

The Year of the Sheep



Tightbeam

SEPTEMBER, 1979

Colin

TIGHTBEAM

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front cover by Anji Valenza

back cover courtesy of Andy Andruschak

N3F President: Irvin Koch, 1870 Dresden Dr. NE B9, Atlanta, GA 30319
N3F Sec'y/Treas: Janie Lamb, Rte 2, Box 272, Heiskill, TN 37754
N3F Directorate: Joanne Burger, 55 Blue Bonnet Ct., Lake Jackson, TX---Chairman
Andy Andruschak, 6933 N. Rosemead, #31, San Gabriel, CA 91775
Judy Gerjuoy, F7, 900 Kirkwood Hwy, Newark, DE 19711
Lynne Holdom, P.O. Box 5, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442
Mike Lowrey, 828 N. Milwaukee #3, Milwaukee, WI 53202

Art Credits--

Laurel Beckley pgs 9, 15
Fred Jackson III pgs 5, 22, 27
Michael Rodan pgs 4, 18, 19,
Anji Valenza pgs 20, 25, 29

editorial

By Lynne Holdom

Well, here it is September already and time for another issue of TIGHTBEAM. This issue is somewhat different as Pat edited a lot of it while I was vacationing in England and Scotland. It rained a lot there but Pat tells me it rained a lot here as well. I do know that tropical storm David did in our willow tree as well as the pine tree across the street. We now have plenty of firewood. If we only had a fireplace.

For the first time I actually had more letters to print than got into this issue. Actually the entire letter section was completed by the end of August. Some of the extra letters will be in the November issue. I also would have cut Chris Martin's letter a bit as I only like to have one controversy per issue.

I suppose most of you got Donald Franson's campaign platform. In it he pledged to make TIGHTBEAM a letterzine without any articles or reviews etc. What do you think about this? Do you like the material other than letters? If so, send a postcard to Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave, North Hollywood, CA 91606. Let me know as well. I do know that if I am going to have someone standing over my shoulder telling me what I can or cannot print, I do not want to edit a zine. Otherwise I am planning to continue editing TIGHTBEAM after the end of this year.

I am not running for the Directorate this year. I'll let someone else have the headache. However Andy Andruschak worked very hard this year and deserves reelection. Joanne Burger did a good job too. All the members of the 78 Directorate worked hard as well, not like this year where we had one deadbeat, Judy, and one person who could sometimes be bothered to write, Mike. Judging from his other activities, Greg Hills would make a good Director.

I liked travelling in England and Scotland even if it did rain most of the time. I also learned to appreciate how cheep things are over here. Honest. I saw that the price of gasoline was 1.15 pounds and a pound is worth \$2.28. You figure it out. That was a self service station also.

I also found out that the whole town of Malton closes down on Thursdays. Because of this, I didn't get any photos of the area though I did get a photo of Roger Waddington who we met there. So I had to get more film in York the next day (I have a number of photos of York.) I also sent a lot of the books I got here from York. Needless to say, they haven't arrived yet. Either I did not see the famed Yorkshire moors, or they are nothing like what you see in films like JANE EYRE. Instead there is a lot of rolling countryside rather like southeastern Pennsylvania.

I spent most of the time travelling about Scotland and saw the lowlands, the highlands, and the islands -- well, one island, Skye. I had venison for the first time there and it was quite good. Skye was about the only place with low prices. Eva Chalker Whitley said that the food on the ferry from Armadale to Mallaig was the worst she'd ever had. Perhaps it's just as well I didn't have any. It was rather rough when I crossed and it was raining (which was usual.)

I didn't see much of Brighton. I rarely ever see much of a city where a con is held so that was about normal. The person who claimed you can see France from Brighton on a clear day was wrong though I must admit we didn't get any really clear weather. I also didn't see much of the programming except a panel on which way SF. There were no definite answers. A lot of us ate at a restaurant which had a dog that came and begged at the table. I wonder what the Board of Health would say?

I guess that's all for this time. I hope to have a true trip report next issue. I got a bad cold right after I got home which made me rather out of things for a while. However I do hope to get caught up with things soon.

alien

reviewed by Perry Glen Moore

To terrify: inf; to fill with intense fear; a side effect of viewing ALIEN.

