, and what mood he/she is in at that moment. Two hours later, they could feel entirely different....

Wolfenbarger: Haven't read it yet.

Heath: Dune.

QUESTION 12: What is the best sf story ever written by a woman?

Walker: Historically, 'Frankenstein'. Personally, 'Island of the Mighty' by Evangeline Walton, with Le Guin's 'The Dispossessed' close behind.

Sween: 'The Dispossessed', no doubt.

Chauvenet: No Woman Born by C L Moore.

Wolfe: I think this question is sexist and counterproductive.

Lapidus: I don't like to choose, but if I must, a toss-up between 'Left Hand of Darkness' and Wilhelm's 'Let the Fire Fall', with points to Russ' 'And Chaos Died'.

Brazier: I think something by C L Moore... was it 'Shambleau'?

Bracken: I haven't read that much sf written by women.

Cvetko: ?

Malzberg: This is a sexist question, but the answer is easy: Vintage Season by C L Moore. Just below the utter top rank of those listed in question 11.

Coulson: What the hell; 'Sword of Rhiannon' by Leigh Brackett. My favorite, anyway.

Pierce: Bearing in mind Wolfe's and Malzberg's objections, I'll state that it's definitely not 'That Only a Mother....' (Yecch!) LeGuin is, of course, the top writer who happens to be a woman. For sheer fun, I love Brackett's "Lorelei of the Red Mist', but she shared that with Bradbury, and can anyone tell the two sections apart?

Steve B: Without a doubt, the one by Zenna Henderson where a woman is separated from the rest of the People and marries an Earthman.

Singer: The Dispossessed.

Tackett: Pass.

Cohen: Left Hand of Darkness, I guess.

Long: Pass.

Connor: I definitely can't decide.

Bliss: The People by Henderson.

Don D': I've never classified writers by

sex (he says righteously), but it would probably be Le Guin's Word/World/Forest.

Shelia D': I am not qualified to answer.

Chilson: Left Hand of Darkness.

Gaier: Left Hand of Darkness.

Arthurs: A Wizard of Earthsea. I suspect most people will nominate LHoD, but I liked AWoE more. Less gloomy. TLHoD was rather a 'cold' novel to me.

Simmons: What kind of question is that? (PW -- what kind of answer is that?)

Salomen: Does Andrew North count?

Applebaum: The Word for World is Forest.

Sharpe: The Dispossessed.

Robinson: Joanna Russ is my favorite, but I can't name a favorite.

Bowie: The Word for World is Forest.

Mayo: Left Hand of Darkness.

Gibbs: Probably any recent story by Kate Wilhelm.

Rostrom: The Left Hand of Darkness.

Denton: The Left Hand of Darkness.

Shoemaker: Unquestionably something by C L Moore. Let's say 'Vintage Season'.

Kring: Couldn't say since I can't recall that many stories by women writers in sf.

Resnick: C L Moore's Shambleau. I re-read it every time my sense of wonder needs a shot of adrenalin.

Davis: I don't differentiate, and the question has (unconscious, I hope) sexist implications, esp. coming right after "What is the finest sf novel etc.?" (PW -- Ah, the paranoid mind!) After racking my brain (PW -- and a sado-masochist?) trying to remember if a story (this is insane) (PW -- I believe you, Hal) was written by a woman, you may put me down for 'To the Mountains' by Laura J. Haney. (PW -- among other things.)

Cagle: Sexual Politics.

Meadows: Gad, what a chauvinist question!

Franke: The Dispossessed.

Whitaker: Judgement Night by C L Moore.

Foyster: The Long Tomorrow by Leigh Brackett, though possibly one of C L Moore's stories should get the nod (PW -- I'm delighted someone mentioned Brackett's book. A very fine novel!)

Hill: I'm still looking...

Piper/Jeeves/Zeldes: don't know.

Goldstein: Why must you distinguish a woman's story? I think Madelaine L'Engle's A Wrinkle In Time(PW -- I bet a cosmotrician straightened it out.)

Brown: The Dragonflight books, Left Hand of Darkness; my own favorite writer is Andre Norton -- let those jeer who will -- Moon of the 3 Rings; and House of Zeor by Jacqueline Lichtenberg.

Vayne: Left Hand of Darkness.

Fendrich: McClintock's 'In the Days of Our Fathers' to be found in the first Best of F&SF. For 15 yrs. it has haunted me, and periodically I search it out again.

Hackenberg: The Word for World is Forest.

Roberts: I am undecided whether Le Guin's Left Hand of Darkness or her The Dispossessed is the better novel, but she is the best woman writer of sf I have ever read.

Anderson: The Dispossessed, novel; shorter, That Only a Mother.

"C.D." Doyle: About the only stories by women I've ever read, have been from Women of Wonder, edited by Pam Sargent. ((Ed's Note: "C.D."'s poll-answers precede her reading of The Dispossessed; her review of that book will be found elsewhere in this fantome. - EC)) The best (in my opinion) in there, were 'Baby, You Were Great' by Kate Wilhelm (the idea, and what possibilities it spurred, was more interesting than the actual story), and 'The Food Farm' by Kit Reed....

Wolfenbarger: Haven't read enuf to find out. The universe is expanding.

Heath: Probably one of Zenna Henderson's People stories.

QUESTION 13: What to you is a long novel -- 300, 400, 500 pages? Do long novels turn you on or off?

Walker: 400 pages and up, although over 300 pages is long for an sf novel. They don't turn me off on sight -- in fact, some turn me on -- but I am suspicious of them because I know how hellish it can be to get trapped in the doldrums on something like 'David Copperfield' with three hundred pages to go before the action picks up.

Sween: Over 500 pages. Turn on/off? On! On!

Chauvenet: 400 pages is too long already. It's an exceptional work whose length is not a drawback, but some exist -- eg. LotR.

Wolfe: 500 pages makes a short 'long novel' to me. If I like a book, it can't be too long -- the problem is, the longer the book, the more liable the publisher is to pack small type on a crowded page, making the book hard to read for purely mechanical reasons.

Lapidus: 500 pages is a long novel -- and I enjoy it immensely if the material justifies the length. Padding, of course, is painful, but as others have said, a mark of a good book is hating it to end.

Brazier: A novel to me is anything over 12 printed pages. I don't like (or read) many novels. I'm after the gimmick, quickly and surprisingly stated.

Bracken: 600 pages or better. I've only read two books that long, TEFL and The Agony and the Ecstacy.

Cvetko: In high school, 500 pages and up was long, but now, with college and less time, anything over 300 pages seems long. Long novels turn me on, or off, as much as short novels. I thought Dune was fantastic, but TEFL

was crud.

Malzberg: Anything over 60,000 words is, in these times, a long novel.

Coulson: 400 pages and up. They don't turn me off, but I approach them with caution because they take so long to read and I don't have that much time.

Pierce: In SF, I guess anything over 100,000 words is long; but I'd like to see longer ones if they're good. Niven and Pournelle were right to let out the stops with The Mote in God's Eye, even if the result wasn't all I'd hoped for.

Steve B: 500 pages, unless it's by Delany, then 50 pages is too long.

Singer: One that I can't read, in one session. I read fast. I guess 700 pages is the breakoff point. I don't mind them at all.

Tackett: 500 pages or more. 200-400 is about average.

Cohen: 300 pages is long in an sf context, but length turns me on in writers I know and like.

Connor: 500 pages. On.

Don D': 500 pages of Sturgeon would be considerably shorter than say 50 pages of ____. Long novels don't bother me.

Shelia D': 500 plus. I like long novels provided that I like the characters.

Chilson: 400 or more. Quality is all that counts with me.

Gaier: 700 pages. No.

Arthurs: In sf circles, I consider 250 pgs. longer than average. I love long books. One of my prized possessions is a 1931 edition of Les Miserables that runs four volumes and over 1400 pages. An exception to this is LotR which I enjoyed only moderately.

Simmons: 400 pp. is long. I really don't care about length tho.

Warner: If it's sf, 300 pages seems long; if it's mundane, 500 pages doesn't.

Sneary: Gee! Anything under 300 pages seems like a short novel to me, if you are talking about h/c book size pages. 500 pages is long, but long novels don't turn me off. I tend to set them aside until I have a large hunk of time for them.

Parks: Any novel over 173 pages is long. I like cheap long novels.

Salomon: 400 plus. Length is irrelevant to me.

Applebaum: 400 pages. The extra depth and characterization turn me on.

Sharpe: 300 pages. If well-written, they don't turn me off.

Robinson: 300-400 pages. I like long novels with low prices.

Bowie: Anything over 300 pages, but I enjoy long novels if they're readable.

Mayo: 400 pages or more. The length doesn't turn me on or off. I'd rather read 500 or 600 pages of gold than 100 pages of garbage.

Rostrom: 350-400 pages. Certain authors

(Delany, Norton) I can only read in small doses.

Gibbs: 300 pages or more. I enjoy/hate long novels as well as short novels.

Denton: 300 pages or more. Sf over 200 pages long. I'm delighted to see Frederik Pohl selections being longer than the normal 160 pages.

Shoemaker: 400 pages. I have no preference.

Kring: Something over 600 pages. And they don't turn me on or off.

Resnick: 750 pages or more, depending on type size. Hate to start them, love to get hooked by them. (Kind of "Wow! It's great, and there are still 800 pages to go" attitude.)

Davis: A long novel is one I can't finish. I may hesitate to pick up one calculating the time it will take, the prospect of hefting it everywhere, but it depends on the quality.

Cagle: 500 pages.

Meadows: By sf terms, 300 pages. By mainstream 400 or more. I must confess long works scare me a bit.

Wallace: Over 300 pages is too long, but there are rare exceptions.

Franke: Page count doesn't have a thing to do with how long a novel is, and I've managed to read 300-400 pagers in an evening where it took a couple of days to get through a 250pp book. A 500pp, average typeface, six book would be a long one. It might tend to make me postpone reading it until I knew there shouldn't be any interruptions.

Whitaker: A long novel is one which is so bad that you discover that the covers are much too far apart. Once in a while I enjoy a long novel.

Foyster: None of these. To me a long novel can only have length subjectively. So I would tend to choose a novel which is difficult to follow: Dream of the Red Chamber or Romance of the 3 Kingdoms, both Chinese.

Hill: Depends on content.

Zeldes: Depends on print size. 300-400 pages, but it doesn't matter to me.

Goldstein: A long novel is one that's about an inch thick. Don't turn me off, but if they don't grab my interest deeply, they'll be set aside for shorter stuff.

Brown: 550-600 pgs. But Dune was too short, as was LotR and Foundation. On the other hand, Einstein Intersection was short but seemed long.

Vayne: about 500 pages. Long Novels don't turn me off if they are good.

Fendrich: 500 plus. I prefer long novels.

Hackenberg: Usually I prefer novels of 200 pages or less, but was glad Cancer Ward was long.

Roberts: A long novel for me is a three-decker like Bleak House or War and Peace. They tend to frighten me, but of course once I get into them -- if I can -- they sometimes seem too short.

Anderson: 350 plus.

Hulse: Long is 400 plus. Long novels fascinate me. I think part of the reason is a love for the physical aspect of books. I love their feel, their looks, their heft, their stock; I enjoy the stitched signatures; I enjoy their presence. Therefore, a hefty book adds a substantial buzz to my library. As for enjoyment, I wouldn't hesitate to buy a hefty Heinlein or an impressive Asimov (depends there; I hesitate to pay $25 for Don Juan; there are limits).

"C.D." Doyle: Many of the 'long' (roughly 450 pages) stories I read are too draggy, with a minimum of action, and crispness. The last 'long' novel I read (Stranger in a Strange Land), I was only persuaded to read after three different people told me how utterly fantastic it was. And their 'testimonials' got me through the bad parts. Lately, long novels have been turning me off, being as my patience quota is somewhere around -5.

Wolfenbarger: Yep, 300 pages is a long novel. Long novels don't turn me off if they're well written.

Heath: No such thing as a long novel.

QUESTION 14: Who is your favorite sf villain?

Walker: The only one I can think of is Lugosi's 'Igor'.

Chauvenet: 'Duquesne' of E E Smith's 'Skylark' series.

Wolfe: How about Professor Lucifer in 'The Ball and the Cross'? Or Sunday in The Man Who was Thursday? Steerpike? Count Dracula? The shark in 'Shark'?

Lapidus: Rhoditis, the industrialist, in Silverberg's 'To Live Again'.

Cvetko: 'The Mule' in the Foundation Tril.

Malzberg: ----

Coulson: Dr. Miguelito Loveless.

Pierce: Dr. Moreau (serious); Ming (non-serious).

Steve B: ----

Singer: Viole Falushe in Vance's Palace of Love.

Cohen: Ben Reich of Demolished Man. Howard Alan Treesong of Vance's Star King novels.

Long: The Klingons, maybe? Sauron?

Connor: I'd hesitate to name Dr. Smith from 'Lost in Space', or 'Killer Kane'. I've forgotten more than I can remember. (PW -- Dr. Smith was the reason I watched LiS for a whole year.)

Don D': Lazarus Long.

Chilson: The only sf villain I can recall offhand is 'Blacky' DuQuesne. Good sf doesn't run to stock villainy, which is one of the best things about it.

Arthurs: The only sf villain I can think of offhand was Duquesne.

Simmons: Blackie DuQuesne.

Warner: Duquesne.
Sneary: No favorite hero either.
Parks: The US Government (yes, you read that right) (PW -- and yet another file in the Annals of the CIA is opened!)
Salomon: The bad guy in the Skylark series. (PW -- who was he?)
Applebaum: Dow deCastreis in Dickson's Tactics of Mistake.
Sharpe: The Mule.
Robinson: Dr. Zachery Smith! What do you expect from someone named John Robinson!
Bowie: Fu Manchu?
Gibbs: Harlan Ellison? What's an sf villain?
Shoemaker: I can recall few, and none hold any particular interest for me.
Kring: It has to be Blackie Duquesne, of course.
Resnick: Ben Reich.
Davis: The suave cyclops in Flesh Gordon. Runner-up Harlan Ellison.
Cagle: Dvgeny Kapinsky (PW -- I'm not even going to ask who 'Dvgeny Kapinsky' is.)
Meadows: C S Lewis' Un-man in Perelandra, Weston, who was already a heavy possessed by Satan. Excellent job of pure convincing evil personified.
Wallace: R.A.H. He can write a plain tale well-told, but now rarely does.
Franke: The Mule.
Whitaker: The Gollum. The things from spaces between in Lovecraft.
Zeldes: Slippery Jim DiGriz.
Goldstein: You wouldn't! Possibly the computer in Ellison's I Have no Mouth etc. or the villain in E E Smith's Lensmen.
Brown: Wormface; and the evil (shudder! hiss! boo!) Boskones, and Dr. Duq.
Vayne: I can't think of any offhand.
Fendrich: Ming the Merciless?
Hackenberg: Hari Seldon (PW -- ?).
Roberts: Sauron in LotR is my favorite. I was rooting for him all the way through that interminable work. I like Baron Harkonnen of Dune quite a bit -- that is, I like him personally. I was shocked to discover that my students this semester preferred the Eloi of the Time Machine over the Morlocks -- and they were shocked by my preferences. But sf does not often produce good villains: that is the function of fantasy. Fantasy does oppose us good guys to them bad guys, but sf usually has simple them vs. us with few overtones of moral rot. When I was a child I always preferred the banker who was secretly head of the gang of outlaws in the Sat. westerns. He was the only person with any brains or ambition.
Anderson: DuQuesne.
"C.D." Doyle: One of my favorite sf villains is the guy (it's always a guy, and there's always at least one in a story) who always plays it by the

book, refuses to accept new ideas, even when they might save him.

Wolfenbarger: Have no tried and true favorite sf villain.

Heath: van Rijn.

QUESTION 15: What one scene from an sf book still sticks in your mind from a book you read more than two years ago? Describe it very briefly.

Walker: The finale of 'Childhood's End' as the children leave the Earth to its fate. Wow.

Sween: When Manuel calls up Mike at the end of 'Moon is a Harsh Mistress' and finds he has died.

Chauvenet: In 'Druso' (maybe by Eando Binder) the scene where selected humans are chosen to go to 'Heaven' and step on a conveyor belt taking them into the slaughter house instead. ((Really by Friedrich Freksa, a German. --j.j.p.))

Wolfe: Frankenstein's monster on the arctic ice. The hobbits seeing Durin's crown in the pool. The demon cat in The Moster and Margarite. The premier of the Queen of Air and Darkness riding a stag. The women boarding the saucer in 'The Women Men Don't See'. Hundreds of others.

Lapidus: The vision of the small band of humans walking endlessly through the computer in 'I Have No Mouth, etc.'

Bracken: When one of Ron Goulart's washing machines (I think it was a washing machine) misses the guy it was trying to kill and to swim the Pacific.

Cvetko: When the two boys in the 'Mushroom Planet' books blast off from Earth and land on the Mushroom Planet. I read those books in 6th grade and they're still very vivid.

Malzberg: Backing that big car up the road in Rogue Moon. The last passage through the death machine in ditto.

Coulson: Hell, I can recall dozens. The books I read 20 years ago are still more vivid in some cases than the ones I read yesterday. At random: The opening line of Sturgeon's 'It' ('It walked in the woods'.) In 'Glory Road' where the hero is sneaking thru the woods and steps on the tail of a baby dragon. In 'Bring the Jubilee', where the hero is trying desperately to get the Southern troops to follow his history and take Little Round Top.

Pierce: One I remembered was the ironic conclusion of 'The Servant Problem' by William Tenn. It's only one of many, but I bring it up, because I had forgotten the name and author of the story for years until Walker just happened to mention it one day.

Steve B: In 'Needle', the alien is attempting to communicate with the boy by forming letters on his retina, and the boy is terrified.

Cohen: From Dick's Martian Time-Slip when the teaching machines begin to babble

-- the insanity of a mad child has begun to affect the real world.

Long: The end of the world scene from Childhood's End.

Connor: One? Sorry, my mind becomes swamped with 'scenes'.... However, for at least 2 years I've been trying to remember what story it was wherein a moon explorer tries a crater transit but is totally covered, lost, in the deep dust. Remarkable how many of those old 'scenes' represented 'ideas' which have since been used over & over again, in one guise or another!

Don D': In Delany's Jewels of Aptor where they encounter a giant amoeba on a narrow bridge.

Shelia D': Braxa dancing in Zalazny's A Rose for Ecclesiastes.

Chilson: James Schmitz' Agent of Vega: Zone Agent Iliff captured it from the non-human Pagadan. "He brought the captured thought slowly from his mind: the picture of a quiet, dawnlit city -- seas of sloping, ivory-tinted roofs, and towers slender against a flaming sky."

Gaier: Hubbard's Fear -- James Lowry makes a descent into the basement on stairs which are uneven. A frightening psychotic journey.

Arthurs: The climactic scene from Z's Isle of the Dead where a volcano, an earthquake, and a hurricane are going on simultaneously, while the hero and villain fight a laser-powered death duel by making obscene gestures at each other. Also, the space-jaunting scene at the end of Stars, My Destination.

Simmons: The restaurant scene in '...And Then There Were None' where the private and the sergeant have thing explained to them. More recently, the scene in When Harlie was One where the old scientist threatens to buy everyone else and then complains about having to do other people's thinking for them.

Warner: The stars appearing at the end of Nightfall.

Parks: I can't think back two years. I don't even think I read sf 2 years ago. I'm 14, remember? (PW -- I love that answer.)

Applebaum: Outpatient by James White. The climax: after 20 pgs. of the doctors trying to cure the newly discovered alien, the young upstart doctor tells the head of the hospital that sometimes you can help someone by not doing anything.

Sharpe: The death of Planet Earth in Childhood's End.

Robinson: The Burning Man on the Spanish Steps in Stars, My Distination.

Bowie: From Wylie's Tomorrow, a woman being sliced to bits from flying glass following the blast of a nuclear de-

vice over rural America. I applaud Wylie's use of such to add realism.

Mayo: Childhood's End -- when the people of Earth see the Overlords for the first time. The Overlord standing on the ramp of his ship with a boy and a girl in his arms.

Denton: Many from LotR. A great scene of thievery from John Jakes' Tonight We Steal the Stars in which the protagonist-thief, having reached the place where precious gems simulating a galaxy are in natural motion, discovers that they are hidden in a matrix of mirrors and other simulation systems. So near and yet so far. Some very nice scenes in Sterling Lanier's recent Hiero's Journey.

Shoemaker: In The Time Machine when the hero first operates his machine.

Kring: Childhood's End where the Overlords first show themselves to the world.

Resnick: Something Wicked This Way Comes (PW -- I loved that book!) where Mr. Dark is slowly, lazily searching through the library where the two boys are hiding. More terrifying than the whole of Lovecraft and Poe combined.

Davis: Venus Plus X, Sturgeon, the children singing in the pool, wafting notes, building trials, and harmonics..

Cagle: Ellison's hype of 'Bentfin Boomer Boys'.

Meadows: That's not fair; I keep on reading my favorite ones. Probably, since you limit it to books since 73, the climax from Lupoff's Sacred Locomotive Flies, where the Earth is destroyed by falling into a huge cavity in itself until nothing is left.

Franke: The transmutation scene in VV's The Enchanted Village. I read it more than 15 yrs. ago and can visualize it instantly at any time.

Whitaker: Some of the sequences in People Minus X by Raymond Z. Gallun. The idea of miniaturizations of people and the duplication of mind/soul concepts.

Foyster: The death of the protagonist in How Beautiful with Banners.

Piper: When Kenneth (I think) gets a pair of glasses in The Judgement of Eve and the interior of the shop he's in lights up by his ability to, at last, see clearly.

Jeeves: Clarke's Rescue Party where the rescuing ships follow and locate Earth's evacuation fleet.

Zeldes: From Asylum Earth by Bruce Elliot in which the protag. performs African (?) rites with a scapel and mud that have been 'cleaned' in an autoclave, to taped drum music. (PW -- Whaaat?)

Goldstein: Oh, boy. 'Sideneus 4 and the Pillers of Dawn'. How many people can remember something like that? One line that evokes a whole series of scenes. Those dreams of (was it?) Poppet, from Childhood's End. That

was the first non-poetry I ever copied. At one time I practically had those strange places memorized. The Hall of Planets from Norton. A Roald Dahl story about a boy who was walking to the end of a tapestry rug, lost his balance, and fell into the red or the black, and got swallowed up. Hundreds more.

Brown: The roll-call of stars in the Hall of Leave-Taking from Last Planet by Norton. In one of the People stories, where Valancy calls down the thunderstorm. The Hunters chasing Legion (?) in Laumer's Trace of Memory. Where Hari Seldon foretells the fall of the Empire in Foundation. The end of Stormbringer when Elric's soul is taken by the Demon.

Vayne: Aldiss' Hothouse -- the idea of the Earth and the Moon tethered by some sort of spider's web, along which these spider-like things travel.

Roberts: I still remember with affection the scene in The Long Afternoon of Earth when the intelligent parasitic fungus decided to head out for the stars, and I like the scene in Rogue Moon when the protagonist returns to Earth to read the note his earlier body had written him. And the scene at the end of Mission of Gravity when the lifeforms of the planet invent a means of flying.

Anderson: The blue fire of the sword of Rhiannon (Brackett).

Hulse: I don't know the author or title. It concerns an expedition into the past. Dinosaurs, etc. As the people are killed, their existence is removed from the future and the group's conscious memory. That idea thrilled me. Know the author or title? I'd like to reread it. I thought it was Heinlein but I've never traced it down.

"C.D." Doyle: The scene in Stranger, when all those police start coming into Jubal Harshaw's back yard, and he bawls them out, was so hilarious, I had to wait 5 minutes before I was in stable enough condition to turn the page. Like, I could just see it happening, right before my eyes.

Wolfenbarger: All of I Am Legend, by Richard Matheson.

Heath: The man-machine duel in DUNE.

QUESTION 16: What is the most interesting sf idea (concept, whatever) that you have ever read?

Walker: at 15, the themes of Williamson's 'The Humanoids', later -- Clement's Gravity World, the Ringworld, Simak's Gods in 'Choice of Gods', and now Priest's 'Inverted World', plus many more -- fascinating!

Sween: The idea of what is human.

Chauvenet: The theme of Don Stuart's 'Forgetfulness'. The primitive, forgettable nature of all our present knowledge compared to what one might

learn in the future.

Wolfe: That a man can change his life by a single discovery.

Lapidus: Probably time travel paradoxes.

Brazier: The concept I found most fascinating which drove me to a long study of non-fiction fields was General Semantics (new to me at the time) which I picked up from VV's 'World of Null-A'.

Bracken: Christopher Priest's 'Inverted World'.

Cvetko: The Ringworld.

Malzberg: The concept of simultaneous consciousness throughout all lifetime chronology in Spinrad's 'The Weed of Time' (In Anne McCaffrey's Alchemy and Academe). It took Spinrad five years to sell that story.

Coulson: Can't say; it's what the authors do with them that counts.

Pierce: The Stapledonian-type concepts in cosmology, alien life, etc., as opposed to just the 'puzzle' ideas.

Steve B: People living permanently in starships, either the 'interstellar ark' or 'free trader' type.

Tackett: FTL.

Cohen: Matter transmission echoes in Disch's Echo Round His Bones; I even invented a bad chess variant based on the idea. See Q.21 for runnerups.

Bliss: For simple fascination, slow glass.

Don D': The view of human existence and the subjectivity of time as found in V's Slaughterhouse Five.

Shelia D': Time travel.

Gaier: Asimov's robotic precepts.

Arthurs: Jaunting, in Stars, My Distination. Not the idea of teleportation but the handling of it.

Simmons: Niven's Ringworld.

Warner: That intelligent life can exist on other worlds.

Sneary: Time wiewing, as in E for Effort.

Parks: In Lord of Light, the machine which you put a dime in and talk to the heavens.

Salomon: Time travel.

Applebaum: James White's concept of Sector General, the ultimate hospital.

Sharpe: Virtual immortality.

Bowie: Heinlein's time travel paradox in 'All You Zombies'.

Mayo: That the Earth is the insane asylum of the universe.

Gibbs: Niven's Ringworld.

Rostrom: Lifeforms made to order through tectogenetic manipulation.

Shoemaker: Wyman Guin's handling of a society in which everyone is schizophrenic in 'Beyond Bedlam'.

Resnick: For the good of the field, hyperspace. Personally, the notion of a galactic empire.

Davis: Alice's spatial approach/avoidance problems in Through the Looking Glass.

Cagle: Anything involving intergalactic con-manship.

Meadows: Dick's Man in the High Castle.

That a parallel universe would not be the 'real' universe, and that a book would use the I Ching as a plot device, and as a means for writing the book as well.

Wallace: Probably androids, in Capek's play, though he called them robots.

Franke: The Ringworld, light-powered sail-space ships, parthenogenesis of humans in critical survival situations, 'jaunting' -- you name it.

Whitaker: See A. to Q. 15 -- Gallun, miniaturizations etc.

Foyster: The decadence of J G Ballard's Vermilion Sands stories.

Hill: SiSL.

Jeeves: Smith's Bergenholm inertia nullifier.

Zeldes: The time travel paradox -- all you Zombies.

Goldstein: Slow glass. Renshawing from Heinlein's Gulf and Citizen of the Galaxy.

Brown: First contact.

Vayne: Parallel or alternate worlds. Or just stories that explore the sideways in time concept. Man in the High Castle, Farmer's 'Sail On! Sail On!', Asimov's 'Living Space'.

Fendrich: Stapledon's species that follow the twilight; the time paradoxes in Charles Harness' 'The Paradox Men'(?).

Hackenberg: Dick's idea of freezing dead human beings and resusitating them briefly to communicate with them. My brother died recently and it would be nice if I could have arranged that sort of set-up.

Roberts: Stapledon's conception of God at the end of Star Maker is a strange self-portrait (though I doubt he realized that). It presents the writer as one of the characters from one of his books would perceive him. And the careful invention of Paul's prescience in Dune seems to me, also, a self-portrait of the writer as someone seeing various possibilities of development his own novel might take if he, the writer, has his hero do this, say, rather than that. And, again, I liked tremendously the careful working out of all the physical details of that disc-shaped planet in Mission of Gravity. But there are paragraphs of imagery in the Conan stories that are so far beyond my own powers of imagination and so different that they intrigue me even as I find myself bursting into -- well, not laughter but -- a smile.

Connor: I'm a little late adding this, but reading all these other ideas reminds me of one of the old ones, which I might include just for the record. Many of the stories (esp. by Ray Cummings) featuring it were sheer pulp-hack, but the idea of a microcosmos and a macrocosmos (i.e. an infinite progression of worlds and life into smallness -- 'below' our size -- and

into greatness — above our size) is — certainly as much so as the parallel world concept — really quite mind-boggling.

Anderson: Reverse time flow.

"C.D." Doyle: I can't remember the title of the story, I can't even remember the author, but it was in a collection of stories titled, Once There Was a Giant. It concerned a young man who couldn't be insured, and was trying to find out why. In the end he found out that when he died, the world ended. All the possibilities that brought up, all the images it conjured....

Wolfenbarger: No single answer....

Heath: That man is infinitely adaptable and inventive. See the Ravenshaw stories.

QUESTION 17: What is your favorite Heinlein story, or novel?

Walker: I Will Fear No Evil -- Honest! Double Star is a close second.

Malzberg: Double Star.

Sween: The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, a nearly perfect novel.

Chauvenet: Beyond This Horizon.

Lapidus: Double Star and Have Spacesuit, etc. Favorite short, 'All You Zombies'.

Bracken: Starship Troopers. Next, Stranger in a Strange Land.

Cvetko: Stranger, etc.

Coulson: 'Green Hills of Earth'.

Pierce: The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Steve B: The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Tackett: Easier to pick one I liked the least: IWFNE.

Cohen: All You Zombies.

Long: SISL.

Connor: Too difficult to pick. Most of his older stuff is in competition.

Bliss: Waldo.

Don D': The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Shelia D': Ditto.

Chilson: The Juveniles, but they can't be considered separately. As a group they make a remarkable extended novel, a sort of exploded Future History.

Gaier: Double Star.

Arthurs: SIASL. Gasp!

Simmons: Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Warner: Might be Methuselah's Children.

Sneary: Heinlein is my favorite writer but I have a bad memory.

Parks: TEFL.

Applebaum: Misfit.

Sharpe: SISL.

Robinson: Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Bowie: Story: Men Who Sold the Moon. Novel: Time for the Stars.

Mayo: SISL.

Gibbs: Roads Must Roll.

Rostrom: Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Denton: Would you believe that I have never been able to finish a Heinlein novel. I've tried five different ones. (PW -- I've read more than five, Frank,

and it has never done me any good. Whenever I tell a Heinleiner I don't like Heinlein, he makes me recite the whole list then exclaims: "That explains it -- you haven't read _____, (his own favorite)." The next day he buys me a copy. I read it. I dislike it. He says, "Perhaps, if you tried _____." If I live long enough, my friends will drag me through his complete works.

Shoemaker: Universe, and Starship Troopers.

Kring: Starship Troopers.

Resnick: Universe.

Davis: All You Zombies. No competition.

Cagle: Starship Trooper. (PW -- Cagle, Brazier tells me you were never a cub scout! That disqualifies you for voting in this poll. Get your goddamn answers off my Bond.)

Meadows: Waldo. He almost put real people in that one.

Wallace: Starship.

Franke: SISL.

Foyster: The Puppet Masters.

Hill: TEfL.

Piper: Double Star, I guess.

Jeeves: Roads Must Roll.

Dave Rowe: Questions 17-19 take it for granted that we hold Heinlein to be Ghod, and highly original, which are two opinions that I (& others) do not hold. (PW -- goddamn limey.)((Don't worry; that info has already been put into Mr Rowe's dossier.))

Zeldes: Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Brown: Have Spacesuit, etc. Double Star, a close second.

Vayne: The Door Into Summer.

Fendrich: Double Star.

Hackenberg: SIASL.

Roberts: The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Anderson: The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Hulse: 'All You Zombies', followed closely by 'By His Bootstraps' (followed closely by 'He Who Shrank', followed by 'Farewell to the Master', if you want to know some of my favorite stories. Got carried away there, didn't I?

"C.D." Doyle: Nearly the only one I've read, Stranger in a Strange Land.

Wolfenbarger: My favorite Heinlein (of what I've read) would most likely be Waldo.

Heath: Glory Road.

QUESTION 18: Who is your favorite Heinlein character?

Walker: The cat in Door Into Summer.

Malzberg: Lorenzo.

Sween: Mike the computer.

Chauvenet: Lazarus Long of Beyond This Horizon (not of TEFL).

Lapidus: Lorenzo.

Bracken: Johann Sabastian Bach Smith/ Eunice.

Coulson: Joe-Jim.

Pierce: D.D. Harriman.

Steve B: Mike the Computer.

Tackett: Joe-Jim? Lazarus Long? The guy who was an unwed mother?
Cohen: Kitten, I guess.
Long: Jubal Harshaw.
Bliss: Wot the heck wuz the name of that wizard in Waldo?
Don D': Adam Selene.
Shelia D': Ditto.
Chilson: Heinlein himself.
Arthurs: Farnham. Gasp! Gasp!
Warner: Podkayne.
Parks: Farnham.
Applebaum: Holly Jones.
Sharpe: V M Smith.
Robinson: Star or perhaps Lorenzo Smyth(e).
Bowie: Harriman.
Mayo: Mike the computer.
Shoemaker: Joe-Jim.
Kring: Lazarus Long.
Davis: Protag. of All You Zombies.
Cagle: Lazarus Long.
Wallace: There are no characters, only 'caricatures'.
Franke: Lazarus. Jubal.
Whitaker: All You Zombies protag.
Foyster: D D Harriman.
Piper: Baslim.
Zeldes: Manuel Garcia O'Kelley.
Brown: The Mother Thing, Granny Hazel, Mary the ?, Carolyne Msyhite, Assault Captain Helen Walker.
Hackenberg: Mike V. Smith.
Roberts: Jubal E. Harshaw during the first two thirds of the book. I usually do not like the Heinlein characters he seems to want me to like. It is that mind of Heinlein's that most intrigues me, something I infer from the stories.
Anderson: Lazarus Long.
"C.D." Doyle: Jubal Harshaw.
Wolfenbarger: I have no favorite Heinlein character.
Heath: Karen, in Farnham's Freehold.

