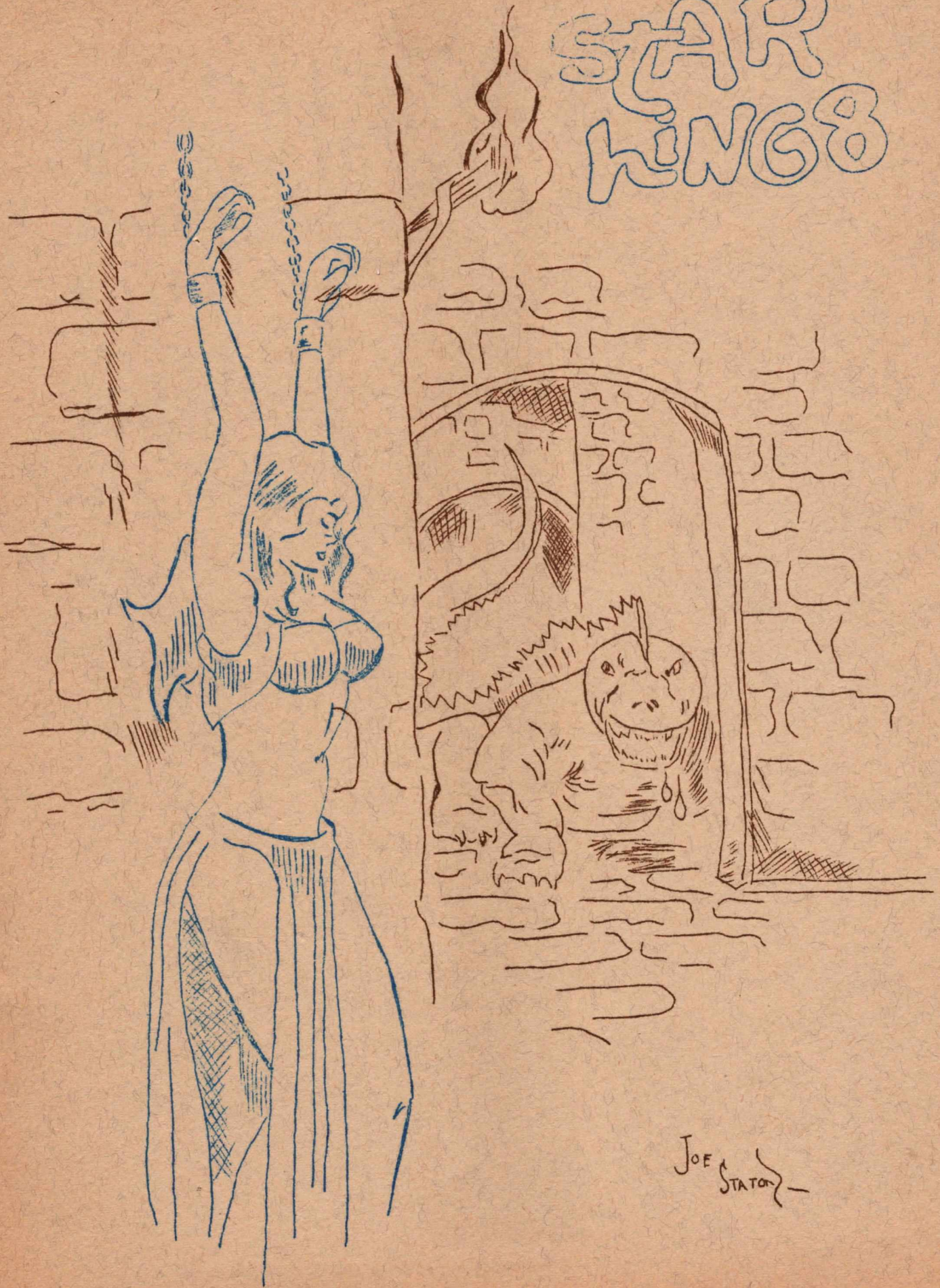


# STAR KING8



JOE STATOR



# STARLING

This is STARLING #8, published by Hank Luttrell, Route 13, 2936 Barrett Station Road, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122. July issue. Obtainable with 25¢ (4/\$1), a letter of comment, a contribution\* . . .and maybe a few other things I've forgotten to list, I don't know.

\* \* \* \* \*

COVER by Joe Staton. . .BACK COVER by Robert E. Gilbert

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## ART

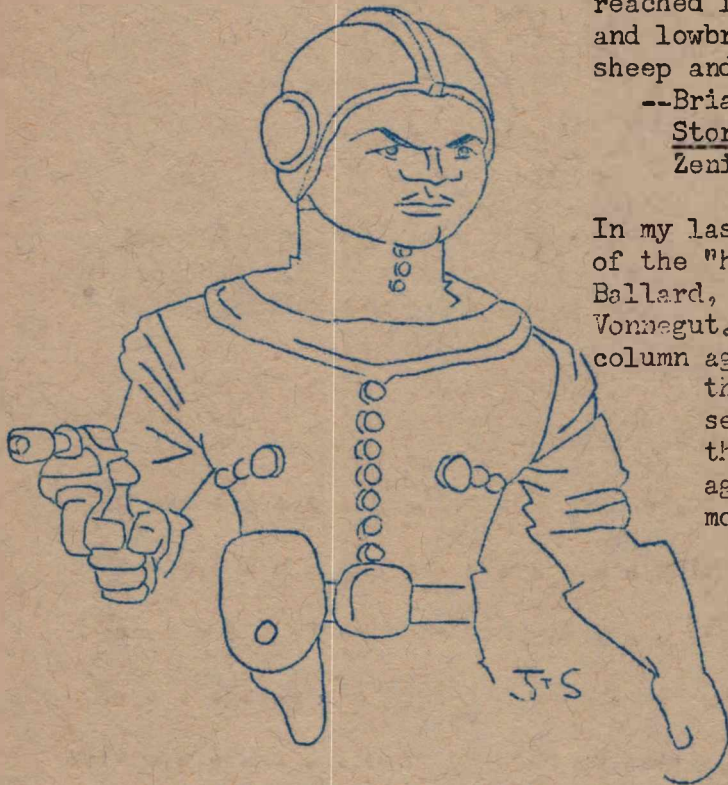
3 (art) Jim Bogart	22 Becker Staus
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(lettering) Hank Luttrell	27 Jim Hamilton
5 Joe Staton	
6 Hank Luttrell	
7 Jurgen Wolff	The hurried proofreaders
8 Johnny Chambers	this time were Joyce Fisher
9 Jurgen Wolff	and Jerry Hall. Don't
10 Joe Staton	blame them, blame me.
11 Becker Staus	
13 Johnny Chambers	
14 Jurgen Wolff	
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19 Joe Staton	
20 Jurgen Wolff	
21 Jurgen Wolff	



\* STARLING is obtainable for "contributions," so send me some. I'll write and draw the whole damn thing, if you want me to, but I'd rather have help.



by Hank Luttrell



"It looks as if science fiction has grown wide enough to reach the point that ordinary fiction reached long ago; where it divided into highbrow and lowbrow, into popular and esoteric, or into sheep and goats, however you care to phrase it."

--Brian Aldiss, in Introduction to Best SF Stories of Brian W. Aldiss, and I saw it in Zenith Speculation, April, 1966, #12

In my last issue, Richard Gordon wrote about some of the "highbrow" authors; mentioned were J. B. Ballard, Brian Aldiss, Alfred Bester and Kurt Vonnegut. In this issue, the reader's letter column agrees with and attacks some of Richard's thoughts on the matter. While no one ever seems to agree with anyone else about anything as complex as this, most everyone agreed that something is happening to modern science fiction, whether they viewed this change with joy or apathy or loathing or patience.

In the above quote, Aldiss implies that most of us are going to be interested in either the "high-" or "lowbrow" fiction, and not both. We have "intellectual" tastes, or "popular" tastes. In my case at least, and I should imagine in many other people's cases, it isn't this simple. I presently

remain, as always, interested in reading good (read "entertaining") space opera, or futuristic melodrama, or fantastic, simple-minded adult fairy tales. I remain interested in reading stories written within the rigid framework of the pulp standard (an often sneered at term.)

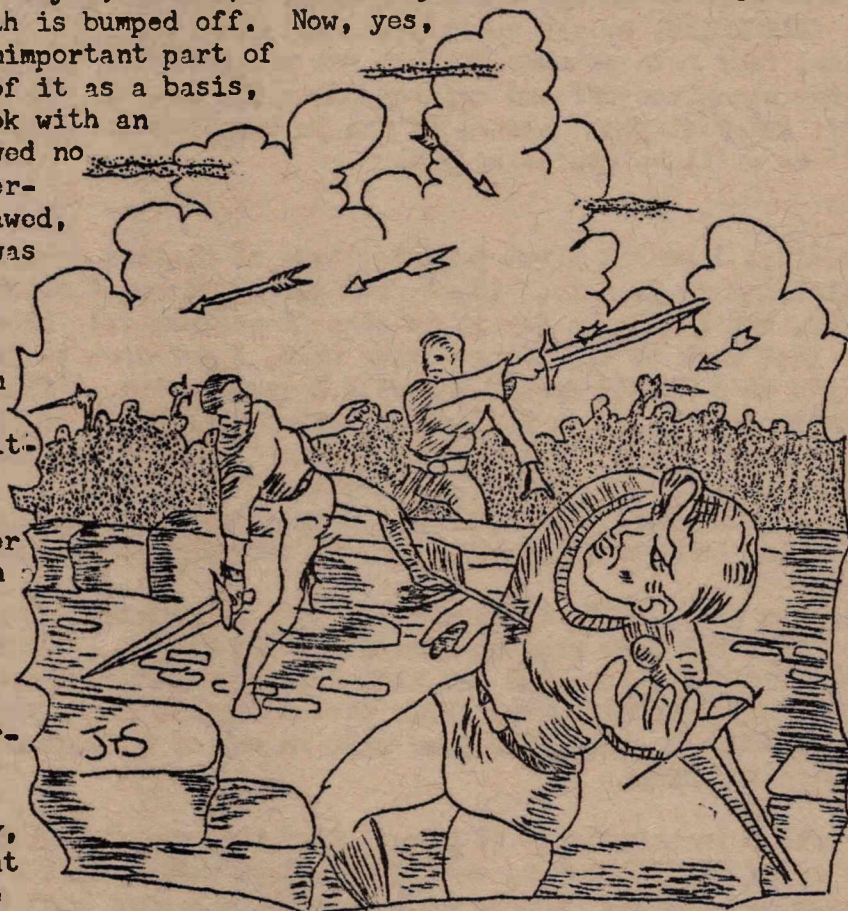
However, I am more interested in what has been labelled earlier as "highbrow." More definitely defining this new wave, I suppose I could say that these authors are using themes once associated only with serious mainstream fiction, and using the devices allowed them by the more imaginative format to say something new -- or at least differently. Also integral to the new wave is a departure from standard straight forward methods of plot development sanctioned by the traditions of the pulp magazine. Hopefully this style will be better suited to the theme and to communicating this theme effectively in this culture -- otherwise, of course, there would be no reason for using the new style, and, indeed, good reason for using a standard story telling method, because this standard method would be more easily understood by the reader.