ALIEN is perhaps the ultimate in science fiction, horror, and/or monster movies. Expect this movie to terrify you, to scare you out of your wits. If it doesn't, then it's failed.

ALIEN, a Donald Shusett production, is superbly directed by Ridley Scott. It centers around a small cast of seven, the seven "astronauts" or crewmen of the space tug Nostromo.

Briefly (I'm not going to say much in the area of plot summary, as saying anything is too much with this movie), the crew is awakened on their return to Earth by the ship's computer (called Mother) to investigate an unknown radio message.

On the planetoid where the message originated, a strange being, the alien, gets aboard the Nostromo. From that point on, the crew struggles to destroy the alien with one notable exception.

Not all of the crew survive, though. In the end, the refinery on the tug is blown up with the "survivors" supposedly escaping in a small shuttle. Eventually, those still living go back into "hibernation" and return to Earth.

But what makes this movie tick? Seven actors (rather five actors and two actresses) all turn in credible performances. Three roles are especially memorable: Yaphet Kotto, who, as Parker, turns in one of the better supporting roles that I have ever seen, in a style reminiscent of Rosey Greer; Ian Holm, who, as the science officer Ash, portrays a very different and surprising character; and Sigourney Weaver, who, as Ripley, turns in the role of "chief" alien fighter.

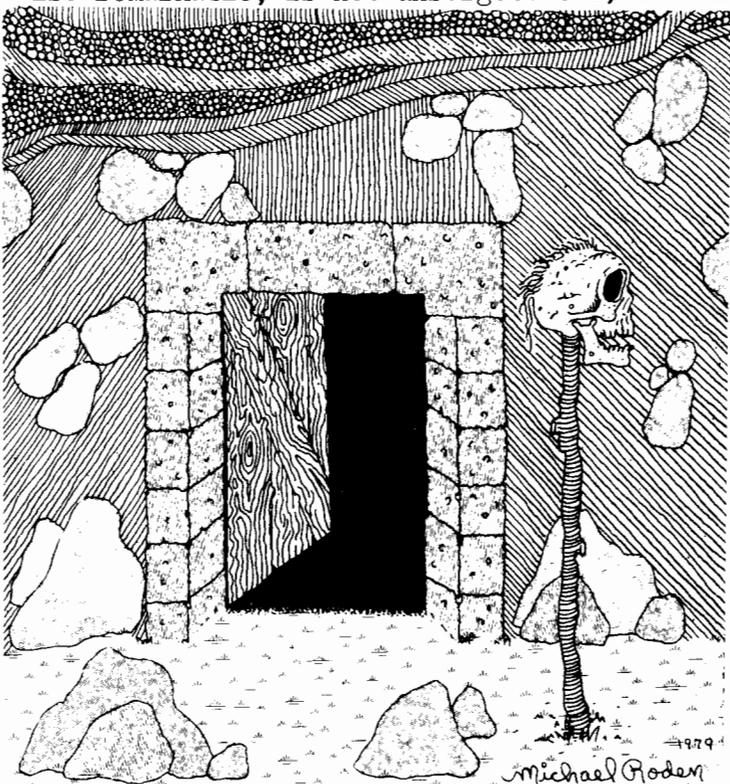
The other four, Tom Skerritt, Veronica Cartwright, Harry Dean Stanton, and John Hurt, all add to this movie's success. It's the first science fiction movie in a long time to have some decent to excellent acting in it, unlike STAR WARS or CLOSE ENCOUNTERS. Last of all, I might mention the cat, Jones. Pay very special attention to this cat!

Also remarkable, if not unforgettable, are the aliens seen in this movie. If you thought STAR TREK was mild or STAR WARS wild, wait till you see ALIEN's aliens. Although it does lack the highly successful and funny alien scenes from STAR WARS (the cantina), ALIEN does have the most memorable alien encounter scene that I have ever seen. One reviewer calls this scene "the most repulsive that I have ever seen in my life." This one scene will feed for ages on those who are queasy or prone to nightmares.