QUESTION 19: What is the best idea Heinlein ever had?

Walker: He had almost all of them first, didn't he? Time travel paradoxes, starship civilizations, futuristic theocracies, etc. But I found the bisexual relationship in I Will Fear etc. the most fascinating and gutsy concept in sf -- ever.
Malzberg: Double Star, again.
Chauvenet: The future history concept.
Lapidus: Perhaps his line marriages, as described in Moon/Mistress.
Coulson: None of Heinlein's best stories presented any ideas that were original with him. He <u>was</u> a craftsman, not an idea man. (And that past tense is deliberate.)
Pierce: The future history series.
Tackett: The best idea Heinlein ever had was to devote his time to writing.
Cohen: Kitten.
Don D': Writing juvenile novels that were not 'written down' but merely featured teenage protagonists.
Shelia D': To stop writing after Moon/Mis-

tress. By comparison everything since suffers. (PW -- ???)

Chilson: For pure ingenuity -- All You Zombies. For an idea carefully developed in every detail -- the flying in 'The Menace from Earth'.

Gaier: Encouraging rare blood donations.

Arthurs: That children should be able to divorce their parents.

Warner: The future history frame for his stories.

Parks: Fucking a computer. (PW -- How did I miss out on that one? Aw, gee.)

Applebaum: Delos D. Harriman owning all the rights to the moon; the extended families started in _____ and continued in TEfL.

Sharpe: The anarchistic concept in Stranger.

Robinson: The conceptualization of All You Zombies.

Bowie: That prostitution should be respected.

Mayo: That a company would raffle off a second hand spacesuit.

Gibbs: His Future History idea or the story structure of 'By His Bootstraps'.

Rostrom: Magnetic launching catapults.

Shoemaker: Either Universe or 'And He Built a Crooked House'.

Kring: His "Waldo" idea was pretty nifty.

Resnick: A consistent, cohesive future history.

Davis: Retirement.

Cagle: Sex. (PW -- maybe he got that idea from Campbell, too.)

Meadows: The paradox in 'By His Bootstraps'.

Franke: To make writing his profession.

Whitaker: All You Zombies.

Foyster: Since the question implies that at one time Heinlein had a good idea, an assumption I am not prepared to make, I can't answer the question.

Hill: Historical connotations and metaphors in TEfL.

Brown: Martian flat cats.

Hackenberg: SIASL -- Mike's upbringing.

Roberts: For me, it is his ability to produce paradigms of activity and relationship: in Moon and in Universe and in Glory Road and in Starship Troopers. He sums up whole traditions with surprising neatness and relevance.

Wolfenbarger: Impossible for me to answer, not being a RAHeinlein completest.

Heath: The Man Who Sold the Moon.

QUESTION 20: I suppose everybody agrees that 'Nightfall' is Asimov's best story. What is his second best?

Walker: 'Nightfall' has a grand idea, but I never thought it A's best. To me, that honor belongs to 'The Dead Past', with all the rest of the stories in 'Earth is Room Enough' for 2nd place.

Malzberg: I don't agree nor does the author. Billiard Ball, Belief, The Ugly Little Boy, The Red Queen's Race, many are much better although less

popular.

Sween: 'Nightfall' is boring and overlong. 'Evidence' and 'Reason' are my first and second choices.

Chauvenet: Part II of The Gods Themselves, which ran in IF, not Parts I or III.

Lapidus: I don't think that 'Nightfall' IS Asimov's best, unless you mean story as opposed to novel. (PW — I did, but that's okay.) Caves of Steel is Asimov's best work. 'Nightfall' his best story with, oh, 'The Last Question' second.

Bracken: Haven't read enough Asimov to comment.

Cvetko: Can't pick out a single story, but his robot stories as a group stick in my mind. Novels -- 'Foundation Trilogy'.

Coulson: The middle section of 'The Gods Themselves' — not the book as a whole.

Pierce: I like "The Martian Way." Also his uncharacteristically poetic "Eyes Do More Than See."

Steve B: 'Reason'.

Tackett: The Mule.

Cohen: The Last Trump and The Last Question stick in my mind more than his others.

Long: I don't think Nightfall was his best. 'Super-neutron', perhaps?

Connor: The Foundation Trilogy as a one-story unit.

Bliss: Did I ever read Nightfall? I always thought his robot stories were the greatest.

Don D': I entirely disagree that Nightfall is Asimov's best story. 'Waterclap' is, with Nightfall about tenth. His second best is probably one of the robot stories: 'Reason' or 'Liar!.

Shelia D': Who's this everybody? I don't. Any of the robot stories come first, closely followed by any of the robot stories.

Chilson: The Ugly Little Boy.

Simmons: Evidence.

Warner: The short-short about children learning how school was in the old days. The Way it Was?

Parks: Asimov has no second best stories. After Nightfall, everything else is just there.

Applebaum: Caves of Steel.

Sharpe: No, I don't think Nightfall is Asimov's best story. I would put it after TFT.

Robinson: Don't say that! How would you like me to help Isaac beat you to a pulp? After all, that was written 30 yrs. ago and the 'real experts' say it's JWC's finest story. Try The Billiard Ball, some time.

Bowie: The Inevitable Conflict.

Gibbs: In my opinion, Asimov's best work is Caves of Steel.

Shoemaker: The Dead Past. (PW — ah, another connoisseur.)

Kring: Haven't read...Asimov in ages, but the center section of Gods Them...

Resnick: I personally prefer Galley Slave

or The Mule.

Davis: His Velikovsky put-down (all-fiction).

Cagle: F&SF columns.

Meadows: I don't know if there is a second best.

Wallace: The first two are the trilogy and Caves of Steel.

Whitaker: His BEST story is 'The Ugly Little Boy'.

Hill: Gods Themselves.

Dave Rowe: Question 20 takes the same attitude as Q. 17-19. I'm a little perturbed by fan writers who are under the impression that their opinion is law. In the case of Q20 Paul does say "I suppose" but then again isn't a questionaire used to find out people's opinions, not pre-suppose them... (PW — goddamn limey.)

Zeldes: The Martian Way.

Brown: Liar.

Vayne: 'Playboy and the Slime Gods' (also called 'What is this Thing Called Love'). Not his best, just most enjoyable. Second best to 'Nightfall' is Foundation Trilogy.

Hackenberg: Naked Sun.

Roberts: I don't care for 'Nightfall', actually. I think he is right in claiming that he learned a lot more about writing after doing that story. I have read so many of his stories that they tend to blur together in a single Asimov tome. Probably I would vote for Caves of Steel, though I like the robot stories. But I am not an Asimov fan... Well, he writes such readable stories that I do admire him tremendously for that.

Anderson: Caves of Steel.

Wolfenbarger: Asimov has a second best?

Heath: I really don't care for Asimov, except for his Foundation trilogy, the robotic stories, and his nonfiction. I'm reserving opinion on all of his works, because The Gods Themselves arrives here shortly.

QUESTION 21: What is your favorite sf cliche? etc. etc.

Walker: I'm crazy about the Zenna Henderson/Chad Oliver's 'Shadows in the Sun' idea of aliens, good or bad, concealed behind the facade of a small town.

Malzberg: See the last section of 'Notes Toward a Useable Past' in Harry Harrison's Nova 2.

Sween: Time Travel.

Chauvenet: Ray guns. An inheritance from Aulo of Ulan first read at an impressionable age (ie 11 or 12).

Wolfe: Probably the Last Man on Earth.

Lapidus: Time travel paradoxes.

Brazier: A story where a character's senses are switched, or he has a new sense, such as sensing magnetic fields. Or any idea that switches my habitual thought pattern — like what I thought was a fossil turns out to be a future-artifact, old to new or short to long

or up to down. I am especially keen on powers of humans or aliens such as the Weinbaum adaptive ultimate, invisibility, the Midas Touch, etc.

Bracken: The world destroyed by an atomic war and the survivors rebuilding it.

Cvetko: The wise old super-race of aliens who had either died and left us a legacy (ie the Krell) or who are watching us (2001). The cliche I most hate is the one in which malevolent aliens are trying to take over the Earth.

Coulson: The adventure on an alien world, with a depiction of an exotic non-human background and society. (Most of the works of Clement, Norton, Brackett, half of Vance, etc.)

Pierce: Sexy Amazons from savage planets like Brackett's Beudag. I don't like any serious idea reduced to a cliche.

Steve B: Societies with interstellar travel -- regular contact with 1000 or more systems.

Singer: Time travel stories.

Cohen: Super-big living areas as in Big Planet, Ringworld, Orbitsville, etc.

Long: Space empires and emperors.

Connor: Pass. (PW -- Ed Connor has passed on the last six questions because he said he could not choose one from so many possibilities. Ed -- shape up!)

Bliss: Sword and Dagger, etc. in the midst of an advanced technology. I will never be convinced that it is supposed to be taken seriously. Especially in an Analog story.

Don D': After-the-Bomb.

Shelia D': Time Travel.

Chilson: New worlds. Strange worlds, beautiful, ugly, dangerous. Grittily rationalized by Anderson, struck off live and quivering by Heinlein, blown like bubbles out of Jack Vance's pipe. I like new and unearthly worlds.

Gaier: First contact, then time travel, then meeting the challenge of an alien new world.

Arthurs: The unknowing superman who slowly becomes aware of his true powers. Survival-in-the-face-of-earth-shattering catastrophes, and convoluted time-travel stories.

Simmons: First contact stories.

Warner: If Paul (PW -- yes, Harry?) means overworked themes (PW -- yes, harry), I'd nominate superpopulation growth fiction (PW -- a glutton for punishment if there ever was one!). If he (PW -- still here, Harry) refers to cliches in construction (PW -- why not?), the moment when the hero discovers that the bad guys are really the good guys after all.

Sneary: Para-time Police, or Leiber's Time-War series idea.

Parks: I like the old body-snatching bit myself. (PW - a goose or two will suffice.)

Solomon: Anything to do with robots.

Applebaum: The alien invasion being beaten off by the puny earthlings.

Sharpe: BEMs ((see back-cover cartoon.))

Robinson: The apocalypse, in any form, is the sf cliche.

Bowie: Disasters -- War of the Worlds, Tomorrow, Dark December, etc.

Mayo: The parallel universe.

Gibbs: The 'after doomsday' story most effectively done by British writers such as Wyndham and Ballard.

Rostrom: The Lensmen destroying the Eich by smashing 2 planets into the Eich world.

Kring: Telepath/psi powers.

Resnick: The starship. Whether it's generations-long, or a Space Beagle, or whatever, I go nuts over starship stories.

Davis: Telepathy's effect on emotions.

Cagle: Clumsy sex scenes. (PW -- clumbsy were the borogroves/and the momeraths were obscene!) ((Huh?))

Meadows: The benevolent ETs watching over us. Problem with this sort of thing is that the ETs always seem to understand us inside and out, and are usually sharing views with the author. Either that or they don't understand us, but think they do. Does anyone know of any stories where the benevolent ETs are really confused by us?

Wallace: Survival and first contact.

Franke: First contact, by far. Followed by After the Bomb/Plague/Holocaust/whatever (preferably a juicy mutant or two) (PW -- cue for a clumsy Cagle sex scene!) Generation starship stories.

Whitaker: Time travel stories with a humerous bent.

Foyster: (PW -- I don't believe it, John! You gave 'no answer' to the last 2 Q's. You, of all people!)

Hill: Crashing suns.

Piper: All of 'em...I love cliches.

Brown: Time travel, alternate dimensions, definitely. Followed by first contact.

Vayne: The idea of the superman in SF -- I don't care for the super strong he-man type, but I do enjoy the idea of mental giants or telepathic mutants. Also time travel, parallel worlds, and geometric puzzle stories involving topology or the fourth dimension of space.

Fendrich: Time paradoxes, visions of God.

Hackenberg: Time Travel.

Roberts: Probably I take most interest in invasions from Mars. The best such is in Stapledon's Last and First Men and no one is likely to surpass that as a serious variation on the theme.

Hulse: Time travel, then telepathy.

"C.D." Doyle: First contact stories - each is a little different. Also computers with minds of their own.

Wolfenbarger: Supernatural sf.

Heath: The asteroid miners.

---- Paul Walker.

From the fan who brought us the 'Rosebud' crack
Such a pome as this is really old hack. ----Ed.

WALT'S WRAMBLINGS

BY WALT LIEBSCHER

Oh, there's nothing like being in a fantome
There really isn't, I'm telling you
There's nothing like being in a fantome
So hip hoorah and bally-who.

Ed's Note: The quatrain just above is Walt's latest creation. The opus below's from the June, 1942 issue of Tucker's 'Sci-Fic Variety', a FAPAzine....

"I'D RATHER BE YOU"

(A POME)

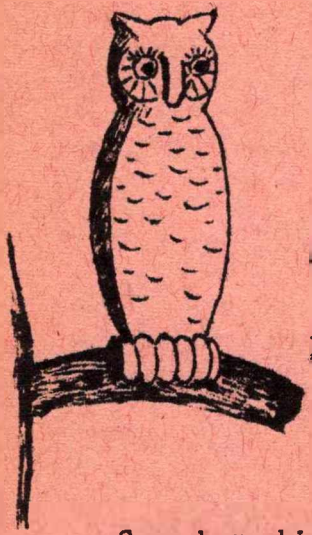
If I had my wish I wouldn't take gems
I'd want to change places with science fiction fmz
Oh little fanmag so good, so true
Above all things I'd rather be you
I'd rather be you than underwear Longie
A Lensman story or Tucker's Pongie
I'd rather be you than a squirrel so frisky
A B-E-M or the ego of Miske
I'd rather be you than all things in existence
Than a chance to do covers with atomical assistance
I'd rather be you than a piece of cheese
Than sciencefiction's 4e or Ackermanese
I'd rather be you than the stars in the heavens
Ruja-blu's popovers or E.E. Evans
I'd rather be you than the dough in my pocket
Than a promag cover or a future rocket
I'd rather be you than a toy if I could
Or a form fitting dress around Susan Wood

I'd rather be you than the Skylark of Space
Or the godawful contours of Korshak's face
I'd rather be you than a gentle breeze
Or even the dimples on Geis' knees
I'd rather be you than the Roks that hover
A vampire bold or a Trekie's lover
I'd rather be you than a frog that croaks
A nice little feud or a suicide hoax
I'd rather be you than a bowl of hash
An exclusion act or a fonepole crash
I'd rather be you than a new invention
Or the liquor consumed at a fan's convention
I'd rather be you than a bale of het
Or Louis Russell Chauvenet
I'd rather be you than pipeline weld-ehs
Or vivacious little Leah Zeldes
I'd rather be you than Charles Burbee
Or a cute little rascally Martian Twerpie
I'd rather be you than a worn out sock
Or a nice little yarn by Robert Bloch
I'd rather be you than a cookie or wafer
A Walt D. recording or Linda Bushyager
Than Blyly, Brazier or Indick too
Oh yes little fanmag I'd rather be you
To write this saga I must've been nuts
And Tuck if you print this, you've sure got guts.

----Walt Liebscher.

(It took nerve to print this, 'tis true
But I'd rather be nervy than a poet like you) --editor (B.T.)

(Used with slight updating revisions.)
Also used with Tucker's approval. See Chauvenet's letter in the LOCs.
Walt's current address: c/o Abby Lu Fuller, 5341 Raphael St., Los Angeles, CA 90042.



LOVECRAFT: MAN AND MYTH

BY

TOM COLLINS

LOVECRAFT: A BIOGRAPHY by L. Sprague de Camp, Doubleday & Co., 510 pp.; $10.00.

LOVECRAFT AT LAST by H. P. Lovecraft and Willis Conover, Carrollton Clark Collectors Edition, $30.00 (o.p.), trade edition $19.75, 272 pp.

Somewhere his friend W. Paul Cook said he was sure Lovecraft's reputation would last, but that it would find its true level only when those who knew him were gone. I think it is fortunate, now that the first major biography has appeared, that they are still around to survey the wreckage, and try to correct some of the damage Sprague de Camp has wrought in his hefty (510 pages) biography, Lovecraft: A Travesty.

No, of course that's not its proper name, but granted that it is the first full-length biography of HPL, and that it will likely remain the standard work for at least another decade, if not far longer, I cannot help but become upset that it is not far better than it is. Aside from simple factual errors, which we'll come back to, it just paints a picture so repellent that reviews have been calling HPL "scaribidaceous" and concluding that he was a thoroughly weird and twisted mental cripple. Worse, they are even leaping, on no further evidence but a reading of de Camp, to the conclusion that HPL was an incompetent hack, a "master of the turgid" whose stuff was not only bad in itself, but bad because the author "had never read a good book in his life."

Those of you who know that August Derleth and Donald Wandrei devoted years of their lives to publicizing HPL's work and to editing his letters, may wonder that such a repugnant specimen of the human race should have awakened such

loyalty in his friends. Those of you who have read any of the letters, or his essays -- indeed, even much of his poetry, will be amazed that such a scholarly, literate, and well-read man could earn such epithets as this biography has coaxed forth from otherwise intelligent reviewers like Larry McMurtry and Michael Kurland.

The fault, dear readers, lies with the amateur scholar who painted such an unpleasant picture that the reviewers, themselves unaware of the truth, had no option but to take the view they did. Here is Lovecraft skulking about at night, an apprentice ghoul. Here he is writing vile racial slanders to his closest family (at a time he was nearly crazy, suicidal, and in need of some excuse for his failure). Here he is as pedant, here again as racist, here as terrible poet, here as racist, now as incompetent businessman, again as racist.... Do you begin to get the picture?

And it is all wrong, wrong, wrong. De Camp makes much to-do about explaining away the prejudiced views on Aryan supremacy that HPL held, putting them carefully in context with the times, and quoting some of the worst of it at quite unnecessary length. But it's a coverup, because it was both worse than he says, and far less important. Instead of alibis and excuses, why not admit it is there, and get on with the other 99% of his life and character?

The reason is part of the fundamental flaw of the book -- de Camp is merely a professional debunker, perfectly at home in tracing down the source of a pseudoscientific theory, but utterly incapable of deciding what it means. Thus it is left to Barton St. Armand of Brown University, to point out the role of the aliens in HPL's life and work can be seen as part of the obsession with Byzantium and the "decline of the West" of the decadent literary tradition of which he was a part. That is, he can usually get his facts straight, but he doesn't have the equipment to analyze them.

"Howard's prejudices were many," Cook wrote in memoriam, "but so were his enthusiasms. If you knew him but little, the prejudices were first evident. When you knew him well, he did not hesitate to show his enthusiasms." He then recounts warmly the genuine love HPL had for things of the past. "Lovecraft was so lenient toward the foibles and toward the literary efforts of his friends that he was not only forgiven but loved for his own very strong opinions on many subjects."

Perhaps the problem is that de Camp knew Lovecraft but little. Certainly there is little or nothing in the biography here to give any sense of the man who saved the best of himself for his friends, the man of whom his friend E. A. Edkins said "There was nothing really affected

in Lovecraft's eccentricities; they sprang quite spontaneously from the ferment of a powerful and original mind."

See, what we're talking about is a full-length biography of one of New England's most extraordinary men of letters, a talented and intelligent man of this century who was nurtured on Georgian prose and poetry until he could write naturally in a style two-hundred years out of date; an outpost of the aesthete/decadent tradition who created the greatest horror stories since Poe, and with as much awareness of what he was doing. It is not Art which manifests itself by accident, and Lovecraft was an artist.

Since this is not the point of view of his biographer, it is perhaps worth taking a moment to enlarge on the matter. First, it does not make a difference that HPL's fiction first appeared in a pulp medium, nor that it was done for money (although, interestingly, it was not done for money). Even if HPL had ever been a member of that now-legendary crew who wrote voluminously and were paid by the word, he would merely have been in the company of Shakespeare, Scott, Trollope, and Clemens who were prolific of necessity. Nor was he, for that matter, prolific in his fiction, though profligate with his letters and careless of his verse.

Writing in the Times Book Review for June 15 of this year, art critic John Russell says:

> Serious art aims to tell us something that we urgently need to know. Unserious art does not; it may give pleasure of a momentary kind, but it does not set before us a system of values by which we ourselves may be changed and enriched. Without such a system, art is trivial, unanchored, unresonant.

By that definition, Lovecraft was a serious artist. His stories exemplify his personal worldview, the mindless cosmos of a materialist, indifferent to man, but by its immensity able to bring us out of ourselves into a truer realization of our role in the vast, empty, and magnificent universe. They are the result of a neo-classical viewpoint in which the true horror is that of Ayn Rand's slobbering idiot -- irrational, chaotic, unpredictable. His villains are Heisenbergs, unleashing disorder, or Eliots, destroying meaning and the rules of discourse.

In short, his fiction (itself only a small part of his writing) is the product of an aesthetic theory -- significant, anchored, and as many commentators have pointed out, in spite of all its flaws, resonant. It speaks to us, "We can say of any work of art of consequence that it is there because people needed it at a specific time and for specific reasons," says Russell. Would you care

to claim that the hundreds of thousands of volumes of Lovecraft's stories now in print, almost forty years after his death, meet no needs, and are popular for no reason?

Of course not. It makes no difference that it took a small band of militants clamouring in an unseemly way to win popular acceptance for his work. It took similar bands of the convinced to turn the tide of opinion about the war in Vietnam and the proper status of Moby Dick in the annals of literature. Anyone who is willing to look should be able to see that Cook was quite right when he said that those who came after HPL (as fiction writers in the genre of the "weird" story) owe more to Lovecraft than he owed to all those who had gone before.

But this is not the view our biographer takes. Instead, he treats HPL as only a minor pulp hack who couldn't make it and who died a failure. Part of the reason for that view is that de Camp is incapable of recognizing real literature when it bites him:

> ...nearly all of contemporary American poetry (so-called) is in free verse. The advantage of this formless 'verse' is that it is easy. It is lazy man's poetry, or poetry in rough draft. Anybody, even a child or a computer can do it.... (p. 174)

so that every time he embarks on criticism and gets away from the basic plot summary he normally provides, trouble is afoot. As when he dismisses HPL's landmark essay on "Supernatural Horror in Literature" as "a compilation of the sort that any professor of English could do." (p. 247). As when he takes the poem "Nemesis" for straight pastiche, when it is clearly at least part parody:

> Despite a good, swinging rhythm, Nemesis (probably inspired by Poe's Ulalume) is not only painfully derivative but also uses a galloping anapestic metre. This is fine for Browning's "Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!" but unsuited to Lovecraft's sombre subject. (p. 124)

It wins approval for jingling nicely, is bonged for being derivative (as any parody -- or pastiche -- must necessarily be), and Lovecraft himself said the metre was hybrid, "a cross between that of Poe's Ulalume and Swinburne's Hertha." (Selected Letters, Vol. I, p. 52)

Which brings us to the matter of factual accuracy. It is one thing to say the kindly, generous man known to his wide circle of friends and correspondents was all manner of unattractive and unlovable. It is another, in the course of detailing his life's story, to garble the simple facts of it. It is one thing to constant-

ly intrude your own opinions -- so that permissive education is confused with over-protection, for example, and so that one can always tell the true motivation for Lovecraft's actions, especially where the motivation was not what he said it was. It is quite another not to spell names correctly.

To take a few items almost at random (some of which have been eliminated from the book's latest printing):

The number of MA theses on HPL and foreign languages into which his stories have been translated is about double de Camp's figures, in each case.

Poe may not have been a drunkard, and Houdini did not die of cancer.

The Belgian author he cites on page four who thinks HPL one of America's leading authors is Michel de Ghelderode. I think it speaks volumes that he can't get the name straight, and clearly has no idea why this guy's opinion might have anything other then curiosity value.

Elizabeth Toldridge is mentioned in four separate places and the "d" is left out of her name every time.

Lovecraft did not tear off the covers of Weird Tales (though Don Wollheim did).

Lovecraft did not have a love affair from afar or otherwise with anyone who was the subject of his poem "To Phyllis". The verse in question is a takeoff on one of his friend Kleiner's productions, "To Miriam", a poem appearing in the same issue of the magazine as "To Phyllis".

Although Mrs. Dunsany did enclose a note in her husband's letter (p. 141) the "Dame Gossip" de Camp takes to be her is, in fact, a regular columnist for the magazine in which the letter was printed.

The basic flaw of the book is that the picture painted of its subject simply does not square with the recollections of his friends, or with the evidence of his writings. The fundamental assumption is that Lovecraft is not important enough to be worthy of real criticism, or the subject of study by a trained, professional scholar, and further, that he was merely an incompetent sort of hack. If those are not the underlying assumptions of the book, then they seem to be, and more famous and highly-paid reviewers than I have made the same mistake.

Beyond the inaccurate view of the writer is a loathesomely distorted view of the man, and on top of all are numerous silly, careless, or just plain incompetent errors of fact. Everyone will say he has his facts straight, but the picture turned out wrong. In fact, even the facts cannot always be relied upon, as I hope has been demonstrated.

So far I have said nothing about the material that has been left out, except to note the lack of reliable and informed criticism. (Not only is HPL's most famous essay dismissed out of hand, but his

poetry is constantly belittled with no justification but the sneers of the author's predecessors.) What might have been provided is a fuller picture of the amateur journalism circles (much like those of fandom today) in which HPL moved and lived and had his being, his friends, his wife, and much of his professional career. There might have been a fuller discussion of the remarkable power of Lovecraft's dreams, from which many of his stories derived. Or, more simply, the footnotes might have made data more accessible, have pinpointed sources, have been organized on the basis of one footnote per datum and not on the basis of a maximum of one per cluster of assertions.

And so far I have said nothing of the virtues of the book. They are indeed many, but by putting them last they are in their proper perspective. In spite of all I have said before, this is the most complete, factual, and important biography of HPL to appear so far. It is the only one of any size at all, and thus necessarily provides vast quantities of information in a comprehensive form. Like George Watzel's bibliography, it is the basis on which all further work must be based and evaluated. It is not the ultimate by any means, but it is a good start. Despite its lapses, and certain really improbable grotesqueries of syntax and style, it is full of curious and forgotten lore. Endless hours of research went into combing one of the outstanding amateur journalism collections in New York, and numerous thousands of pages of correspondence for information. He uncovered much new information, such as the letters of the poet Guiney, whom the young Lovecraft knew. These are all considerable accomplishments, and there are none among us who cannot learn from, enjoy, and profit by the reading of this large and interesting volume. It is indispensable for the collector and researcher, and points up brilliantly the size of the task that lies ahead.

Part of that task will surely be to counter the repellent view he has given us of Lovecraft the man, and fortunately we have at hand a book excellently calculated to do just that. In company with Frank Belknap Long's forthcoming (November) Arkham House memoir, we have Willis Conover's Lovecraft at Last.

Let me begin by saying that much of the discussion prior to publication was over its price. At $12.50 prepublication, from a new publishing company, people were suspicious. Now, at $30 after publication, the limited collector's edition is or soon will be, out of print, and worth every cent even of the higher prices it will surely bring.

It is a book that was actually designed, rather than pasted up, even by someone with an eye for "graphics." By designed, I mean that someone, Robert L.

Dothard in this case, went over the book with the author, page by page, to get the text to appear the way he wanted it to.

The end result is a truly beautiful book, one that ought to be nominated for graphic awards as one of the best-designed books of the year, and so on. It is not a "trick" book where you have to unfold the cover to find the table of contents, and there are not cut-outs and pop ups and fold-ins to play with. But it is attractive, and arranged so that without calling attention to itself, each aspect of the book serves to illuminate and transmit the text. In short, it is quietly spectacular, if a little melodramatic, and would seem more quiet and less spectacular if it were not the only sf-related book to have aimed so high or achieved so much in the way of sheer physical beauty.

Much discussion has been made of the $40,000 it took to produce this volume, and the obvious care that went into every aspect of its production. The money was well spent, and is visible in every line, and on every page, not conspicuously, as the gaudy manner of the nouveau riche, but elegantly, as those to the manor born. It is a work of more loving care than one would have thought possible, and the result is a volume that is a pleasure to own, to handle, to share.

All of which, as I said, is beside the point. First, none of the beauty and simplicity of the unbound signatures gave a hint of the attractiveness of the whole, the sheer heft of it, the bulk of the boxed book in your hand. What the poet Hopkins called "The achieve of, the mastery of the thing" is here made solid pleasure. But looks are not all, and a gilded package is still but a package. The real value is within.

And that is why, second, all the talk about the beauty of the book isn't as important here as it might be: the contents are stunning. It is not the story of H.P. Lovecraft, master of the weird, interesting and important New England writer. It is the story of the old man and the boy who loved him; of a kindly and wise man who corresponded with a pesky teenager, introduced him to the world of ideas, and treated him as an equal; of a youth and his idol who turned out, for a change, not to have clay feet.

When young Willis started writing to professional writers, at the age of fifteen, he had no idea his success would be so great, or that he would bring forth voluntary contributions of fiction and verse from such authors as Robert Bloch and Henry Kuttner, or artwork from Virgil Finlay. Nor did he expect when he sent the usual ingenuous letter, that H. P. Lovecraft would not only reply kindly, but at great length, answering all of his questions in great detail.

The ice broken, they exchanged letters for most of two years, conversing

by post on a wide range of topics including weird fiction, but not limited to that. And then one day a postcard was returned with a pencilled note, "I am very ill, and likely to remain so for a long time." It marked the beginning of the end. You know when you see it what is going to happen, and the author wisely lets the letters speak for themselves, the two holograph letters from Howard's aunt Annie Gamwell telling of his illness and death.

It is a terrific shock. So far I have read those final, crushing pages aloud to various people three times now, and each time I am nearly overwhelmed with sadness, perhaps for Lovecraft, perhaps for some lost love of the world or the infinite sadness of the passing of time and universal loss. It's just that coming after the funny, touching story of these two friends, it is a moving and fitting conclusion to see the story unravel itself again as it did in life, each new revelation another twist of the knife.

Unlike the cold and unfriendly biography the scholars will have to make do with, we have here the personal, touching, and even heart-warming story of two real people who loved one another. And it is more than that. One of them is the wise and learned old man, the other the brash young kid, but without, I think, falsifying anything, the elegant and literate man that child became has revealed him to us across the years, more than he can

quite believe, I'm sure, since 1937. It is, then, also a kind of elegy or memoir of the "remembrance of things past" genre, in which we are taken to another, not necessarily better, time, and given tantalizing first-hand glimpses of First Fandom.

The whole is told with the same impeccable attention to detail and nuance which characterizes the book's design, and is integral to Conover the man. The prose is limpid, pellucid, even charming. From the beautifully phrased and warm introduction by Harold Taylor (yes, that one) you know you are in safe hands, and that it will be a warm and humane book. In fact, as Christopher Morley said in another context, it is a better book than one expects or deserves.

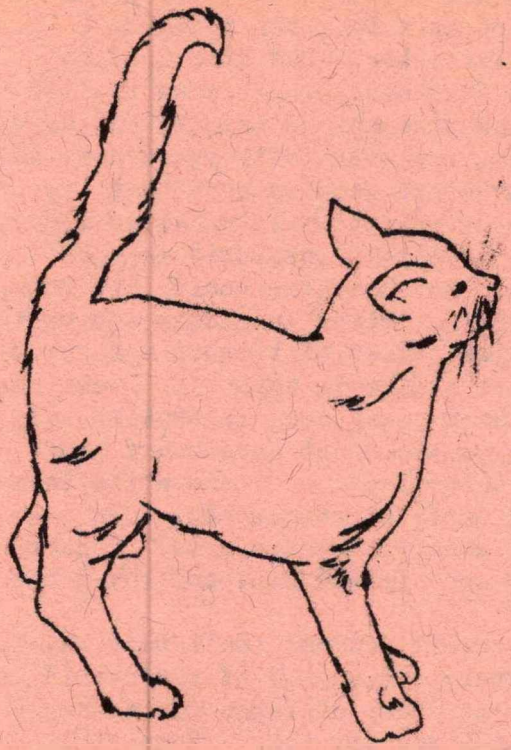
Accompanying the story of this interesting friendship and the account of the conversations these two distinguished people enjoyed, are such incidental treasures as photographs of Lovecraft (several quite good, and at least one very funny), a biographical sketch by F. Lee Baldwin, and a short story by Robert Bloch. All told, it is a book to touch, to treasure, and to talk about. People will be doing all three for a long time to come.

----Tom Collins.

Tom Collins is the editor of A Winter Wish, an anthology of Lovecraft's poetry to appear from Whispers Press.

He is the publisher of MEDUSA: A PORTRAIT, a high-quality limited edition poem by Lovecraft, printed letterpress at six dollars each, 500 copies. A scathing satire in 29 heroic couplets, its only previous publication was in a small-circulation amateur journal over half a century ago, under a previously-unrecorded pen name. Printed on a hand-fed press by Ronald Gordon, proprietor of Oliphant Press, these beautiful booklets may be ordered from Mr Collins at: P.O.Box 1261, Peter Stuyvesant Sta., New York, NY 10009.

"Lovecraft, Man and Myth" is revised from its original appearance in MYTHOLOGIES #6, July-August 1975 and appears with the permission of Don D'Ammassa.



RITE OF PASSAGE

by

ROGER BRYANT

Wherein Roger Bryant writes a Highly Subjective Review of Willis Conover's book, Lovecraft at Last.

There are other books that I've had at hand longer, and still haven't read. But my fingers itched for Lovecraft At Last. I started reading it the day I received it, and I'm glad I did.

Lovecraft At Last is a book that aroused strange feelings in me. I'm grateful for having read it. It says some wonderful things about the experience of becoming a fan in those days (or an "amateur", as they called themselves then), and the most wonderful thing of all is that you can still feel those sensations while becoming a fan today.