In many ways, the movement in these directions has been quite encouraging. There are a few things I'm unhappy about, however. For instance, J. G. Ballard, one of the major writers of the new wave has been writing some

Your  
man  
in  
Mo.



really remarkable novels, huh? Style, themes; wonderfully handled. But the plots? Rather plot, just one, the earth is bumped off. Now, yes, I know, the plot is the most unimportant part of a story. But I tend to think of it as a basis, at any rate, a well written book with an illogical or trite plot is flawed no matter how well it is done otherwise. Ballard's plot isn't flawed, it is just standardized. (It was standardized before Ballard got hold of it) and I think it tends to spoil his books somewhat. With all the imagination he shows in other areas it seems a shame he can't use a little in the plot.



I implied my second gripe earlier when I mentioned that rejection of traditional story telling styles is empty unless it helps tell the story and communicate the theme. Generalizing this attitude, I think several important things are being rejected simply because they were a standard part of the pulp story, and not because they are without meaning. For instance, in some British publications you'll notice considerable scorn shown for the "interplanetary story." (They still publish some, but always with some sort of apology.) The Outer Space story, they tell us, has now been replaced by the story of Ballard's Inner Space. This attitude, in an era when space travel is becoming more and more vitally important to our future!

As I've already said, I enjoy some space opera -- or adventure-oriented science fiction/fantasy, or what have you -- it sort of annoys me when someone calls it "utter crap." But, at least I understand their position! Even more annoying to me are the people who completely condemn all the modern fantasy/science fiction as trash. In most cases, the only reason they have that makes any sense seems to be that by heavens they've been reading pulp-standard stories every night before they went to sleep for 40 years, and by heavens they aren't about to do any thinking this late in the game.

This is the "Special Convention Issue" of STARING -- or something. Which means only two things: 1) It will be on sale to the people attending the OZARKON 1 and 2) I want to invite everyone who finds a copy of this in his or her hands before convention time to the convention. Many of you will have already gotten a copy of our OZARKON 1 flyer, others of you will find one enclosed with this issue.

5

There are a few things which I should add to the information on that flyer: Reed Crandell, who has done such excellent art work in CREEPY and ERRIE, and elsewhere, will almost certainly be here. At the moment, it seems possible that Al Capp might



well be here -- though I can't promise this. If all you're life you've wanted to see METROPOLIS, by all means come, and we'll show it to you. There will be other films, too; both science fiction and non-fiction. We'll be showing them off in the corner someplace off and on; you can watch them if you want to, skip them if they don't interest you. And -- if you just happen to enjoy friendly conventions --like I do -- we'll be expecting you.

Recently, I bought about 5 collections of Charles Schulz's PEANUTS, to finish my collection up to date. (See? I'm not a science fiction completist, I can't afford to be, but I make up for it in other departments.) About three or four times during the last week or so, after buying them, I sat down to read " a couple or three pages!" That's what I told myself before I began reading. After the tenth or so page, I usually realized that if I didn't put the book up pretty soon, I was going to be late for whatever it was I had planned to do before I started reading --OSFA meeting or date, whatever it was. Then I would turn the page and read another cartoon. And then another one. . .and another, etc., etc. You know, the edible peanuts effect me that same way, too, though actually not to such a great extent.

Speaking of PEANUTS, did you see the latest Charlie Brown TV special? For some reason, I didn't think it was as funny as the Christmas show. But the last few seconds were classic: "Why are you staring at me like that?" Charlie Brown wants to know. "Because they made your uniform out of my blanket!" Linus answers in tears.

Elsewhere in this issue (I hope I find the space) I'll publish a list of my duplicates, and stuff I just want to sell, for one reason or another. I also want to publish a want list this time. I'll pay what I've indicated for good, whole copies, or trade for it with an approximately equal value of material from my for sale list. Write me before you send anything, and write me if you want to argue about the amount I'm willing to pay. State condition of the items you have.

75¢:

STARTLING STORIES 1940 3, 5, 11; 1941 3, 5, 7, 11; 1942 7, 9; 1943 3

PLANET STORIES 1939 W; 1940 Spring, F, W; 1941 Summer, F, W; 1942 Spring, F, W; 1943 3, W; 1944 Spring, F, W.

FANTASTIC NOVELS 1940-1941 all

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STARTLING STORIES 1945 W

PLANET STORIES 1946 Summer; 1947 fall; 1948 Summer

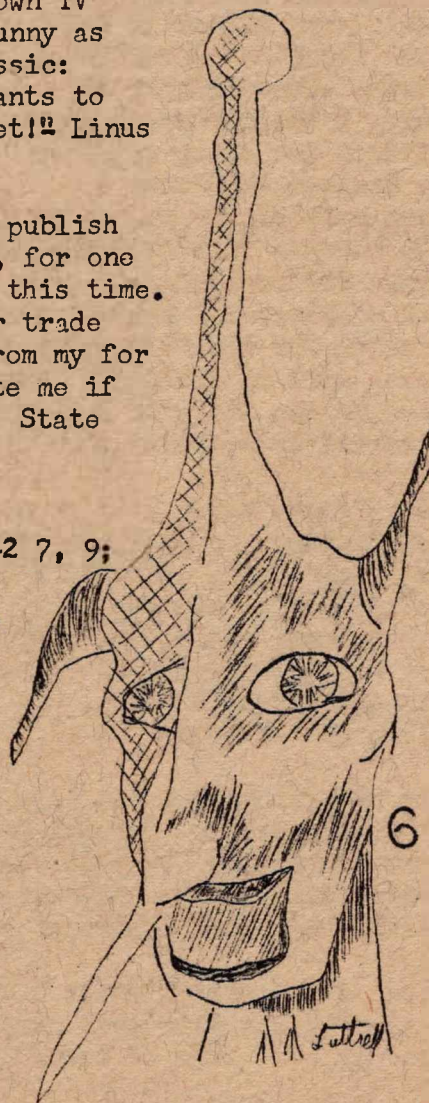
FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES 1946 2

40¢

PLANET STORIES 1952 3; 1955 Spring

FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES 1952 4, 8, 12; 1953 2;

FANTASTIC NOVEL 1949 9 more next time.





# ANOTHER PART OF GROFF CONKLIN

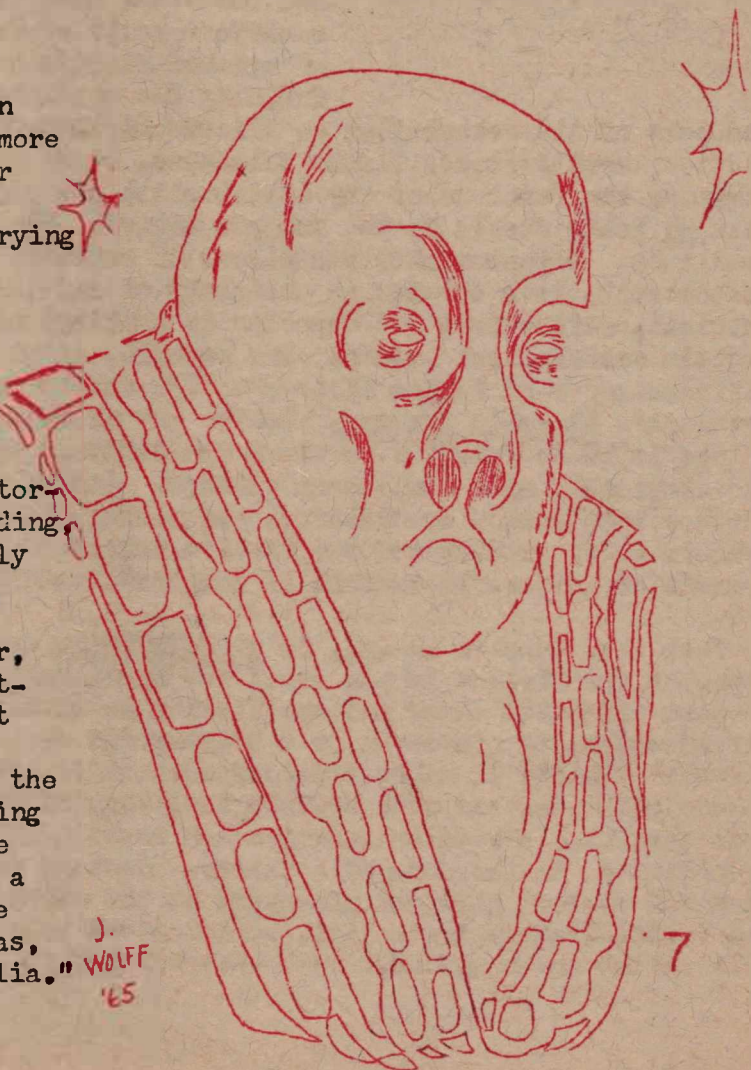
By STEPHEN PICKERING

Another Part of the Galaxy, Fawcett Books, 50¢, 1966.

Without referring to our files, we would say that this is approximately Conklin's fortieth anthology; for twenty years he has anthologized, edited and reviewed science fiction. Suffice to say, however, one would expect consistent criticism and quality, but, frankly, Conklin is inconsistent, ethnocentric and anti-intellectual. And the present anthology, Another Part of the Galaxy, is not a notable exception.

Conklin, from last reports, is a real-estate salesman, and his introductions vary as much as a real-estate salesman's "pitch talks." But, for twenty years, Conklin has not cared; he has managed to be published by almost all major pocket-book companies, although few have been significant symposiums of sociological science fiction. There are those who dislike the characteristics mentioned in the first part of this essay. For example, E. E. Smith, speaking at the 1955 World SF Convention (Cleveland) or "Reviewing the Reviewers," proved through statistical mathematics that Anthony Boucher and Groff Conklin were the most biased reviewers of the time, that Damon Knight was the most critical, and that P. Schuyler Miller was the most impartial. And there are cases in Conklin's anthologies which tend to prove this premise.

In 17 X Infinity (Dell, 1963), Conklin stressed that science fiction has "A more urgent need to expose the dangerous or foolish or wasteful or simply screwy tendencies in our own society, by carrying them logically forward into a tomorrow where these tendencies have been permitted to exfoliate until they dominate parts or all of the world in which we will then live." Here one has a positive expression of science fiction's role as a medium of sociological extrapolation, and the stories in the volume, though not outstanding, do mirror this intrinsic function fairly well. However, in 13 Above the Night (Dell, 1965), Conklin acrimoniously attacks the assumption that any writer, science fiction or otherwise, can criticize society, his feelings being that there are no more ideas to be found. "There never were many basic ideas in the first place, and they were already being explored long before the term 'science fiction' was even invented." And, in a later paragraph, he feels that science fiction does not have substantial ideas, but merely "backgrounds and paraphenalia."





Conklin suffers from lack of definite conclusions as well as clear and distinctive ideas; his criticisms are mediocre, lacking any sense of relevance. For example, in the introduction to Another Part of the Galaxy, he spends two paragraphs musing over a recondite quotation from Shakespeare's As You Like It which gives Conklin the title for the anthology. The title is suppose to indicate the content of the volume, varied stories about portions of the galaxy. . .and, ostensibly, that is all they are; there is not an original idea in the entire collection.



The contributors are Poul Anderson, Paul Ash, J. F. Bone, J. T. McIntosh, Edgar Pangborn, and Eric Frank Russell. Pangborn, noted for his seemingly "realistic" characterization, contributes a pastiche, which, one would assume, is meant to point to Conklin's praise of his "real" people. Even Pangborn's Davy suffers from sociological naivete, shallow characters, lack of originality, and the present story, "The Red Hill of Summer" (from F&SF, September 1959) is nothing more than a tired retelling of the First Landing on the Alien Planet, replete with the benevolent father image in Captain Madison, the All American David Leroy, etc.