And, you may have noticed, why hasn't he told us which scene he's talking about? There's no need to do so -- you'll know it when it comes. (And I thought nothing could top THE EXORCIST.) This scene and one other are the reasons why ALIEN is deservedly rated "R".

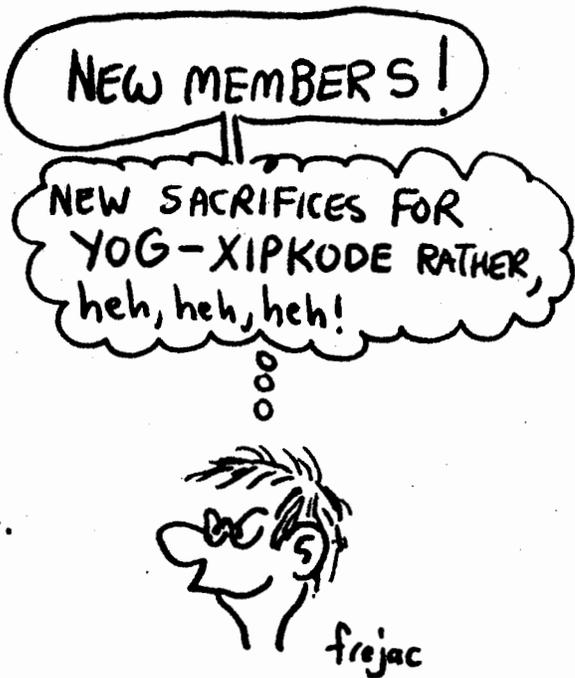
ALIEN is also memorable for several other factors. It has a pretty good sound track, although it lacks the majesty that John Williams gave JAWS, STAR WARS, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS and SUPERMAN. The camera work for ALIEN is superb, and Scott's job of

(cont on page 7)



new members

- Dr. Wilfred E. Beaver
418 E. Main St
Sparta, WI 54656
A writer from the old days of AMAZING and WONDER stories. Writes interesting letters. Inst corres.
- Lisa Ellen Cowan
P.O. Box 5276
Orange, CA 92667
BD: 10-23-52. Writer and mother. Inst writing, art corres, books fanzines. Will write or do art for zines.
- Bob and Mary Draper
10292 Westminster Ave
Garden Grove, CA 92643
BD: 1942. Editors and producers, book dealers, publishers. Is preserving history of SF on tape.
- Brigitta Henry
812 Forest Ave., Apt 2
South Bend, IN 46616
BD: 5-2-51. Photo processor. Inst writing, doing art, fanzines cons pubbing. Fav authors: Ellison, Leiber.
- Harry A. Hopkins
P.O. Box 873
Langley AFB, VA 23665
BD: 7-3-51. USAF officer. Inst pubbing, fanzines, computer games, cons. Active 17 years. Pubs fanzine directory.
- Peter S. Peters
P.O. Box 752
Houlton, ME 04730
No known birthday. He has written a book entitled "Quantum Jump" about UFOs. Saw ad in Fan Fare and in Oct "Fantastic."
- Jeff Siegel
11612 Kling St
North Hollywood, CA 91602
BD: 11-21-61. Computer Tech in the Air Force. Inst apas, films, corres, fanzines. Has mimeo, typer. Fav authors: Niven, Heinlein.
- Victoria Smith
4500 Pohick Lane Bldg 4 Apt 205
Fairfax, VA 22030
BD: 5-31-58. Student. Inst: fanzines, corres, Round Robins. Head of Gar Hold and Darriel Council. Fav authors: McCaffrey, Bradley, Clarke.
- Sharon L. Stefaniuk
341 Lowell Ave
San Bruno, CA 94066
No known birthday. Actually she didn't give any info about herself but did ask about JUMEAUX so might be a Darkover fan.
- Sherilynn Thagard
9880 Stonehurst
Sun Valley, CA 91352
BD: 6-2-50. Acct Clerk. Inst writing, collects books. Member of the Academy of SF. Will be active. Has typer, photo copier. Ist SF 10 years. Reads "Star Log."
- William West
58 Walnut St
Abington, MA 02357
BD: 8-20-48. Inst writing, reviewing, corres, Round Robins. Has typer, cassette, Member Friends of Darkover. Has BA in history. Was in N3F ages ago. Wants to get in RRs and corres.
- Jay S. Wilkinson
5000 Butte., #278
Boulder, CO 80301
BD: 12-25-36. Teacher. Inst writing, corres, editing, pubbing, collects books, fanzines. Will do club work. Never active in fandom. Fav authors: Norton, McCaffrey, Tolkien.
- New Members with no info: Clinton R. Hyde
4020 E. Roanoke
Blacksburg, VA 24060
- Ben A. Riley
1016 Belmont St
Ashland, KY 41101