The preface and early chapters picture clearly and delightfully the feelings of the 15-year-old Willis Conover, somewhat oppressed at home, apparently an only child. (O'meara's hypothesis confirmed again?) It was a case of from Oz

to Barsoom to WEIRD TALES, and pretty soon the adolescent was writing letters to ASTOUNDING and WEIRD TALES -- and getting them published! One day -- a letter from another fan -- then a club -- then a magazine! And young Willis suddenly finds himself a fanzine editor in search of contributors, writing unsolicited letters to authors.

I was five years older than Willis Conover, and I took a slightly different path into fandom, and it was thirty-four years later. But the sensations are just the same. There is no describing the empathy I felt with Willis as he re-lived the fascination of the young boy in discovering that there were others who shared his interests; or the ecstasy of seeing his name in print (however foolish his words would sound in later years); the awe of corresponding with the Writers Themselves, and later, of hobnobbing with them at gatherings in New York. A lot of fans today have never known quite the same feelings, because other roads have been cut into fandom since those days. But I'm glad to have come in by the old road, and pleased that someone else can talk about it with joy, and pride, instead of shamefaced sheepishness. I'm proud of Willis Conover, for printing his own words -- the often pretentious, often foolish, often naive words of a 15-year-old -- and saying, "Yes, it was childish, but I loved every minute of it."

I've said some foolish things in my seven years as a fan, and no doubt I'll say some more, too. But it's good to know that fans have been saying foolish things, and pretentious things, and naive things too, for over forty years now. And it does my heart good to know that the same amateur spirit still survives today, that H.P. Lovecraft possessed in such abundance. For how else could this busy, hungry, ailing writer in middle age write such a thick packet of letters and cards in so short a time to this . . . well, he was a goshwow young neo, is what he was, although you would not have heard those terms in those days . . . and write them with such perfect seriousness, open honesty, and cheerful camaraderie? I have felt that open friendship, and loved the feeling.

"Lovecraft Fandom" isn't that way today, entirely. Too many of the people in the Esoteric Order of Dagon won't understand what I mean by this. Some will -- Claire Beck will, and Ben Indick and Jim Webbert and some others. But perhaps most won't. Even some of them, who have owned, or at least read, copies of the old fanzines of the Thirties, have probably missed a large part of their psychological and spiritual underpinnings. Lovecraft Fandom, sad to say, is full of Lovecraft's philosophical and literary brethren, but it has all too few people who are the same type of fan he was.

The spirit of fandom in the 1930s IS alive and at least in fair condition — but not so much among the Lovecraft fans as elsewhere. It's alive, if not universal, in places like FAPA and First Fandom. And I have found it to be thriving among the members of the Spectator Amateur Press Society. I was fortunate, indeed, to have found fandom just when I did, in 1969. I almost walked into the 1966 Worldcon in Cleveland, and if I had I'd be a much different fan, if a fan at all. But three more years went by, and I met three fans to whom I owe great debts: I'm indebted to Bill Bowers for introducing me to the current fandom, and for introducing me to Doreen and Jim Webbert. And I'm indebted to the Webberts for introducing me to the Older Fandom.

There are rather few fans of my generation who feel that way. At conventions, the fans in their 20s are mostly either into each other, or into the Pros. I've had my most enjoyable times at conventions with long-time fans like Howard DeVore, Lynn and Carol Hickman, Roger and Pat Sims, Rusty Hevelin, Leigh Couch -- and with those occasional younger fans of the old persuasion, like Seth and Cathy McEvoy, Wally Stoelting, Susan Wood. I'm looking forward to every convention, hoping to meet more. I've never met Art Rapp, or Wrai Ballard, or F.M. Busby, or Walt Liebscher, or Harry Warner. But I may meet them someday, and I'm looking forward to it.

But now, Lovecraft Fandom (we <u>were</u> talking about Lovecraft) is not the same, and it is the poorer as a result. Yes, I am a confirmed weird-fiction fan -- I partake of the joy of research and bibliography and "literary endeavor". But I miss the "fannish spirit". Too many Lovecraft fans (and a lot of other fans too) have lost track of the difference between being serious and taking it seriously. I know Lovecraftians who are just as serious, and pretentious and foolish and naive, about what they're doing after five years as they were after five months.

Willis Conover was humanized by his experience with fandom in general, and with H.P. Lovecraft in particular. Conover did not remain a fan after Lovecraft's death, but in his preface he makes clear that the youthful experience indelibly affected him. "I wish he could have known," Conover writes, "how his words to me would shape my life."

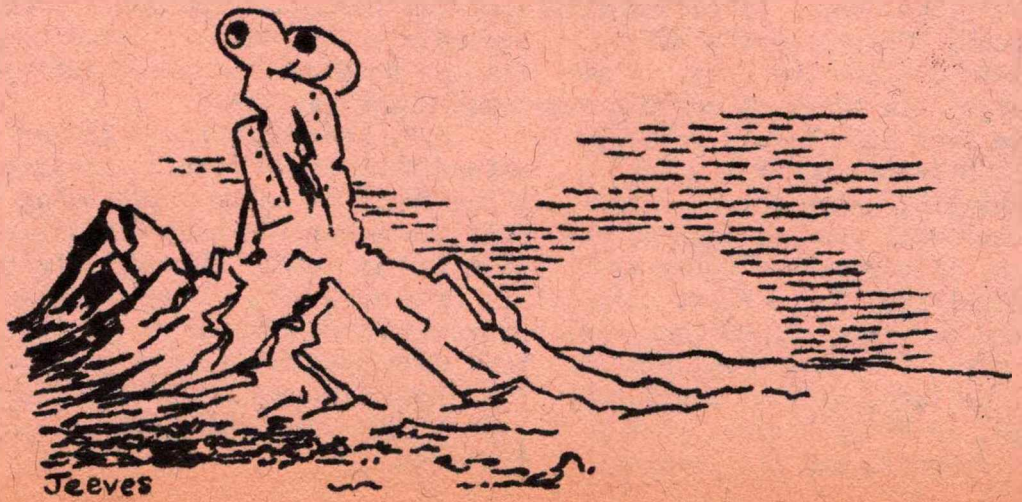
H.P. Lovecraft is no longer here to extend that incredible courtesy to a young fan, but it is still being done. Walt Liebscher has been getting a reputation for it lately (though he's been doing it for years). I've never had the pleasure of meeting Walt, but I've felt that same feeling, had it extended to me by people like Howard DeVore, Harry Warner, Ben Indick. And many another fan is just the same.

Lovecraft At Last (remember that?) is, perhaps, over-lavish in its production, but its contents are perfectly edited. Conover has in places printed Lovecraft in conversation, alternating his own sentences with the elder man's responses. And by printing his own naive, foolish words, he shows Lovecraft not only as the scholar and author -- as the Selected Letters do -- but as a person: patient, kind, generous, and above all happy to see another youngster learning and growing up.

When Conover rediscovered fandom in 1972, and found that his boyhood idol had attained a Stature and a Following, he naturally sought an avenue to publish the letters he still cherished. It may be that the acquaintances he formed in "Lovecraft Fandom" dictated the way he edited the book. Lovecraft At Last has all the things that will turn the specialists on -- information, personal history, literary gossip, "essays" in HPL's special style on almost everything, Cthulhu mythology, and more -- but Conover has gone to great effort to show Lovecraft in the special personal sense, as Conover himself knew the writer. Knowing Lovecraft Fandom, and doubting that Conover has encountered the rest of fandom, I can see why conveying that was very important to him.

To a fan who has known and felt the same emotions, and who cares greatly for Lovecraft's image and remembrance, Lovecraft At Last is a joy and a thing of beauty.

Lovecraft At Last is also full of corollary material reprinted in full:



——F. Lee Baldwin's biographical sketch of HPL from Fantasy Magazine, in facsimile.

——Robert Bloch's spoof "A Visit with H.P. Lovecraft."

——Don Wollheim's review of the Necronomicon, which he managed to get printed in a small-town newspaper.

——A facsimile holograph version of the "History and Chronology of the Necronomicon," with a transcript in which Conover "incorporated elements of both his 1927 manuscript and the typewritten version he sent me in 1936 -- repairing errors-in-translation, so to speak, but keeping what clearly were Lovecraft's own afterthoughts."

——The summary of "Supernatural Horror in Literature," a transcript of the manuscript which, in facsimile, formed the "premium" with this book (on advance orders).

——"H.P. Lovecraft: Viewed by E. Hoffman Price," intended as a submission for Conover's fanzine, corrected and annotated by HPL.

——A long letter by HPL to Edwin Baird, dating to 1924, obtained by Conover, containing a lengthy, idiosyncratic autobiography, evidently to satisfy Henneberger's curiosity about Lovecraft's persona; and also the poem "To Mr. Hoag, Upon His 93d Birthday."

——Lovecraft's list of his own stories, with dates and circumstances of publication..."exclusive of juvenile, collaborated, experimental and disavowed stories..." HPL also breaks down his output by year (1925-3, 1926-5, 1927-1, 1928-1" etc.) and, poignantly, leaves blank spaces for years all the way through 1948. At the time he wrote the list, he had less than two months to live.

After this, there follow only brief notes. HPL's last words, written in pencil on the obverse of a postcard sent by Conover: "Am very ill & likely to remain so for a long time." Written, apparently, March 9th.

Annie Gamwell's two letters to Conover, announcing HPL's hospitalization and his death, are printed complete and in facsimile. The book ends there, with no afterword.

What else could he have said?

——Roger Bryant.

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The preceding article/review first appeared in the author's fanzine, Asrar Nama, #9, in the Lovecraft-and-other-weird-fiction-writers specialist's APA (founded by Mr Bryant): The Esoteric Order of Dagon. It is reprinted by permission. Candidates for the E.O.D. may contact Roger at: 1019 Cordova Ave., Akron, OH 44320.

FULL CIRCLE TRIANGLE

by fred miller

IS IT REALLY
A PROUD AND LONELY THING
TO BE A FAN???

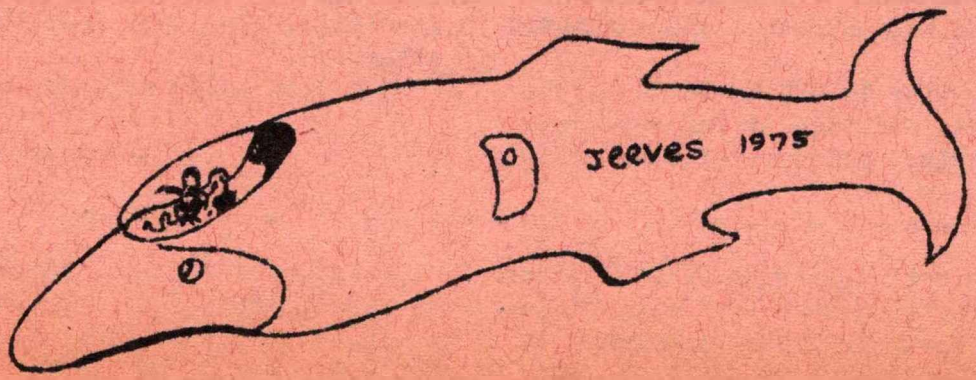
Most people would say no.

Linda Bushyager wrote an editorial saying as much.

Many people believe Worldcons are getting too large. People are now devising means and ways to make them smaller. So, when you go to the average fan-on-the-street, he'll probably agree...right? Maybe so. Well...I don't.

Maybe Worldcons <u>are</u> too big, but I think it is still a proud and lonely thing to be a fan. Case In Point: I started going to a different school this year, and, naturally, I tried to find all of the people who liked SF. I found three, in a school with several hundred students. One liked Star Trek, one liked Wells and Verne (having read one book by each of them), and one liked "space n' stuff like that." None of them had heard of Asimov, Clarke, or Heinlein, and the most SF read by any one of them was two books.

I have been re-re-reading Tolkien lately in school. One of the SF semi-fans ridiculed me for reading "some ol' fairy tale for babies." One of his older sisters had apparently read <u>The</u>



Hobbit, and had liked it a lot. His view of the book, however, was not so favorable, nor so reasonable. His version of the plot is this: "Some dumb book about a bunch of midgets with hair all over their feet running around in their underwear." He didn't listen when I questioned the validity of his opinion, considering he hadn't even read the book.

Another semi-fan had some helpful advice, given to me during P.E. class. It is his view that I would be a lot better in sports "If (I) didn't spend all (my) time reading that science-fiction junk!" Hmmm... Despite the fact that the comment is probably quite true, for some reason I wasn't very pleased at having this new piece of wisdom to cherish. I was actually insulted!

In fact, there is only one person in Pensacola who really knows his way around the SF section of the local bookstore, with another one coming up fast behind, that I have met.

Frankly, I think it is lonely. But seeing the type of person who might be infesting fandom, it's probably better that way....

THE UNIVERSE AND MONTY PYTHON, or HOW I CAME TO BELIEVE THAT NOTHING IS SACRED

What would you say about a movie (comedy) that tells you, in the credits, that it was directed by 40 Andean Llamas, 16 American geese, etc. etc.? You should say, "Monty Python is at it again!" And you would be right, for who else would present something that silly to the utterly sophisticated (*sneer*) American movie-goers?

Silly or not, Monty Python and the Holy Grail is the best movie I have seen this year. Where else would you find such things as migratory coconuts, Trojan Bunnies, and the Holy Hand Grenade?

Basically, the movie is a satire of the King Arthur and the Grail legend (with such famous heroes as Arthur, King of the Britons; and Sir Launcelot, the Brave; and Sir Galahad, the Pure; and of course, Sir Robin, the Not-Quite-So-Brave-As-Sir-Launcelot).

The most interesting thing about the movie is the sudden transitions from serious to silly. For instance, Arthur and another knight are confronted in a grey forest (with ominous shapes all about) by tall men, dressed as knights, with horns on their helmets. They are very impressive, though not quite so much once you are told that they are the Knights That Say "Neep." Neep is a Sacred Word.

"We demand," they say, "a shrubbery." (pause).

"A what?"

"Neep, neep neep neep neep neep."

The intruders cower. "We shall find you a shrubbery..."

"One that looks nice..." (this time

in a feminine conversational voice) "...and not too expensive?"

And so forth. While the scene may not entirely survive the retelling, the original is executed very successfully, and the joke works. The technique is used all throughout the film, always when you least expect it. Everything changes, the filming, the music... When a fog clears away, the colors come in sharply, and the music becomes quiet, prepare yourself for a punchline.

As implied by the above, the movie will go serious occasionally. It is then that the remarkable special effects come into play. Actually, the movie is worth seeing for one scene alone. A sorceror stands atop a HUGE rock (something like the Dune cover, only it is surrounded by cliffs) motioning his staff, causing explosions all about the face of the surrounding rock. It is the most visually exciting thing I have seen in the movies since 2001: A Space Odyssey (like Ben Indick, I prefer the whole title).

All in all, it's a movie I think you should see, for it is utterly Pythonish, and that means funny.

"I HAVE CREATED A FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER!" or THE MATHEMATICS OF FAANISH CORRESPONDENCE

The story of the poor Trufan's correspondence is a simple, well-known horror. The Trufan gets a lot of fanzines, and has to write locs to all of them, lest they incite the faned to a raging, red-hot fury. All letters must be answered. All comments must be acknowledged. This means a lot of postage, but the process is not nearly as horrible as that which the faned must bear.

Let us begin with John Fnerdoo and his friends Bill, Bob, and Roy. They are all SF fans. John wants to put out a fanzine called Spaceship Blasts. He writes a letter to each of his three friends asking for contribs. They respond. That's three letters the faned has to write so far. He then writes back thanking them, and asking them to tell some of their friends about Blasts. Six letters so far.

Bill, Bob and Roy each write letters to three of their friends. They, in turn write back to John asking him about his zine. He responds, making it fifteen letters so far. They all, in turn, write back asking him for the first-ish. He sends it to them, as well as his other friends, and three other people, whose contributions he would like for ish two

He, then, has had to write fifteen "Here is a copy of my fanzine, which I thought you might enjoy taking a look at..." type letters. Thirty letters so far. The people receiving the issues tell some other people about Blasts. Ten more write in, and John writes a


ONCE FANDOM WAS A SMALL PLACE
YOU KNEW EVERYONE AND THEY KNEW YOU
HI
HI
IT WAS FULL OF CLIQUES AND CLICHES, INSIDE JOKES AND A SENSE OF SPECIALNESS
YOU KNEW YOU WERE SPECIAL AND THEY'D FIND OUT IN TIME
BUT THEN CAME SPUTNIK AND SUDDENLY THEY WERE FANS... MONSTER FANS, COMIX FANS... FAN FANS...
DOPERS...
FORGET HIM, HE'S ONE OF THEM
HI
SUDDENLY FANDOM WASN'T FANDOM ANYMORE...
ISN'T IT NICE?

a brief letter to each of them. Forty letters. Postage: $4.00, not to mention inflationary postal rate increases, if any (ha).

One of those people, however, is Ed Connor, who reviews in in his Recent New Fanzines section. He reviews it favorably, since Blasts #1 was done well.

One-hundred people write in.

John has given up hope of writing letters to any of these people, except for ten BNFs. Fourteen dollars postage. Second ish, another $10.90 in postage. Twenty-four-ninety in postage. The hundred people who read Ed Connor's review tell three friends each, and thus three hundred more people write in. Another thirty dollars in postage, making a total (so far) of fifty-four-ninety in postage. And then John receives contribs from Thirty people. He must either respond to or return each of the submissions.

$57.90, at least, in postage -- on only two issues of a fanzine. And other faneds start reviewing it, so for everyone who stops getting Blasts, another fills in.

And so on....

----Fred Miller.

ONE DAY, WITH BHEER

BY JEFF SCHALLES

Once upon an eon Ghod was sitting around the living room, with his feet up on the coffee table, drinking bheer and watching the football game on TV, and his wife came upon him and spoke thusly:

"Christ, you really are getting into a rut. You never go out of the house, you never speak to me, you complain that there's

nothing to do, AND YOU KEEP PUTTING YOUR BIG DIRTY FEET UP ON MY CLEAN FURNITURE. You're nothing but a good for nothing slob, that's what you are. Why, for two cents I'd..."

Nag-nag-nag, he thought. He sat and listened for as long as he could, and then he did what he always did when he could take no more. He got up and sneaked downstairs to his workshop.

"Hmmmm..." he said, "What shall I invent today? Lessee...we've got about as many model sailboats as we could ever need, plenty of those nifty hand-carved chess sets, I fixed the bar just last year...hmmmm." He sat on his high stool in the midst of one of the most complete home workshops this side of...well, anywhere, actually. It had the well-ordered but sloppy look of a man who knew what he wanted to do but didn't neessarily care how it was done.

"I know!" he declared at last, "I'll build a nice Cosmos! I've never tried making one of those before." He cleared the remains of a half-finished model of the Titanic from his workbench and began hunting around his various boxes of scraps and parts and stuff, now and then whistling to himself as he pulled some interesting piece or another out. Soon he had a large pile of this and that and whatnot arrayed before him, along with a heavy slab of oak.

He seemed to have a little bit of nearly everything in the world at hand, and slowly and meticulously he began to fit them together on the wooden base. Spires of ruby-golden light, gems of starfire, interlacings of gossamer green, wisps of velvet black, faint tracings of pale, breathtaking blue, all began softly to float beneath the skillful manipulations of his time-worn fingers.

The piles of material grew less and less as the intricate beauty of the thing grew more and more, deeper and deeper, brighter and brighter. He mounted a number of small knobs and levers and dials along one edge, polished the base to a deep oaken luster, tinkered a bit more with one thing or another, and finally sat back with a great sigh of satisfaction.

"Not bad," he said to himself. "I bet this will look nice on the mantel." Brushing away a few stray scraps, he carefully picked up the Cosmos and carried it upstairs.

"Where the hell have you been all week," his wife complained as he walked into the kitchen, "off slumming with your mangy friends again?"

"Uh...no...you see...I made this Cosmos here. It's a -- well it's sort of...uh...er...well..." he stammered.

"Oh, I see. Another one of those crack-potted inventions of yours, huh? If that thing wrecks my house like that

damn Minotaur did..."

He slid past her to the dining room and set his creation carefully down on the table.

"Watch this," he said, as he started to wind the key.

The patterns of color began to swirl and shift in subtle shading movements, and he began to adjust the manner of this with the various controls. His wife watched for a while but saw nothing but tinsel and styrofoam and stalked off to the living room to watch TV. He hardly noticed, as he was deeply engrossed with the doings of a certain infinitely-small mote located near the heart of his Cosmos.

Why he had singled out this particular speck he could never recall. There was something about its warm bluish-green appearance that caused him to turn up the gain enough so that he could look more closely in upon it. He saw before him a race of creatures very much like himself, but mortal and dissatisfied with their lot. They kept on building up cities and empires just to throw them down again in flaming, agonizing wars. Time was passing swiftly beneath his immortal gaze and his fingers flew to a small control that slowed it to a speed more concordant with his own. The beings under his gaze were just beginning to tap the resources and powers available to them, harnessing them into automobiles and airplanes, with dreams of shining silver spaceships only just forming in the minds of some small few of them.

He recognized these early fleeting dreams for what they were: the heart and future of the race if ever there was to be one. He saw that without some form of assistance these men and women of vision were doomed to failure by their ignorant fellows. So, he began carefully, carefully, ever so carefully, to manipulate certain of the controls on his machine. A planted thought here, a vision there, some added energy in another place, and soon he knew that he had done all that could be done.

He sat back with a sigh and a belch of bheer and rested from his labors.

He had just invented the genre of Science Fiction and with this planted the seed for the eventual uplifting of the race. It was called Fandom, and its people were called Fans.

Concurrent with this came the sudden invention of the mineograph, the pulp magazine, conventions, corflu, beany propeller hats, and bheer.

And it was good.

----Jeff Schalles.

THE CASE FOR KNICKERS

BY JACK WODHAMS

Damned if I don't think I have it in me to be a wowser, Ed. That's a puritan -- you know? Where no standards are set, moral decadence ensues, for permissiveness does not lead naturally to an 'average' middle-of-the-road balance, but rather grants a disproportionately loud voice to those bereft of esthetic values, or sense for the finer subtleties. Honesty, chivalry, self-respect, honor — aspirations to hew to such elevating sentiments would seem naive today.

Today we have the full-frontal, and the English BBC TV casually, anaemically, using 'bastard', 'piss off', 'bullshit', 'bugger', all in a one-hour play. And we have The Pill to suggest and promote a liberation of sexuality, through the removal of the fear of the consequences of a poorly-researched liaison.

I can remember when nudity meant something to me, when pin-ups wore more than a bikini, even, and gave my sense of wonder some naughty exercise. Now I walk by the newstand, and there's tits hanging out all over the place, and there's only so many poses, and even arse-holes are getting over-exposed. There gets less that is provocative any more. Maybe I'm getting old. Who was it said that less is more? Certainly more seems to become less.

I can remember when 'fuck' was a damn fine cuss word, available, if needed, to provide satisfactory vocal expression at a special point of heat in a passionate altercation. Now even women use it, as part of their emancipation. 'Fuck' is an expletive that has been grossly devalued and, like the speed of light, and gold, it is a constant — it cannot be replaced by a superior value. I can remember when screwing had importance, when one, at least, of two people, endeavored to establish some depth of feeling, of commitment, to be wary of taking chances before a testing interchange of mutual appraisal might promise a relationship some quality of durable substance. At

least she would know who the guy was.

When it gets that nothing is sacred any more, abundance in competitive salaciousness defeats its aim, to make real tingling titillation even harder to find. I can begin to see the times of strict censorship as being the good old days, the banning of certain works landing their basically unremarkable contents a delightfully risqué emphasis. Stolen fruit taste sweeter, and all that.

Openly recognizing the fundamental unavoidability of nakedness is no great trick at all. To uninhibitedly display, to accept fornication not only as a part of life, but even more as a way of life, may appear open and free, to be a bluntly frank admittance to deny all grounds for guilt, and may appear to be a most honest, sensible, and logical approach to life. However, squarely facing the fact that humans stripped are most revealed to be very ordinary and unexceptional animals, the removal of privacy for parts also rapidly removes any cause for stimulating conjecture about those parts. Considering means to gain accessibility is a most diverting pastime. The sustainment of any interest in such factors wanes acutely in direct proportion to the amount of general nudity indulged. The result of too much is apathy.

Clothes have a marked civilising influence upon people. The simple expedient of wearing clothes automatically endows an individual with an element of mystery. Subsequently, the amount of clothing worn, where, and how, and in what style, can afford at once an exercise for the intellect. The more wildly imaginative the variations in attire, the more elegant may be the formulations of the wit.

How we may have nostalgia for the Victorian era -- the days of bustles, hobble-skirts, where a glimpse of ankle electrified, where table 'legs' were not described such, and where to refer to the 'naked' eye was taboo. Laughable, yes. But, by God! it was irrefutably tremendously sexy.

----Jack Wodhams.

REGRET

BY JACK WODHAMS

An whore is a woman you buy, lad,
she's naught but a working girl,
and she's met lots like you lad before, lad,
for the trick with the upturning curl.

She's just meat as she lies there to greet, lad,
no kissing, no warmth, and no love,
with no mind for the act as you climb, lad,
just patience with you as you shove.

She don't mewl or sing out with delight, lad,
grab a hold, give a cry hug or holler,
an' when you've squirted your juice and got off, lad,
you've had what you've bought for your dollar.

You can't buy emotion with cash, lad,
and a lass on the game is no chum.
If 'tis affection you crave and you need, lad,
you want a wife, or a mistress, or mum.

An whore is a hole that you hire, lad,
a cut that is loaned for your thrust,
but there's never a hole that's so empty, lad,
as the hole of a one-sided lust.

I preach you no sermon or moral, lad,
you may and will do what you please,
but don't ask of an whore that she love you, lad,
for 'tis cock that has give her bow-knees.

If you must buy a poke with your money, lad,
to pig to your narrow desire,
though a working girl richer than you, lad,
weep for her as she puts out your fire.

What you put you put in to nothing, lad,
what you take is perhaps even less,
when you leave you have even more nothing, lad,
no regard or fond parting caress.

And small is this price that you pay, lad,
to buy and sell pride in one stroke,
both the he and the she are made lesser, lad,
and 'tis loving itself that goes broke.

----Jack Wodhams.

"I'm sorry,
but I do NOT
patronise females..."

MAE STRELKOV JOURNEYS NORTH

BY MAE SERTES STRELKOV

(Ed's Note: What follows is a condensed sample of the first part of Mae's account of her journey to 1974's Worldcon in Washington, D.C. The complete story is being published by Sam Long & Ned Brooks in one fabulous volume.)

Down the valleys of the Past a gale was blowing.

Overhead, the old Colonial tiles drummed with a sudden clap of thunder promising Doomsday "soon". Black clouds rolled in and engulfed our lonely hollow... I thought of the jet I must soon go forth to take, and my heart trembled.

Now in the sudden stillness indoors, another peal of thunder reverberated across the entire sky. And now the lightning itself drew nearer...a stream of raindrops started hissing through the chimneys bringing lakes of black soot upon the red tile floors of the house. I opened the dining-room door onto the narrow eastern porch. A column of rainwater poured straight down from an overhead drain. The "Windows of Heaven" had indeed opened, with the advent of the North Wind, its wings filled with the moisture from Brazil and Paraguay, now being poured upon our high, wintry hills of the Sierras, in central Argentina.

My ticket on the El Dorado from Ascochinga to Buenos Aires was already reserved. This was my last day with Vadim before I must say goodbye to him. We were deliberately cheerful while our grownup children watched thoughtfully, making jokes that did not hide their concern.

We drove away, Sylvia and Tony, our youngest two, in the back seat. Tony is the tallest in our family though just 14 years old. (Not quite; Ed is still a bit taller, but Tony eyes him as a challenge to beat.) And Sylvia, a lovely fair mortal, slim as a sapling and blond like a yellow butterfly, was 20.

There was silence now as the scenery rushed by on either side, Vadim turning corners with a skill I find a little frightening.... We were descending the eastern slopes of Sierra Chica, bumping over the terrible ruts and stones of the snaking, unpaved trail, leaving the flakes of snow behind and above us that had begun to veil the hills in those heights where we lived, Vadim's job being to manage a huge estancia there. Now we entered the natural forestation of gnarled, bright green thorn-trees that give terrible allergies....

And now we reached the lower stretches, still 800 meters above the distant sea, and were crossing the last ford going to Ascochinga. To think in heavy floods cars have been washed away right there!

The El Dorado bus lurked below like

a shadow in its own hidden hollow in the hamlet of Ascochinga. It is just a summer-resort thronged when it's hot and bright, but doubly isolated in winter, and so lonely and empty.

Inside the bus, with its plush, dark-red seats and plush-lined walls, I felt the dust of it in my imagination, the myriad invisible beings that rode on the whirling motes we raised within.

I slid a panel of glass open and waved a final goodbye to Vadim, Sylvia and Tony, as we rolled out of their sight, thundering down the rutty macadam into the night, while beyond the western hills a bloody sunset lurked fleetingly. It would be an all-night trip, so I switched off to make it pass the quicker, tucking my head in my shoulder....

Well, the next morning in Buenos Aires was the coldest day yet of the 1974 winter, at the start of August, rain and mud everywhere. In due course I made my way to a modest little pension downtown, a block from a subway station, near where I used to work in an office years ago. I was already with a high fever, having caught the flu while standing in a tightly pressed throng of thousands (waiting to leave in my wake just one thumb-print so as to have permission to leave this blessed land).

Almost delirious with fever, I tumbled into the humble bed on the third floor, and gave myself up to semi-unconsciousness. (I'd left a message with the old lady portera to phone and let my husband know how and where I was....)

After two days of this, alone and half-conscious and without even a glass for water (and I was stranded up there with nobody near to ask help), Vadim -- who'd gotten the message -- rushed in, and pulled me through, getting medicines, some fruit and so on.

Vadim said he'd get me to that jet even if he had to push me there in a wheelbarrow, because he knew I was feeling defeated and wanting to find a hole into which to climb instead of leaving.

I was still with a high fever and so light-headed it all didn't seem real, when our jet set off. Night fell at once and we crossed the Andes in pitch darkness and couldn't see a thing. But it was like riding along a giant oiled slide, and the descent was as smooth, till we stopped without a jolt at Santiago, Chile. From there we lifted as smoothly to Lima, reaching it still by night (after a two-hour delay...while the plane was thoroughly searched).

After an apparently endless night, however, dawn glowed feebly beyond the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, and at last we plunged down toward Miami, were mated with a "funnel-corridor" that took us right into the Customs, together with all our belongings.

When that too was over and with my British passport stamped with an entry permit beside the U.S. visa already given me in Buenos Aires, the jet lifted anew, with the crowd mostly gone that had packed it till Miami.

The jet set us down at Dulles Airport of Washington, around ten by their

time. Dulles airport is an extraordinary place. Far from having to enter some sort of a tunnel as in Miami, you step from the jet into a huge mobile lounge. I wasn't prepared for this; I was stunned! Here I had come from a bombpocked world in mid-winter, into this brilliant summery scene. Green fields and soft blue skies surrounded me and now I was carried forward like a visiting princess in that luxurious lounge with glass windows on all sides, so I felt myself on some high, moving verandah. It was like stepping into the 21st century!

We turned a curve with stately grace, and stopped before a wide terrace where my friends awaited me. So there was Sheryl Birkhead, and there were Alexis and Dolly Gilliland waiting too!

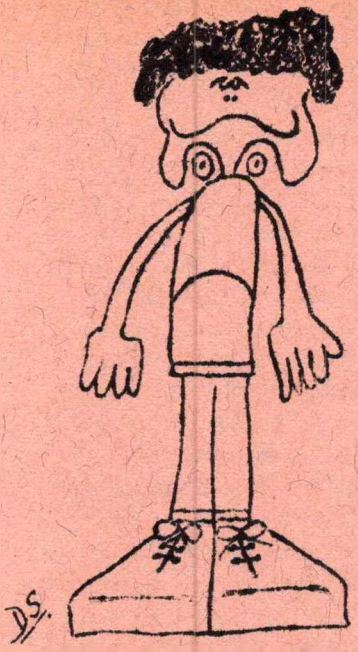
After a few photoes, we said goodbye to Sheryl who had to get back to her job, but the Gillilands had specially taken their holidays to be free to take care of me, the dears! So they drove me around.

We had lunch at an outdoor picnic table at a MacDonalds', for they'd all talked plans over and decided to introduce me to both extremes of eating-places in the USA. That was the first (not to frighten me), and I loved it. I loved all the brightly-clad people at the other outdoor tables too, dressed however they liked. (From shorts to caftans.) That evening we went with Dick (Eney) to the Watergate Complex (they knew I'd be interested after all the publicity it had had), and ate at a very fancy restaurant, then went on to the Kennedy Center to see Angela Lansbury in GYPSY. It was all for me absolutely faerielike and unreal, but I was just spellbound. The Potomac at night, with the lovely trees on the terraces; the brilliant lighting; the quietly-flowing traffic, so orderly and calm! Why was everybody so polite? Not a sign of machismo anywhere. I was charmed and reassured. This world of quiet dignity matched the one I'd known in childhood in Shanghai...going to a British School, having friends both British and American (as well as of every other nationality, and especially Chinese. But even noisy Chinese streets had a calmness to put to shame the noveau-type life I'd grown accustomed to after so many years).

I was tremendously impressed by the lovely huge shopping malls, everywhere, like air-conditioned, indoor parks, some of them, where people strolled, sat on benches eating ice-cream, or relaxed, and children played. I had never seen anything like it. And the merchandise! Such artistry and elegance! Such variety and quality! Perhaps inflation had hit here, but you were still "in the gravy", know it or not!

...during those two and a half months of constantly being with real American folk a thing happened to me. I regained the American side of myself, my mother's side (since my dad was a Britisher). I felt myself again so "American" by the end of the trip, it really was a wrenching experience to tear myself away and take the jet south once again, reaching Ascochinga on Hallowe'en.... ----Mae Strelkov.

This article appeared in the New York Times, Aug 3, '75.



MEET A MUMMY, GRAPPLE WITH A GHOST

BY PAUL KRESH

AVAILABLE RECORDINGS

of

SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY, TERROR, MYSTERY,

INTERVIEWS, etc...