And the other five stories only seem to be an ethnocentric "proof" of Conklin's belief that the majority of science fiction has never had original ideas. In defining the concepts of science fiction through the contents of his anthologies -- Science Fiction Thinking Machines, Great Science Fiction about Doctors, Giants Unleashed, et al -- Groff Conklin is deliberately limiting the functions of any sociological perspective; thus, Conklin is asserting what he feels should be the subject matter. The reader focuses his thoughts upon Conklin's selected bits and pieces of reality; he is telling us what to look at. In contrast, look through an anthology of Judith Merrill (which are always more critical, definitive, and superior in quality) one is stimulated into looking for certain sociological maxims. For example, if we want to learn about "juvenile delinquency," read Harlan Ellison's "The Juvies" or significant portions of Robert Heinlein's Starship Trooper. Unlike any of Conklin's anthologies, we find cultural values in these forms of "deviant behaviours," and, conversely, would look sociologically upon adolescent culture. (And our analysis would carry us still further into races, communities, and social groups.) Each of these concepts are of concern to the modern science fiction writer, but one will rarely find social comment of mermoralbe context in Conklin's anthologies.

We feel that Conklin --e.g., in 17 X Infinity or Another Part of the Galaxy -- is somewhat inefficient in his quest for quasi-relevant factors in determining the present situation among science fiction writers. That is, when he writes an introduction, it proves to be a hodge-podge of incongruities, irrelevancies, and further rubbish; it makes little constructive effort at determing possible solutions to our problems, and what sociological inquiry is becoming restricted in systematic theories. A good science fiction novel consists of a sociologically-oriented proposition in the form of a theory. Just as early, naive "gadget" science fiction examined various physical phenomena at the expense of intellectual development and rational characterization, sociological science fiction will relate two 8 cultural phenomenon, e.g., James Blish's A Case of Conscience presents one with a



state of religious beliefs consolidated with a scientist's knowledge, between the socioeconomic institutions of Earth and the family organization of Blish's alien planet, between the class construction of our own planet and the esthetic "religion" of the alien planet, between "deviant behaviour" of the alien on our planet and the conflicting values and mores resulting.

In the remaining part of Conklin's anthology -- following Pangborn's story -- sociological theory is slighted, save in portions of Poul Anderson's "The Live Coward" (Astounding, June 1956). Conklin seems to feel that his word is the final word on criticism; nevertheless, before one can publish an introduction presenting theoretical sociological propositions, one must elucidate and define the foundations upon which modern science fiction is built. And when doing so, the reviewer such as Conklin is only maligning himself when he builds a predetermined set of ideas upon sociological abstractions; the latter cannot be limited. The entire history of science fiction anthologies (particularly with those of T. E. Dikty and, later, with Judith Merrill) mirrors the fact that a recurring theme of science fiction is not Time Travel, Alien Worlds, nor any of Groff Conklin's Ideas. Rather it is the effort of a skilled writer endeavoring to adequately deal with some aspect of reality, and it is from the past experiences of a writer that he re-defines old ideas or creates new ones.

The primary fault of Conklin, then, is anti-intellectualism. He is acrimoniously against those writers who do deal with new ideas, and more often than not completely ignores sociological content. Theories are cumulative as well as tentative; they do not suddenly burst forth in one novel, nor are they static. William James once said that the writer must "forge every sentence in the teeth of irreducible and stubborn facts." This Groff Conklin has not done. And, for the most part, Another Part of the Galaxy shows that he probably will not ever do so.

END

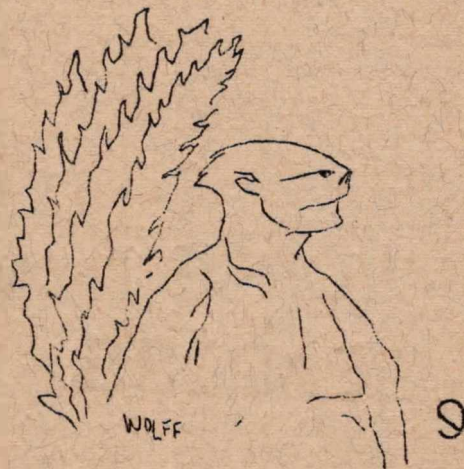
TEDDY BOY

by Jim Turner, Dave Hall and Becker Staus

Oh, where have you been Teddy boy, Teddy boy,  
Oh, where have you been, Charming Teddy?  
I've been to Ace Books  
And I got some dirty looks,  
And that's where I've been, darling Terry.

Oh, what did you do, Teddy Boy, Teddy boy,  
Oh, what did you do, Charming Teddy?  
I shot Donny through the head;  
I left him cold and dead,  
And that's what I did, darling Terry.

Oh, where are you going, Teddy boy, Teddy boy,  
Oh, where are you going, Charming Teddy.  
I'm going down to Hell  
To watch him sizzle well,  
And that's where I'm going, darling Terry.





Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd., Hoddesdon, Herts., England

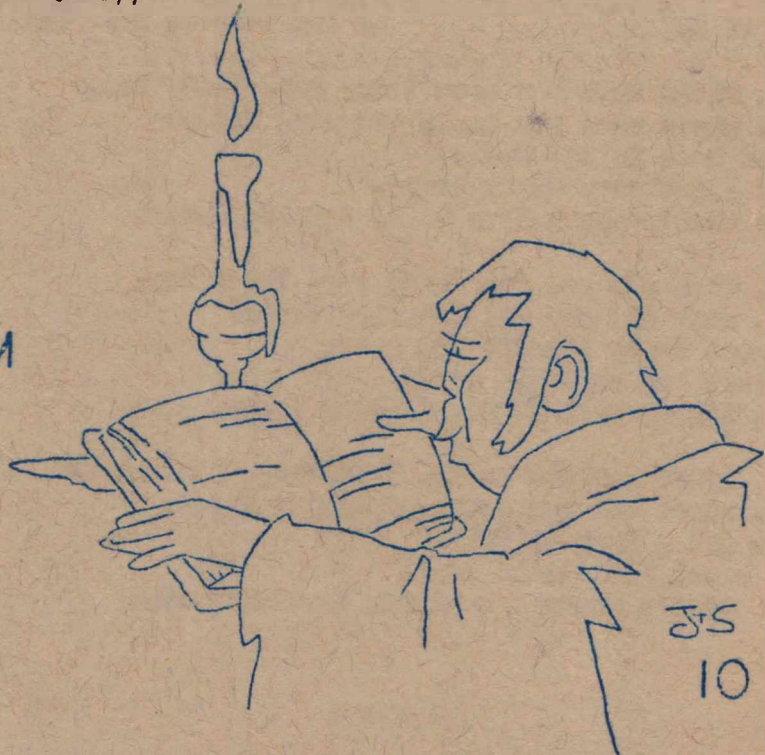
The letter column is filled with magical and fascinating names and places; just think for a moment what they conjure up in the mind's eye -- "Crystal City"-- now surely that's Leigh Brackett's "Shandakor" though what it is doing in Missouri I don't know. Dreaming crystal spires, great domes of glass - no, it couldn't be - or could it? //Well, they make a lot of glass, there, anyway. A Pittsburg Plate Glass factory is located in Crystal. HL// Does Hank Luttrell sing like Hank Williams or Hank Snow - I've never known a Hank before - is it your real name or short for Henry perhaps? //Full name: James Henry Luttrell. HL//

I've never considered Earle Bergy the least bit boring or unimaginative at all; on the contrary I've always thought of him as one of the great "stylists" of American science fiction art, and one who could not be replaced after his sudden death. Admittedly he did belong to his "period" but so did Frank R. Paul, and not being willing to change is not always a fault to my way of thinking, there is often beauty and skill in something created and belonging to a special era - and Earle Bergy was just that.

Gene Klein, 33-51 84th St., Jackson Hts., New York, New York, 11372

The letter column was interesting, and I like people commenting on other people's comments rather than commenting on the articles in the zine, as is the wont in most fmzs. //Perhaps you find less commenting-on-other-people's-comments in some other fanzines because the editors of these other fanzines edit most of this out. I've always felt that some controversy, even if on nothing more important than, say, the realitive merit of Earle Bergy, was more interesting than lists of what readers did and did not like in a past issue--and comments on a past issue's contents --and nothing else--sometimes tend to turn into something like this. HL//

WORDS FROM  
READERS



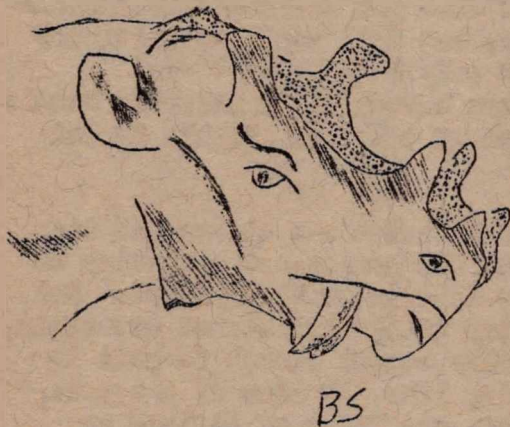


Jack Gaughan, Post Office Box #177, Edgewater, New Jersey, 07020

(Buck Coulson:) I hope that I did not imply that what is new is good or that what is not new is the province of fuddy-duddies. I don't think that. Since Mr. Coulson may have interpreted my remarks as a sort of personal stand perhaps I had better try to state just what I do think about old and new in relation to art. The trouble is I don't have a real stand to take. . .my position is an ambiguous one. . .or two or three! All that is old is not good. All that is new is not good. Oldness isn't goodness. Newness isn't good. . .neither are they bad. My remarks about SF readers were meant to express curiosity at the reluctance to incorporate new approaches to the old problems. I agree that an illustration should illustrate and not react or interpret. I am not crying in a liberal-arts wilderness that I am alone and afraid etc. . .rather that it amuses me that what seems on the surface like an open minded group (sf readers) are really thoroughly traditional in certain areas. I must admit that much of the "experimental" (really just N.Y. eclectic) art that Galaxy was guilty of in its middle days didn't come off. . .some of it did, but most of it looked like amateur gropings. Speaking for myself that is exactly what it was.

Nonetheless I see a sort of deadly future for a field which at one point seemed to want nothing more than to grow endless little J. Allen St. Johns. An artist can learn from J. Allen St. John but that doesn't mean he has to BE him. . .or Finlay or Stevens or whoever. I have frankly imitated a number of older artists in order to add to my vocabulary a few new "words." None of the imitations ever came off as direct steals. . .Hannes Bok told me once that (assuming one has a head of his own) it was impossible to fully imitate someone else. That spark of self (which must exist somewhere) always makes itself known. I think you'll find that most artists (in a manner of speaking) eat the work of other artists and digest and grow therefrom. . .sometimes you'll see the excrement.

In order to live things must change whether to grow or adapt! This does not say that cha is good or that new is good but it does not preclude the possibility that good new things may happen. I think what may upset both Coulson and myself is that CHANGE and NEW are being sought instead of being allowed to grow and develop naturally. Any number of N.Y. artists are, for instance, trying like hell to do paintings in which they are NOT INVOLVED. Gee!



As for intellectualism in SF, I don't find the newer writers all THAT intellectual. It seems to me that they are merely writing SF around a premise rather than around a mechanical gimmick. The Lord of the Ring is, I suppose, closer to being intellectual, but perhaps that's not SF. I don't really see too much difference between Allan Quatermain fighting a lost civilization and 12<sup>4</sup>warn-41 fighting a concept. Not really!