I have felt the cutting edge of the blade graze my throat in the dark as the pendulum swung downward, ever closer. I have conversed with ghosts and mummies, grappled with invisible, murderous beings, watched corpses rise in their cerements from lonely graves. I have stared into the red eyes of slithering rats, willed lovers back to life, fended off vampires, fought down evil alter-egos trying to take over my personality. In other words, I have just emerged, pale and shaken, from a season of exposure to horror stories on disks.

The major recording author in the horror-tale department is Edgar Allan Poe, whose economic but vivid prose shrouded the spring-trap plots of his stories in symbols and psychological overtones and raised them to the level of literature. CMS weighs in with a collection of 11 Poe records, Spoken Arts with 10. The tales are read for CMS by the label's old stand-by, Martin Donegan, a reliable performer with a resonant baritone who seems to move imperviously through the Poe staples of walled-up corpses, mad murderers, doppelgangers, ladies who return from their graves through sheer will power, corpses that deliquesce, houses that collapse on their decadent residents.

Spoken Arts covers much the same

ground, but the readers vary. Arthur Luce Klein's way with this prose is cool and objective, Hurd Hatfield's haunting and highly calculated, Alexander Scourby's measured and mellifluous, Paul Hecht's approach -- in "Descent Into the Maelstrom" -- altogether artful. Caedmon offers four Poe albums, three of them featuring juicy recitations by the late Basil Rathbone of the tales in slightly abridged form, the fourth a Britishly brisk attack on "The Purloined Letter" by Anthony Quayle. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. also reads, urbanely, Poe's "Ms. Found in a Bottle" for Caedmon, in a collection called "The Flying Dutchman and Other Ghost Ship Tales," including Wagner's own outline for the libretto of his opera about the captain who must roam the seas for eternity.

The most hair-raising Poe reading of the lot, however, is James Mason's bravura performance of "The Tell-Tale Heart" on Listening Library -- a no-holds-barred rendition backed by funeral-parlor organ music. For a bonus, on side two, there's Agnes Moorehead, supported by a full cast, in Lucille Fletcher's famous radio thriller "Sorry, Wrong Number." In this 20th-century version of a horror tale, what horrifies is not so much the plot -- how the neurotic heroine overhears her own murder planned on the telephone -- but the impersonal world of an institutionalized city as refracted through the icy indifference of the voices of telephone operators, hospital employes and the very ring of the instrument she turns to as a friend, but which becomes her fatal enemy.

It is the Gothic prose of the 19th century, however, that dominates the field. Two outstanding collections drawn mainly from the horror masterpieces of the last century are "Tales of Mystery and Terror" (Spoken Arts) and the aptly labeled "Tales of Things That Go Bump in the Night" (Listening Library). The Spoken Arts anthology contains dramatizations, put together in England by Christopher Casson with a flexible cast, sound effects and original music, of such masterpieces of the horrendous as William Willkie Collins' "A Terribly Strange Bed," W.W. Jacob's "The Monkey's Paw," Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein," Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and Bram Stoker's "Dracula." These enactments, which manage to draw almost entirely on the author's prose, are beautifully paced and rife with spooky production values.

For those who prefer more sober, straighter readings of the original texts, there's the earnest English voice of Patrick Horgan in a complete "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (Listening Library) while Anthony Quayle offers a condensation in his best clipped style (Caedmon). And if you'd care to hear an earlier, off-beat Stevenson story that led to the composition of "Dr. Jekyll," Ugo Toppo is the deep-voiced storyteller on a complete recording of "Markheim" (CMS) which also deals with a bright and sensitive fellow plagued by an evil alter ego. As for "The Monkey's Paw," that tale of a hairy, simian, noctambulating fist gets

pear-shape-toned treatment from George Rose (CMS) and understated British ones from Quayle (Caedmon) and Patrick Waddington (Listening Library). More typical Jacobs tales with seacoast settings fill out the reverse sides of the first two, while Waddington backs his reading with "The Damned Thing" by Ambrose Bierce.

But it is "Tales of Things That Go Bump in the Night" that walks off with the highest honors, enriching the catalogue with less familiar yarns of terror. Here, in a boxed package of six cassettes, are stories by Algernon Blackwood, who died in 1951 at 82 and is considered the last of the great British masters of supernatural fiction, tales by England's E.F. Benson and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and Lord Dunsany; one by Guy de Maupassant; and several by the American spellbinders Francis Marion Crawford and Robert W. Chambers.

In these gems of the genre, terror strikes in far-flung locales -- an island in the path of the Danube; a hut in the Arctic Circle; a villa in Italy "haunted in a very terrible and practical manner"; an inn in an English village; a flat in London; a Parisian cemetary; and a gaslit house in mid-19th-century Manhattan where an invisible Thing threatens the sanity of the tenants. The readers are Edward Blake, Jack Whitaker, Patrick Waddington, Buckley Kozlow and Tom Martin -- a well-mixed assortment of English and American voices, every one of them a master at building suspense and invoking a climate of total dread.

In the realm of more standard literary works, there's intense handling by Mr Donegan of passages from Gogol's "The Diary of a Madman" (CMS), one of those Russian affairs about a "little" man crushed by the power of aristocrats and bureaucrats, but this time with a lacing of destructive phantoms that invade and take over the mind of the clerk who keeps the journal. Lotte Lenya is incomparably haunting, with her whispy alto, in readings of "A Hunger Artist," "The Bucket Rider" and four other scarifying gleanings from the pen of Franz Kafka whose heroes usually manage to haunt themselves without requiring supernatural aid (Caedmon). Henry James brings horror out of the shadows right into the sunlight in "The Turn of the Screw," his masterpiece about the children who were -- or were not -- corrupted by the specters of a dead governess and steward. Judith Anderson's reading is hair-raising, in her best forged-steel style, and practically complete (Caedmon).

A bitter, biting wit suffuses the stories of the supernatural by Ambrose Bierce, who flourished between the Civil War and World War I. His Civil War story, "The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," turns up in a number of collections, in readings by Toppo (CMS), by Richard Pyatt (Listening Library) and by David McCallum (Caedmon) -- all somber, sonorous performances. Other Bierce studies in the macabre, where the supernatural and the psychological merge in a dark world that might be situated more in our unconscious

selves than outside us, are included in these fascinating collections.

H. P. Lovecraft, a master of flesh-crawling prose who flourished in the 19-20's, is represented by only one story (there used to be several more on a record Roddy McDowall made, but that, too, is gone). And what a stupefyingly horrific affair it is: "The Rats in the Walls," read to a turn for a hackles-rising hour by David McCallum (Caedmon). Lovecraft has been kept at arm's length by the critics, yet his demonic style profoundly influenced his successors. It was shortly after she became fascinated by his tales that Shirley Jackson wrote her own classic chronicle of horror, "The Lottery." Before she died in 1965, she recorded the story, and it has been released now on both a record and a cassette (Folkways). The saga of a ritual stoning in a modern American town is as frightening to hear as to read, but the author's delivery is rough, the voice flat & tired.

Paul Bowles' brand of horror, in his stories of North Africa, is physical and brutal. He reads two of his tales of the Moroccan Sahara -- "The Delicate Prey" and "A Distant Episode" (Spoken Arts). One ends in castration, the other in agonies of mutilation even more unspeakable for its infidel protagonist. Both are read with deceptive diffidence; neither is for the squeamish.

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Edgar Allan Poe: Short Stories; read by Martin Donegan, CMS 555, 567, 588, 592/2, 626, 630, 652, 653, 663; read by Hurd Hatfield, Paul Hecht, Arthur Luce Klein and Alexander Scourby, Spoken Arts Cassettes SAC 7024, 7026, 7027; read by Basil Rathbone and Anthony Quayle, Caedmon TC 1028, 1115, 1195, 1288 (cassettes CDL 51028, 51115, 51195); read by James Mason (with "Sorry, Wrong Number," featuring Agnes Moorehead), Listening Library DL 34806.

Tales of Mystery and Terror; directed by Christopher Casson, Spoken Arts SA 3005 (four disks).

Robert Louis Stevenson: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; read by Patrick Horgan, Listening Library CX 644 (three cassettes); read by Anthony Quayle, Caedmon TC 1283; Markheim, read by Ugo Toppo, CMS 654.

W.W. Jacobs: The Monkey's Paw and Other Stories; read by George Rose, CMS 624 (cassette X 4624); read by Anthony Quayle, Caedmon TC 1357; read by Patrick Waddington, Listening Library AA 3347 (cassette CX 347).

Things That Go Bump in the Night; read by Edward Blake, Jack Whitaker, Patrick Waddington, Buckley Kozlow and Tom Martin, Listening Library CXL 516 (six cassettes).

Ambrose Bierce: Tales of Horror and Suspense; read by Ugo Toppo, CMS 513, 529 (cassettes X 4513, 4529); read by Richard Hudson, CMS 664, 668; read by Richard Pyatt, Listening Library AA 33111/2 (cassettes CX 3111/2); read by David McCallum, Caedmon TC 1345.

Nicolai Gogol: The Diary of a Madman; read by Martin Donegan, CMS 536.

Franz Kafka: The Bucket Rider and

Other Stories; read by Lotte Lenya, Caedmon TC 1114 (cassette CDL 5114).

Henry James: The Turn of the Screw; read by Judith Anderson, Caedmon TC 2045.

H.P. Lovecraft: The Rats in the Walls; read by David McCallum, Caedmon TC 1347.

Shirley Jackson: The Daemon Lover & The Lottery; read by the author, Folkways FL 9728 (cassette FL 79728).

Paul Bowles: The Delicate Prey and A Distant Episode; read by the author, Spoken Arts 855.

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EDITOR'S ADDENDUM: The following tapes are available from Writer's Digest (9933 Alliance Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45242).

Marvin Miller, Narrator: Classic Poems of Suspense and Horror (Noyes' The Highwayman; Poe's The Bells; The Raven; Oscar Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol) Time: 47 minutes; price $7.95.

Gene Lockhart, Narrator: Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde. Stevenson's classic. Time: 161 min. (2 tapes) $14.50.

Basil Rathbone, Narrator. Sherlock Holmes in four of the most famous detective stories of all time: A Scandal in Bohemia; The Red-Headed League; The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle; The Adventure of the Speckled Band. 195 min. (3) $21.50.

Isaac Asimov Talks: An Interview. One of the leading writers of the genre talks about writing, discipline, and literary responsibilities. 60 min. $4.95

Roger Zelazny: Writing Science Fiction. Another top sf writer reveals helpful hints on the genre. 120 min.(2) $6.95.

Dan O'Herlihy, Narrator: H.G. Wells' The Time Machine. The classic that some consider the greatest sf story of all "time". Time: 182¼ min.$21.50.

Hal Gerard, Narrator: Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels. Gulliver's two voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag are still capable of stirring the imagination of young & old. Here is a whimsical reading. 45 min. $7.95.

Marvin Miller & Jeff Chandler, Narrators: The Best of Mark Twain. The humor, drama, rhythm and pulse of life in the late 19th century America as it is preserved by the pen of Twain.
Time: 45 min. $7.95.
Note: When less than 3 cassettes ordered add 35¢ each for post/insurance/handling.

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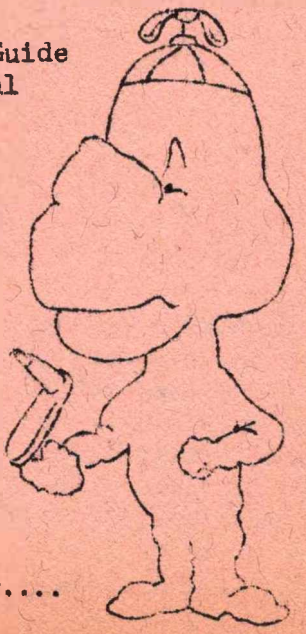
Dave Rowe's "Guide to Faneditorial Excuses"



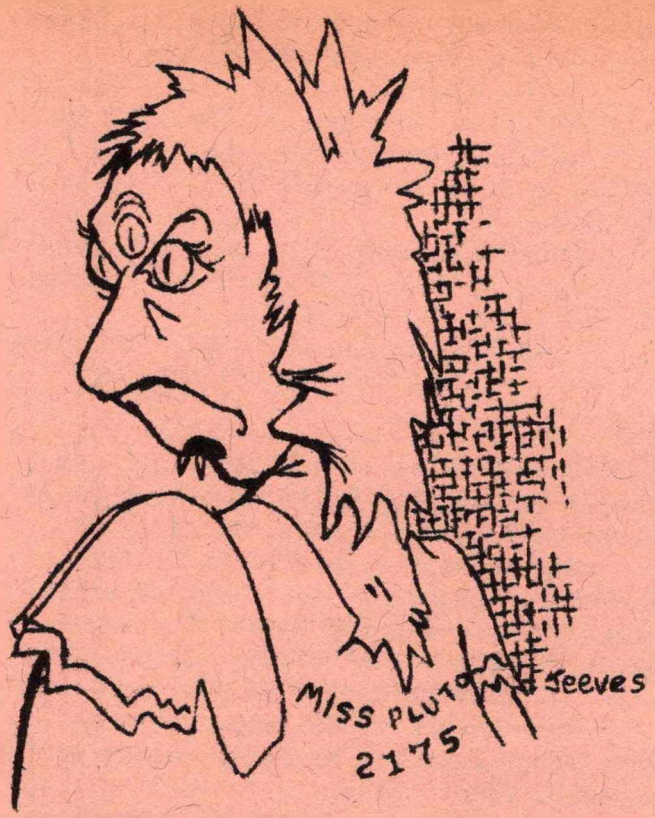
#2

There was some trouble with the duper....

JOHNNY APPLEKNOCKERSEED

BY

WILLIAM G. BLISS



"A VERY LOOSELY-PIECED SPACE OPERA"

Supposing you wanted to populate a planet (or planets) in a hurry, in less than a thousand years. A thousand people placed on a single orb could do the job without putting in any overtime. If there are scads, literally millions, of planets, that crowd would have to be reduced to a modern version of Adam and Eve on each planet. Assuming they are not very high powered begatters, and only average four offspring and those offspring have the same batting average, you get into dull statistics. (If you can start out a new planet with a million or two individuals, it can swing very efficiently in a jiffy. But, to achieve that, something gets laid by the wayside along the way. Something known in our own times as, "the most

popular indoor sport".)

Here, is where it makes a bit of a comeback.

Johnny stood at formal attention before his commanding officer. He was in the buff except for a pair of sneakers and a heavy duty jockstrap. He had been summoned on short notice from the base gymnasium where he had been dressing for his usual daily stint of vigorous exercise to maintain his splendid physique. The base Commander, Colonel Percival De Klik, sat at the impressively large desk perusing a small bookreel. He laid it down.

"And what, lad, did prompt you to dash in here in such a notable lack of attire?"

"I was at the gymnasium sir."

"Hmn. That figures. Relax and sit down, lad, anyone at attention naked looks ridiculous. Hmn. At my age, the only practical exercise is power golf."

The chair evidently had not been designed to be sat in naked. The black plastic felt scrunchy and cold and clammy. "What did you summon me for sir?"

"Your assignment for permanent duty just arrived from Colonial Central."

Johnny had sudden visions of the numerous things one could be grabbed off for, the miscellaneous things that fetched few or no volunteers. Soldier on a wild planet...sewer inspector...planet scout going to places where no one had been before -- and a few of those never made it back -- ...space beacon tender on a far off asteroid...swamp tender...space rescue and search -- which was almost as dull as being here waiting for an assignment. It must be something important to have come all the way from Colonial Central itself. Maybe command of an automated cargo space ship?

The dramatic pause the Colonel had let into the conversation ended. "I called you in because this is something quite new and does require a bit of explaining. In a way, lad, you have won a sort of contest."

"What was that sir?"

"It was held with the existing two dozen of your Type *12a* males. You actually are an old, almost obsolete, heavy-duty universal model of Colonial human. With unusual strength and stamina even when as old as me! Colonial has decided to put you back into production, and you are the consistently greatest sperm producer -- by a factor of 2.86 compared to the second best *12a* male. Your being youngest with the greatest potential service life no doubt had something to do with their choice of you."

"Do you mean sir, that such will be all I will do for an occupation? I already do that anyway."

"Oh, there's a bit more to it than that, lad," the Colonel said, seriously. "You have a rebuilt zip-transit space ship, completely automated and flown on schedule from Colonial Central. It will take you from one Colonial planet to another, and on each you will leave your sperm, and incredibly enough, actually

deposit into a female. The why or wherefore of that is quite beyond me. It is the original method of starting gestation, and is prone to many inefficiencies."

Johnny steadfastly ignored an itch generated by the jockstrap and mentally noted that Colonial was great for efficiencies. It even had a military branch that was 55% efficient for a 2000 year average.

"...but lad, it is a scientific truism that almost nothing ever is perfectly efficient, so it is often necessary to calibrate inevitable inefficiencies. Shipping sperm involves a loss of 2 to 6%, so transporting you from one planet's gestating center to the next in an extremely expensive space ship simply does not add up. On the other hand, the master computer at Colonial Central takes the aeons-long viewpoint, and does things once in a while that puzzle us mere Colonial humans. You are the sole single person in this new activity -- since it is a pilot programme -- which we're calling Operation Stud.

"In the case of humans, that means any male who is exceptionally well equipped in all respects sexually and in your case, that is obviously the case. And that, lad, is all of the information I have for you. I have instructed the med center to have available any information they can find on the ancient method of sperm depositing." A dreamy far-away look came into the Colonel's eyes and he mused aloud, "You know lad, sometimes when I see the lads leave here for the far places, I rather wish I had been chosen to be a planet scout instead of running a supply planet for seventy years. Lots of luck, lad, and remember, the success of Operation Stud depends a great deal on your performance."

Back at the gymnasium, Johnny changed back into his coverall standard issue uniform. A messenger arrived. "You're Appleknockerseed?"

"That's me."

"The Colonel said to inform you that your space ship leaves in one half hour, and I am supposed to stick to you like glue to make sure you are on time."

Johnny got out of the messenger's scooter and strode briskly into the med center where he was ushered directly into the med director's office. "Kindly sit down, Lieutenant."

"The Colonel didn't mention the promotion."

"You have an independent command, so it figures. This is on short notice, but I'll try to brief you at length. I think a short training programme would be a lot more satisfactory -- but all I could do was get central archieves to dig up what little they have on the subject. Basically, there are two ways sperm is emitted. The common way is by nocturnal emission during sleep --" Johnny recollected how he had been issued a rubber sperm collection bag for the regular monthly sperm collection, along with everybody else in the barracks. Before that, he had been in school on a gestating and rearing planet. School had been boring -- there

was little to do -- learning was by standard hypnotraining, and that only took an hour a day. He had become an athlete out of sheer boredom, and that had been considered quite eccentric by the other students who only exercised as required by the schedule. Colonial had supplied an amazing amount of expensive equipment for him. It included a six mile long road to run on, diving equipment for swimming underwater, and a boxing machine. Actually that was a Colonial soldier-training machine for manual combat with only the boxing tapes left in it. It could supply an amazing amount of strenuous exercise in a very short time without overheating its motor. And, Colonial had also supplied a robot athletic coach named Martinet. "--and the other way is by continuous mechanical stimulation of your erectile digit. Females have internal sex organs -- one of them is approximately tubular-shaped and erectile digits fit into it (one at a time, I might add).

"So, all you do is insert your erectile digit, in its erect condition, into the female receptacle organ, and reciprocate it until you achieve sufficient stimulation to emit your sperm. That will probably require something around the same timing you have for nocturnal emission -- according to your medical tape, sixteen to thirty minutes --" Johnny marveled at modern technical wonders sometimes, like the small transducers in everybody that automatically sent information about one's body to med in the interest of sheer efficiency. The first thought he'd had on emitting sperm in the Colonel's office -- thinking about inserting his erectile digit into a female and then going to sleep and having a nocturnal emission -- did seem impractical now that he was better informed.

"Incidentally," the med director was continuing, "you do produce more sperm than any of the other type *12a* males. Three to four nocturnal emissions a night and an average of one a week while snoozing in the sun at the recreational swimming beach, so an emitting schedule of eight times a day is well within your abilities. The multifabricator machine in your ship will keep you supplied with the special sperm collection bags this method of emission requires -- a long tubular bag which you unroll onto your erectile digit."

"I had an idea about the standard sperm collection bags."

"You type *12a's* are idea prone. You know all ideas have to go through processing, that can be all the way up through Colonial Central, and you know that after all of this time with people and computers having ideas, the chances of an idea being original is small."

"It's just a simple little idea. Why not issue the sperm collection bags for every night use?"

"No gestating center within practical shipping distance needs that much sperm."

"I was thinking of how it would eliminate getting up and showering in the middle of the night."

"Hmn. There might be a gain in efficiency there. I'll put your brainstorm in the routine dispatch file that goes to the local computer. Anyway, in short, what you will be doing in delivering sperm is so simple and uncomplicated that there isn't any foreseeable difficulty. One way to think of it is as an athletic activity -- doing a lot of push-ups."

"Wouldn't that be more like push-ins?"

"Very droll."

The messenger got Johnny to his hundred-foot-long space ship three minutes before take-off time. (Actually, the ship merely winked out of existence and traveled anywhere in Colonial territory in less than fifteen minutes by going through hyper-complicated space. Our common everyday space is only medium-complicated.) He had just enough time to change into his new uniform coverall which had the emblem of Operation Stud on shoulder patches on both sides; the design included two erect erectile digits complete with balls, which had always been called balls. Colonial was capable of fine touches at times. They were exact artistic renditions of Johnny's own genitalia.

The ship left on schedule and fifteen seconds later arrived close to the gestating center on the Colonial planet of Hotshot. The gestating center director was waiting at the small space ship field as he had been scheduled to. "This is the first time we have received a sperm shipment in person," he said, as Johnny stepped from the ship.

"Where do I leave it at here?"

"Oh, on such short notice, the handiest place is the wrestling arena building across the way." In the middle of the arena was a couch and a young female of his approximate age.

"Hi. I'm Delores."

"I'm Johnny. You do understand what we are supposed to do?"

"Sure. I'm to assist you in making a sperm delivery. I've never done anything like this before."

"Confidentially, this is my first time also. It's supposed to be easy to do." He unrolled the special sperm collection bag onto his erectile digit which had without prompting become rigid; perhaps that was an old dim ancestral genetic memory he had inherited from the most ancient times when people did this a lot according to legend. Well, at least there should be some body of legend left about it -- he would have to find out.

At the moment, it would help a lot to know more about this vocation. The Gestating Center director had him remove the sperm bag and reinstall it with some slack on the end to make room for sperm. He anointed it with a lubricating jelly.

"Do you or I lay down first?" Delores asked.

"Looks more practical if you did."

"And spread your legs for easy access to your receptacle organ," the director said. He watched studiously as they readied themselves for emitting sperm. "There, I think that went very well. You can start any time now."

"It sure feels full," murmured Delores. "What do I do now? Work my muscles around down there?"

"According to standard proceedure, I reciprocate, probably a more mechanically-practical motion," Johnny said thoughtfully.

"Gosh! Is that all it takes to make it work?" exclaimed Delores, wonderingly.

It did, which is one of those things with a dependably high predictability like the sun coming up in the morning. In the dressing room of the wrestling arena, the director had collected the sperm bag, had used a special ring-shaped squeegee to make sure all fluid was obtained and had departed, remarking on the unusual quantity -- perhaps quite enough for two million gestation starts, if of usual viability.

They went to the showers and Delores said, "I think we did fairly well out there in front of the cameras for the planet video system. I hope nobody noticed too much that we weren't too expert at it. After all, they never saw anything like it before -- who would have ever thought there would be that much video watcher demand?"

(In this theoretical, enlightened future, video fans get to vote on prospective programme material.)

"Probably natural curiousity," Johnny said.

"I didn't think it would tickle so much. Kinda like a tickle in your nose before a sneeze combined with a foot tickle. It's kinda like too much to do much. I think I'll let somebody else volunteer for the next time. What do you think about it?"

"If you get the chance again -- don't pass it up," Johnny said sagely.

He noted mentally that it had been a rather joyful Delores under him. And noted, mentally: That was what everybody had missed so far. This way of delivering sperm was good for morale. It could be scheduled for the future general use for recreation. But at the same time, he had serious mental reservations about it. He had never imagined there could be anything that could be such a tremendous blast to one's system. He would have to check with his ship's robot medical department to see if indeed his system had withstood it all in good shape.

Tickle? That had been 2000% beyond any "tickle" he had ever known. Martinet had never succeeded in driving him to any equivalent physical exertion upon emitting. Yet he felt not even a trace of fatigue. Just something

like the pleasant feeling after swimming leisurely in warm water. After all, he told himself logically, his system had been doing the same thing for nocturnal emissions all along.

The automated shower stalls went into the drying cycle. Delores asked, "Care to join us for lunch? This planet has grade A food."

"Like to, but I am scheduled for the next planet in sixteen minutes."

What had went on just before the shower zapped around in his mind. He was scheduled to do it again. In a few minutes. He gazed at Delores, who was also putting on her coverall. His digit magically became rigid, and went back limp slowly and reluctantly as he walked back to the ship. Not only just again in a few minutes, but seven more times today. He wondered if his mind would be frazzled at the end of this day. He wondered if he should put in a quick special request for a more mentally tranquil sort of duty like being caretaker on a desert planet, instead of this truly awesome occupation.

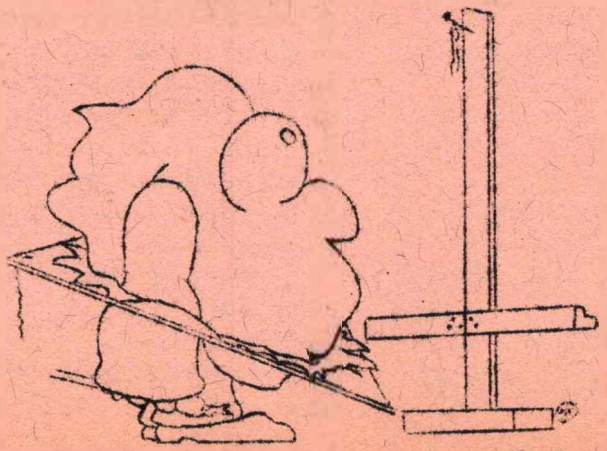
Did he do it again on the next planet? He most certainly did.

And, he told that female of his approximate age, that it was his first such experience; and he told them all that from then on.

Type *12a's* are pretty fair actors.

----William G. Bliss.

Dave Rowe's "Guide to Faneditorial Excuses"



#3: The promised cover did not arrive.

THE ETHICS OF SUICIDE —— MARK MUMPER

Quite a while ago MOEBIUS TRIP was a vehicle for a running debate on the ethics of abortion. Cy Chauvin raised some important questions. Despite my strong disagreement with his personal conclusions, I think those questions deserve an answer or at least a good deal of thought if they are unanswerable. In a letter in MT 13 he brought up the question of suicide in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek manner. I'd like to expand upon the topic a bit, since I believe the "right" of the individual to take his or her own life is every bit as important and relevant as the "right" to have an abortion.

I use the term "right" loosely, mainly because I don't believe "rights" can be delegated or withdrawn; the power of the individual to choose will always make societal rights seem weak and meaningless, and I believe it should be this way. However I will continue to use the term, if for no other reason than to provide a commonly understood concept to work with.

Every one of us is to a certain extent independent of the influence and movements of others. We all have ties that bind us to others, but with the passage of time and cessation of contact these ties weaken. However most of us have a number of strong bonds that will never break or weaken. Were we to kill ourselves, our closest relations would suffer a great deal of shock. This shock is due to a very powerful attitude toward death that has been instilled in us since we were born. Western society as a rule fears or at least despises the idea of dying. Thus when someone we know commits suicide, we usually feel more disgust than sorrow, compassion or even happiness.

I'd like to put forward the thought that perhaps we should not consider death a finality, something to be avoided. We all die, and death is as natural a thing as life. Therefore why should we become upset at the news of a suicide? Why should we legislate that act and make it illegal? Doesn't an individual have a "right" (in the context of law) to end his own life if desired? Many suicides are actually attempts that worked too well, but there are those who want to kill themselves and do succeed. If a person desires death so much, should we stop the act?

Of course there is an individual's responsibility to friends, family, business, God, country, etc., ad absurdum. I don't think a person who has young children to care for, or close relations to

think of, should blindly plunge into a suicidal end. That person has taken on bonds that if broken suddenly cause trouble and grief for those left behind. However, were our attitude toward death less fatalistic and fearful, those friends of a suicide would not feel as helpless and morose. The reaction of most persons to someone's death stems from selfishness, a loss of something desired. If we realize the truth of death, we would not feel a sense of loss, but rather a true sense of change, of new directions. The "responsibility" to continue living is with those still alive, not those who have chosen to die.

From thinking through the concept of death, and feeling its nature, I have come to believe that it is as acceptable, even desirable, to some people as is life. For myself it certainly is. The fact that I am now alive merely indicates that I know more about life than death, and I know more or less what to expect from it. Death is quite often a great attraction, however. Aside from personal cowardice or lack of will, what has kept me alive throughout my own suicidal moods has been the knowledge and acceptance of my bonds with other people. Most people I know would not accept my reasons for killing myself, and would surely not understand why I would do so. As much as I wish people to know my reasons for living, I would also hope they could understand my motives for suicide.

I believe an individual has a right to commit suicide, and I think we should all give thought to its implications. Regrets are mere guilt feelings over things that weren't achieved in life -- we should not feel regrets for things not done for those who commit suicide, we should act well toward them while they are still living.

With a healthier attitude toward death in our culture, we would perhaps have more respect for life. If we learn that an individual's choice of suicide is respectable, we might have less acceptance of violence and murder than we do now. In fact if suicide were better understood, potential suicides might be stopped.

We should stop worrying about the dead and concentrate on the feelings and love of the living.

----Mark Mumper.

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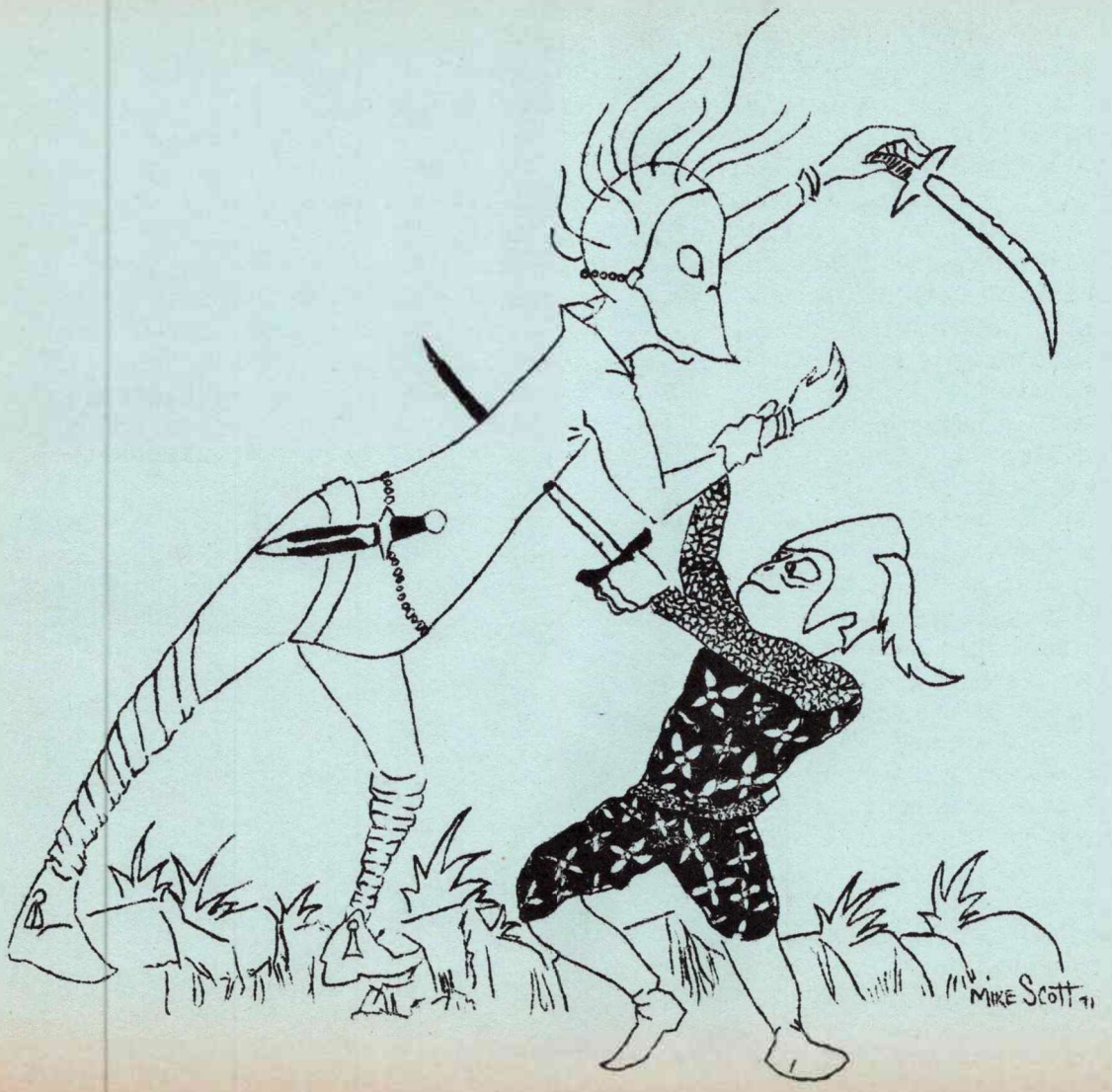
EDITOR'S ADDENDUM: A recent sociological study conducted by Monmouth College provides information of interest to supplement Mr. Mumper's article.

A study of four west-central Illinois counties was made over the past several years in an attempt to measure the amount of social disorganization which prevails in such an area. So far, it has been determined that what appears to the outsider to be a very stable community, in relation to social norms, is not necessarily the case at all.

The most striking statistic is the fact that in a survey of a thousand suicides from 1917 to 1971, the four counties


MIKE SCOTT '71

had a suicide rate 3½ times higher than the city of Chicago.

It surprised everyone to find that the four-county area had a rate of suicide of 35 per 100000 population, with the Chicago rate being only 10 per 100M.

Dr. Epley, in charge of the survey, has refused to give a cause for the higher suicide rate, noting that his findings are as yet incomplete. However, he has authorized release of the following data:

In the area Knox-Warren-Henderson-Henry Counties, for the period stated:

Females in the study committed suicide younger than men. The average age for women was 49, for men, 55.

Males tended to commit suicide in March, while female suicides were generally toward July.

March was the high-point in suicides for single people of both sexes.

Saturday is the worst day of the week for those without spouses. It is on this day that unmarried and unattached individuals tend to commit suicide most often.

Older females, over the age of 55, tended to commit suicide late in the year with much more regularity than other groups.

Epley has hypothesized on the causes thusly:

"Being part of a rural community, it's easy to interpolate that the men here, faced with a new year of farming and plowing, would find March a hard month to face.

"For the older women, whose families have gone their own ways, the late-year holidays are probably very hard to take.

"Those who are unattached can likewise be analyzed -- Saturday, the normal day for people who are close to each other to relax and spend some time together, would logically be a hard time for unattached people to be apart." By unattached, Epley means, in addition to single people, those who have been divorced or lost a spouse through death.

He further states: "In addition to having a higher rate of suicide here than Chicago, older people tend to commit suicide here with a great deal more regularity than in Chicago.... The older person who returns to (local small towns) after having lived in a larger city perhaps with relatives, finds himself alone, his friends ill or dying, & becomes despondent. There is also the feeling...that elderly individuals have of being a burden on children or others, which they don't want to be."

Speculation has now arisen as to whether or not the findings are merely a local phenomenon, or if statistics for other rural counties in the state, and in other states, will show the same pattern.

Of course, some of the causes of suicide are known. Eliminating such causes, recognizing the symptoms in individuals, can be exceedingly difficult.

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MALZBERG WINS GOLDEN TROUT AWARD!

Other authors also honored.

by CRAVEN von FEIGLING

May 11, 1975:

The Tenth Annual Trout Awards were announced tonight at a banquet in the Puce Room of the Beau Vista Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh. Created in honor of Kilgore Trout, sci-fi master and wordsmith extraordinaire, the Trout Awards each year recognize special achievements in the field. The ceremony was hosted by Mr. Trout himself, who delivered a blunt, punchy, and at times emotional speech on his own credo and the function of the Awards. The following is a partial text:

> The pseudo-intellectual, effete-snob, self-styled creative artists with their college degrees and their God-damned writers' conferences can take their sensitive prose and fancy metaphors and shove them up their own lily-white asses, so far as I'm concerned (Mr. Trout began). That gang gives me constipation. So do those smart-ass kids who've been to Clarion and think they can write science fiction like Frank Kafka (sic). Screw 'em. We're here tonight to honor the real pros. Guys the Milford Mafia would shit on and call schlock merchants and hacks. Well I'll tell you, I'M a hack, and I'm not ashamed to say so. Because the so-called hack writer is a guy with balls and savvy enough not to swallow that holier-than-thou garbage about finely honed prose. He knows how to write a story, he knows how to plot, he does an honest day's work for an honest buck and he doesn't pretend it's art because he knows it's not -- it's good old-fashioned entertainment that you don't need a degree in literature to understand. And I'll tell you it's also part of a great literary tradition. Shake-

speare was a hack, if a hack's a guy who cranks it out for quick cash. The only art-for-art's-sake he did was some sonnets for his old lady, and they're obscene. Charlie Dickens, he wrote so fast you'd think he had a Selectric instead of a quill pen. Jules Verne, Doc Smith, Ron Hubbard, all the real greats down to Lin Carter, John Brunner, Ron Goulart, Forry Ackerman, they know it's a proud thing to be a hack because a hack may not be a self-styled creative artist but he's a craftsman, God damn it, and he may never get a fancy lump of plastic with a Nebula inside it but he deserves a Trout, and I'm here tonight to see that the guys who deserve 'em, get 'em.

Mr. Trout then announced this year's winners, each of whom receives a personally inscribed dead unstuffed trout mounted on a plaque of unvarnished Norwegian plywood. "Best hack novel of 1974" was won by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle for The Mote in God's Eye. "I love these guys," Mr. Trout commented. "They take a 30-years-old space opera that even Star Trek wouldn't touch, they dress it up and pad it out and the next thing you know kids are studying it in college like it's literature. Nice going," he said, handing over the award.

"Best hack short story of 1974" was won by Robert Silverberg's "In the House of Double Minds." "Bob's been putting it around he isn't one of us any more," Trout joked, making the award. "But as far as I'm concerned, old buddy, you'll never lose the touch." "I guess it takes one to know one," Silverberg commented ruefully, but with no rancor.

"Most promising newcomer" went to Christopher Priest for his novel, Inverted World. "I don't know the guy," Trout commented, noting Priest was not present, "but he's got a great future. If not as a writer, a used-car dealer maybe."

Mr. Trout then announced this year's special awards. "Smartest Editor of 1974" went to Donald A. Wollheim. "Schlock Salesman and Con Artist of 1974" went to Roger Elwood, to whom Trout remarked, "Guys say you're a religious n t and an irresponsible creep, and maybe they're right, but any guy who gets science fiction into Woolworth's deserves at least this much. Try not to eat it till you get home," he quipped, handing the trophy to Elwood, who was too overcome to reply.

Lastly a special Golden Trout want to Barry Malzberg as "Grand Master Hack." Trout, beaming and moist-eyed, embraced Malzberg and declared him "A man who can keep producing and producing without ever sacrificing mediocrity." Mr. Malzberg, in a brief acceptance speech, confessed lifelong admiration for Trout's work, which he said he had first discovered as a kid browsing through a pornographic book store. "That was the inspiration for my whole career," he said.

Following the ceremony the guests enjoyed an informal party at which sangria and hot dogs were served and a number of "party girls" provided by the hotel management in cooperation with Mr. Trout were much appreciated. Cheap cigars and chewing gum were handed out freely and there was dancing to Las Muchachos Exotiques, a local band. Asked by this reporter about the future of the Awards, Mr. Trout declared things had never been better for science fiction hack authors, and next year's banquet, in Tijuana, would draw an even bigger crowd. Pressed to predict future winners, he remarked that Samuel R. Delaney's Dhalgren could merit a special "Most Pretentious, Most Boring, and Longest Piece of Incomprehensible Crap Masquerading as Serious Literature" award, but he refused to speculate on other categories. "There'll be a lot of competition," he said. "The guys are cranking it out all over." With a cheerful wave Mr. Trout then retired from the festivities to his guest of honor suite, accompanied by his two attractive companions Mitzi and Doris. There were cheers as he exited.

Note: There is no relationship between the Trout Awards and the identity of the well known author who recently pirated the name Kilgore Trout as a pseudonym for a totally spurious edition of Venus on the Half Shell (Dell Books), and whom Mr. Trout is in fact suing for defamation of character.

---Craven von Feigling.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The above "press release" was first sprung upon an unsuspecting firmament earlier this year, 1975, during the course of the "Ten Evenings Down a Rabbit Hole" proceedings, under the auspices of the UCLA Extension College SF Class, etc. (anyway, that's approximately correct). A lot of high-powered SF writers & hangers-on were present, not to mention mere students, etc., etc.

Imagine the surprise of some of the attendees when none other than the eminent scientifictionist, Harlan Ellison, strode forth to read this opus (which he received, I understand, surreptiously -- in the mail, as others of those mentioned soon did).

It should be noted that, while certain authors were momentarily teed off at hearing their names or those of their friends/protegés taken in vain, they soon recalled that only the "greats" -- hopefully, in this instance -- are given such "negative" honor -- as in the manner of the Friars' Club "roasts" or the recent TV "roasts," etc.

Various persons have long since denied authorship. However, none other than "General" Ted Cogswell is the present suspect. But, that is only an educated guess. ("von Feigling" is a pseudonym invented as a substitute for "anon.")--ecc.

DONN BRAZIER ASKS:

WHAT DO YOU BRING TO A BOOK?

An unread book on the shelf is an object whose value is measured only by the most elementary of physical principles governing objects at rest relative to the observer. Such things as weight, size, and reflective properties are really of interest to only two people: the bookseller who wants the book to be attractive to the potential buyer and the interior decorator who wants the book to match the wallpaper.

But you have purchased the book, ostensibly to read it, and unless you do read it, the book has not fulfilled its destiny. It must be read -- by you. Until a book and a human being react together in some sort of reading relationship, hereafter called RR, the book falls short of its goal. And so do you.

Regard a book the way an artist regards a block of granite, a chunk of wood, or a bit of space filled with light and shadow. The raw material is there, awaiting the magic touch of the artist's tools. The artist and the material develop a relationship as the granite chips fly, the shavings come peeling off the wood, and the paint flows onto the canvas.

In the same way, a book unread is no more valuable than the artist's materials. A book unread is like a bare canvas staring blankly, a hunk of wood just sitting

there, or a granite boulder rolling down a hill. In each instance, someone must come to the raw material with sharp and appropriate tools. Note those two important words: sharp and appropriate.

With what sort of tools does the reader approach a book in a genuine RR? Are they the same tools for all kinds of books? These are questions I'd like to answer.

Have you already read a book? If so, you have had some experience in reading a book. Your reading tool has been sharpened to that extent, and the more books you've read on any subject, the more you have whetted your tool. If you have already read a book on the same subject, you have sharpened something else.

You have gained some knowledge, some information you can apply to the new book. Let's broaden this. Let's state that, generally, the better educated you are in all subjects, the more information you can relate to the new book; the more associations your brain can make, and thus the better will you remember the information in the new book. Since creativity depends upon a gigantic source of data in your biological computer, the brain, the more new ideas you will get from the new book.

So we have mentioned two tools, reading ability and education. What next? How about experience in living? The more you've traveled, the more you've loved and hated, the more hobbies you have -- all this, and more, will bring the tool of experience to the book.

How can we sharpen these three tools, reading ability, education, and experience? One way is by growing old. If you're young, you'll have to work harder at it. For experience, you'll have to substitute a lot more reading. You haven't had the chance yet to visit Mexico; you could, then, read about it. Of course, such experience (as are all experiences) is just a subfacet of education, but there are many experiences you cannot learn from a book. Unless you've survived in a subzero blizzard or nearly died of thirst in Death Valley, how can a book reader feel about such things?

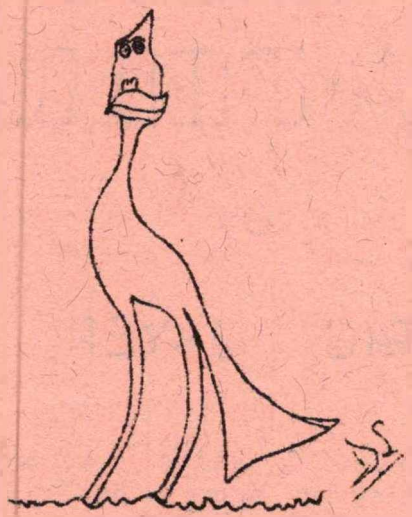
I'm not advocating that you search out possibly fatal experiences (and I include drug trips in this), but you can swim in the ocean, climb a cliff, ride a horse, skin a rabbit, listen to a symphony, etc. Pack in as much as you can. And what you can't pack in, read about. And since you'll have to do a lot of reading, practice speed reading. Do all this and your tools will be sharp. But is there anything more you can do?

Yes, maintain a sharp attitude. Approach a new book with the anticipation of discovery. Be positive. Get the good things out of it; don't nitpick for flaws. This is your fourth tool. If you are indifferent, sleepy, sick to your stomach, worrying, and don't have

the proper illumination on your book, your attitude tool is too dull to cut the mustard.

Now, if your reading ability, your education, your experience, and your attitude are as sharp as you can make them, you and that new book will have a rewarding event. And this brings us to the other question: are the tools the same for all books?

Yes and no. Yes, any book, even a volume edited by Harlan Ellison, will offer you more if the tools are sharp.



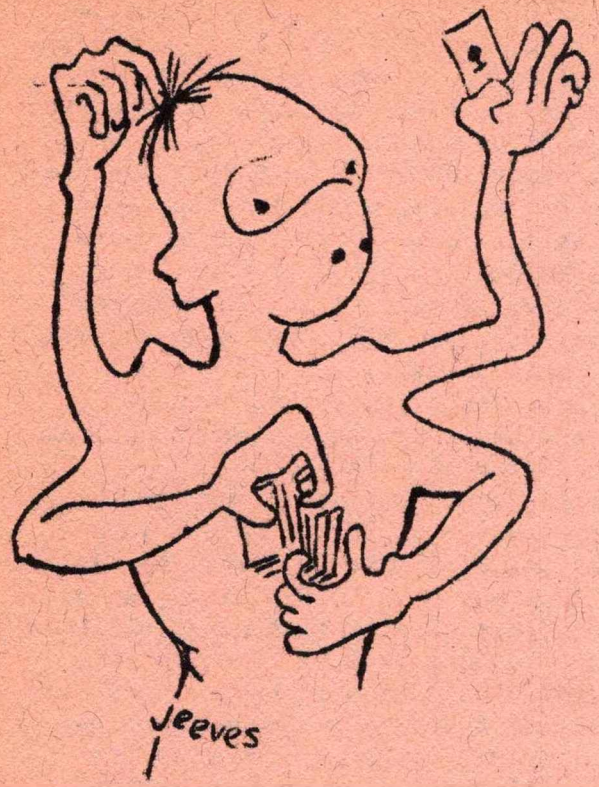
No, though the tools are the same, some books just do not demand a tool as sharp as a sorceror's sword. Some books can easily be read when it's late in the day and you're tired; others require the freshness of early morning. Some can be read next to the swimming pool or on a streetcar, which is certainly not the place for reading about the theory of relativity. Some books require years of technical education or experience; certainly, if your tools are rusty or undeveloped, you will have more success with comic books.

But even a joke makes no sense if all your tools are broken or as dull as the backside of a fat hog.

So, don't "put down" any book. Perhaps your half of the RR was incomplete, insufficient, or downright faulty. That book may have been saying plenty, but you just weren't listening (attitude), you just didn't feel it (experience), you just didn't know it (education), or you couldn't read a sentence or paragraph rapidly enough to remember the first part when you, finally, arrived at the end.

Which I now have.

----Donn Brazier.



A CASE OF CAMPBELL

by

ERIC MAYER

I'm always jealous when I hear someone reminiscing about the first SF magazine he smuggled into his bedroom or rhapsodizing over some early, life-shaping encounter with Heinlein. I can't recall such things. Maybe my memory is faulty. My girlfriend Kathy insists that she can remember swallowing a mothball at age two and I honestly couldn't say what I had for dinner last night. Or maybe it's just that the reading habits of a fourth-grader confronting the enormous new world of the written word, and desiring to swallow it whole, immediately, were not condusive to remembering.

My normal procedure was to sneak as large a stack of books as permissible past the librarian and from there on it was a race with the due date. I never lost. It was a matter of wanting more

and still more -- a headlong rush into one new wonder after another. I was opening a new book almost before I had finished the old one. The library had a science fiction section and whatever was on those shelves, I read. I cared no more about titles and authors than I cared about brands of aspirin.

I was left with a disgust for reality and only vague memories of plots and ideas that tended to surface mainly when I attempted to write my own stories. In my teens I rewrote Rebirth innumerable times without realizing it and without improving on Wyndham.

Science fiction has formed an absurdly important part of my life, yet I have virtually no specific memories of the early reading that, presumably, hooked me on the genre. There is one exception.

On a high shelf, somewhat removed from the science fiction shelf, among volumes of O. Henry and Sherlock Holmes, I found a massive anthology of science fiction. The book was so thick, with such thin pages and such small print that I was actually forced to renew it before I had finished. Only a few titles come to mind, "By His Bootstraps," "The Twonky," "He Who Shrank." Though I didn't remember authors very well I did recognize familiar names and the book contained stories by every author I'd ever heard of and numerous others. It was a remarkable book, one that I've never entirely recovered from, and the most remarkable story in it was a chilling tale of alien menace called "Who Goes There?"

There were years when I drifted away from science fiction. I had outgrown my Tom Swift Jr. books, had exhausted the library's small collection of Norton, del Rey, Asimov and Clarke. I took to "improving my mind" with novels from "recommended readings for college" lists. Some of those novels were beyond me, many of them bored me. I persevered for a while but I could never forget the drop of blood crawling away from a hot needle in that isolated, Antarctic research station and eventually I returned to science fiction.

It was not the place I remembered. There were new authors, Le Guins, Delanys and Zelaznys, who promptly became my favorites. There was a sort of Holy War going on also between a New Wave and an Old Wave, and I couldn't help noticing that the authors I enjoyed were closer to the New than the Old. The bete noir of the New Wave was, of course, an editor by the name of John Campbell. I couldn't argue with the evaluation. I loathed ANALOG with a Malzbergian loathing. I hated it from its militaristic cover to its jingoistic fiction.

Campbell seemed to me the epitome of all that was wrong with science fiction, a pathetic but destructive reactionary in a revolutionary field. When he died, it was with fascinated distaste that I began to read AMAZING's memorial reprint of Sam Moskowitz's "John W.

Campbell: The Writing Years." It was surprising to think of this man as a writer at all. I hadn't read any of his novels, most of which had first appeared long ago. I supposed they were rather bad, rather like ANALOG fiction. And then I came to the end of that article. "Few authors made their literary exit more magnificently...'Who Goes There'..."

I had never associated any name, let alone that of John W. Campbell with that unforgettable story. I was shocked. Not only that but the whole dichotomy I had set up between the "good" New Wave writing and "bad" Old Wave writing was destroyed.

It seemed there was nothing for me to do but find some Campbell and read it. The first thing that came to hand was the Ace edition of The Black Star Passes (Including "Piracy Preferred" and "Solarite" with the title story). I was still dubious. Too many fans had ruined too many memories by ill advised re-reading of childhood idols. But I plunged ahead anyway.

The three interconnected novellas of The Black Star Passes are among Campbell's earlier work. Written while he was a sophomore at MIT (and perhaps helping to explain how Campbell came to flunk German there) the tales were first published in 1930 in AMAZING STORIES. In the 22nd century a group of young scientists saves the Earth from a series of menaces: a rocket propelled pirate, warring Venusians, and finally the far advanced inhabitants of a dead star. The scientific theorizing grows wilder and wilder and the machines become mightier and mightier.

Everyone who has read early SF, and a good many of those who haven't, will be quick to recognize its shortcomings. The writing is crude in comparision to modern SF novels. The characterization is weak. Arcot, Fuller, Wade and Morey are distinguishable mainly by their names and the fact that Arcot solves all the major problems. In fact, the characters are so pitifully uninteresting that all but the two required for dialogue are entirely superfluous. The science is ridiculous from a practical standpoint. There is something obviously preposterous about the molecular-motion-drive in which all the molecules in a substance are forced to move in the same direction thus propelling it forward. And as for Campbell's eccentric gas, C_{62} TH H_{39} O_{27} N_8, which not only permeates any substance and induces a state of suspended animation in whomever breathes it, but also cures cancer -- one wonders why Campbell didn't give up SF and start producing it. Campbell himself was later to promote SF as a genre of technological prediction. In The Black Star Passes he predicts a 22nd century world that has never managed space travel. The theme of the book seems to be the pretty well disproved notion that Technology Saves and might be dismissed as the wishful thinking of a young physics student. The endings of all three tales are predictable. The bad guys are beaten by the superior machines spawned

by the superior brains of the good guys.

However, I was not disappointed by The Black Star Passes. I enjoyed the book. The obvious question, the question I had to ask myself, was "Why?" I have a BA in English Literature. I've read everything from Homer to Joyce. By any accepted literary standard The Black Star Passes is very poor literature indeed. And yet it is far from being the useless garbage that such a statement implies. The obvious argument might be that the scientific content rises above the literary content. But, as noted before, the scientific content is, to all serious intents, a joke. So what is it that gives rise to my feeling that there is something worthwhile about the novel? Is it nothing more than an emotional response? Is it just that I like seeing the good guys win for a change? Is a world of beneficent technology a nice place to dream about for a few hours? These factors may account for part of my favorable reaction to the book. A little optimism is not without value in a world where literature, of all genres, is basically pessimistic. But it isn't enough to say pleasant things. Telling people what they want to hear is the basis for most of the bestseller list and I despise bestsellers.

Perhaps it is the accepted literary standards which are at fault. It should be remembered that criticism of the novel is, basically, a product of this century. The novel itself at its inception was viewed as little more than a low, commercial product by students of literature. Novel criticism is in its adolescence and may be quite naturally attracted to novels of adolescent narcissism (i.e. the "introspective" novel).

The constancy of change is cliché. Both literature and criticism are constantly evolving but, by its very nature, criticism is always a step behind. By the time the critics begin to digest one body of literature, a new one is already being written. By adhering to present critical standards many New Wave writers are assuring their own stagnation. When writers are influenced by critics the proper chain of cause and effect has been reversed and progress ceases.

This is not to excuse Campbell's shortcomings as a writer. (And at that age who wouldn't have shortcomings. Campbell's abandonment of writing at 28 may be the greatest loss SF has ever suffered.) His style does nothing; it could be improved. It is, however, almost refreshing compared to some modern, overly verbose styles. Likewise, his characters are a distinct liability but, on the other hand, just because E.M. Forster had a predilection for a type of character he described as "round" does not mean that a book has to have "round" characters to be successful.

But just exactly what is it that makes The Black Star Passes and similar SF novels successful? It is, I think, something that is so simple as to be completely overlooked, something that literary criticism seems to entirely ignore.

Consider, what is the main purpose of writing? Social criticism, psychoanalysis of character, myth making? Obviously, these, and many other goals are all perfectly legitimate. But isn't there some common denominator to all writing, or, for that matter to all art? Art is man's own, small attempt at creation. Many artistic creations have some secondary aim, social criticism maybe. But any art, any piece of writing is also valuable simply as a creation, as an order, fashioned by man. Modern criticism is too often concerned with the secondary aims or even with the stylistic devices employed in achieving those aims. Literary critics often miss the value of works such as Lord of the Rings because they fail to recognize the legitimacy of creation as an end in itself. By his nature man is a creator.

What is interesting in The Black Star Passes is Campbell's intellectual artifice. It does not matter whether his postulated inventions are plausible or not, what matters is that they are. I would never have dreamed up a molecular-motion-drive. It is a fascinating idea. Nor does it matter that his reasoning is specious because it is also pleasingly self-consistent. Imagination has been shortchanged by academia. Isn't a new idea as valuable as the five millionth retelling of the Oedipus legend?

Classic science fiction has much in common with that other neglected genre, the mystery. In both the classic SF novel and the classic mystery novel the characters are less important than the intellectual puzzle at hand. It is not hard to see that all three parts of The Black Star Passes are, in a sense, mysteries. The problem is not "whodunit" but rather how to develop the technology necessary to defeat some threat. This sounds very dull, but the intellectual puzzle itself is more interesting than the philosophy from which it springs. The classic mystery, like a Campbell SF novel is conservative, if not actually simplistic in outlook. But just as we can enjoy a mystery without accepting a law and order philosophy and without taking any pleasure in murder so we can enjoy the puzzles Campbell poses (the alien invaders, wild inventions and so on are all part of the puzzle) without agreeing with his worldview.

If I seem to have wandered a long way from my original path I can only refer back to the Moskowitz article cited previously and note his accurate description of "Who Goes There" as "one of the greatest detective stories ever told." In this case the puzzle Campbell poses is "whodunit" and his setting is that hoary favorite of mystery writers, the isolated house

containing a finite group of suspects, as epitomized by Agatha Christie's And Then There were None. The similarities of the genres become very apparent.

The implications of all this should be disturbing to new wavers. No doubt, science fiction has been in need of better stylistic craftsmanship and novels like The Black Star Passes do tend to degenerate into space opera. The first time it is used FTL is a fresh idea, valuable and interesting in its own right. The 1001st time it is used, without imagination, it is a cliché. But science fiction cannot succeed, except academically, by mimicking the mainstream. Imagination is the lifeblood of science fiction. Ringworld and the "Riverworld" series, whatever one may think of their style, are fine examples of science fiction because the ideas they pursue are original. Indeed, a novel like The Black Star Passes can fail miserably by every accepted standard of both science and literature and still be great science fiction.

And now I have a confession to make. I haven't re-read "Who Goes There" yet. I will. I'm sure I'll still think just as highly of it. No doubt about it. I intend to re-read it...any day now...

-----Eric Mayer.

HUMAN TRACERY

BY BILL WOLFENBARGER

Chapter 2: At Noel's Funeral

Through the pouring of rain this morning at 7:30 upstairs I could hear an awful croaking, which at first I couldn't identify. I thrust wide the bed covers. Down the eighteen stair-steps I looked, went down the stairs, looked into the living room, saw that the swing window over the leather couch was a little open; and at first I imagined the croakings were coming from hinges there. I crossed the room in only a few swift strides, then shut the window. It didn't squeak or anything. Puzzled, I looked around, trying to figure out what was going on.

Then I saw Noel lying on a Navajo rug on his right side, before the gas heater, and I went over to him as he gave out his death cries.

I couldn't see any blood, or any other sign of immediate injury. I gently stroked his head and back.

"Oh Noel, Noel, what in the world has happened to you?"

He could hardly lift his head. He gave forth his final cry of death.

How some of the older cats sometimes get a little carried away in their play, I knew. Yet I remained perplexed as to what had actually happened.

When Loretta come home from work,

she figured out what had happened. (She's had more experience that I.) "He's choked on something," she said.

I cut out a cardboard box for his little casket. Loretta found a cloth to put over his nearly-3-month-old body. Noel was a black kitten with white paws, a poetry streak of white on his neck, and beautiful white whiskers. Loretta mentioned that Noel had set into the classic rigor mortis.

She placed the cardboard casket in the library until newly-4-year-old Sara Dawn awoke, then she prepared hot oatmeal for all of us. Meanwhile I dug the hole in the back yard. Loretta was so tired from a hard night's work as nurse's aide in Eugene that she went up to bed with a hot water bottle for her feet.

Sara patted Noel a few times. We gathered our raingarb, then took little Noel out in the back yard near the long-ago-peeled-paint wooden picket fence. I had to shovel out a half foot of rain collected. Loretta had asked Sara to put a handful of dirt over Noel for him, and she said she would; but the pile of dirt was now a heap of mud. She declined. I placed a handful over poor little Noel for all of us. I'd made a little wooden cross from two sturdy sticks and a little nail; and pounded it in with shovel at the head of his tender little grave.

We said a few words and a prayer over his grave. I also told Sara that he would be going to cat heaven now.

Noel was my very favorite from Luna's litter. He was a sleepyhead most of the time. There was an unspoken acceptance between us that he would be a writer's cat, to keep me company in long lonely writing hours as he grew older and more aware. From the living room window I can look out and see the cat grave.

The remaining five kittens from mother Luna's litter have already been promised away. We only have Justin, Luna and Johnson who will live with us.

I wanted to see what Noel would think of a Christmas tree...

Time now for this metaphysical frog to go hopping off into other directions while a new sad memory remains always. For you see, the metaphysical frog knows next to nothing on how to colonize new realms, and he needs to ask some old trusted diehards about that very subject. I barely had time to wish him all the luck in the world as he went by.

After all this time, however, I could never convince him that starships won't take anyone who wears glasses. Poor little fella. He doesn't realize he's crazy, at all... I'll be thinking of him. Maybe he'll have better luck finding a flying saucer. But then again, maybe Johnny McNabb will take him along...

----Bill Wolfenbarger.
Route #2, Box 23
Harrisburg, OR 97446

SPACE: 1999 – A REVIEW

BY MARK SHARPE

Several, all of three, Indianapolis science fiction groups were invited by the local ABC affiliate to view the new SF television series SPACE: 1999. About fifty persons showed up and most were college age, but there was a wide assortment of age groups; the youngest being 12 and the eldest being Nancy Stewart, an Australian fan with a collection you wouldn't believe. But, on to the review.

SPACE: 1999 is a special effects extravaganza, but that is about all. It is pleasant to look at but there is little to the story and characters. The first episode, the only one we viewed, was titled "Breakaway" and as with the first STAR TREK episodes, it shows many areas that require improvement.

"Breakaway" contains too much information to really make it enjoyable, and technical errors are rampant. The whole plot of the first episode revolves around the mysterious deaths of crew members scheduled to head off for a planet that is conveniently going through our 'neighborhood' (stellar-wise, that is) and Martin Landau arriving to get the exploration team off the moon. Enter Barbara Bain. She is the doctor who will not give the crew clearance because of the strange deaths. The acting was fair, but all Bain does is stand around with wide eyes begging all the males in Moon Base Alpha to screw her. Even I was tempted to run up at the screen and grab...well, you get what I mean. She is there as window dressing and consequently detracts from the series. She must change into a believeable (but still sexy), intelligent and active character similar to Uhura of ST fame. Anywho, the mysterious deaths are attributed to radiation, but there is no radiation that anybody can find.

Finally, Landau discovers that it is not radiation per se, it is magnetic radiation. That's what I said, magnetic radiation.

The moon is being used in this series as a repository for the Earth's atomic wastes, which may have to happen in the near future. The oldest of the waste disposal areas is found to be responsible for the deaths and eventually explodes. Using great logic (choke!) Landau makes the brilliant statement that the second and larger waste disposal area could also explode. Bain makes the equally brilliant reply, "You mean...?" and Landau replies, "Yes!". The dialogue isn't the best.

The second waste disposal area does explode and send the Moon out of its orbit, conveniently heading for the planet that is visiting our stellar neighborhood. The whole first episode has too many 'convenient' events and is not believeable. Perhaps it will improve, which may be wishful thinking on my part.

SPACE: 1999 will in all likelyhood, be a hit. Not as big a hit as STAR TREK, but still a hit. The mondanes will gobble it up, the fans will hate it. Hopefully, we won't have to endure the 'Trekkies' type fans; called 'Spacies' perhaps?

----Mark Sharpe.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Transition of Titus Crow by Brian Lumley. DAW Books #151; 1975; 253pp.; $1.50.

Reviewed by Kenneth Faig

Titus Crow and his pal Henri-Laurent de Marigny are back! After having battled the CCD (Cthulhu Cycle Deities) through The Burrowers Beneath, they suffer the loss of their star stones and the Old Ones descend on Crow's residence Blowne House in wrath. It's a choice between certain destruction and an adventure into space-time in the womb of Crow's ancient grandfather clock -- actually a space-time travelling machine designed by the benignant Elder Gods -- and so we have The Transition of Titus Crow. De Marigny soon loses his course and falls back into this demesne after a span of ten earthly years; with the help of a colorful old psychic, he is able to guide Crow back to the Earth's current era. The bulk of The Transition of Titus Crow consists of the narrative of Crow's adventures in his space-time clock, a rich and varied account which reveals the author's considerable growth since the writing of The Burrowers Beneath. Whereas The Burrowers Beneath was restricted almost exclusively to a scientific rationalization of the evil doings of the Old Ones and their minions here on Earth, The Transition of Titus Crow ranges from an excellent and exciting narrative of Crow's adventures on Earth in the Cretaceous Period to a finely worked out picture of the time-corridors haunted by Frank Belknap Long's Hounds of the Tindalos (called by Lumley the Tind'losi Hounds) and of the strange ultradimensional space occupied by Yog-Sothoth.

Perhaps most surprisingly of all, Lumley adds to all of this a beautifully painted fantasy of the world of the benignant Elder Gods, which is the far point of Crow's journeying in space-time before his return to Earth. Some inveterate Lovecraftians may object to the introduction of Crow's romance with the beautiful Tiania, Chosen of the Gods, but the note of romance between Crow, by now no longer flesh and blood, and the strange and beautiful Tiania sheds a humanizing light on what would otherwise be merely the narrative of a series of marvelous adventures. All in all, a blend of beautiful fantasy and high adventure in space-time is successfully achieved in The Transition of Titus Crow. To reveal the end of the book would be unfair to the reader; enough to say that room is left wide open for a sequel. If the talents of Brian Lumley as a writer of imaginative fiction keep growing, his next book is one which we should all eagerly await.-KF.

Lovecraft: The Fiction, by Donald Cochran. Published by the author (1315 West Capitol St., N4, Jackson, Mississippi 39203); 1974; 15pp.; 75¢.

Reviewed by Kenneth Faig

This is a person and place name index to Lovecraft's fiction, based on the standard Arkham House edition. This eminently useful work is further enhanced by an interesting and detailed map of Lovecraft's Dunsanian dreamland which readers may enjoy comparing with the map in the de Camp biography. Lovecraft: The Fiction, a labor of love, is certainly one of the most valuable contributions of Lovecraftiana in the past few years. Indispensible if you are interested in Lovecraft's work; if Arkham House ever publishes another general collection of material by and about Lovecraft, this index should certainly be included. --KF.

The Chaos Spawn by F.C. Adams. Vol. Two of The Library Lovecraftian; Shroud Publishers (5652 Vineland Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91606); 1974; 32pp.; $1.00.

The Devil Ground by Ted Pons. Vol. Three of The Library Lovecraftian; Shroud; 1975; 30pp.; $1.00.

Reviewed by Kenneth Faig

For more than thirty-five years, August Derleth was mentor and publisher for writers in the Cthulhu Mythos which Lovecraft created. Most of Lovecraft's own correspondents among professional writers went on to stake out their own ground in fantasy and weird fiction, but as older, more experienced writers left the Mythos behind, new writers, enthralled by Lovecraft's creation, began to try their hands at writing stories in the genre.

Derleth himself had a major role in changing and standardizing the standards for fiction in this very special genre; with his lamentably early death in 1971, publication of material in this specialized field, even material by established authors, has become much more difficult. Paul Berglund, in association with Harry Morris' Silver Scarab Press and other amateur and semiprofessional publishers, has done yeoman's work in presenting the work of new writers in the field, and Kenneth Krueger of Shroud Press deserves similar commendation for his Library Lovecraftian. While these chapbooks provide much less reading for your dollar than an ordinary paperback, they are attractively presented and interestingly illustrated.