Well, I gotta go paint a girl running | | away from a castle! How's that for a revolutionary concept?



SP4 Earl E. Evers, RA 51 533 159, 269 Sig Co (Svc), APO New York, NY, 09041

I was going to really lambaste Gordon's attempt at a con-report in verse for everything from naivete to poor syntax, but then I read my story and decided not to bother.

"The Intellectual Invasion" in SF is self-evident, but it is part of the far wider changes now occurring in every facet of American culture. As a nation, we are becoming better educated and more widely read (by no means the same thing!) and more liberal in outlook every day. This is both good and bad like all sweeping cultural changes, and stems from our adjustment to a high standard of living. Material plenty causes leisure which causes a higher standard of education which causes more liberal and intellectual outlook. Various SF writers are producing "intellectual" work because that is what they think (quite rightly, as sales figures are proving) that such literature is what the public wants. But the increase in "liberal" or "intellectual" (or "pseudo-intellectual" if that word is something you like to use; myself, I think the word is one only a pseudo-intellectual would use.) thinking is universal. Adult movies. PLAYBOY. CAVALIER. The current tolerant attitude toward college protest and anti-war movements. (I keep hearing various para-phrases of "I don't agree with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." cropping up whenever either movement is brought up. And this is on Army bases! Now remember, or ask someone old enough to remember what most Americans said about the pitiful minority who raised their voices against WW2.)

Since people are learning moral and sexual liberalism because it is necessary to reconcile your beliefs with your actions in this century of free and easy access to out-of-wedlock sex, they also tend to pick up many other traits and fads from the morally liberal intellectuals who are now serving as teachers to the rest of society (They having discovered free love Quite Some Time Ago). That's where the current interest in protest music comes from. And the Beatle haircut, and rash of bearded youth.

As I said, liberalization of morals isn't bad. It isn't necessarily good, either, but merely facing the facts in a society with a teenage and young adult virginity rate approaching the literacy rate among slaves in Imperial Rome. But when about three-quarters of the population under thirty starts trying to be intellectual, it gets pretty ridiculous. I mean there was a time when you could say of someone with extremely "egghead" ideas, "he may be crazy, but I'll admit he's smarter than I am." But I keep running into people who can only be labeled "idiot intellectuals" --people who are educated quite a ways beyond their power to handle the knowledge. . . on a year or so at a typical American college! (Leave me out of this, I' an unlettered genius, myself!)

And, of course this movement has come to Fandom. Oh, fandom has always had its share of "genuine" intellectuals; fans who have both the brains and education to really understand and communicate the subjects they discuss in their fanac. But we seem to be getting more and more fans who will try to discuss almost any topic, no matter how difficult, just as if they were actually expert enough to pull it off. Oh I don't mean SF'nal speculation on something like "My idea of a Utopia," but a lot of those extremely detailed pieces on, say, the Kings of England by people whose entire previous knowledge of history (till they entered the discussion, which was probably started by some fan who knew what he was talking about) was



confined to high school, a skimming of Wells Outline and ten or a dozen of the more popular historical novels. This is beginning to bother me - now I'm definitely not an expert in anything, and the two or three fields I know well enough to join Deep Serious Discussions on aren't in vogue. But I feel I shouldn't sit outside, so I plunge in and make a big fugghead of myself. This is one reason I've always said I don't mind being called a fugghead.

What does all this really mean to fandom? For one thing, it increases the current trend toward extremely serious and intellectual dissertations on every topic but SF. For another, a tremendous increase in the size of fandom - the microcosm does at least have the semblance of an "intellectual hobby." And last, the exile of today's Tru Fen into small ingroups where they can continue to get great pleasure out of telling each other what they ate for lunch last Tuesday.

Seth A. Johnson, 339 Stiles Street, Vaux Hall, N.J., 07088

Gordon seems to be the mainstay of STARLING 7. I liked the poem and the article, but I do wish everyone would stop painting the worldcons as drunken orgies. I know a certain amount of drinking goes on but seldom does anyone get pie-eyed drunk or fall on the floor as implied in so many fan reports of all kinds of cons.

Sanders reviews of Doc Savage books was interesting! . . . but you know I wish you had put his considerable talent to something more worthy of review than Doc Savage. When I think of what he might have done reviewing Hersey's WHITE LOTUS for instance! . . . There are so many fine books to review and call to the attention of your readers that it is a shame to waste the space, time and talent of trivializing Doc Savage! I don't think I've seen WHITE LOTUS reviewed or even mentioned anywhere in fandom. I'm sure it would be more interesting to the readers than the ridiculous stuff that went out twenty years ago because the public just got fed up with the same characters going through the same plot with the same results all the time.

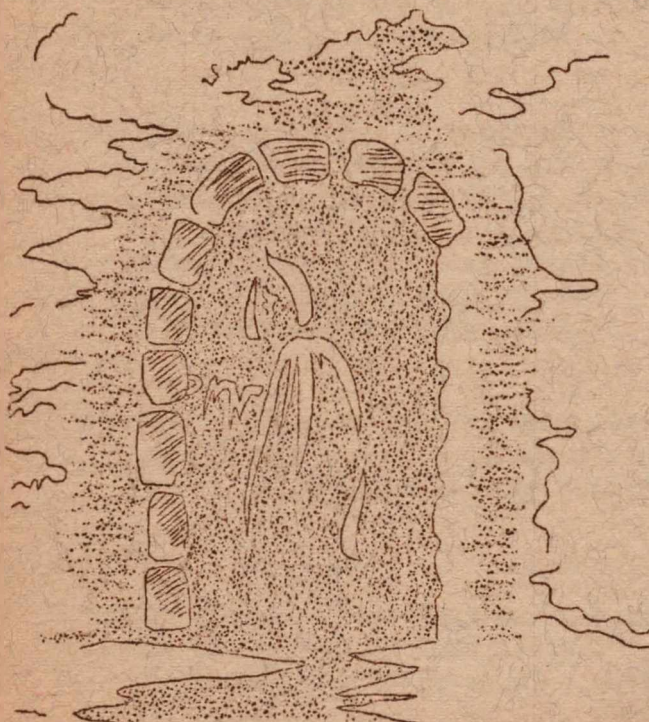
Ned Brooks, 911 Briarfield Road, Newport News, Virginia, 23605

I found STARLING 7 very enthusiastic! Perhaps even . . . over-excited! There were so many exclamation points all over the place! Even some of the commas had exclamation marks on them! //How 'bout that?! Like my typer had this trick(!), see? HL//

The discussion in the lettercol over the relative merits of ERB and Ian Fleming reminds me of the old joke (which I just made up) about the kindly old jailer who called down to the dungeon, "You slubs want your stinking swill hot or cold?"

Dave Hall may well have something when he says that Tolkien fans are "depth" readers. I can't imagine reading the RING books at the speed you would Kuttner or such.

13





It would seem like seeing the Louvre on roller skates. Like the other great British fantasy writers, Dunsany, Machen, Eddison, Charles Williams, Tolkien's books were meant to be read at leisure. Speed reading is useful but it was never meant to be applied to fiction or poetry. I know a fan who claims to read an SF novel every day, but what is the point? There aren't that many worth reading, and any that are worth reading are worth taking more time over. Another British fantasy that must be read even more slowly than the RING is the trilogy of books by Mervyn Peake about Titus Groan.



Stephen E. Pickering, who didn't put his address on his letter.

Richard Gordon's article is well done. However, like so many other quasi-critics, he fails to define just what he means by "science fiction." And the attitude that one knows what science fiction is by pointing to a particular magazine or story is merely evading the issue.

The "intellectual" outlook in science fiction began originally with Gernsback, although any analysis of Gernsback's magazines reveals an intrinsic anti-intellectualism. However, I fail to ascertain the basis for Gordon's theses, i.e., that several British writers are more intellectual than Americans. Notably several writers are ethnocentric and anti-intellectual, e.g., Theodore Sturgeon and others. At the beginning of the essay, Gordon states that he will discuss the quasi-intellectual movement in British science fiction, but, unfortunately, I do not discern any notable examples. E.g., on page 10, he states that Ballard has "developed a technique for turning psychological phrases that appear to be full of meaning," but the quotes and his comments do not have any analogy to psychology; in fact, he seems to be groping for an expression of awe with imagery, i.e., imagery is not "psychological" but merely esthetic. And imagery in Ballard's work is not meant as "concepts."

Also, I do not feel that Buck Coulson's criticism of Bradbury is valid; speaking as one who knows Bradbury, has a complete collection of all he has published, we feel that Bradbury offers more in the way of philosophy than, say, Ballard. Likewise, the classification of Bradbury being a "fantasy" author, I am afraid, deserves pity and commiseration; Bradbury has not written fantasy since his apprenticeship for Weird Tales, and the two novels, Dark Carnival and The October Country. Something Wicked This Way Comes is a difficult work to label, as, in some aspects, it can qualify as weird fiction.

//I can't imagine calling Bradbury anything but a fantasy author, so perhaps I don't define fantasy the way you do. Certainly you don't think he is a science fiction author? Ah, well, your pity and commiseration is much appreciated. HL//

Norman Masters, Box 79, Ortonville, Mich., 48462

14

Richard Gordon's article was an interestingly fine job--an analytical article with some meat to it and something worthwhile to say. I still tend to prefer the simple story-telling science fictioners, though I'm tending to appreciate the so-called



intellectual ones more and more. Some of the stuff Ballard has been writing has evoked a "sense of wonder" feeling--as has Aldiss's Hothouse stories--but British-wise I prefer something like Moorcock's Elric stories, real fine jobs to my tastes. Action enough to satisfy any S&S-ERB fan--and much more in the unforgettable Elric stories, the doom-haunted lord of Melnibone & his sword, Stormbringer. Certainly Moorcock has shown a lot of originality in these stories--in addition to using a lot of the action elements found in other stories and myth elements too. Of course this is fantasy instead of SF, but Ballard's writings--at least what I've read of it--is more fantasy than sf.

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

Richard Gordon's con report would have been better in prose--his article shows he can handle prose fairly well, but not much can be said for his verse. His article makes some good points, but I disagree with some of it, too. He uses the term "intellectual" for the new British school of Ballard, Aldiss, et al., but if anything, I would call them "anti-intellectual," or perhaps "pro-emotional." If there is any one thing which unites the writers he is discussing, it is their conviction that a rational approach to life is not sufficient, and that man's irrational needs are far more important. Another writer who would qualify with the group on this basis is Cordwainer Smith, and I'm surprised that Gordon didn't mention him.

I liked Joe Sanders on Doc Savage, but I still think Dick Lupoff coined the perfect phrase for Doc: "superb terrible writing."

Your review and comments on WEIRD TALES were good, but you made a mistake in gender: The "D." in front of the "McIlwraith" stands for Dorothy, I suppose about forty-seven people have written you about this. Not only did Dolgov's style resemble Bok's somewhat, but they were friends and occasionally collaborated: their joint efforts were signed Dolbokov. //Sorry about the mistake concerning the WT editor. Only you and Ed Cox bothered to bring it to my attention. I try to be as accurate as possible, but, after all, all my information is second hand; I hadn't even been born when many of the magazines I review were first published. HL//

From Dave Hall's column, I gather that OSFA meetings are rather like WSFA meetings. There's usually a Diplomacy or Risk board in action at our get-togethers, and another game called Acquire, which seems to involve cornering the real estate market. (When is somebody going to bring out a game called simply and starkly "Greed"?)

Ronald R. Eberle, 100 Elmhurst Ave., Syracuse, New York, 13207

Recently, I've discovered a group of books even worse than the Badger abortions: While pawing through a stack of pbs in the local second-hand book store, I ran into about a dozen titles which are, by strict definition, stf. Actually, they're about a quarter of an inch this side of out-and-out pornography. Titles alone are enough to indicate the breed: WOMAN FROM ANOTHER PLANET, MARTIAN SEXPOT, THE LOVE MACHINE, LUST PLANET, SPACE SEX, LOVERS: 2075, etc.

15

When I say they're worse than Badger, I mean as stf. As sex books, I suppose they're okay. At least, they keep the protagonist moving (from one bed to the next, mostly) so as not to bog down the action. That's more than can be said of the some of the recent Ace books I've read.



Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland

For two months the L has stared at me beside my name on the envelope for STARLING, evidence of blind trust that had been betrayed by my procrastination. Resumption of work on the fan history, the severe winter that slowed down my normal activities, a lot of extra work, and general problems have caused the long delay I'm sorry, for the most part, with an adulteration of a small amount of joy that this letter will be much too late for your letter column and I'll be able to enjoy a fanzine for once without finding my own reflection on one or two of its pages. //Ha-ha, as it were. I'm even later than you are. I don't even have any good reasons. HL//



I don't find the quotations (that Richard Gordon uses in his article) as advanced or surrealistic as he implies; in fact, they're rather straightforward narration, in comparison with the literary experiments that some of the mainstream writers have published in recent decades. Probably the real problem is that science fiction has been so closely associated with pulp magazines and mass circulation paperbacks, down through the years. We've come to equate this style of fiction with the simple narrative techniques that the pulps insisted on and the paperbacks prefer to use. So we make fun of Bradbury's purple passages, because they're different from the prose of Otis Adelbert Kline, even though Bradbury writes nothing more far out than what you'll find in Dickens, and we get excited when Bester comes along to fill up one percent of a chapter with material that does not consist of sentences with subjects and objects and action verbs. I've not read enough of Ballard to compare general reactions with Richard Gordon but his article has caused me to want to get the Ballard fiction: anything that doesn't read like an imitation of Hugo Gernsback's fiction style is encouraging for the future of science fiction.

//Whoops! Someone else did notice my mistake with D. Mcwhat'shername. That makes three people, then. Harry Warner, Ed Cox and Banks Mebane. HL//

Harry's letter, still: It's strange, how small the reading market and how big the looking market for the weird. Sometimes I thought that Weird Tales circulation was handicapped by those covers of the Brundage age. But it didn't grow more popular when the art became a trifle less likely to incite blood pressure.

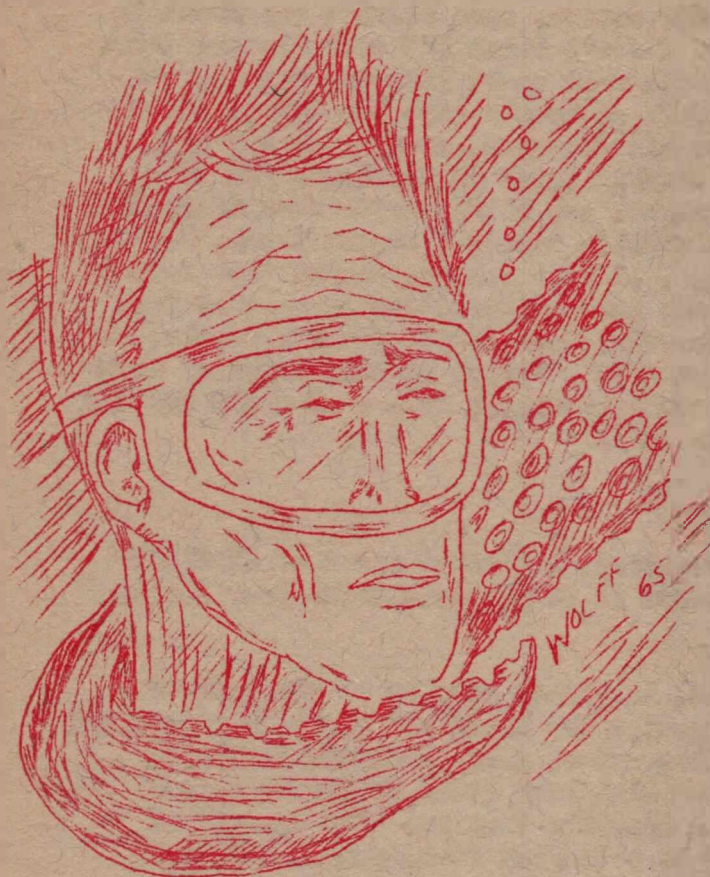
Dave Hall's column makes life in St. Louis sound quite entertaining. The anti-bullfighting propaganda is quite puzzling. Somewhere I ran across an unexplained reference to bloodless bullfighting. Conceivably promoters are trying to popularize in this country some sort of bull-baiting that doesn't result in the death of the beast, and this might be the basis of the bill-boards, but it's impossible to understand why one group of auto firms should set themselves to the task of fighting the innovation. //All of the members of OSFA were vastly disappointed when a couple of weeks after Dave's column was published, signs went up all over the city and county, proclaiming "NO BULL SALES AT YOUR\*\*\* DEALER ." Damned if I'm going to give them a plug in my pages, after something like that. HL//

16

John J. Kusalavage, 195-08 Station Rd., Flushing, N.Y., 11358

Try dividing the sea area of the RISK board into sectors. Give each player two colors, one for land and one for sea, and provide for conversion of land forces to





sea forces and vice versa by a lucky throw of a die! It complicates the game somewhat, and halves the maximum number of players, but HOO BOY what a game!

Bruce Robbins (who didn't put his address on his letter--but I'll make an exception here and print it anyway, since he was kind enough to send me his COA recently.) 436 S. Stone Ave., Lagrange, Ill., 60525

I'd like to clear up a few things before they become too widespread misconceptions. "They Flew By Night" by "Leo Brett" actually Lionel Fanthorpe) in Supernatural Stories V1N43 is part of the Cthulhu Mythos because Cthulhu is a character in the story. I erroneously referred to Him as an Elder God; someone who has read Lovecraft more recently than I have says that Cthulhu is not an Elder God!

It was Stephen Takacs who told me that Lionel Fanthorpe was the author of the Badger Books--Stephen has bought, and read, all the Badger Books. Further-

more, as a well known book seller, and a reasonably well-informed one, I wouldn't quibble with his statements. Probably the only exception is the publication of Murray Leinster's THE BRAIN STEALERS as a Badger SF book. I called the Badger books "unreadable" --well, I read one--they're fair time killers. As to whether one can continue to write so much verbiage month after month, just consider how bland and alike all the Badger Books are and the hacks of the past -- John R. Fearn and the authors of the Nick Carter and other dime novels! //Still think that occasionally another author sells at least a short story or two to them--Fanthorpe may write most of the stuff--may God forgive his soul! HL//

Dave Dewsnap, 4 Eldredge Street, Newton, Mass., 02158

I consider ERB perhaps the most creative and interesting author in the world (of fantasy authors.) However I never recommend his books to anyone, without first warning them that out of some fifty or sixty books you can easily survive in reading about 10 of them. It seems that most fan who loudly proclaim their abhorrence of ERB have read only one or two of his later Tarzan books, which I wouldn't recommend to even Campbell. In one of the letters in STARLING, a fellow says he dislikes his ERB because his characters are unbelievable! Granted. I seem to believe that fantasy is often unbelievable, but not less enjoyable for that reason. John Carter was purposefully unbelievable, and was meant to be the embodiment of all the virtues that are ideally considered to be correct in our society. //Fantasy is, when viewed objectively, by definition, "unbelievable." However, a story is read from a subjective viewpoint, and most stories are intended



to seem real, at least while reading them. (Of course, some stories are meant to seem unreal--but they are the exception, and I don't think ERB ever thought about using this technique!) Some people are able to read books like Burroughs', and believe in what the author is telling them. Those people like Burroughs. Others are irritated by, say, the author's style, or his concepts, or perhaps his cardboard characters, and can't believe in the story. Those people Don't like ERB. I suppose there may be people who like Burroughs, and still, never once identified with the hero--which is the form the belief usually takes, I should think, but I bet there aren't many. And another thing. . .I keep telling people that John Carter was horribly immoral, assuming that one accepts Christianity more or less literally--and a lot of people claim them do--why, Carter killed a few people, you know. The Ten Commandments don't say a thing about "except in self defense" when they tell you not to kill! Don't get the wrong impression, now. . .I don't exactly accept Christianity. . .let alone literally. HL//

Clay Hamlin, Southwest Harbor, Maine, 04679

Probably not significant, or even very interesting, but issue seven of STARLING did bring something to mind. Guess I mentioned it to you back about your second issue, but it will mean more now.

I've noticed that issue seven or thereabouts, is almost sure to be the make or break point for a fanzine. They will have gotten the kinks out of their mimeograph by that time. They will have made a few discoveries, good ones, and developed them, the fanzine itself and the contributors will have grown up together, and developed a personal style that belongs to a specific fanzine. The down right haphazard job of getting contributors won't be bothering much, you will be well known enough so that both writers and artists will contribute at request.

Some have folded before this, for lack of any of those things, but they are replaced. There are always newcomers. But they will still be new fanzines, can't help being, and they are distinctly different than those in the upper 25%.

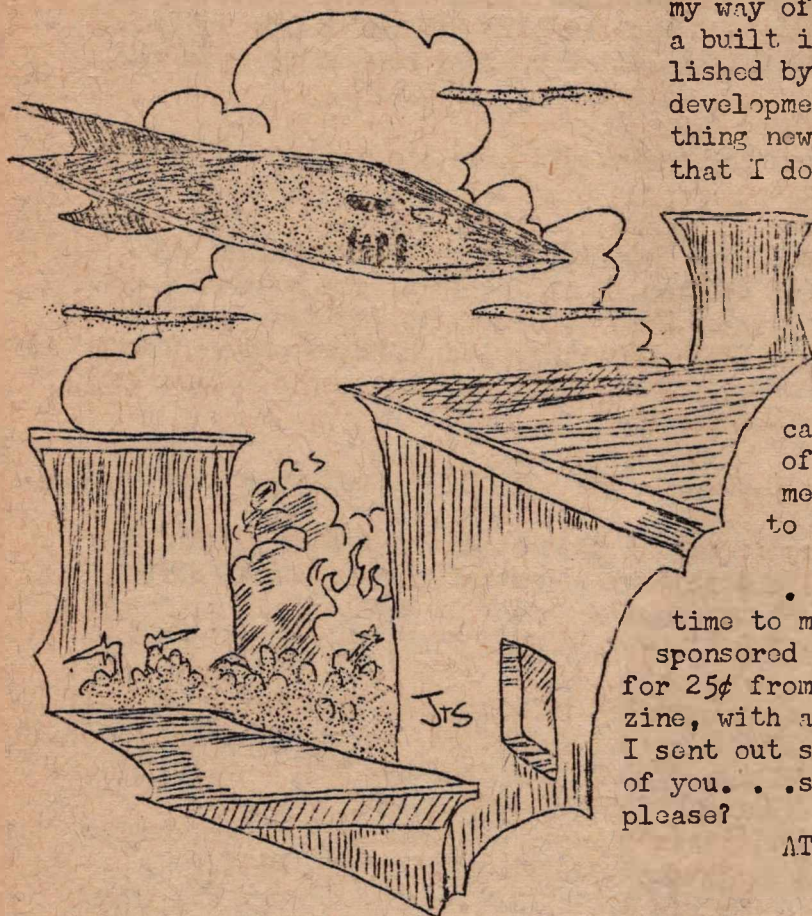
What's the difference? A couple of things. They have a personality of their own, while at the same time having a balance that gets a substantial segment of general fandom looking forward to reading it, rather than simply a specialized audience. Otherwise, they start downhill just about issue number seven, two or maybe more issues, and it goes the way of other promising fanzines that never quite made it.