Adams' is a tale of the results of overindulgence in the terrible books of the Mythos, and Pons tells the story of the backwoods town where the minions of the Old Ones are still secretly active. Both stories are readable narratives, and both have imaginative merits -- they suffer principally from a lack of development enforced by their brevity. The Adams tale is the more self-contained as

a work of art, while Pons' forgotten village theme most definitely needs expansion to novelette length to be fully successful. The two of these are recommended for inveterate lovers of Mythos tales.-KF.

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((Editor's Note: The next several reviews are by Carolyn "C.D." Doyle. She has told me that "Proto" is the first review that she has ever done. (Her second & third follow in order.) With each review she sent a "Reading Diary", each at least as interesting as the book with which it is concerned. Space is not available for all the diaries, but at least one will be used, as a preliminary to its review.-ec))

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Experiment at Proto by Philip Oakes. AVON #22582; 218pp.; $1.25.

Reviewed by Carolyn "C.D." Doyle

Anymore, I'm beginning to wonder just what is considered science fiction. Is sf a western with a Captain Cool, instead of a Sheriff Shining? With a Mars, instead of an Earth? Or is it a mystery, with some of the main characters being monkeys, instead of people? Experiment at Proto is a good example of the latter.

The story "plot" could be found in any here-and-now fiction or mystery paperback. Mark Barrow, a scientist from the good old U.S. of A., comes to Proto laboratory, situated in England. Proto, which is publically known to produce animal rations, wants Barrow, not to conjure up confectionery delights for cougars, kangaroos and the like, but to help with some communication research being done on monkeys. He, his wife Biddy (they're having marriage problems, which seem to fluctuate in level of intensity throughout the story), and their son James (who seems to be one of the main reasons their marriage is having problems) move into a house, which was formerly occupied by a guy named Ryman, whose job Mark is taking over. Mark becomes involved with Charlette Bloom, another research scientist, who smells like somebody who thinks cleanliness is next to impossible. Mark, however, finds Miss Bloom's body odor almost as tantalizing as Miss Bloom herself. He seems to have no qualms about physically "fancying" two different women, Charlette and Biddy.

There is a variety of apes at Proto; most of them are cute, harmless, and young. There's one, though, that just doesn't fit into the picture. His name is Otto, and he's old, moody, and dangerous when he wants to be. His reason for fitting into the Proto program is kept under wraps for a while, but Mark finally finds out. Seems like the whole reason for Contact (that's the name of the group he's working in) is to find out why Otto killed his old master. The late master's widow, Mrs. Deely, is sure that Otto had a reason for killing her husband, and is determined to find out what it was. (This seemed -- and

does seem -- a little too weak of a reason for a whole network of research teams. Surely, someone would have brought up the fact that language is hard enough to teach to people the equivalent of Otto's age, much less to Otto. Altogether, much too weak of a reason for a whole story.)

The ousted Ryman was trying to teach Otto language through sleep teaching, before he went into Otto's cage one day, totally unprotected, almost asking for Otto to tear off his right arm, which he did. After Mark comes to Proto, Ryman starts popping up again, causing mischief here and there, crazy as a bedbug. In the end, Ryman walks straight into Otto's cage, telling him, "I'm sorry" just before Otto breaks his neck. (This seemed to be one of the better parts of the story, the idea of an unmistakably mad man, whose only "goal" -- that somehow doesn't seem like quite the right word -- is to go up to this ape, this moody, misunderstood ape, and tell him that he's sorry. We may have our problems, little small-shot things that get in the way of life, the goals (if any) that we've set for ourselves; but this "crazy" guy has this one thing that he is convinced he must do -- and he does it. Even if Ryman did kill the director of Proto's wife just before he "did what he had to do", that child-like desire to try and make peace with Otto before he was killed really did get to me. Of course, I'm reading all this into what he did; none of it was spelled out. I could have been reading in things that just don't exist.)

Sex did not appear too often, and most of it (except for one glaring scene), was handled a fraction better than in some of the stories I've read lately. Mark didn't seem to have any big moral hang-ups but everyone else in the story was fairly squeaky clean.

Quality-wise, Proto rates a C-. I find it very hard to believe this is science fiction, and would definitely not recommend it to anyone just starting to read sf. I'm a little surprised it got into print at all. The nut who approved it must have had a hangover when he read it, and been so desperate for something to take his mind off his sufferings, that he O.K.ed it, just to see how mad everyone would be when they found out they'd wasted $1.25 on it. There are better ways to lose money than buying Experiment at Proto.

Testimonials:

"SMASHING!" says the N.Y.Times Book Review; what they really said: "When I got done reading the book, I felt like smashing it, along with the writer's nose."

"I read it all night and couldn't stop," said Desmond Morris. Original: "I read it all night, and couldn't stop wondering how it ever got into print."

"An absolute knockout...extremely readable & exciting," said Rod Serling. Original: "This book is anything but an absolute knockout. I've read a lot of other books that have

been so much more extremely readable and exciting."

The phrase: "Post coitum omne animal triste, Anon" appears at the beginning of this book. What does it mean? --C. D. ((Literally, "After fornication there's a letdown.": not necessarily true, in toto, but the phrase dates, I believe, from ancient times & hence is generally considered A Pearl of Wisdom.))

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Special Feature by Charles DeVet. AVON #24562; 176pp.; 95¢.

Reviewed by Carolyn "C.D." Doyle

To put it in simple terms, Special Feature is a bad book. It promises little, and gives even less. The time wasted reading it could be put to better use pruning privet hedges, or studying the organic compound of yaks' milk. I have found getting blood out of turnips to be child's play, compared to getting something out of this book, except a sort of fleeting longing to put the author out of business -- permanently.

Basically, it concerns these two cat creatures from Paarae. One comes to Earth to escape the cat that is trying to mate with her. (I've heard of playing hard to get, but isn't that going a bit too far?) She is discovered knocking out a man by a TV manager named Howard Benidt. Benidt immediately recognizes (that she's an alien from another planet) this fugitive cat, Pentizel, and sets up a "Special Feature" (you wondered where the title came in, didn't you?) on her for his station. Mistake No. 1: How did he recognize the cat so quickly? (The "cat", incidently, can easily kill & eat a person in a very short period of time....) The "Special" goes on & off six hours at a time.

Later on, Pentizel finds out that her mate-to-be is on Earth, too (how's that for stick-to-itness, guys?). He tracks her down and overcomes her. Now, a massive change takes place. The cat who, a few hours before, was running like her mate was the plague, is now ready to lay down her life for him.

But about this time, the guys from (Trumpets, please) Special Feature! come and take the male cat away, before he hurts somebody. Pentizel assumes he's dead, and wants to kill someone. (About this time, I had a feeling akin to Pentizel's, but it was directed to the writer of the book.) Her mate is not really dead, but merely injured. He is taken to a jail cell.

Everybody starts looking around for Pentizel, as she is pretty dangerous in the mood she's in. He mate keens to her (a sort of mental telepathy/mind reading thing that was never explained quite as fully as I would have liked) and tells her that he is still alive. She helps him escape, and they go to a nest she has made in a sewer pipe. Later on, they kidnap the TV manager, and are promised their ship back. As they walk up to the ship, Benidt is supposed to kill them (why? Because his Special Feature needs

a "heroic" ending), but at the last minute decides to let them go. Because of this, "a new era opened in the galaxy", to quote the book. To me, a new era has opened in bad writing.

I guess the TV station bit was supposed to make the reader feel like he/she is a "part of the game" in capturing the cats. If DeVet was trying to show two different views on the cats (the station's view, and their's) I sure couldn't tell it. The "keening" bit was rather nice, and showed the intense loyalty the cats felt to one another. It was not enough to save the story, however. (If there was a story, which I'm not quite sure of yet), Special Feature makes the last book I reviewed, Experiment at Proto, look like a Hugo winner. Don't make the mistake of reading it. ----C.D. Doyle

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Interlude.

"Hey, Ed, how about sending me a good book to review? I'm not all that fussy, but the last two have been bad...."

READING DIARY: 7/9/75, 12:00 am. The mailman finally got here! From what you'd told me, I'd expected either Dispossessed or Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said. I've never read anything by Ms. Le Guin before, and I'm a little scared to do this review. I can't compare it to any of her other works, and I don't know a thing about her style, what sort of medium she is most known in, etc... Oh well, best thing to do is read the book and find out....

THE DISPOSSESSED by Ursula K. Le Guin. AVON -- $1.75.

Reviewed by Carolyn "C.D." Doyle

Preliminary to Review: Continuation of READING DIARY: 7/9/75, 12:30 pm. I'm only on page 19, and already, I like it. It's too soon to tell what sort of plot Dispossessed has, but Ursula's writing style is very pleasing, much better than in any other book I've reviewed. It gets the idea across clearly -- and more. Be back after lunch.

7:15 pm. I think Ursula is going to use chapters the same way Silverberg did in "Hawksbill Station," with every other one being a sort of flashback into what the main character (mc) was doing earlier in his/her life.

7/10/75, 5:30 pm. I haven't touched D all day. Been too busy making yet another collage for the one blank space left in my room/office. It's about the only way the "artist" in me can come forth with a finished product that is satisfying to both the eye and the soul. Right now I'm babysitting, and doubt if I'll get too much reading done.

7/11/75, 9:00 am. Got to page 129 last night. I don't know how much I actually "absorbed," though, because every two seconds I was looking around to make sure the brats didn't kill somebody (*sigh* the true reason us pimply teenagers babysit -- money!). The way Ursula portrays Urras society as looking down upon the woman -- a veiled parallel to what Terran (I tried

using "Earthian" once, and the hard core fan who heard me nearly fainted) society is/was? As I read this book, I wonder how much of Ursula is projected into the characters, especially their philosophy.
7/12/75, 1:00 pm. I'm only on page 145! Things just keep taking me away from it. Dispossessed is going to be a sort of hard book to review. It's really two stories, the "present-day" one, and the "flash-back" one. Maybe I could do a two part review.
1:50. On page 188. I think Ursula's chapters are a bit too much for me to handle. I'll be reading a "present day" chapter, that has some very interesting or exciting stuff in it, then the next chapter will be about something that happened to the mc twenty years ago. Those big switches -- Ursula's got me interested enough in the character that I am concerned about him, I want to know what happens to him. When suddenly I'm jerked away, it takes me a while to adjust. She should have ended chapter 7 on a slightly calmer note.
2:15. There's at least one advantage to having these sort of chapters. In the flashbacks, you can be secure in knowing that no matter how hairy things become, the mc can't die. But it's really not security, as he could die in one of the present-day chapters very easily. It reminds me of drinking warm chicken with rice soup while a tornado watch is in effect. Drinking it isn't going to change the weather outside, but as it fills you up, and starts to spread all through your system, your attitude toward the weather changes. It gives you a sort of nice, secure feeling. Yet it's false security, because the tornado could rip off the roof of your house any second. (Or is it "false" security? If it is not imitating security, your concept of it, if it feels like/represents security to you, then it is a very real sort.) (Le Guin is rubbing off on me, the philosophy so evident in this novel is affecting me. It's rather pleasant, and a sign that she can get across what she wants, to the point of affecting the people who read it.)
2:45. On page 222. This book came along at an excellent time. The mc is going through some stuff that used to bug me once in a while, namely, what sort of contribution do intellectuals make to society? I have always gone in for mentally stimulating activities, few of which produce any physical results. It is by far easier for me to criticize a movie, or back up an argument, than to fix the engine on a lawn mower, or drive to Chicago. The mc, being a physicist, has probably felt feelings akin to the ones I had in my early "intellectual" years.
7/14/75, 10:30 am. Only 4 more pages to go! This book is best read straight through, not in the bits and pieces I've been getting it in.
11:35. No, it doesn't normally take me an hour & five minutes to read 4 pages, but there have been a lot of interruptions.

The Dispossessed is an excellent book. It was deserving of the Nebula it won, and I will not be too surprised if it wins the Hugo. This is the first book I have ever read by Ms. Le Guin, and it will certainly not be the last. Now that I have told you, in a nutshell, what I think of it, we can get on to what the story is about.

A man named Shevek, a native of the barren, dusty planet of Anarres, goes to the planet Urras, which is Anarres' equivalent to a moon, and vice versa. But, unlike our moon, Urras is a teeming, thriving planet, with a large amount of people, to me a bit like Earth. Shevek's reason for going to Urras is to give the planet a new theory he is in the process of developing, called the General Temporal Theory. At first he is treated royally, like an ambassador, but as time goes on he still does not have the theory down in written form; his fellow physicists get rather impatient.

Thing is, Shevek is having second thoughts about giving his theory to the government of Urras, which would really control it (as he's found out in the time since he's been there). He longs to see the real people on Urras, the working class, the people who make up most of this world. They are the ones to whom he really wants to give the theory. He feels he came to Urras to unite it with his planet of Anarres (for he is the first native of his planet to have ever set foot on Urras), and that he has failed. In the end, he joins some of the middle class (he finally found them!) in a demonstration, protesting against Urras' government, is befriended by an ambassador from Earth, and returns to his home planet, with the General Temporal Theory still not on paper entirely.

Re-reading the above, it sounds as if The Dispossessed is a sort of weak story. It isn't. Every other chapter is sort of a flashback, telling some of the things Shevek did and lived through in his earlier years, and giving the character twice the depth he would have had otherwise. There is a good philosophy in the story, the one of Anarres, that is as warm & good to read of as it probably would be to live. In the story, you see how different people struggle with themselves, and their problems, and you see at least one man's attitude toward living on two planets, yet not totally belonging to either (though toward the end, Shevek seems to love his planet more than at the beginning). The sex was handled beautifully, and was used where it should have been. The characters, especially Shevek, were very real in most cases, and really made the reader concerned about what happened to them.

Each individual will probably read something different into this story, will probably get something different out of it, because the plot is flexible enough to allow a lot of different translations to be correct, even if they are all varied. Any reader can identify with at least one of the characters, and understand the pro-

blems and attitudes they have and face.

This is really a book to be read all at one time, if possible. But even with the 100 and 1 odd interruptions I had, I still enjoyed The Dispossessed immensely.

----Carolyn "C.D." Doyle.

Note: For the record, The Dispossessed was, in fact, subsequently awarded the Hugo.

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Wandor's Journey by Roland Green. AVON #24372; 1975; 188pp.; 95¢.

Reviewed by Don Ayres

With this volume, Roland Green continues the adventures of Bertan Wandor, Master of the Order of Duelists, as he fulfills his destiny as candidate for the Throne of the Five Crowned King whose reign will restore peace to the world.

Although Wandor defeated the army of Duke Cragor at Delkum Pass, thereby allying himself with King Nord against Nord's ambitious son-in-law, Cragor has again raised an army to pursue his plans for dominion in an unexpectedly short period of time. Cragor manages to mount an assault on the capital city of Benzos with the aid of Kaldnor the Dark and drive Nord to the Viceroyalty of the East -- where Wandor is one of the landowners. Kaldnor obtains the assistance of the magic of Nem of Toshak, the sorceror who had long ago managed to overthrow the reign of the Five Crowned King and is sent to assist Baron Galkor when Cragor learns Nord may be fleeing in that direction. Against Temshak's magic, the only hope is for Wandor to seek out Cheloth of the Woods.

This review is not written at the breakneck pace of the first (see Wandor's Ride, SF Echo 19, p. 95), nor did I read it under similar conditions; indeed, they were the opposite, in which I had time for little but the novel -- a train ride to the West Coast.

The handling of the characters is satisfactory, with Wandor's distaste for sorcery being a plus to his characterization. Likewise, villains Galkor and Kaldnor are interesting, the former being realistic and pragmatic and the latter clearly a man in over his head, but doing his best.

Like the first book, there is intrigue and action aplenty. One disquieting aspect is the jump between the end of Chapter 14 and the next time Wandor appears in Chapter 15; it reads as though several pages had been omitted and fails to give Cheloth adequate introduction. Otherwise, I have no particular complaints about the book. On the whole, it is an entertaining, if undistinguished, sword and sorcery novel, and the characters are interesting enough to make it a better choice than much of that genre. --DA.

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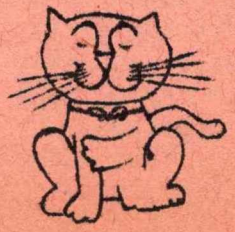

AVON BOOKS' S. F. REDISCOVERY series: EQUINOX book format (5¼ x 8"); $1.95 each (Canada 2.45.)

OMNIVORE by Piers Anthony.

THE GREAT EXPLOSION by Eric Frank Russell.

THE WINDS OF TIME by Chad Oliver.

NO BLADE OF GRASS by John Christopher.

A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS by Edgar Pangborn.

BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO by Harry Harrison.

ULTIMATE WORLD by Hugo Gernsback.

CITY UNDER THE SEA by Kenneth Bulmer.

These are volumes number 8 through 15 of the series that is intended to be available on a continuing basis.

In Omnivore a team of "semi-private" Earth agents (Veg, Aquilon and Cal) is sent to the planet Nacre on a scientific investigation. Filters must be worn in the thick atmosphere of the unmapped jungle world of many poisonous plants; a tractor without radio (it doesn't work on the planet) provides transport. Eighteen predecessors have been killed in unknown ways. (It is necessary for the girl, Aquilon, to paint pictures for home-base viewing. Why no camera? Her magic brush does a better job.) Soon a creature with a huge eye is met; it attacks; they slay it, dissect it and examine. Then another "manta" begins to follow them. Soon, they encounter a gigantic omnivore and are saved by the manta.

After which, the reader is plunged into a fascinating complexity of rapidly progressing plot, interrelated explanatory sequences, and the gradual buildup of a threat to all of Earth. This may very well be the best writing Piers Anthony has produced. --E.C.C.

The Great Explosion: Some time after many worlds had been haphazardly settled by malcontents of one sort or another from Earth, a military ship is sent from there to attempt to put four of the worlds into harness. But the inhabitants of those independent orbs object, in one

instance by "passive" resistance, which episode is enhanced by Russell's subtle brand of humor. Another planet forbids the wearing of clothing, having been settled by nudists. And so on. The writing is masterful, the reader knows pretty much what is going on at all times while suspense continues to build, and one is left at the end of the book wishing that one could accompany the ship on more adventures to even more outre "neocivilizations."

The Great Explosion is a classic that nearly everyone will find intriguing.-E.C.

The opening of The Winds of Time is serene -- a man going up into the mountains to fish. But he is trapped, high up, by a hailstorm, finally gaining succor in a cave. Dark falls; he sleeps; it rains steadily. A noise awakens him; trying to flee, his way is blocked by a stranger, who stuns him, carrying him back up to the cave, back through a door. Four other human figures are visible in wall niches.

Eventually he is roused by his captor, who slowly, day by day, learns English. Then he tells the story of how he and the others arrived on Earth: In the past, 15,000 years back when civilization here still lay at an uncertain time in the future. So, suspended animation was utilized until mankind had advanced sufficiently.

Basically, that's very trite as a theme. But Chad Oliver has given it the breath of gripping, matter-of-fact reality. His craftsmanship herein is near superb. The men from another world do not, at first, succeed. But in the end, with the help of the Earthman they've contacted, they do. The ending is finely honed.

The book was a pleasure to read.-E.C.

No Blade of Grass is another production that has worn well. It is well worthy of this attractive edition. Having read this years ago, I knew that Christopher (C.S."Sam" Youd) had written well and pleasingly. He had reminded me then, and I hadn't forgotten, that "grass" is not just that green stuff that must be disposed of much too often, but that grasses -- the Gramineae -- include wheat, oats, rye, barley, etc. Well, in this novel a virus sweeps the Earth, destroying all grasses.

The author is a realist; he notes, when news reaches England from America in re the conservation of grain stocks for domestic consumption: "The trouble as far as the Americans are conserned is that their cards are always on the table. The other grain-producing countries just sit on their stocks without saying anything." Throughout the world, countless millions continue to starve to death.

The virus takes over gradually in England, followed by creeping, then sweeping, barbarism. Civilization teeters. A struggle for survival occurs, the author showing us how killing becomes necessary. Here, again, is a trite theme. In the way it is handled by Christopher, however, the reader is carried along with suspense, fascination & anticipation. Unforgettable.

The "observers" in A Mirror for Observers migrated to Earth from a dying Mars milennia ago, establishing several secret cities which, however, have a total population of only 2,000 (but whose inhabitants live for some hundreds of years). There are a few dozen other Martians known as "abdicators" who've gone off on their own. There is much mixing with Earth's population, the Martians, of course, not disclosing their true identities.

The story holds up well for a tale written twenty-one years ago; the rare boo-boo is of the type one can expect in a novel of this vintage: the baseball Dodgers being coupled with Brooklyn, for instance. Mostly the plot is concerned with one observer living in the New York area; we read his reports to headquarters. The climax builds to the point where "only today comes the first newspaper account of the disaster," and, next day, "New York area, 436 reported cases, 70 deaths." It continues to build.

There is quite a bit of proselytizing, by the way, viz.: "...They invent religions of charity such as Christianity -- if you want to know how they practice them, look at the prisons, the slums, the armies, the concentration camps and execution chambers; better still, look into the not very well hidden hearts of the respectable, and watch the maggots squirm, the maggots of jealousy and hate and fear and greed...."

And again, "They have always done their best to smother and destroy the few abnormal ones who have a little vision, a little ability beyond the ordinary, and they always will....

"I abdicated because I saw that the only cure for the human situation was annihilation." Yes, it is an abdicated Observer, a renegade, who wants humanity to destroy itself, who has been tracked down in an effort to fend off his harmful influence.

But there is disaster, although not a final one. This is a book that will, perhaps, cause you to think a little more deeply, a little longer, than usual.-E.C.

The man who turns out to be Bill, the Galactic Hero is a plowjockey when he is seduced by the Emperor's recruiting robot. Which opens one of SF's most distinctive farces -- a satire of all that we tried-and-true scientifictionists are alleged to hold dear. (The sweeping, van Vogtish, Heinleinian space opera, for example.) Harry Harrison, he of the flamboyant, irreverent humor-in-SF, did one of his best jobs in this case.

Bill gets into the thick of a galactic war, becomes a hero by mishap, and is bestowed with the gift of a trip to a "pleasure" city, at which point (with over half the novel left) things begin to go round and round, Bill is bounced from pillar to post, and the hectic pace continues to the end.

If you like the type of humorous satire featured here from start to finish, get this one! --E.C.C.

The Ultimate World was first published just several years ago. As Sam

Moskowitz points out in his introduction, this is a work of technological prophecy. The introduction itself is a substantial summation of Gernsback's background, outlining many of his SF, and other, accomplishments. It is revealed that Ultimate World was originally interposed with non-fictional essays which made it nearly twice as long. Gernsback trimmed it some; after his death Sam excised all but the fiction. Mr Moskowitz notes: "Ultimate World is destined to become a new source book for science fiction plots.

"To date, only one other man, Philip José Farmer has nearly as successfully used the science of sex as the basis for strong science fiction."

The story itself starts out on a, er, rather supercampy note. I found it quite amusing. The first chapter ends with the protagonist and his wife enjoying mutual ravishment "in a marital union such as humanity had never experienced before."

The avid SF reader should find many interesting episodes and ideas -- mostly non-sexual, by the bye -- herein. All stemming from the fact that a super-race called the Xenos has descended upon Earth, bringing a "legacy of progress toward peace and enlightenment." The occupiers stay a year. They are then drawn to space by the approach of others -- enemies -- the encounter resulting in mutual destruction.

I opened this book not knowing what might be therein, but anticipating the worst. The ensuing surprise was very pleasant indeed; this book is worth reading and keeping. Hugo was quite a personality, with a seethingly questing mentality.-E.C.

City Under the Sea: It is a time when Earth is ever more heavily populated, with domed undersea colonies, ocean floor mining, regular space flights and much discussion of colonizing Saturn's moons, etc. Workers are press-ganged, sometimes in wholesale lots, by unscrupulous mining concerns for slave labor deep underwater. It is a time when over half of the world's food comes from undersea farming of various types.

The chief thread of this narrative is concerned with one man who is kidnapped by subterfuge and made to work underwater. The group is using humans who have been altered to breathe in water (and who can no longer breathe in air). Soon he, too, is altered. (Skin is not protected from the water, except as the author says, "their diet encouraged an oil skim over their own skin through the sweat pores.") Suffice to say that after a series of harrowing experiences as a slave, the protagonist and friend escape, at last falling in with humans who'd been born undersea. They go back on a rescue mission, find they aren't needed -- authority has at last caught up with the slavemasters -- and at that point a mystery that has been lurking in the background is suddenly thrust forward.

Alien contact -- nicely handled.

And in the end, the principle characters are to be operated on and returned to breathing air.

----Ed Connor.

NEW WORLDS #6, edited by Charles Platt & Hilary Bailey (EQUINOX 23929); 233pp.; 8" x 5¼"; $2.95. (Canada, $3.45.)

Reviewed by Ed Connor

In the U.K. this was #7. As Charles Platt notes in his intro, "Our scope includes possible worlds of the future, surreal worlds of the human psyche and impossible worlds of fantasy."

Moorcock's "Pale Roses" is a far future tale of jaded immortals, seeking relief in grotesque artistry, including time travel searching. (Travel into the future is relatively easy; returning to the past can be done for brief periods only.) At one point an "Auditor" interposes to provide reasonably lucid explanations. But -- why is so little known for sure of the future? We are told that returnees must rush back, so they've given an auditor only "a short account," stayed "half an hour with a relative or a loved one," and so forth. But what about tapings that can be brought back to show and tell anything? Moorcock ignores such things, unhappily. The long last section is a rather puerile "staged" love story. Passing over much of Moorcock's intemperance, many readers will greatly enjoy the tale. It is the first of a series utilizing the same background as that of the author's An Alien Heat, we are told.

Passing over a clutch of poems, the B.J.Bayley short, "Maladjustment", is found to be excellent. (Spaceman saved by alien doctor; rebuilt!) "Black Rose & White Rose" by Rachel Pollack is an interesting adult fairy tale. John Sladek's "The Kindly Ones" is a sterling example of the author's herky-jerky humor, but has little coherency.

"The Return of the Mandarin" by Rick Gellman hints that even in a world of spaceports and ships, poverty and discontent will again be manipulated in a new bloodbath. Gerald Giannattasio, with "G. I. Sparrow," gives us a real oddity, thought-provoking and well written. Bertil Martensson's "A Modest Proposal" is simply too clever for words and should not have contained any. Ronald Cross' "The Jewel Thief" is 15 pages of somewhat surrealistic adventure; rather pointless.

Eleanor Arnason's "The Warlord of Saturn's Moons" is of a science fiction writer, with the main clout being the contrast between her mundane existence (with the usual hectic events of the world outside) and the story she's writing (and letting us in on). Quite Entertaining. Brian Aldiss' "The Secret of Holman Hunt & the Crude Death Rate" is a spoof, actually, of extrasensory and supranormal mental awareness; not overdone, so enjoyable. "Miss Subways" by Gwyneth Cravens is short and blunt.

Ruth Berman's "Lakewood Cemetery" is an excellent, if brief, episode of a girl's encounter with an unusual male. "The Ghosts of Luna" by Ian Watson, concerns a later visitor to the moon who finds the immaterial American astronauts of 50 years before hopping around. M. John Harrison's "The Wolf that Fol-

lows" is an excerpt from The Centauri Device (Doubleday; Panther), of adventure, battle, etc., in space; overdone; too arty. "Red Sky at Night" by Jean Charlotte is possibly a vignette about wishful thinking.

The others worth mentioning are: "Liberation" by Rona Spalten, a superb look at an institution where are confined several types of mutants. It skillfully portrays how one particular mutant grows to help the others, beginning to teach them to read, and how eventually the humans in charge accept her skills and give her a free hand. Freedom to leave for all looms as a possibility for the future but the teacher realizes that freedom is one thing, acceptance -- by a mutant's parents, etc. -- quite another. The yarn ends there, the piece being so well written, so gripping, that one feels a desire to read more. Fine!

"The Thalidomide Kid" by Jeremy Gilchrist is a horror story in a desolated world of mutants. John Clute's "Birdseed for Our Feathered Fans" is a mishmash of reviews of several SF books, one by Niven, one by Harrison, etc., but chiefly of Phil Farmer's Traitor to the Living (2 pages of butchery which includes such tidbits as "It's a dangerously shoddy piece of merchandise for Mr Farmer to hawk...".

The fine stories in New Worlds #6, particularly Rona Spalten's "Liberation", make it well worth the price. There is a bonus of seven full-page fine illoes.-E.C.

THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD by Patricia A. McKillip. AVON #25502; 208pp.; $1.50.

This volume has been singled out for the Howard Phillips Lovecraft award as "Best Fantasy Novel," in the first presentation of the HPLs at the recent First World Fantasy Convention at Providence. I have been champing at the bit in the anticipation of reading it, since all reviews scanned to date have been quite favorable. The wraparound cover, by the way, is by Gervasio Gallardo -- his usual captivating creation.

After writing the above, I have read it, caught up in the magic of a cunningly woven plot-line -- read it nonstop, oblivious to time and surroundings. The Forgotten Beasts of Eld is, truly, a magnificent fantasy.

Sybel, a descendant of "gifted" parents, lives in a land of kings, sorcerers, witches and animals of oft strange ability. She continues to "call" additional of the mysterious animals, to add to the collection begun by her grandsire and enlarged by her father. She dwells alone in the place he'd built for her, at peace with her animals. Until one day an armed man brings a baby -- heir to the throne -- to her for protection. So it is that the way is paved for future trouble. Eventually the king lures his son to court, men fall in love with Sybel, her penchant for purloining esoteric books gets her into deadly danger (from which she is rescued), she undergoes various further tribulations, marries, and finally frees her animals.

At last there is vengeance, peace -- although permeated by a feeling of sadness -- and an unexpected revelation.

Now, if I were to write a "blurb"

for this wondrous book, what would I say? Something like "Utterly captivating... should be on every shelf of fantasy books in the land." ----E.C.C.

2000 A.D.-Illustrations from the Science Fiction Pulps, by Jacques Sadoul. Henry Regnery Company - Chicago (180 N.Michigan Ave., IL 60601). 176pp. ($8\frac{1}{4}$"x $10\frac{1}{2}$") 8pp. in full color. Hb: $15.00; pb: $7.95.

Reviewed by Ed Connor

One book that well deserved to be translated into English after its original publication in France. It is a very nicely laid out "history" of pulp SF artwork. There is a preface by A.E. van Vogt in which he notes how numerous artists have striven to depict the future. A four-page introduction by the author is a general history, including anecdotes, and is extremely interesting as is the following "Guide to the principal sf pulps mentioned"; covers of a dozen different are shown. The sections of artwork cover 1) The Great Galactics; 2) The Age of Robots; 3) Spaceships; 4) The Women of the Cosmos; 5) Dream Weapons; 6) The Bestiary of Outer Space; 7) The Machines of the Future; 8) The Cities of the Future. Plus an Appendix: "Some Facts about the Universe." There is an incredible range of artists herein -- all the giants from Frank R. Paul and J. Allen St. John to Finlay and Bok! --E.C.

Times Without Number by John Brunner. THE ELMFIELD PRESS (Elmfield Road, Morley, Leeds LS27 ONN - U.K.) 233pp.; £3.95.

Reviewed by Ed Connor

This is completely revised & expanded from the 1962 Ace edition.

The story is laid in an alternate timeline, where the Spanish Armada triumphed, taking over Britain and North America. The protagonist is Don Miguel Navarro, "Licentiate in Ordinary of the Society of Time." Here there is slavery, an Empire-Mohawk Indian alliance, no airplanes, and other anomalies with our Earth. And, there is time-travel, to the past and back only. And that is where Don Miguel is concerned.

It all came about through his involvement with Two Dogs, who tried to deceive him but was found out, went through with his rebellion, and went back in time to deliberately alter the future. So Don Miguel, his chaser, rushes back toward the future, hoping to get there before the permutations of the alteration reach there and destroy the time travel node.

He arrives safely. But in New York. In our timeline. A finely tuned, admirable narrative. --E.C.

The Light that Never Was by Lloyd Biggle, Jr. THE ELMFIELD PRESS, U.K. 240pp.; £3.95.

Reviewed by Ed Connor

On a planet of artists who profit by the uniqueness of their environment, and during a time when pressure is building from a multiplicity of nonhuman lifeforms who demand to be considered as equal to humans rather than being called "animal-

oids" and considered inferior, an art critic acquires a brilliantly conceived painting which he learns may have been created by a non-human.

The place where the painting originated is traced to a swampland farm where resides an artist, who attributes the work of art -- more are to appear -- to a "slug" he keeps in the back garden. There follows much intrigue; the hatred of many humans for the animaloids is secondary to the mania of one powerful figure who is eventually revealed as the causive factor behind the upheavals in the 24 "riot" worlds. (He had sowed ecological disaster, hoping to profit thereby. He liked so much to "do good" -- having given away most of his vast inherited fortune -- that he needed more and more funds to spread around. No matter the harm to others.)

And, finally, we learn the probable truth about the "slug" and the paintings. Amazingly well done! --E.C.

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The World's Best SF Short Stories No. 1, edited by Donald A. Wollheim. THE ELMFIELD PRESS, U.K. 280pp.; £4.50.

Reviewed by Ed Connor

This collection of 10 stories appeared from DAW Books in the U.S./Canada under a slightly different title.

Here, Robert Sheckley's "A Suppliant in Space" is concerned with a social outcast, set adrift between galaxies with his robot servant; they happen to land on a planet to which comes a great ship from Earth. First contact with aliens! Vastly amusing; I kept laughing out loud.