I guess you got it made, Hank. You have a slick, polished job, talented contributors all over the place!//?Slick?Polished? With my typing? HL//And you are obviously still having lots of fun creating this zine of yours, no loss of interest such as frequently plagues the best of fans at times. And you got an issue number seven just bound to get you lots of compliments, something for you to aim at in the future.. So what's the problem? Simple, the same old tail chasing procedure where you got something good, and keep right on doing it the same old way, imitating yourself, the same old things over and over again, the words may change, but the music doesn't. The feeling remains the same, no surprises, the old stand by of "Why tamper with a smoothly running machine?"

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Somehow, I get the impression that the deck is stacked against you even more because STARLING seems to be the product of a fan club. It happened to Shaggy, as fine a zine as there was around for a while. It would have, maybe did happen at times, to Cry, only the letter column really saved that much of the time, to





my way of thinking. Almost seems to be a built in fault of a fanzine to be published by a fan club, just no further development, no taking a chance on something new and unique! //Well, it is true that I don't plan to make too many drastic changes in here. Assuming I I keep publishing (and, yes, as of now, I have every intention of doing so), I'll be changing STARLING, because I'll be changing myself! Gee-wiz, I'll change, I'm young. I wouldn't call STARLING club-produced. Some of my contributors live close to me, is all. And, yes, we belong to OSFA. . .

. . .and this is, I suppose, a good time to mention the OSFA produced and sponsored SIRRUIISH, which you can have for 25¢ from me. I edited it, and its a genzine, with all kind of articles and things. I sent out some sample copies, but not to all of you. . .so, like send me a quarter. . . please?

ATTEND THE OZARKON

HL//

Dave Hall, 202 Taylor Ave., Crystal City, Missouri,

Jim Edward Turner's comments on Ian Fleming give me a pain in the posterior. //Don't mind Dave and Jim, friends; they were roommates at college for a while, and they like screaming at each other--all in the spirit of friendship, of course. HL//

"The rain came down in swift, slanting strokes, italic script across the unopened black cover that hid the secret hours that lay ahead." I'm glad that he used that as his example; I was going to use it as mine anyway. Other than being clumsy, syntactically; it is A) purple, and B) nonsense. What the hell does the rain have to do with anything? Then there was a page long dissertation, I think in the same book, where Bond is suddenly seized with horror that his plane is going to crash, and starts worrying about the competence of the man of the ground crew, who doubtless just had a sad love affair and is going to neglect his duty and send Little Jimmie Bond plummeting to his death. Needless to say, nothing of the sort happens. Nothing happens at all. The plane doesn't even buck particularly. I've been on secret planes myself that bucked enough to set out dead paric in England's number one secret agent! How big a meatball can you get? Next thing you'll know, we'll have RICHIE BENYO --SECRET AGENT. Turner once lured me to a double feature Bond show, and sat there telling me all about the differences in the book, how Dieter wasn't very well represented in the movie version of Dr. No, since he'd had the entire right side of his body clawed off in LIVE AND LET DIE some years earlier, about how the Arab in FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE had kept his girl friend chained up and threw her raw meat, and how Honeychile Rider's nose had been broken in the book, and stuff like that. It got me interested enough to read some of the books, and I've always regretted it since. Fleming's books are filled with



irrelevencies. Which is all right, I guess, they are interesting irrevelencies. (One of them is great. The front of the bad guys in LIVE AND LET DIE is called The Ouroboros Worm and Bait Company.) But the idiotic plots keep getting in the way.

E.E. Evers story stank. But then every fanzine should have one really bad item.

//We also heard from Charles P. Johnson, Vin Mansfield (Who wanted to know why Richard Gordon hadn't considered Harlan Ellison in his article, and suggested we try playing Tactics II at an OSFA meeting), Paul C. Crawford, Jay Dobis, Joe Sanders, Creath Thorne, Richard Labonte, Mike Viggiano, Gary Hubbard and various other people with quarters and tradzines. //

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Okay, I've got these duplicates to sell, see? Take a look, the prices are fantastic.

PAPERBACKS (new condition, 25¢, 5 for \$1, unless indicated) THE ATOM CONSPIRACY, Jeff Sutton; FIRE AND THE NIGHT, Philip Jose Farmer (not sf); THE PUPPET MASTERS, Robert Heinlein; PLANET OF THE APES, Pierre Boulle; AGENT OF VEGA, James H. Schmitz; THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU, H. G. Wells; DOUBLE STAR, DOUBLE STAR, Robert Heinlein.

(paperbacks in less than new condition. . usually they have my name scrawled across them. 20¢, 6 for \$1) THE CHALLENGE OF THE SPACESHIP, Arthur C. Clarke (non-fiction); THE SPACE EGG, Russ Winterbotham; TIME IS THE SIMPLEST THING, Clifford D. Simak; A DECADE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION ed. by Robert P. Mills; THE INFINITE MOMENT, John Wyndham; I, ROBOT, Isaac Asimov; AND SOME WERE HUMAN, Lester Del Rey; OTHER WORLDS OF CLIFFORD SIMAK, Simak; CONDITIONALLY HUMAN, Walter M. Miller, Jr.; THE SEED OF EARTH & NEXT STOP THE STARS, Robert Silverberg; 6XH (The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag) Robert Heinlein; THE CITY AND THE STARS, Arthur C. Clarke; YOURS TRULY, JACK THE RIPPER, Robert Bloch.



BOOK CLUB EDITIONS (new condition, 60¢) THE DARK SIDE Damon Knight; THE DROWNED WORLD & THE WIND FROM NOWHERE, J. G. Ballard; THE CORRIDORS OF TIME, Poul Anderson; THE POSSESSORS, John Christopher.

MAGAZINES FUTURE COMBINED WITH SCIENCE FICTION STORIES January, March, July 1951 50¢; FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES Aug. 1949; STARTLING STORIES May 1953 40¢; THRILLING WONDER STORIES Aug., 1951 50¢; GALAXY March 1955 40¢ October 1965 (15th Anniversary issue) 30¢; SCIENCE FANTASY # 53, #54, #56, #58 40¢; GAMMA #5 30¢; CREEPY (a EC-type black and white comic, published by Warren) #7, #8 35¢; ERRIE (more or less the same as CREEPY) #2, #3 35¢; SPACEMEN 1965 Yearbook 40¢; MAD #75, # 81, #82 25¢.

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Send the orders to Hank Luttrell, at the address in front; I'll pay the postage.

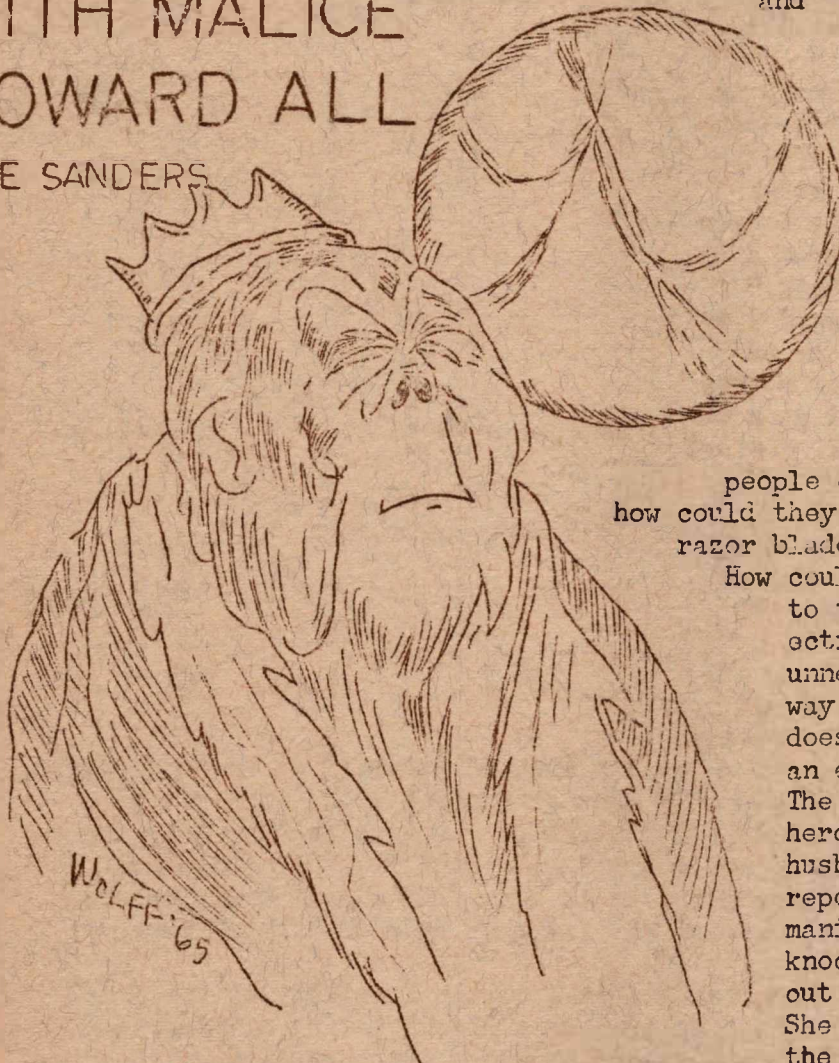


I have rather mixed feeling about Ballantine's Tales from the Crypt and The Vault of Horror, reprinted from the E.C. horror comics of the early 50's. The E.C. horror zines are remembered for two things: the high quality of their art and stories, and the puddles of gore that helped panic the comics industry into the straitjacket of the Comics Code Authority. Both sides are amply shown in these paperback collections. The art is good, and the stories are sometimes quite effective. But even in my ideally uncensored universe I'd have strong reservations about letting my own small child read them. This, you understand, is a different question from whether or not adults should be free to read them. It may also be a question apart from their artistic success -- but I'm not sure about that. Part of the difficulty, I think, lies in the nature of the fantasy involved, part in the nature of the comic book medium.

The E.C. stories are fantastic to a greater or lesser degree, make no mistake. It's true that only seven out of the total sixteen stories in these two volumes deal with overtly supernatural themes -- animated corpses, a human mind conscious after death, etc. -- but even the "straight" stories take place in conveniently flexible settings.