"Parthen" by R.A.Lafferty is of an irresistible "women's lib"; Fred Pohl's & Jack Williamson's "Doomship" is concerned with Earth as part of a galactic confraternity & brings various lifeforms together in space as a strange extragalactic object is to be investigated by a ship with an all-volunteer crew; Norman Spinrad's "Weed of Time" is told from the viewpoint of a creature to whom all time is simultaneous (of course that is logically impossible since if all time were identical it would have no length, and so would be nil, but Spinrad's is an excellent attempt). In Vadim Shefner's "A Modest Genius," a youth invents: a camera to take pictures of the future; an antigravity machine; etc. A pleasantly amusing peek at a bit of Russian SF. Harlan Ellison's "The Deathbird" is referred to as "new wave" by the editor but I don't see why; perhaps I don't see why because this work is vastly superior to any recognizable "New Wave" that I have seen. In the brilliancy of its construction it transcends any attempt at classification in any of the sub-genres of SF: It's a true work of art; an emotional experience. "Evane" by E.C.Tubb is about a spaceman who is "tended" by a computer. "Moby, Too" by Gordon Eklund is about whales, one in particular. Michael Bishop's "Death and Designation among the Asadi" concerns the study of an alien species whose thought processes are different to a marked extent. The observer tells us what the creatures do, many odd

practices, etc., just as an anthropologist studying aborigines in an isolated locale on Earth might do. Hence, I found it too mundane, even though quite elaborate. Finally, Clifford Simak's "Construction Shack" is about a landing on Pluto and what the Earthlings found there. All in all, this book contains some nice pickings.

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THE OTHER GLASS TEAT by Harlan Ellison. PYRAMID #A3791; 397pp.; $1.50. "Further Essays of Opinion on Television" (from the L.A.Free Press and Rolling Stone).

Reviewed by Ed Connor

I'll start out by using a blurb. Most of you, as indicated by a pretty fair sampling of the readership elsewhere in this fantome, do not trust blurbs. In general, that is -- I venture to say. I think any smart reader can recognize the truth of many blurbs as well as being disillusioned by others. So grab this, accompanying a list of Ellison's PYRAMID editions -- out & coming out -- in the back of this volume: "Here's a man who slams his work edge-on into your guts. You'll relish even the bruises. And it's long past time for Harlan Ellison to be awarded the title: 20th Century Lewis Carroll." -- Philip José Farmer in the L.A.Times. Well, that's true, as far as the publisher has let it go. Much, indeed, could be added. Perhaps, The 20th Century Dickens; a "New Wave" Dickens. Of course, Harlan Ellison goes about his commentaries on social mores quite differently, especially as to directness of expression.

Now this second Glass Teat is all Ellison. All jabber-jabber-jabber about one hell of a lot of different aspects of TV "entertainment" and life in general. Or, if you prefer, people and their likes & dislikes, and their good and -- mostly -- bad habits. TV's bad habits. Read the book's Introduction first; HE wrote it in 1975, so it's the latest part. Oh, one thing. I haven't seen this book on sale anywhere, though I can't imagine why. (You may have to order it direct.) Maybe it sold out quickly. Maybe I didn't look hard enough. But maybe the author is right, maybe not even paranoid, about how the original The Glass Teat was coldcocked on the newsstands, and maybe the second book got some of the fallout from that. Well, get it -- by hook or by crook, get it! How in the hell else are you going to read it? --E.C.C.

- -

OPTIONS by Robert Sheckly. PYRAMID #V3688; 158pp.; $1.25.

Reviewed by Ed Connor

"Weird wit" is the main fabric of this space opera.

Pilot Mishkin's spaceship's main drive goes blotto; he must have a part or it will not function. He limps by secondary drive to the nearest spare-parts planet. There, a series of incredible happenings begin; they are all concerned with trying to get that one spare part to him. For example: "Fifty yards from Mishkin the motorcyclist ran across a land mine. The man, the cycle, and the package were blown to bits." You guess what

was in the package.

There is an almost continuous flow of humorous happenings, language, etc. It is very difficult to maintain such a pace for long but Sheckley does a better job than anyone I can think of. You wouldn't want to read two books like this in succession, or maybe not more than one a year, but this is more than passable.

If zany fun & games (presented in a coherent manner, if that's possible) appeal to you, I think you'll find Options outstanding. You really wouldn't believe the ending, if I told it to you. (Nobody can get by with that, at this late date....)

- -

The Other Side of Tomorrow, edited by Roger Elwood. PYRAMID #V3937; 192pp; $1.25

Reviewed by Ed Connor

In nine stories written for this volume, each author shows a possible future.

"Come Sing the Moons of Moravenn" by Leigh Brackett concerns 200 young colonists on a new world who learn about life the hard way. "Examination Day" by Gordon Eklund looks at the aftermath of a mysterious, presumably pollution-engendered, upheaval. Arthur Tofte's "The Speeders" shows how two youthful speeders are finally raced out.

In "Let My People Go" by Joseph Green a future "throwback" is, with others of his kind, given a new chance, on another world. Edward Hoch's "Night of the Millennium" is a pleasant little adventure, but of little depth. Ray Jones' "A Bowl of Biskies Makes a Growing Boy" is an excellent piece about a society "controlled" unknowingly via TV and drugs, and about how dissenters are "cured". "Final Exam" by Tom Scortia tells how an "accident" turns out to be a test for a potential recruit.

"The Others" by J. Hunter Holly is about deformed youngsters growing up in isolated confinement, until they break out and discover a couple of their society's deformities. Finally, "Peace, Love and Food For the Hungry" by Gail Kimberly deals with a small group from overcrowded Earth which settles on a planet with some oddball aliens.

An unusual and interesting anthology, although the volume has an aura of blandness about it and none of the situations are very convoluted; particularly recommended -- by me, the publisher is noncommittal -- for the 12-14 age group, but others will enjoy a large percentage of the contents. --E.C.C.

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RECENT NEW FANZINES

SFinctor- 9115 Beverlywood St., Los Angeles, CA 90034. 25¢; $2.50 per year (12-ish); overseas 40¢ or $4 yr. NEWSZINE now ready to roll as #7 out from Craig Miller/Mike Glyer/Elliot Weinstein/Glenn Mitchell. NEWS WANTED.

ETERNITY ROAD #3 - Larry Carmody, 118 Lincoln Ave., Mineola, NY 11501. 35¢ or 3/$1. Offset, 12pp. Comments, reviews, Locs.

WINDING NUMBERS #1 - Randall Reichardt, 58 Penrose Place, Winnipeg, Manitoba,

Canada R2J 1S1. (For 50¢, contribs, Locs, art, etc.) Editor gives his fan history; SF in Winnipeg; reviews; an appraisal of the pulps; piece on Heinlein, etc. 18pp. NOTE: If Canadian POSTAL STRIKE still on send mail to Reichardt c/o George Chale, Box 183, Pembina, ND 58271.

SIMULACRUM #1, #2: Victoria Vayne (P.O.Box 156, Stn. D, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6P 3J8.) If Canadian POSTAL STRIKE still on send mail to Victoria V. c/o Karen Klinck, 142 Snughaven Court, Tonawanda, NY 14150. Available for $1 or trades, Locs, contribs, art, etc. No. 1 was a fine firstish, but No. 2 is obviously the leading contemporary Canadian genzine, the finest since ASPIDISTRA. 74pp., 3/yr. I've been amazed that practically everything to date by Victoria that I've read (Locs, etc.) has agreed with my own opinions. So, no wonder I find SIMULACRUM so outstanding. But obviously Victoria is showing a superior ability at fanzine pubbing. Exc. material here by Long, Chauvin, Strelkov, D'Ammassa, Stewart, etc.

BSFAN #3: Mike Kurman, 2434-304 Chetwood Circle, Timonium, MD 21093. Baltimore SF Soc. organ. A lot of good Con Reports, including Aussiecon. Locs, reviews, etc. (For Loc, trade, 20¢ in stamps.)

MYRDDIN TWO: Lawson W. Hill, 3952 W. Dundee Rd., Northbrook, IL 60062. $1 or 4/$3.50 48pp. Finely done photo-offset 5½x8½. 2-page supplement of Locs, comments, etc. Poetry by H.Warner Munn, Fritz Leiber and others, "Phantomes" (concerning fantasy currently on the market), stories, an interview w/photo of the Curator of the largest collection of material relating to C.S.Lewis, the story of how "Alice" was conceived, reviews, etc.; very neat and enjoyable.

UNIVERSE SF REVIEW (#2,3,4,5): Keith L. Justice, Rt.3 Box 42, Union, Miss. 39365. Bi-Mo (6/$3 by surface anywhere.) ($7 by air worldwide.) Issue 5 is tabloid newspaper format -- very effective! 16pp. of quite readable type; a lot of wordage. Numerous reviews of books (by D'Ammassa, Sween, A.K.Molnar, Tiptree,Jr., etc.), many fanzine reviews, a wordfinder puzzle (of authors' names, altho the creator forgot to put in "Miller"), photoes of book covers, etc. This ish 50¢; back issues 75¢. This has become a very likeable, thorough journal, in general as good as any of its type I've seen in the SF field. If Keith Justice can manage to keep going for another half to full year UNIVERSE might very well prove to be almost indispensable. It's really interesting & well worth trying.

TINAUP #1: Steve McDonald, 805 Range Line, Columbia, MO 65201; 50¢ or Loc, Contrib., art, trades. "The adventures of an Englishman in America, via Jamaica." An obvious first issue in appearance, the editor wants a variety of material.

SCIENTIFRICTION #3: Mike Glyer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342. Trades, contribs, Locs, etc; sample 25¢. 44pp of Locs, verse by Sam Long, Conreport by Glyer, reviews, etc.

WARK 3 & 4: Rosemary Pardoe, 24 Othello Close, Hartford, Huntingdon PE18 7SU, U.K. 3/$2 (UK 25p ea.) or the usual. Offset; 20 pp each; 8½x 6; "A fanzine about fanzines." Has gorgeous fantasy-artwork. Substantial articles by editors about how their fanzines developed; reviews; Locs. Exc.

JAYLAND UNLIMITED No. 4: Craig J. Hill, 220 Standish 1, Redwood, CA 94063. 50¢ (16/$6; 3/yr.) 5x8, 24pp; Fine quality pro fanzine. Nice article on the major diff. between Lewis' Narnia & Tolkien's LOTR, etc.

THE FILLOSTRATED FAN DICTIONARY: 7001 Park Manor, North Hollywood, CA 91605. 2 vols., 8x5, total 172pp. Many illoes, offset, $1.50. Elliot Weinstein's great listing of terms of Fandom & SF. (Very incomplete yet, but 3rd vol. to come @ 50¢.) Almost a must.

KOLVIR #1, 2: The Amber Society, c/o Hopsfa, SAC Offices, Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore, MD 21218. 12pp; 20pp; for trade, 25¢ (6/$1.25), Locs, contribs. Tim Daniels, Editor. Very neatly produced.

FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE 3, 4: Susan & Cliff Biggers, 621 Olive St., Cedartown, GA 30125 22, 24pp; 35¢ or 6/$2. Many fine reviews & Locs, etc. Good, average, enjoyable zine.

WELTANSCHAUUNG #1, 2 (12 & 20pp.): Stephen Dorneman, 221 S. Gill St., State College, PA. 16801. (30¢ or usual.) Excellent articles, Locs. Asks for material, inc. art.

CINEFAN: Randall D. Larson, 774 Vista Grande Ave., Los Altos, CA 94022. $1.50 ($2.50 out of US). Large 60pp offset production, loaded with photoes from movies, etc. Many choice articles, interview, reviews, etc., much SF. Will overjoy the movie buff.

FARRAGO #1: Donn Brazier, 1455 Fawnvalley Dr., St. Louis, MO 63131. Trade, or 75¢, 3/$2. About 40pp. Several excellent articles, many photoes, etc. Also (sob) fiction & poetry.

NICKELODEON #1: Tom Reamy & Ken Keller, 1131 White, Kansas City, MO 64126; Q., 48pp; $2, year $7. (Foreign $8 sea; $10 air, US funds). Arranged trades, pubbed Locs. Pro fanzine; high quality package. First issue leaves room for improvement, but a wide range of material includes some fine stuff.

XENOPHILE: Nils Hardin, P.O.Box 9660, St. Louis, MO 63122. M., $1; yr/$6 ($12 overseas). Last ish I have is May, which has an extensive addition to extant indexes to the works of Ray Bradbury (and a long verse by him). Also the usual ADVERTS for a wide range of pulps, etc. Very fine.

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES #1: Fred Miller (address page 155). This leaves a lot of room for improvement in the larger second ish. 26¢; trades; etc.

CAMBION #1: Wm. Siros, 1208 Devonshire Dr, El Paso, TX 79925. 26pp, Trades, 50¢, etc. Solarcon report, articles about Phil Farmer at the Con, "Fritz Leiber in El Paso", etc. Exc.

PVENUS PFLYTRAP #1: Linda Johnson, 674 Elm St., New Haven, CT 06511. Interesting odds & ends, including reviews.

SHAMBLES #1: Ed Cagle, Star Rt. South,

Box 80, Locust Grove, OK 74352. 33pp; for 6-10¢ stamps, etc. Offbeat &/or wayward stuff. Dave Locke co-ed.

CYGNUS X-1: Bob Ruben, 1351 Denniston Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15217. 24pp. Article on Le Guin, on SF movies, fiction, 4-page cartoon story. Q., 4/$1.20; trades.

DURFED: Kevin Williams - 9, Whitton Pl. - Seaton Delaval, Northumberland, U.K. Misc. spoofery of SF & fandom.

GANNETSCRAPBOOK #2: Harry & Irene Bell, 9 Lincoln St., Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE8 4EE - U.K. 24pp.; Trades, Locs, etc. A variety of material of fair to good qual.

SCUZMOTHRE #3: Gary Hubbard, Apt 2/208 Hubbard Ct., Westland, MI 48185. 22pp. Usual or 8/$1. Torcon 2 reports, Locs, etc.

PHILLY-CON "SURVEY RESULTS": Lew Wolkoff, 243 Maclay St., Harrisburg, PA 17110. Covers answers to questions about (mainly) the future of worldcons -- what should be done or not done, to help them and insure their continued existence. 16pp. No price listed; prob. trade.

EDITORIAL NOTES

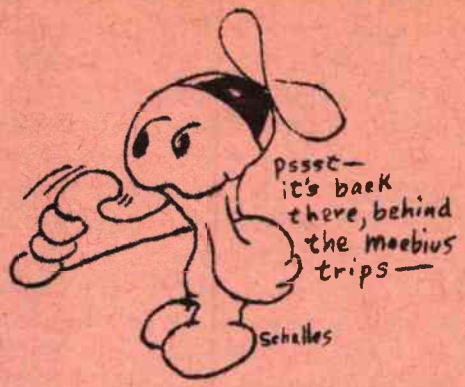
see page 8 too

I may send Dave Rowe a few new ideas for his cartoon series of "This Issue is Late Because...". I suspect my main trouble was that the soft rubber side-pads clutching the nether end of the hopper-paper finally petered out. The last few stencils were a struggle to finish, taking double & triple the usual hour each. Pfui.

Thanks to Tom Cockcroft, sage of New Zealand, who sends Xeroxes of old artwork by Bok, Lindsay & Krenkel -- the latter two being of more than coincidental similarity, plus covers of old pulps including a Gernsback AMAZING illustrating H.G. Wells' "War of the Worlds." And a copy of an article on Lovecraft from a 1951 "The Amateur Scribe." In re artwork similarities, sometimes very great with that of master and "student," Tom notes that he saw in an early FANEWS (by the time FANEWSCARD had that name, Tom, it was Dunkelberger's pub) the defense by Charles McNutt of his use of other artists' work in his drawings (I believe I still have that issue somewhere). The reason McNutt was put into such a defensive position was Frank Malcolm Robinson's (formerly my co-ed of FANEWSCARD) preceding rather bitter castigation of that practice by McNutt. Frank knew McNutt (I didn't) & once or twice talked to me about his artistic borrowings; it was plain that he cared very little for McNutt. (McNutt soon after adopted a "professional" name -- which I'm not sure I recall, perhaps it was "Charles Beaumont.") Frank of course went on to attain success as a writer (the film "The Power" being based on one of his tales), being co-author with Scortia of The Glass Inferno and The Prometheus Crisis.

Don Ayres' newest address is 5707 Harold Way #3, Hollywood, CA 90028. (The one on page 154 is now more or less obsolete.)

LOCOL



LOUIS RUSSELL CHAUVENET

(11 Sussex Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910)

The format of #22 is comfortable. The contents were an astonishment to me, in that so much of it seems to be directly to my field of interest. I've always liked Bob Tucker, but never met him. The one time I was on my way to do so in the summer of 1940 my bicycle broke down somewhere in the wilds of Indiana and I beat a retreat by train in the direction of relatives in Kentucky. Anyhow I still remember the jingle he wrote "To a Fanzine" in which he repeatedly expressed his preference to being a fanzine rather than any of a vast number of things faanish and otherwise, including the lines I can't forget, "I'd rather be you than a bale of het, or Louis Russell Chauvenet." I loved reading all about the dear old fellow. On my shelf at the moment of writing stand Long Loud Silence and Wild Talent. However, I was taken aback to see his classifying To the Tombaugh Station as his #2 worst story. I liked Tombaugh Sta.; the portrayal of the discomforts of being stuck in an extremely small space-capsule with someone of the opposite sex you disliked has stuck in my mind as "well-done." Maybe my mind was utterly corrupted by reading Wild West Weekly at an impressionable age.

It was equally exciting to turn the page and run into a discussion of The Kasidah. I've always loved that rambling poem, and didn't think many people knew about it. When I was 20 I took it with me on a journey and I remember my companion asking what one of the stanzas meant, and my joyous reply, "I don't really know but it sounds great!"

Puns in Russian! Do Sveedaneeya converted to Do Sfandaneeya! Sam Long amazes me.

I'm not really active in fandom; don't have much recollection of Mae's contributions, but enjoyed the article by Ben Indick.

By accident I noticed the fantastic

suggestion you made to call Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards "The Chauvenets". You mean well, and I wouldn't exactly object, but it is highly inappropriate; 95 out of 100 active fans (educated guess) of today never heard of me. Instead it would be logical to honor Harry Warner Jr. Whether he would prefer The Warners, The Harrys, or The Horizons, I don't know but any would be a much more pertinent choice. It was interesting to note from his loc that the next volume of the fan history, the ever-awaited sequel to All Our Yesterdays, exists and may yet see print.

In the interview with Bob Tucker (page 17, Echo 22) the hero BT is under a misapprehension when he talks about the 1967-1968 riots & burnings in Negro ghettos and says "I really expected them to continue, and it is surprising to me they didn't follow up the early gains of their guerilla warfare; after the burning of Washington, the politicians were so frightened of impending civil war they would have handed over the key to the White House ----"

"Washington" was not burned, looted or destroyed. A very limited area, almost 100% Negro, suffered looting and burning of chiefly White-owned stores. When the riots & burning ended the Negro population discovered that life now was more difficult. With the neighborhood Safeway destroyed, getting groceries now involved much longer trips. The Negroes realized that a frenzy of destruction in their own front yard hurt them, not the "Whites" in general.

There was then no threat of civil war. Nor will there be any until minority groups attempt to invade & destroy areas other than those in which they live. This will not happen unless hunger or some equally compelling urge brings it about. That does not seem inherently likely in the next few years.

However, massive crop failures, the need to export some of our food in trade for other urgent necessities, hyperinflation, and other woes possible in the future, might after all create civil war, or uncontrolled disorders. I don't especially want to live to see this happen -- and it is merely one possible future if we make a few more wrong choices.

(Well, as it turned out the poem was by Liebscher, with a slightly different title (but the exact point). Bob had forgotten its existence, actually, but it nagged at me (I knew I'd read it) until I searched my archieves & found a copy among a sheaf of Tucker's old FAPA pubs. Maybe a lot of fans of today have never heard of you, but anyone connected with a fanzine should know that you invented the word: FANZINE.)

DON D'AMMASSA

(19 Angell Dr, East Providence, RI 02914)

SF ECHO/MOEBIUS TRIP looks much better in the new format. Less waste space. A very enjoyable stack of contents this time too, although I've read the Jon Inouye piece in two other fanzines already. Did anyone ever tell Jon he shouldn't do

this sort of thing? (Yes, but too late. The piece appeared in 4 fanzines and 1 crudzine whose Prick-editor flatly refused to refrain from publishing it when informed by Inouye that it was accepted elsewhere. I'm not referring to Maybe, Xenophile, or any other fanzine for which I trade.)

...Agreed with most of the comments in the reviews, particularly Rogue Moon, which I consider one of the top 1% of all SF, and Starship by Aldiss, which I've read four times now. Also was pleased to see that someone besides myself in fandom actually enjoys Dozois fiction, as "King Harvest" is the type of story that seems to turn off most fans.

I'd like to respond to Rick Sneary's comments about the "New Wave", but I've made it a policy not to react to such generalized comments any more unless specific examples are provided.

I do disagree with Terry Jeeves that modern SF is not up to the standards of the "classics". Tiptree, Dozois, Bishop, Ellison, and a host of others write every bit as well and better. They don't necessarily write the same kind of story, but that's not the same thing at all.

I've been enthusiastic about reviews occasionally in the past couple of years, and I have a reputation for being hard to please. Books that come immediately to mind are The Godwhale by Bass, 334 by Disch, Moon is a Harsh Mistress by Heinlein, Rings of Ice by Anthony, Funeral for the Eyes of Fire by Bishop, The Princess Bride by Goldman, Grendel by Gardner, and assorted bits by Brian Stableford, Gardner Dozois, James Tiptree, and others.

Although I agree in principle with the comments by Sam Long and Roy Tackett that writers should have their science reasonably accurate, I don't agree that an inaccurate bit of background is sufficient to destroy a story's worth. If Sam thinks that the catastrophe in Rings of Ice is impossible and if Roy thinks that Malzberg's sloppy stellar nomenclature spoil the scientific basis of the novel he mentioned, then they should consider them fantasies and read on any way. If Anthony had been writing about the steps necessary to stop the disaster, Sam's point would have great merit; but in fact the novel was about the reaction of a set of characters to any natural disaster. Sandworms and the Ringworld are apparently scientifically impossible too; does that make Dune and Ringworld any the less enjoyable? I don't think so. (Sandworms & Ringworlds may seem improbable, but they are certainly NOT impossible.)

I was very glad to see that I'm not the only one in the world who considers The Lincoln Hunters to be Tucker's best book. But then, authors are supposed to be lousy judges of their own work.

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SAM LONG

(Box 4946, Patrick AFB, FL. 32925)

Thanks for MTL/SFE, even if it is the Sam-Long's-foot-in-his-mouth issue. I had just finished Rings of Ice a week or so ago, and was about to write you about it, and here comes your Fantome in the mail

and lo! I am shown to have shot off my mouth before I read the book.

Well, if I may, I'll discuss Rings of Ice here, then go on to comment about the rest of the zine. Besides the meteorology of the book, the astrophysics of it troubled me. I have figured that to raise the level of the ocean a mere meter would require something on the order of 10 trillion (10^{13}) or more tons of water -- a far cry from the few billion tons Piers Anthony calls for. A culture that can change the orbit of that much matter ain't lacking in energy sources, no matter what its generals say. And I can't really believe that even the military would do such a thing as construct the rings without long thought and many studies. The Air Force has a hard enough time getting aircraft designed without chasing after ice nebulae, much less presenting the earth with an astrophysical fait accompli. All this is quite distinct from the problem of getting the water from the orbiting rings to an extra-atmospheric veil and down thru the ionosphere into the troposphere and so into rain. These problems and their meteorological consequences I can only begin to guess at, but I would suspect that the main effect at first would be a cooling caused by a decrease in solar radiation reaching the earth.... These are merely some of the scientific objections to the book.

Now for some literary objections. Now as I understand it, Piers had some characters in mind -- all misfits, one might say -- and thought of a way of getting them together and interacting: namely by means of the motor home. The "science" came last, or so it would appear. OK, so Zena's a man-hater. But a meteorologist? Why? Merely so she can tell us the readers some of the background. More is made of her being a meteorologist than is necessary, I think. Also, the flashbacks she has while making love to Thatch, the flashbacks that fill us in on how the rings and rains came about, are crudely done. They're not reasonable, as I said above. They're a bit too obviously for the benefit of the reader, rather than the advancement of the story. And "real people" don't talk that way: "'Do you know how to sew?' Gus inquired. 'Excellently.' (said Gloria)" "'Survey for anchoring points.'" Indeed! Some of the conversation is OK, but a good bit of it is stilted as Sheelba's hut. I'll grant that, once he got the rain a-falling, Piers did a pretty good job of making his characters, unlikely tho they be, interact: he had a fairly good story, and a 'different' set of characters, but between the astrophysics and the meteorology and the military and the language and the contrived plot and characters I was not able to suspend disbelief enough to think the book much more than a third-rate effort. Not a "'pleasant adventure'" at all.

What I said in my LoC on #21 about the water in the atmosphere still holds, of course, but now I've read the book, the objections about where the water for the floods comes from

are now invalid. But they are replaced by other objections that I've outlined above.

I much enjoyed the Bob Tucker interview. If anyone asks me about the fact that I put "nearly 70" to Bob's age in my Disconrep in Q8, I'll have to say that that's the way I heard him say it. But even at 60, he's a remarkable fellow, and I'm grateful to Paul for helping me know him better. I kinda wish there'd been a little more on Tucker the Fan and the legends surrounding him, but that was partly covered in The Really Incomplete Bob Tucker festschrift, and goes over best in conversation anyway. Learning of Bob's development as a pro writer was interesting enough....

I saw George Hay at Seacon. His (friend's) letter was a lot of fun, being as it was in archaic style -- tho I've heard say that we can't have archaic and eat it too -- and it sounds reasonable enough...more so than von D and Velikovsky.

HELMUT PESCH

(D-5000 Köln-1, Zülpicher Str. 35, West Germany)

You will remember that I told you in my last letter, last year, that I could be reached via my home address while I was in Scotland (now, as you see, I'm happily back again, with a Scottish accent, but otherwise undamaged). This was right, basically, though I had told my parents only to send letters over to Glasgow and leave magazines etc. to wait for my coming back. Some time in early January, I presume, my mother wrote that a book had arrived for me, a certain The High King by a certain Lloyd Alexander. I did not know what to think about it; unnecessary to mention that I had got a copy myself in the meantime. So, when I came back there was the book. No envelope had survived. Me being totally puzzled.

The revelation hit me while reading my own letter in MT 21. I'll never do it again. Mention that I am still looking for a book. I have got too many friends, apparently. It is terrible: I do not know whom to thank. I do not even know where the sponsor lives. I am rendered completely helpless by the circumstances. What the hell am I to do?

If the situation weren't that crazy I'd really find it embarrassing.

...I got a permission from Tom Collins to translate his Watership Down review for a German fantasy fanzine, MAGIRA, the journal of FOLLOW, a German society for which I am selecting the reviews.... (To whomever sent Helmut the copy of The High King: Please note (above) why he hasn't thanked you personally: he doesn't know who you are! Anyway, he thanks you & I thank you, Unknown Benefactor.)

CHRIS HULSE

(955 Ellis Court, Eugene, ORegon 97405)

The Bob Tucker interview was engrossing, especially since I know very little about Tucker -- er, I used to know very little about Tucker. I am always fascin-

ated by other fen's descriptions of their jobs, their mundane activities. That's one reason why personalzines appeal so much to me and fandom and fanzines in general are so interesting; why, there is someone else out there interested in the same things you are, and many of them have very interesting and insightful comments to make.

...Perceptive essay by Hagan on Farmer and Kasidah. Farmer's reply is even more interesting (especially to us "avid" readers of sf). Farmer mentions an almost complete collection of Burton's works; I'd like to have a very good edition of his translation and version of the Arabian Nights. The Hermitage edition of many moons ago was a good one, and I really don't know of any others not in rare book stores -- of course, the Heritage edition is pretty rare now, too. In fact, while we are on the subject, I think that Farmer's treatment of Burton, just the fact that he used Burton as a character is one large reason why I liked Farmer's writing. I've been interested in Burtona as long as I have been interested in sf, and long before I read anything by Farmer. So when I found out that some sf writer had written a story which used Burton as its main character, and was a rousing well-written adventure to boot, well, I had a warm place in my heart for that author. At the time, I felt that I was sharing a taste with someone of considerable talent, and that not too many other people could say they knew who Burton was. (I was about 15-16 when I read the first Burton story by Farmer -- I think. But dumb enough and young enough to feel the way I stated above.)

GRAY BOAK

(2 Cecil Court, Cecil Street, Lytham, Lancs. FY8 5NN England)

...I like MT, it is fun, easy to read, slips down smooth.... a very quality that makes it difficult to write a letter of comment. It is marvellously easy to write a letter of comment to a bad fanzine, it is reasonably easy (once I've plucked up the nerve) to write a letter to magazines such as ALGOL, or CYPHER, or similar deadly serious magazines. Writing to such as MT is difficult. I think that most of your pieces were just too short for the reader to sink his teeth into. Doubtless I will be proved wrong by your usual flood of mail.

The Bob Tucker interview was the best, I feel, though I personally would prefer an interview with more attention paid to the fannish side. The tales that must be there for the telling. (Or retelling. Or re-retelling...even the most repeated tale is fresh to the newcomer. I've been in British fandom for ten years -- Bob Tucker is mainly only reputation to me, but I've never been disappointed with the brief glimpses that I have seen of his fan work.)

The Long Loud Silence I remember from my pre-fandom days when I read SF from my local library. I also remember the joy of discovering, many years later,

that Wilson Tucker had written other books, and they were available in fannish circles, at least. I also remember reading The Year of the Quiet Sun during a long journey by British Rail, and looking up to see the newspaper opposite me blazoned 'MARTIAL LAW IN CANADA'. (The diplomat kidnapping.) I couldn't help shivering, feeling like a character from a Philip K. Dick novel who has just crossed probability tracks....

JIM MEADOWS III

(31 Apple Court, Park Forest, IL 60466.)

Bob Tucker interview served its purpose in that I now have a desire to read a Wilson Tucker book. All I've read is his time travel piece that appeared in the first volume of Universe, and I've forgotten how that went. I shall definitely have to look into more of his stuff though, as I remember the flavor of that story as tasting good.

It was good to hear from Walt Liebscher again, and touching as well.

Concerning Walt and Dhalgren. Walt may have hated the book, but I do notice that he read the entire thing. I don't know of any people hostile towards the book who have stayed through it, except a few reviewers who wanted to get their word in, and could only do so by finishing the thing. So far, the reaction I've found is mixed. Ted Sturgeon loves it, an aquaintance in one of my classes used it for a final dramatic reading, the LOCUS reviewer didn't care for it, and I have a feeling that the results will be mixed. I suspect it just depends on what you're looking for in a book, and what you can accept. I suspect I may wind up reading it myself soon, which could take up my whole summer.... (I did not read the entire thing, but I discontinued my perusal when I decided that the writer was either incompetent or sloppy to the point of showing contempt for the reader. At one point the joker has his character climbing a strange cliff, at night, & later descending it, both done with an ease only possible to a writer who knows next to nothing of what he writes. And that's only one point. Anyway, I'm sick of hearing about that stupid book.)

...Now that back cover by Wodhams.... Sometimes I take Jack to be serious with his views on women's rights, but when he does masterpieces like this, I have to reconsider. The artwork wasn't immortal, but the captions are priceless....

MARK SHARPE

(2721 Black Knight Blvd, Indianapolis, IN 46229)

...One of the more interesting aspects of the interview was to find out Tucker enjoys cooking. I enjoy eating very much, as my waist-size would indicate. Due to domestic circumstances, I was forced to learn to cook, and I turned out to be rather good, modestly speaking. You haven't lived until you've had a batch of my Greek-style stuffed eggplant and veal stew. On second thought, you may not live after you've had my cooking. I have just got done reading

two Tucker books, The Year of the Quiet Sun and Tomorrow Plus X. Quiet Sun was much better and had several paragraphs which I thought were real insights into the future....

MAURICE HARTER

(27 Water St., Gorham, Maine 04038)

...The article on Farmer's River-world was very thought-provoking, well researched and thought out. Hosannas to Randall Hagan.

Attention all fanzine editors. I'm just breaking into fandom and would like to sample as many fanzines as possible. Send me a sample copy of your 'zine and I'll respond with a letter of comment. And maybe a subscription.... (Hmmmm...)

ROBERT CHILSON

(Rt. 3, Box 181, Osceola, MO. 64776)

...Do you suppose, when Tucker was drawing blood in the pre-First World Con days, that he ever thought he might settle down to being an Elder Ghod in his elder days? Especially so mild, reasonable, and mature a one.

Speaking of settling down, I wonder if you know anything about Ted Pauls? Columnist for ENERGUMEN, reviewer for SFR. I don't know what or where he is these days; I'm not plugged into his fannish orbit... or any other.

The reason I ask, I have this book here, Between Two Worlds, by Nandor Fodor, Parker Pub. Co., 1964. It's a book of psychic investigations and about average. Fodor has been around since the '30s, has seen plenty of hoaxes and plenty of things he can't explain. A good part of the incidents appear to have been purely or largely psychological.

One is the usual sort of thing in the poltergeist line: a 17-year-old, highly intelligent, whose family and school friends thought little of him and who disapproved of his reading and...writing... and publishing. He was the editor of the fanzine Fanjack, and Ted Pauls was his name.

Fodor cured the lad by announcing to all and sundry that he had talent, "a great talent for writing." The case had attracted considerable attention and Fodor went out on a limb, announcing this on TV and radio. Since Pauls had been belittled by everybody in sight or hearing, this, he reasoned, should help restore his ego. With his ego in good health, the agression he had sublimated would be expressed naturally, in Fanjack no doubt, and the manifestations would cease.

He says it or something worked; the Baltimore Poltergeist was heard of no more.

I was just wondering if this was the Ted Pauls of whom even I in my cave have heard? If you have or can get his address you might inquire. He might be interested in reading Fodor's account, whether he is or no. (The incident occurred in January, 1960.) --I think you shouldn't publish this till you've checked and gotten permission though, if he is him. Might be he wouldn't want it brought up. (I sent a Xerox of your letter, plus a SASE,

etc., to "today's" Ted Pauls, but he did not deign to reply, perhaps being too busy with his book company, T.K.Graphics. Since he had the option of withholding publication of your info & did not take it, I assume that it is of little or no concern to him what we do. He may or may not be the T.P. in the Fodor book...)