Take, for example, two of the most effective stories in Crypt, "Blind Alleys" and "All Through the House." In

WITH MALICE  
TOWARD ALL  
JOE SANDERS



the first, the crooked director of a home for the blind is attacked by his inmates and held prisoner a few days while they construct a vast maze, walls thickly studded with razor blades, through which the fink is then sent running, pursued by a ravenous dog. in the dark. Well, okay. The question is, granting

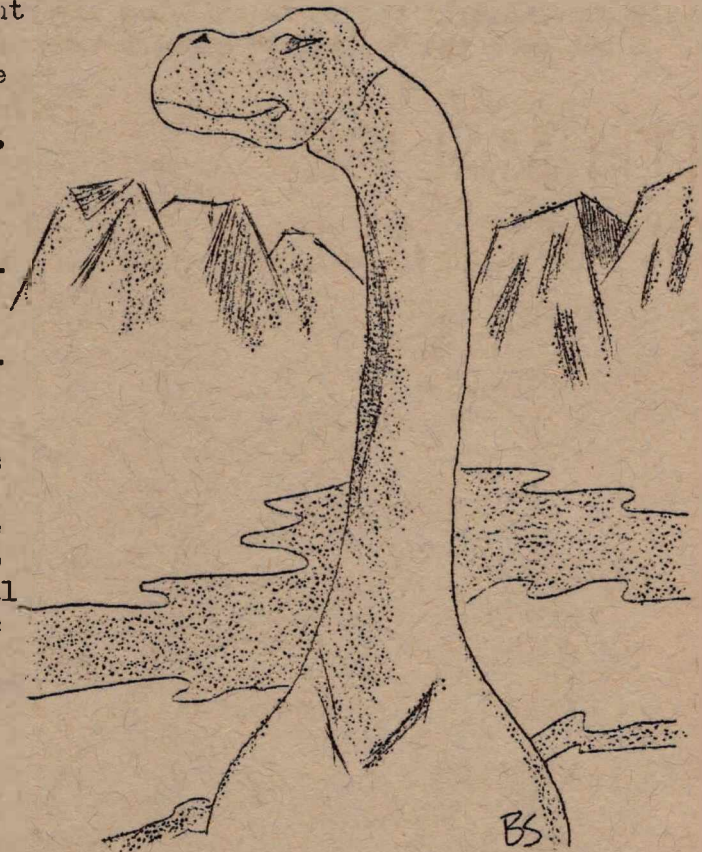
for a moment that blind people could build such a structure, how could they get the many thousands of razor blades required to line the maze? How could they attach them all to the walls so they'd be effective? This may seem like unnecessary quibbling, and in a way it is; the story works. So does "All Through the House," an even more impossible tale. The basic situation is that the heroine has just murdered her husband when she hears a radio report of an escaped homicidal maniac in the vicinity, hears knocking at her front door, looks out the window and sees -- yes. She can't call for help under the circumstances. She doesn't have a gun. So she locks the



doors and windows a step or two ahead of the maniac, then realizes that he could break the glass, so dashes around the house boarding up windows -- and at this point the story logically should break down completely. I mean, in our small, non-ranch style house, there are thirteen windows on the ground floor through which a man could easily climb. Any idea how long it would take to break a window and climb in? Or how long it would take to board up one window, even sloppily? No, he didn't climb in, and no, I'm not going to reveal the gimmick here. Because the story works. What happens may not be possible, but it's believable. It feels right. Rather than the laws of rational thought, these stories obey the laws of nightmare. In a nightmare, it doesn't matter how the blades get there; it's enough that they're there as part of the forces closing in on the reader-in-the-victim. Not does it matter how the windows get boarded, but they must be boarded; the tension can't end now; not yet. That's all we know and all we need to know.

Instead of depending on werewolves, vampires, and things that go bump in the night as monaces, the people at E.C. realized that it is the monsters that exist in the darkness of our own minds -- crimes, insanity, etc. -- that are most terrifying. A case in point, to pull in an outside example, is Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart." The frightening thing about this story is not so much that the narrator has committed a murder as the mad rationality with which he goes about it: "If you still think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body." The frightening thing, in other words, is that insanity speaks through a mask of sanity which gradually flakes away before the reader's eyes. And, when you stop to think about it, if one careful, logical man can turn out to be a homicidal maniac -- how do you know that fellow down the hall isn't lying in wait for you? How do you know your best friend isn't? How do you know, however much you protest, you aren't really insane yourself? (or, as "Starlight, Starbright" in Vault puts it, how do you know that the sane world you move about in isn't a dream and nightmare madness in reality?) Stupid questions when you ask them of yourself in broad daylight, but try the again late at night as you walk down an empty street. And so, if E.C.'s stories don't work out logically, they still convince us because they are tuned to our own hidden fears that we are not going to Make It, that there are people out to get us, that we don't know the truth and if we did it would be even worse. This is very close to the viewpoint of "fantasy" as a distinct literary form. As H. P. Lovecraft puts it:

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its direction, have hitherto harmed us





little; but some day the piecing together of disassociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and our frightful position there in that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

("The Call of Cthulhu")

The assumption, then, is that man is a pawn of forces beyond his comprehension; human reason and sympathy must ultimately fail. The specific plot devices used may be different, but E.C.'s stories of crime and insanity are allied to the straight fantasies in basic attitude.

Here is the point of this long digression: The stories in these E.C. reprints are uniformly downbeat. The happiest possible ending is when, somehow, a sympathetic character drags his rotting corpse from the grave and takes revenge of the people who put him there. In almost all the stores, we can assume that the main character is doomed before he starts -- the only question is how he's going to get it.

And here we come to the second main difficulty -- the comic medium.

It's hard to draw fear on paper, to evoke through pictures the unreasoning dread they are getting at! (The least successful story in the two collections, "Whirlpool," tries to depict insanity in realistic visual terms.) It's easier, and maybe safer, to shock the reader by showing him a revolting picture than to try to frighten him by understatement and suggestion. A prose horror story like Lord Dunsany's "Two Bottles of Relish" can rely on indirect verbal suggestion to make its points -- to lay the clues for the hideous solution and at the same time create an urbane atmosphere in which that conclusion is completely unexpected. "Curiosity Killer," a story in Vault on a similar theme, operates on a different level as it shows juicy chunks of human flesh being fed to dogs. Yes, it works in its own way, but it's as if Poe's narrator had dwelt on the cutting-up of the murdered man in terms of lovely, soaking blood or the difficulty in sawing through the joints, rather than treating it just as another part of his ingenious, mad scheme. (Creepy magazine, a new effort which possesses some of the virtues of the old E.C. zines but a larger measure of their faults, has published an adaption of Poe's story in which the murderer finally rips up the floor himself, offering it to the police! As one officer remarks, "Good Lord! >Choke< ") A matter of emphasis. Just as Life distorts the week's news into what can be shown in photographs, comics tend to limit horror to the bucket of blood and entrails that can be spilled before the reader. A kick in the stomach, rather than a stroking of the imagination.

There are exceptions. I think the first two stories I mentioned stop at about the right point, leaving the reader to imagine his way along from there. There are others in these two volumes. And "Wish You Were Here," in Vault, violates the criteria I've suggested above but strikes me as a very ingenious twist on "The Monkey's Paw."

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To sum it up, then, because of their basic orientation and the way they go about expressing it these comics aren't for kids. Keeping in mind the limitations noted above, though, some of you adults might find some of them worth your time.



## THE GOOD OLD DAZE by Hank Luttrell

Three issues ago I published an installment of this column that was less well received than I might have hoped. In the next issue (#6) I let my pulp reviews take a little vacation, and wrote a review of the English Badger Books. In #7, I made with some more pulp reviews, this time trying to incorporate some of the suggestions made by readers.

This issue, I really should try to say something in this column about my editorial; I mentioned the "pulp standard" an awful lot there. Maybe I will, even.

Originally I had intended to simply review some of the pulp magazines I happen to read in this column. When I review anything, I try religiously to avoid plot summaries, except in cases where the plot was something unusually important. Also, in most cases when reviewing a book or paperback, there is no reason to go into any detail about a cover or illustrations; people can look at it themselves. But -- as some readers pointed out -- the goal of my pulp reviews aren't those of normal book reviews. I should also try to communicate some of the magic felt by the one time readers of the pulp magazine. This means that plot summaries and descriptions of the art work should be a part of what I try to cover.

This may be asking too much of my writing talent, I hope not. At any rate, I wish I had realized this more when handling some of the pulps I touched upon earlier.

Some of you requested that I branch out to other titles -- DOC SAVAGE, UNKNOWN, ASTOUNDING, and more, and older WEIRD TALES were mentied, among others. Okay, but give me time. I have to read them first. And in the mean time, I suggest you try Alva Roger's A REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING and Quentin Reynold's THE FICTION FACTORY (This one covers Street & Smith in general.)

FANTASTIC NOVELS March 1948, Vol 1, #6, edited by Mary Gnaedinger

This magazine, like it's big-sister, FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, was a reprint magazine. I can hardly say this without comparing FN to our 4 present day reprinters, Sol Cohon's AMAZING STORIES and FANTASTIC, and Robert A. W. Lowndes' MAGAZINE OF HORROR and STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES. If you read Cohon's magazines, you may, like me, be rather displeased with the whole affair. While happy to see these two magazines continue in any form, most of the stories aren't much good by modern standards. Most of them weren't any good when they were published. (I like old stories, don't misunderstand, I just don't see reprinting them unless they're good. I can read the poor ones in the old magazines, so can you, so can anyone crazy enough to read poor pulp stories. We don't need them





reprinted.)

The situation with Lowndes' magazines is quite different. Amazing and Fantastic reprint from their own past pages -- you know, the good old days, when Ray Palmer or Howard Brown or Paul Fairman edited the things -- glub. Oh, they published some fair stuff, but not much. (They published lots of Fairman stuff, which was quite something else again, and not good enough to be called fair by any means.) Lowndes is reprinting from any source which is economically feasible. Weird Tales, books, Strange Tales, other old magazines. He is reprinting very enjoyable fiction. He is publishing a good magazine, mainly because he is using good editorial judgment in picking stories from a very rich vein. I'm not too sure about Cohen's editorial judgment, and he certainly doesn't use a very rich vein of material.

In the case of FN and FFM, they had a very reprintable vein; lots of good stories. Their richest vein was the old Munsey magazines, with assists from books and a few other companies' magazines. They even published a few original stories, though they were never very important.

I've read a number of good stories reprinted from the Munsey Magazines. However, A. Merritt remains my favorite author from those publications, as must be the case for many other people. And THE SHIP OF ISTAR is my favorite Merritt novel.

The story begins when John Kenton receives a great block of stone found in the ruins of Babylon. Kenton splits the block, revealing a miniature ship within, which seemed to possess a strange life of its own. Watching it, Kenton slips into a coma and finds himself aboard a strange ship and participating in a strange struggle between good and evil. This indication of the plot line says nothing about the book. It says nothing about the mood of mysterious antiquity -- the frightening glimpses of awesome supernatural -- the high adventure.

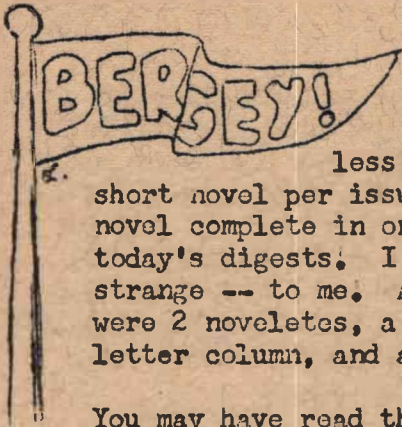
And now an apology: did the paragraph above sound slightly mawkish? Well, reading the book, I found it anything but "mawkish," it was beautiful. Subjectively, that is, I liked the book. If you haven't read the letter column yet, read my comments to Dave Darnap on page 17, please. Objectively, I think I'm going to have to admit that A. Merritt wrote books with silly plots and heavy handed style. My more critical readers may dislike his books for those reasons. Those of you able to read a story for enjoyment's sake, and able to overlook such flaws, may like this book almost as much as I do.

There is also a short story in this issue, "The Middle Room" by H. de Vere Stacpoole, reprinted from a 1919 Munsey Magazine. It is unusually good for a "filler," but, then, this was usually the case in FN and FFM.

One of the reasons FN and FFM is well remembered and well liked is the artwork. During its best period, Virgil Finlay and "Lawrence" (Lawrence Sterne Stevens) shared the duties. Finlay did four full page illustrations for THE SHIP OF ISTAR, plus another across the top of the first two pages of the story. Each is a masterpiece in terms of capturing the author's mood. Some people don't understand why I prefer collecting magazines to collecting books. Finlay is one good reason. <sup>25</sup> Lawrence is another, and here he did a full page for "The Middle Bedroom." Lawrence was immediately popular with fans, he used the style of almost everyone's favorite, Finlay. He remained popular because he was a good artist, and not only used Finlay's technique, but used it well, and added to it; made it his own. Not only that, he was a much better cover artist than Finlay.



STARTLING STORIES Nov. 1950, Vol 22, #2, edited by Sam Merwin, Jr.



Startling Stories differed from its sister magazine THRILLING WONDER STORIES in that it published more or less book length novels in each issue --TWS published only a short novel per issue, really only a novelete. The idea of a book length novel complete in one issue of a magazine may be alien to some readers of today's digests. I remember at first it seemed strange --rather, thrilling-strange -- to me. And, there was more. In this issue of Startling, there were 2 noveletes, a book review column, 3 short stories, an article, a letter column, and a fanzine review section. All this for a quarter. Sigh!

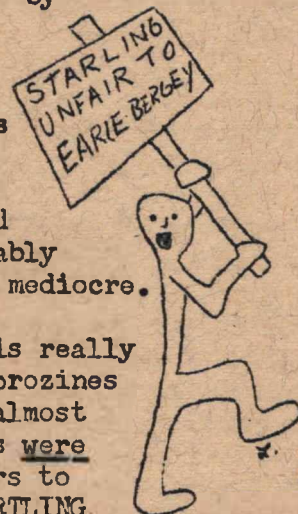
You may have read the novel in this issue, Jack Vance's THE FIVE GOLD BANDS (Ace, 1962) It's a potboiler. Hardly what you would expect from Jack Vance. I must have been in a bad mood when I read this, or something, as a result I seem to have ended up more objective than usual. The clumsy style and silly plot and cardboard characters simply would not blend into the usual enjoyable hodge-podge. I was quite disappointed when Ace published this novel. If I had been in a better mood, I might well have considered it above average 1950 space-opera, but that hardly makes it worthwhile publishing along side of THE DRAGON MASTERS.

"Pardon My Iron Nerves" by Edmond Hamilton is a Captain Future story starring Grag, a robot, and one of Curt Newton's (that's Captain Future's name, you know) Futuremen. The other Futuremen are Simon Wright (who is a human brain kept alive in "an artificial serum-case. . .") and Otho, who is an android. This novelete was published after they had apparently found Captain Future unable to sell enough copies of his own magazine. I suppose they might have been hoping to use what popularity he did have in selling STARTLING. The idea of a guy named Captain Future and a bunch of other guys called Futuremen running around the solar system fighting criminals, mad scientists and equally mad robots no doubt seems a bit dumb. Ed Hamilton, however, is one of our most entertaining writers, and he somehow manages to make the whole thing believable. I must have read this in the same mood as THE FIVE GOLD BANDS -- and I liked Hamilton's story better!

The other stories are "Tough Old Man" by L. Ron Hubbard (Hack-work, not as good as most of his Street & Smith stories, but not one of his poorest, and really slightly entertaining ), "Love my Robot" by Rog Phillips, "Road Back" by Robert Moore Williams and "Tall Tail" by Mack Reynolds.

The cover was typical Bergy, and if you happen to like Bergy, you might have liked it. I didn't. The good art this issue was by Orban, using a style similar to Finlay's. He may have used this technique because it was popular and the editor had asked him to; or perhaps because he liked it and wanted to use it, I don't know. At any rate, it was reasonably well done. Other artwork was done by Astorita and Poulton; mediocre.

I mentioned earlier that STARTLING had a letter column. This really deserves more mention than this. Today, letter columns in prozines are almost completely ignored by fans. Sometimes one could almost believe that the STARTLING-TWS-PLANET STORIES letter columns were fandom -- fans must have been almost too busy writing letters to those three magazines to do anything else. The typical STARTLING

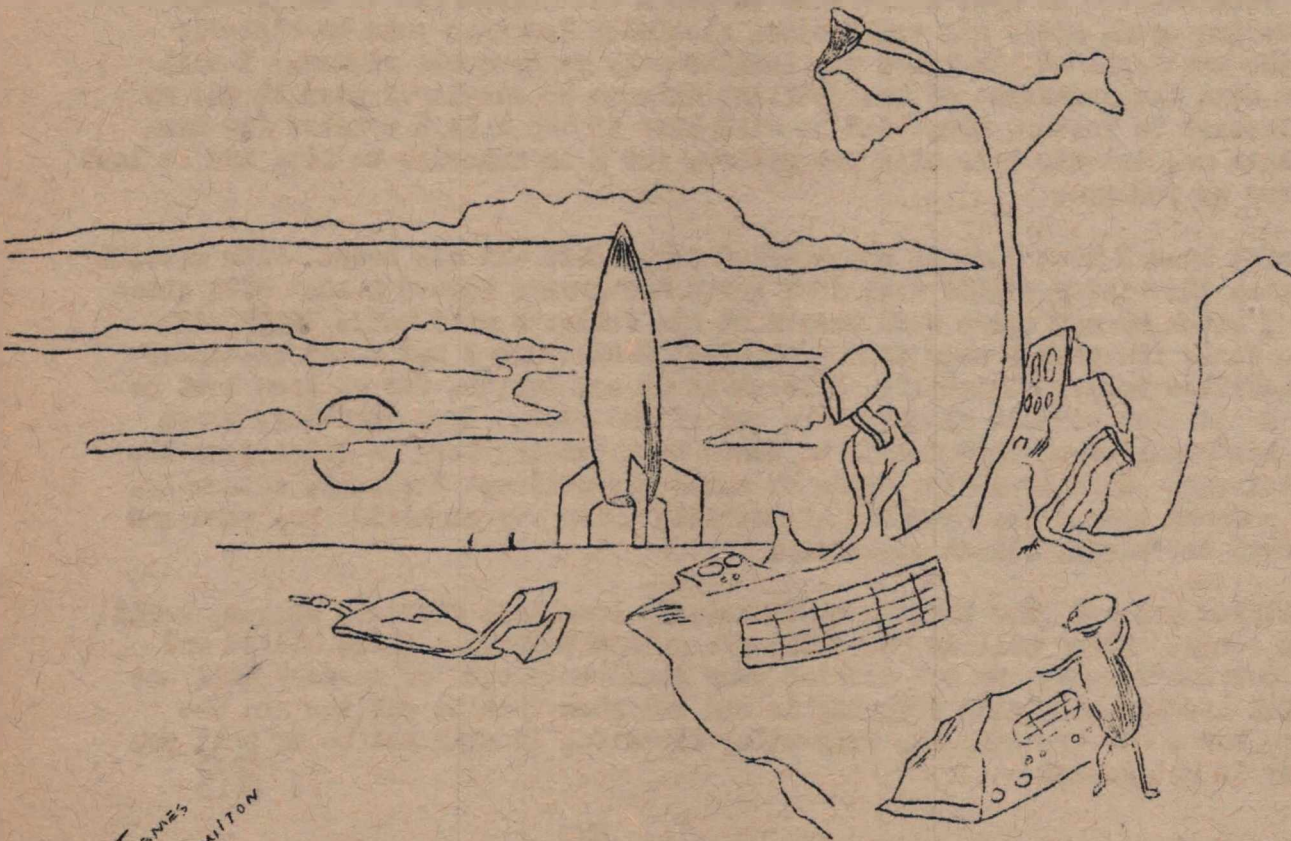




letter started out with comments directed at various readers who had appeared in last issue's column. Then, perhaps, the letter writer would make with some silly poetry. Then, finally, they would comment on the previous issue's fiction -- usually in terms never more specific than "it stunk!" or "Great!" Then the editor had his turn; and answered at length. It must have been great fun. And, oh yes, Bergey-blasting was a favorite sport in the letter column!

END

Robert Schoenfeld, of 9516 Minerva, Overland, Missouri 63114, wants me to mention that he is looking for copies of Xero #1-9. Contact him if you think you might want to sell him a copy or three!



JAMES  
HAMILTON



I hate him! I despise his avariciousness, his selfishness, the rabbit-like limidity he hides beneath a despotic exterior! I can still remember the glances of hating passion directed at me when at long last my body was cold and dead! But his dream of years of happy relief will soon be shattered. I, his dead wife, will torture him until his old, wrinkled, pain-wracked body dies from sheer agony. His will be no easy death. Much will be his terror and pain before his damnable soul rips itself away from his mortal body. And then all of his riches, jewels, and money, which he refused to lavish on me, will become my son's. My son will cherish his mother even more, and the black hate against his father which fills his heart

## LAST LAUGH

by Marsha Bise

will swell as he tastes for the first time the voluptuous pleasures his father forced him to abstain from. His smile will gleam wider and wider as the groans and screams torn from his father by his mother's ghost reach his ears. Then he will feel gratitude and love toward the one who bore him, as he realizes it was I who gave him his fortune.

The time had come. When my husband's flesh could for little longer stand my ceaseless torment, I rolled him out of his wheel chair. Painstakingly, I crushed every bone in his body, watching the red blood gush forth out of his mangled flesh, deliciously listening for every crack of fractured bone, every groan forced from those pale, bloodless lips which so often had shouted bitter invective epithets at me. Soon his loathsome soul will float up beside me. But I will shun it and spit on it as he did to me when both of us were human beings on the earth. He will have no mercy from me, and he will learn that it was I who killed him. I will, with never wavering eyes, study his expression, gleefully laughing when he bitterly surveys the spectacle of his hated son tumultuously wasting his riches. I will taunt him with the cowardice of the chilling unknown he displayed when it was my morbid pleasure to torture him. And he will live in the hell I created for him. He will hate me, but his hate will not matter, for I am superior to him, and at last I will have my revenge.

With gleeful eyes I look down at the mangled pulp which was his body. With gleeful eyes I watch the rising of his soul from earth heavenward toward mine. With gleeful eyes I watch my son stare with horror at his father's dead body, laugh with joy as he feels the riches pour down upon him. Behind him I see a servant enter the death-filled room. Maniacally, I laugh as my son laughs, for at long last he is dead, dead! The servant slowly backs out of the room. Eyes shifting, chest heaving, his pupils rool from father to son. With running feet he flies down the marble stairway. With trembling hands he calls the police. Suddenly, awesomely, the full portent seizes me. Shrieks of sadistic mirth scream beside me, echo and echo through the black, silent emptiness.

"So you killed me, ay? You thought my riches, my beautiful glorious riches, would become my son's. Never will it be! Will the police believe a ghost killed me? Will the servant's testimony not convict your loathesome son of murder? Will not his gleeful laughs, his hands dripping in red not show that he was the one who crushed my bones one by one? Ah, ugly wife, fishwife, it will not be my hell you will glory in but yours!









REG  
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