An interesting thing about the case is Fodor's reaction, training out to interview Pauls. Knowing that he was an SF fan and knowing little else about him, Fodor tried to come up with an explanation in advance. I won't bore you with it, though it was ingenious in parts (Ted Pauls=tadpole), because it turned out to be wrong. He brought in A. Merritt's The Moon Pool...but Pauls had never read it.

"So my fancy did not expose him. It only exposed myself as a fantasy fan of strong mystical inclinations...."

And to gain Pauls' confidence he took Asimov's Nine Tomorrows with him and inscribed it to him as "from one science fiction fan to another."

Fodor may not have been a "fan" in the strict sense -- he called a fanzine a "multigraphed discussion sheet" -- but he had sense enough to say "science fiction" instead of "fantasy." A most unusual psychiatrist and psychic researcher. SF was rarely differentiated from fantasy in 1960.

An account of an incubus in the same book is also of interest. This is the way to come back!

ROBERT BLOCH

(2111 Sunset Crest Drive, L.A., CA 90046)

Yours is indeed an influential and all-encompassing fanzine! Along with #22, received today, I also received an instantaneous reply to my letter therein. Responding to my comments on Wisconsin Death Trip, Buck Coulson sent me a copy of his review of same -- now that's what I call speedy results! Since I'm victimized by a virus, I found the 'zine especially welcome today -- and was glad to see material by Liebscher and Farmer, three of my favorite people. I also enjoyed Paul Walker's deft whitewash of Tucker. In that connection, was surprised there was no mention of the matter alluded to in my letter -- viz, that Tucker's name was originally spelled with an "F". But indeed it was -- the name used to be "TuckeF".

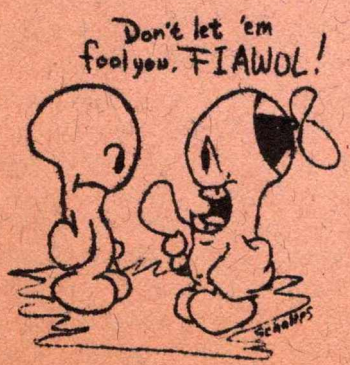
HARRY WARNER, JR.

(423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740)

I sort of like the new format for S. F. Echo. Even if people who want to bind their fanzines someday nickname your publications Trip Tease, I find it easy to read it in this arrangement. You have the added advantage of dimensions which are very close to the height-width ratio of the television screen. A couple of decades from now, when all fanzines are read by being plugged into the antenna connections of the home tv set, yours might be almost the only old one capable of being enjoyed, for this reason.

I think the Bob Tucker "interview" held my attention best of all those that Paul Walker has turned out. It's sinful, come to think of it, that it should be left to Bob himself to do this kind of

extensive description of his literary output for the first time in any fanzine. I don't remember, at least, any lengthy article on Tucker's fiction, despite the scads of essays that have been written about some writers of considerably smaller attainments. I do wish there had been room for more material about Bob's fanzine writing career. Much of his fanzine work has merits which should make it readable long after the people and events he wrote about have been forgotten. If I remember correctly some things Tucker has written in other places about his fanac, he has been almost as careful when writing for fanzines as when writing for pay, doing a lot of rewriting, new drafts, and research to create fanzine material which reads as if it had just flowed out of his typewriter in one spontaneous gush. His remarks about the mystery fiction elements in science fiction interested me, because I think I've found them in other types of fiction, too. I didn't read Jane Austen's novels until a few years ago; when I did, all of a sudden I realized that they're essentially mystery stories, substituting for the murderer the successful swain. And I hope that somehow the postal service people manage to get the Australia-bound copies of this issue to their destination before the worldcon. Recipients down there should enjoy even more that visit from Tucker, if they learn all these things about his life and activities. (Happily, Bruce Gillespie was due to reprint it in a Tucker-oriented issue of SF Commentary, to be done prior to the Worldcon.)



The page from Walt Liebscher was very good news....

The Hagan-Farmer contributions are interesting, and exactly in line with my belief that all such theories should be referred to the writer involved. All too often, everyone except the author has been expressing opinions when someone thinks he has found symbolism or sources or other exciting things in fiction....

Sam Long must have been dissatisfied with the pun in his caption, since he left it untranslated from the Russian. It might have gone smoother if he'd put fan into the second rather that the first syllable of his last word, necessitating the change in only one letter.

Ben Indick's contribution filled in a few more niches and crevices in the three-dimensional Mae Strelkov picture which various articles and autobiographical writings have been molding. For instance, I don't remember having read before about her manner of learning how to use oils.

But I'm of two minds about Ben's review of The Stepford Wives. I like it immensely, from the standpoint of reviewing technique; it's so much better to write naturally in this manner about a book than to wallow in the academic, literary mannerisms which keep threatening to infiltrate fanzine book review columns. But I disagree violently with Ben's reaction to the book, which I liked immensely. This could get me into trouble with a lot of women in fandom, who might assume that I also feel sympathy for the behavior of the men in Levin's novel. I don't but I can view the book as a bible of the counter-revolution to the women's lib movement. That is, Levin might be saying that women who gobble birth control pills so they won't have children, who prefer to be efficient jobholders rather than the gossipping housewives of the old stereotypes, might as well be converted into robots so they won't be tempted to slip back into the bad habits of their grandmothers. I don't think it's fair to complain too loudly about some underlying similarities to Rosemary's Baby: most fantasy writers yield to the same urge to do over again something that worked out well the first time they tried it. I think all fandom would have raved in delight over this novel, if it had been written by an author in the science fiction establishment, but there seems to be a strong prejudice against any ventures into the field by writers who are already famous in mainstream or who didn't serve an apprenticeship in the prozines. Lieber's Conjure Wife, with the same basic notion of a conspiracy among members of one sex who keep it a secret from the other sex, was welcomed with huzzahs years ago, because Lieber was a familiar name and his book was fine.

I don't think the fanzine activity achievement awards were rushed unduly. About six months of discussion and planning preceded the distribution of nomination forms. Waiting another year would have created the danger of using all that extra time to plan too many complications and gobbledegook into the basically simple basic idea. Besides, this schedule will provide a set of public awards for fans to attend in a year when comparatively few fans will be able to see anyone accept a Hugo in Australia. There seemed to be strong sentiment against linking anyone's name with the new awards I had suggested calling them the WAWards. If it weren't for what fans think of the Perry Rhodan books, I think calling them the FanAcks might also be justified. (I'll grant you that plenty of time was devoted to preliminary discussion of the Fanzine A. A. Awards, by the committee & a fairly small group of other fans. However, I'm convinced that not nearly enough time was given to spreading the gospel to and among fans in general; the number of fans who knew what was going on was appallingly insufficient. The number actually voting was very small, compared to even the number of genzines being published! Something like 72 votes, was it? I'd have expected about that many votes in similar circumstances 20, 25, or more years ago.

The awards need a lot of continuing publicity, if they are to be continued -- I've heard nothing about them for a long time. People have to work at publicizing them, not just discussing them. And I think that the contribution-of-money-as-a-voting-requirement must be eliminated. Some fans did not vote for that reason: stating flatly that they did not think they should have to pay money to vote. An unfortunate complication, but true; I suspect that point cost more votes than anyone realizes. There are those who'll say that fans who feel that way are not worth bothering about, of course, but I think that all eligible fans are worth it. However, I'm wondering if the Fanzine A.A.Awards themselves are worth bothering about....)

STEPHEN DORNEMAN

(221 S. Gill St., State College, PA 16801)

Comments on MT-SFE. A very fine interview by Paul Walker of Bob Tucker, whom I knew practically nothing about until reading it. I see from the locs that Paul is collecting his interviews into a book which I, for one, will snap up as soon as published. I am surprised by Tucker's assertion that "I think the mystery story is the basic one (theme), and is universally employed to spin out gothic, historical, adventure, and science fiction novels."... Well, I have heard of purportedly pornographic novels where the main pastime appeared to be searching one another for clues....

Very fine inserted artwork by Rotsler and Jeeves, but wouldn't it be better to have it face the reader? (Picky, picky I am.) (Most of the time it does, but it jibed better facing Liebscher's page, which just happened to fall where it did due to the length of the interview, which just happened...uh...see?)

JODIE OFFUTT

(Funny Farm, Haldeman, KY 40329)

It's no wonder Tucker was such a good fanzinist (nice word) and has such a good rep. He comes across so relaxed and un-self-conscious. Like...himself. What I'm trying to say is that I enjoyed reading about Bob. Thanks to you and PaulW.

And Mae... She is one of the few people I've run across -- experts included -- who knows the difference between Jesus and Christ. What Mae says reminds me of the protagonist in Silverberg's Dying Inside, who was told by somebody that he was a very religious man who did not believe in God.

BRAD PARKS

(562 Kennedy Rd., Windsor, CT 06095)

The cover was superb. Hats off to Pearson. The sun looked just right, at least to myself. The backcover left a little to be desired in the art department, but the captions were in great fun and very amusing. The art was especially good this issue, and my favorites were the craggy castle (the blue paper was perfect in effect) and the polar bear with sunglasses. Cute, and better than that, really good.

The interview with Bob Tucker was enjoyable, if uncommentable. Bob would be a good companion if Harry Warner ever decides to once again write fan history (besides the 50's one he is currently working on). Walt is a good article writer, and he saddens me with news of his arm. But I'm afraid I must disagree with him about Dhalgren. It is one (if not the) best novels of s.f. ever written and deserves a Hugo it will most likely be nominated for. The book is sheer perfection. How anybody can find it boring is beyond me. Comments have ranged from "it sucks" to "It takes a while to get into it." Not for me. I began to get into the book on the first page, and I couldn't let go. What is the matter with everyone? Has fandom gone crazy? Or have I? (I suspect you've never read any really good porn.)

WILLIAM R NORRIS

(1073 Shave Road, Schenectady, NY 12303)

...the very fine Paul Walker interview of Bob Tucker. If past Walker interviews were this good -- as locs would indicate -- then I am very sorry that I did not get onto MTL earlier. Part of this is somewhat selfish. As chief of the N3F fledgling bureau (got to identify it), the Teaching SF Bureau, I read Tucker's comments about writing and so on with a great deal of interest. If Paul has not already done so, I'd like for him to consider at least excerpting and releasing such interviews with an eye toward the use as a tool for instructors and others. If he has thought of this and is doing so, I'd particularly like the details, including price, contents, &c....

MIKE KRING

(PSC #1 Box 3147, Kirtland AFB, NM 87115)

Bruce D. Arthur's Shaggy River Story was really good....

Randall Hagan's article was fine, but it didn't really interest me that much, since I haven't read any of the Riverworld stories. Not that I dislike Mr. Farmer's writings, heaven forfend! (I've just finished his Doc Savage His Apocalyptic Life, and loved every minute of it!) It's just I hate to read series when they definitely don't have an end, yet. But with the release of the third Riverworld novel, I intend to read them all. Even though I know that won't be the last one, it should give me enough to go on to really enjoy them....

MICHAEL CARLSON

(35 Dunbar Road, Milford, CT 06460)

Paul's interview w/ Bob Tucker transported me mystically back to the floor of the KC suite at Discon II, sipping bourbon & sitting in a large semi-circle around Tucker as he regaled us w/ wit, wisdom, and other things....

...Oh, and did I mention I read Wild Talent on the Amtrak from DC to New Haven? Sexy, for 1954 and sf.

JOHN CARL

(3750 Green Lane, Butte, MT 59701)

I like this new format a lot. It seems that it should save you quite a bit of labor, although still much more than I

would ever care to consider in relation to producing a fanzine, and it is quite attractive. I find the cover stock interesting -- what is it? (Some 24# laid paper I picked up at auction.) I know that, as a fanzine collector, I really should complain about the difficulty in filing this fanzine but with the five previous issues of your fanzine you would seem to have already cornered the market on these complaints....

Paul Walker's interview was as fascinating (and that word ought to be abolished -- what a fasc...amusing concept) as any of his other excellent interviews. Basically, what his interviews do for me is to allow a glimpse into the interviewee's personality as deep or deeper than I would otherwise be able to find. I wonder whatever happened to Walker's Ace book of interviews? (As I have it, that was dropped when Pohl left Ace. Paul is still looking for a publisher, not necessarily one of the biggies, I understand....)

ROSE HOGUE

(16331 Golden Gate Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92649.)

Heck I just discovered a new fannish word in the letter col -- goo -- "grumpy old opinion"...so that is what it has always meant... However having met Rick (Sneary) I hardly find him grumpy....

...As yet I'm not sure how pointed Robert Bloch's wit is but fortunately he has not the decency of the Albuquerque bunch -- Speer excluded of course... Gads what a seamy sort they try to seem in print and are totally different in person; fangs and strange ideas all to the contrary they really are a nice group of peoples. (Hmm...so was Dr. Jekyll.)

By the large the Bob Tucker interview is quite readable and a muchly insight into the man and writer. He certainly has led an interesting and varied life and I hope he (had) a great trip to Australia! (Wait'll you hear about the cards he was handing out to numerous femmes at Aussycon! And the ones he soon got in return!)

CAROLYN "C.D." DOYLE

(1949 N.Spencer, Indianapolis, IN 46218)

...got done reading SFE no more than 20 minutes ago, and thought it was good. Of course, I always have derived some sort of security from things typed in single space, especially if the colors are warm golds or pinks. If you would imagine yourself about the size of a capital W, and imagine that one of the pages from your fanzine/fantome...has been folded into a hollow cube, with no openings, and you are inside it, you may get what I mean by security. Probably when I was younger, I felt very secure around a person who owned something looking similar to your fanzine/tome. (One tends to attach other meanings to your subtle description.)

DON AYRES

(c/o Gregory Productions, 6565 Fountain Ave. #10, Hollywood, CA 90028.)

The address above is a temporary one;

I'll be seeking my own place...soon.... It should be treated accordingly, though Dave will cheerfully handle my mail as long as necessary to establish a new address, I'm sure.

An unfortunate aspect of my move was that I wound up having to leave all fanzines behind at the very last minute, including a number from people who deserve letters/locs from far back: To these, I beg indulgence. I hope to bring all such material out around the first of next year and answer a number of deserving people as soon as I can. Bear with me -- I'd like to contact a number of you and cannot for I didn't get a chance to write down addresses and Dave has had little contact with fandom. Maybe in a few months, things can get back to normal.

P.S. For those who are wondering, yes, I completed by Master's (M.S. in Zoology) and yes, I am finishing the script for "There's a Tentacle in my Soup!" I have no intention of fitting into any categories established by anyone.

FRED MILLER

(1157 Ellison Dr., Pensacola, FL 32503)

The interview with Bob Tucker satisfied a lot of curiosity about him. I particularly liked the long, in-depth answers. However this is achieved, keep it up! // Seeing any news about Walt Liebscher makes my day, and Walt's Wramblings certainly does that. One complaint, though: Once you give Walt's address, won't the 300-some-odd people who get MTSFE probably swamp the poor guy with letters? I know I plan to.... // Let's have a little more of Sam Long's cartoons! What you've printed is nice, but only three? (I use what he sends. I hope to see a lot of his work in his forthcoming new fanzine, GUNPUTTY.)

STEVE LARUE

(8249 W. Baker, Denver, CO 80227)

...As a rule I crave book reviews... I devour them whole...mostly because, as there are so many books being published these days, reading the reviews is one of the only ways of keeping up with them all. Especially on a limited income and a limited time budget. But I find myself cringing at reviews that merely seem to quickly sum up what the book is about and then give it a "five star rating" or somesuch. (To combine the worst of all possible worlds.) The review of Rogue Moon on p. 48 is particularly suspect, if you see what I mean. Being a book that I have never read, yet it is definitely sitting on my shelf waiting to be read... well, I now feel a bit cheated.

I know it's important to review a lot of books, but if the books that are being written today are more demanding and complex...and I think that they are... then I think that the reviews have to respond in accord.

Sure is tough, ain't it.

ROBERT E. BLENHEIM

(8 Catalpa Lane, Levittown, PA 19055)

Bob "Wilson" Tucker is not one of my favorite sf writers (I did not like

Year of the Quiet Sun very much, contrary to most sf fans), but his interview was SUPERB! In fact, I will read my next Tucker book a little more sympathetically than I have in the past. He's an extremely interesting man with many informative words for free-lance-writers-to-be (of which I am). If this kind of treatment were more common for interviews with authors, what better fanzines we'd have!

Mr. Hagen's analysis on Farmer's Riverworld was extremely thought-provoking (if slightly bordering on the pretentious), but Farmer's comments were priceless; I love the idea of following an article ABOUT someone, with comments BY the man the article is about.

I want to disagree with Paul Anderson that Again, Dangerous Visions "wasn't much of a book". I have never read a single anthology that had as much literary merit as this one does in my life. Absolutely first-rate art and MUCH better than the first D.V.....

PAUL ANDERSON

(21 Mulga Rd., Hawthorndene, S.A. 5051, Australia.)

It's nice to see that the 3rd Riverworld will see print soon. I was beginning to wonder whether it was ever going to see print. He (Farmer) is a bit frustrating with all of the different series going at the same time. Now that the Riverworld is moving on I would love to see that Farmer is going to continue the World of the Tiers series as well (He plans to do that.) Perhaps Randall could try to find an origin for this sequence after his effort for the other one.

In between a week or so of films at the 17th Adelaide Film Festival I managed to find the time to read a bit of SF. The main one that I read though was finally Cordwainer Smith's Norstrilia. That one was a bit unusual in that I had read the first half at least twice before in the prozine and the Pyramid pb but I don't think that I had actually got around to completing the other half of the story. I was most impressed by the book and would consider...it for a Hugo at K.C....

STEVE SIMMONS

(124 Carlann, San Marcos, CA 92069)

"Fancies" was the real bell-ringer of the issue. Its hypotheses should be relatively easy to test, simply by weighing the larger bodies of the universe. Since any normal method of establishing the mass would be misleading due to the flux, the best method would be to move some very massive object and record how much energy is needed to overcome its inertia. The difference between the mass recorded in this way and the mass recorded in the regular way would be an excellent indication of just how good the flux is at penetrating matter.... (I won't add any more of your profound discourse, Steve, since you lost me with weighing the "larger" bodies; I wasn't sure but what you meant "heavier" bodies. Anyway, what is "our" universe? The minute "expanding" bit we can readily detect, or that plus the limitless expanses that

probability indicates lie beyond?:)

DENNY BOWDEN

(917 Tracy St., Daytona Beach, FL 32017)

I read Moebius Trip...#22 with red pen in hand, underlining the particularly interesting or important lines, and when I had finished, my fantome nearly dripped with red ink. Your zine was packed with information and pleasure.

The Tucker interview interested me most with its insight into Tucker SF and his life. I enjoyed Tucker's personal responses to Paul's questions. The results were both valuable and interesting. I'd definitely like to see more interviews by Paul....

KEN MAYO

(68 Pratt Street, Bristol, CT 06010)

The highlite of #22 was, for my money, the Bob Tucker interview. Walker always does a great job, striking just the right balance between the personal and professional aspects of the people he is interviewing.

Randall Hagan's article, as well as the article by James Zychowicz were also excellent. I suppose that there are a lot of people who feel that sf doesn't merit this type of attention but these two articles should prove them dead wrong....

ALEX DONIPHAN WALLACE

(306 E.Gatehouse Dr,Apt.H,Metairie,LA 70001)

Paul Walker's "interview" of Bob Tucker is more factual, down to earth, and satisfying than many of this sort. (Tucker's reasons for being in fandom may be compared with Edmund Cooper's for not being in (Cypher, #12, p.18).) The format was natural and enlightening, first a biographical statement and then a catechetical section. (Never used that word before, it came unsummoned from the lexicographic depths.) In respect to "style", the simpler and shorter the question, the more responsive the answer. A reasoned and scientific examination and exploration of the "creative process" has, more and more, engaged the efforts of psychologists, and Paul Walker's excellent series of interviews may eventually be cited in learned journals. What the psychologist is most likely to want is the "raw" data, not a polished, literary version.

The "flux of particles" theory of A N O'Nymous (as presented by George Hay) must go back at least a century, having been formulated by a French scientist, and stated in a text used at the University of Virginia circa 1900. Sorry, but I cannot give more information, the details having gone down the memory drain. The appearance of science in SF&F zines (both pro and fan) is rare, and Hay's article is the more welcome, a very nice piece indeed. A very early objection to Newton's notion of "gravity" was that it involved "action at a distance", a concept repugnant even in his time. A second concern was that it was "instantaneous", thus omitting all reference to time. In a crude fashion, "gravity" traveled faster than light. But just why a "field"

is more acceptable on a philosophical basis remains unclear. (A comment not immediately germane in this context: Parallel worlds would seem to require a five-dimensional universe, four space coordinates in addition to the time coordinate.)

TOM ROBERTS

(English 0205, The Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06268.)

The remarks on Watership Down in the earlier issue persuaded me to use it in my course on popular fantasy next fall -- though it still requires a deliberate effort to accept a band of rabbits speaking like middlebrow Englishmen. On the other hand, I find that I do not object to Bugs Bunny speaking like a small-town wise guy or Carl Barks' Uncle Scrooge and so I suppose it is my distaste for that long tradition of marginally-cute English stories about rabbits and rats for children.

Like others I regret, in part, the shift in format; but I am pleased to know that the fantome is easier to produce. Of several good pieces in this most recent issue, it seems to me that the most instructive was Arthurs' piece on Tolkien in Riverworld. In fact, I strongly recommend that Farmer include in his next in the series sketches of people like Shakespeare and Melville and Twain desperately fleeing all those interpreters who won their degrees in English by writing new interpretations. It really would happen. The Hagan essay was also interesting and Farmer's reply: I had assumed the principal source for at least the energy behind the image of Riverworld had come from that BBC series on the search for the sources of the Nile. Burton was the hero of that series and the image of a single river in a complex world was there too. Farmer certainly has a most interesting and puzzling mind....

GIL GAIER

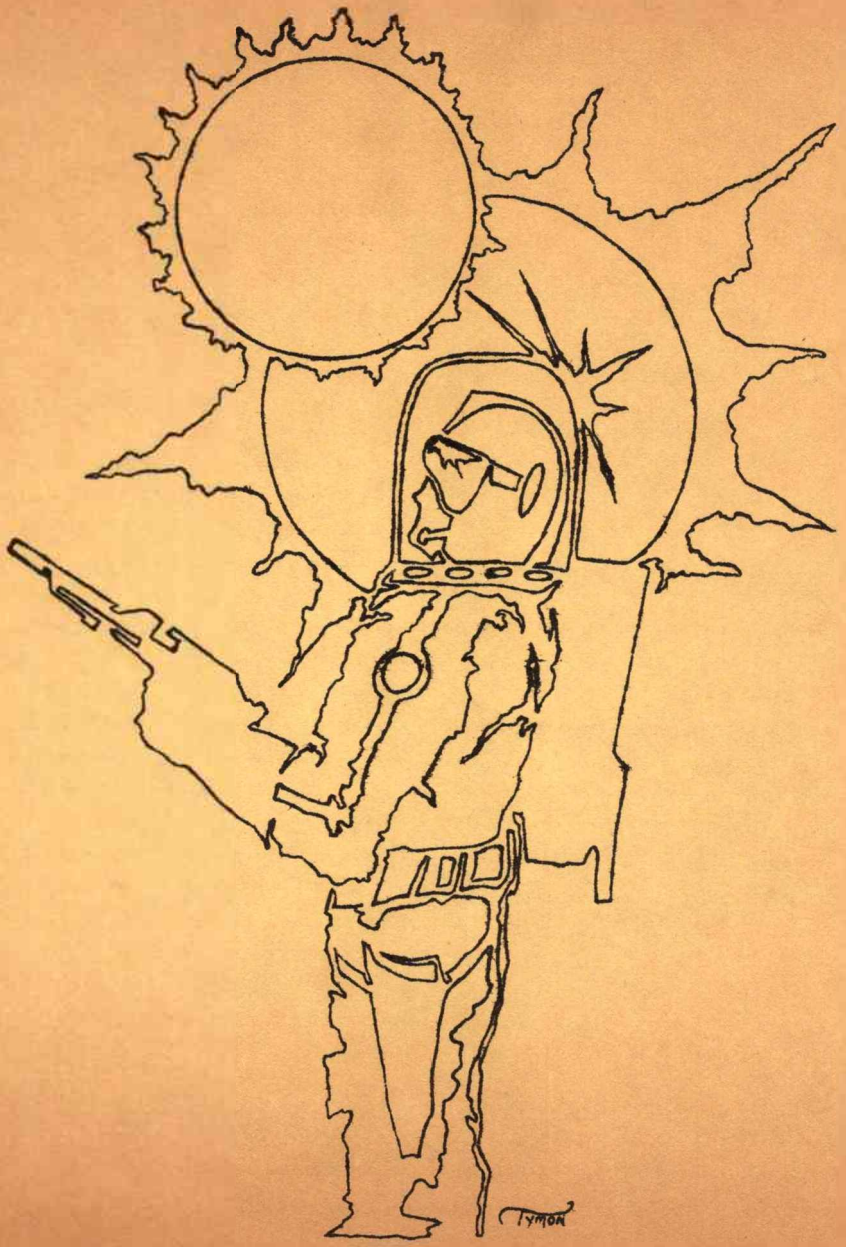
(1016 Beech Ave., Torrance, CA 90501)

Don't let Walker get away. I wasn't too fond of the Aldiss interview because I thought he was being over solicitous and cautious so as not to offend. The Tucker interview turned out to be quite satisfying; Tucker's answers were honest and filling and provided insight into himself and his works -- what more can be asked. // The Hagan piece on Riverworld was quite enlightening. Throughout, though, I kept having the feeling that he just missed seeing/saying/finding the GREAT TRUTH of what he was getting at. // There are not many letter/articles in any fanzine which I can say I honestly dislike, but "Fancies on Ye Known and Ye Unknown" by Anon fits the bill. // I consider Zychowicz' article on "Brave New World: A Prophecy" so good that I'm going to take it to school so some of my students (who've read the book) can also enjoy this examination of its ideas....

MIKE GILBERT

(19 Essex Ave. Apt 3, Metuchen, NJ 08840)

My, my, I certainly stirred up a hornet's nest. Now, I didn't say that that was my opinion of Watership Down. I simply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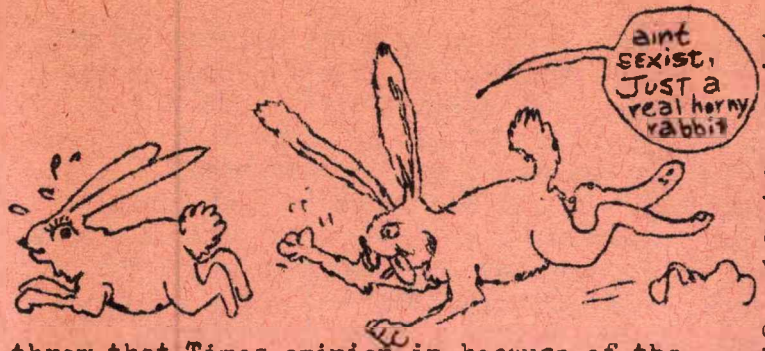


threw that Times opinion in because of the discussion and it was an interesting diverging view. For a moment the assault of lusty fans hath caused me to feel that I had slandered the holiest grails, my goodness. I can only say that the loyal opposition gave the most typical kneejerk reactions.

BILL BLISS

(422 Wilmot, Chillicothe, IL 61523)

Zine distribution has deteriorated locally. The only sf on the news stand is ANALOG and Cohen reprints. (Here, even F&SF is spotty; I missed the Oct. ish because I couldn't find it!)

Lettercol: Peter Roberts: It's been ages since I re-read Poe. Always thought The Fall of the House of Usher was the best. Roytack: Géesh. Time Enough for Love...is drek. Heinlein ought to dig up his old self and run it through the typer. I never seen such sappy conversations with a computer that should know better and so should Lazarus Long. Oh there's a lotta good ideas in the book, but egad the drippy drippy prose. A lot of things are right about it though, eventually I'll wade through the dang thing. Groovable was the naval career. No doubt that was closer to truth than fiction.

Harry Warner, Jr: Modern wire insulating spaghetti is made of a variety of plastics, including a kind that shrinks onto the wire when heated and woven fiberglass....

Coming to mine own Loc: Ed, how did you find that there are those two worlds in parallelism both above and below ours? (I goofed by not elaborating; there may be only one -- who knows? Since the topography of it and Earth varies in altitude, any one point on either may be above or below the congruent point on the other....) My researches into what basic physics really is indicated other worlds at right angles to ours with a mechanical ratio of 0-1 between them at each junction of right angled topological connectivity. Technically they'd be worlds of our world, or do worlds occur in sets?...

May we hope that the government never "discovers" fandom or we will end up with the Fandom Protection Agency (for control of thought pollution of course). Details of what would result are best left to the imagination.

The establishment keeps intruding on the individual more & more....

MAE STRELKOV

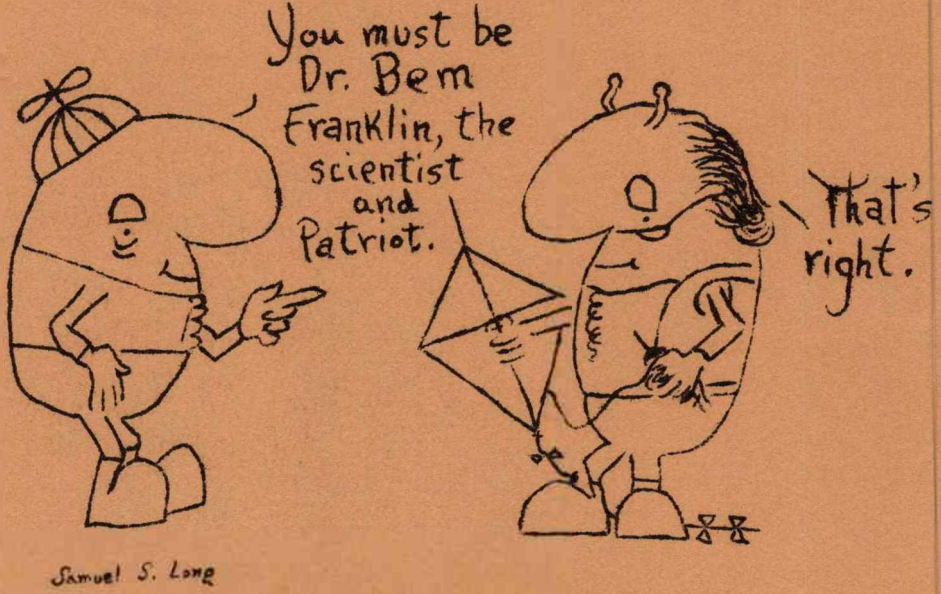
(C.C.55, Jesus Maria,Cordoba,Argentina.)

...I'm sitting with a minuscule black kitten in my woolen blouse, asleep. Sylvia rescued it from a frozen,

dark street last weekend, hearing its tiny Miaow. I'd been telling her up here (on the estancia, for she was home for the weekend from Rio Cuarto where she studies to be a vet), "I've discovered I loved puppies best. I just didn't know formerly how adorable puppies are." "Mother," she said reprovingly. "I still love kittens best. You've just forgotten how nice kittens are. I'll have to get one for you." "No hurry," said I urgently, but she smiled her little enigmatic smile. And, hey presto, when Vadim drove the kids back to town that evening, the little black kitten was miaowing right outside their gate and more -- the buses weren't running (strike) so Vadim brought Sylvia uphill again for another day, with Webster nestled in her neck. Yes, "Webster!" After a P.G.Wodehouse cat. First, she asked me to give her a series of words for "black" -- "Hei" said I, "in modern Chinese". "Hay? No, it's not a name." "Well, the older form was Xmwag, or the like." "Shmoog? Noooo!" she shuddered. "Well, how about Cambá of the Guaraníes for a black person? It's a very old term, Ham is the Biblical form." "Nooo!" She was the more positive, then added, "But I knew the word cambá...it's in a song!" "Well, what about Larama? It's Aymará and they use it in a very old way for matching ideas like shiny black, vivid blue of sky or sea, youngness and so on." "Larama? No!" She decided not to let me go on, said, "Let me think a bit," and next announced, "Webster!" I pretend to forget and called it "Funk and Wagnell" to tease her. It's still an "it", sex impossible even for a budding vet to guess as yet, it's that small! The emotions of our dogs and elderly Tomcats (which keep appearing just for handouts or to get out-of-the-rain) are indescribable.

...It was funny to leaf through your new zine's pages and remember meeting so many named therein...Bob Tucker, for instance. He sure had a fascinating life, didn't he! José Farmer. Why! I chatted with him at your place, by phone! Sam Long! Had a real long chat or two in the hotel lobby with him and greatly enjoyed his nimble mind and good heartedness! His cartoons are tremendous fun, always, too! Bruce Arthurs. (Gee, I wish I could get on his permanent mailing list for GODLESS, somehow. He sent me the copy mentioning meeting me.)...in the interim of writing all this (Including a thousand or more words of DNQs) I've fed puppies, fussed over Webster, and now "it" is back on my lap furiously kneading and purring and demanding TOTAL concentration upon IT alone, as cats and kittens do!

W.A.H.F.: Leah A. Zeldes, Ben Indick, Bruce Arthurs, Moshe Feder, Dave Rowe, Jeff Bass, Clifford R. Wind (now working in Western Australia), Randall D. Larson, Jeff May, Richard Newsome, G.E. Giannattasio, Jim Zychowicz, Vic Kostrikin, Mike Glyer, Mark Mumper, Perry Chapdelaine, Tim Marion, Merv Barrett, etc. & Keith Justice of UNIVERSE, who chided me for overlooking VERTEX's earlier preponderance of UNsigned reviews (see UNIVERSE in Reviews (Fanzines) this ish.


You must be Dr. Bem Franklin, the scientist and Patriot.
That's right.
Samuel S. Long