COAs--

- William Goodson, 9209 Providence Rd., Matthews, NC 28105
Mitchell Hollander, 11 Oakland Park, Medford, MA 02155
Sally A. Syrjala, P.O. Box 149, Centerville, MA 02632

the hugo winners

1,160 valid ballot forms were received by the closing date: July 31, 1979
The winners and runners-up were as follows.

BEST NOVEL

Winner: DREAMSNAKE by Vonda McIntyre
2nd: THE WHITE DRAGON by Anne McCaffrey
3rd: THE FADED SUN: KESRITH by C.J. Cherryh

(Note: UP THE WALLS OF THE WORLD by James Tiptree, Jr. was withdrawn after the ballot forms had been sent out)

BEST NOVELLA

Winner: "The Persistence of Vision" by John Varley
2nd: "Fireship" by Joan D. Vinge
3rd: "The Watched" by Christopher Priest

BEST NOVELLETTE

Winner: "Hunter's Moon" by Poul Anderson
2nd: "Mikal's Songbird" by Orson Scott Card
3rd: "The Man Who Had No Idea" by Thomas N. Disch

BEST SHORT STORY

Winner: "Cassandra" by C.J. Cherryh
2nd: "Count the Clock that Tells the Time" by Harlan Ellison
3rd: "View From a Height" by Joan D. Vinge

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD FOR BEST NEW WRITER

Winner: Stephen R. Donaldson
2nd: James P. Hogan
3rd: Elizabeth A. Lynn

GANDALF GRAND MASTER OF FANTASY AWARD

Winner: Ursula K. LeGuin
2nd: Roger Zelazny
3rd: Ray Bradbury

FIRST FANDOM AWARD

(Presented by First Fandom)

Raymond Z. Gallun

BIG HEART AWARD

(Presented by Forrest J. Ackerman)

M. Georges H. Gallet

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If you voted and were a pre-supporting member of Denver in 81 --- \$4.00

If you voted but were not a Denver pre-supporting member --- \$5.00

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

Winner: SUPERMAN
2nd: HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY
3rd: WATERSHIP DOWN

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

Winner: Ben Bova
2nd: Edward L. Ferman
3rd: George Scithers

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

Winner: Vincent diFate
2nd: Michael Whelan
3rd: Boris Vallejo

BEST FANZINE

Winner: SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW by Dick Geis
2nd: MAYA by Rob Jackson
3rd: NO AWARD

BEST FAN WRITER

Winner: Bob Shaw
2nd: Richard E. Geis
3rd: NO AWARD

BEST FAN ARTIST

Winner: Bill Rotsler
2nd: Jim Barker
3rd: Alex Gilliland

GANDALF AWARD FOR BEST BOOK LENGTH FANTASY

Winner: THE WHITE DRAGON by Anne McCaffrey
2nd: THE COURTS OF CHAOS by Roger Zelazny
3rd: SAINT CAMBER by Katherine Kurtz

(Note: Michael Moorcock withdrew his name and his novel, GLORIANA, from consideration for the Gandalf Awards after the ballot forms had been printed.)

SITE SELECTION:

Winner: Denver
2nd: Seattle
3rd: Los Angeles

OTHERS --- \$15.00 -- until Jan 1, 1980

Write to: Denvention II, P.O. Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211

ALIEN (con't from page 4)

directing is the best I've seen since Kubrick's 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. The special effects (if you don't include the various aliens) are enjoyable, although no original effects are seen in the movie. Many of the scenes remind one of the classic 2001 or the fairly well-known SILENT RUNNING.

All in all, ALIEN is a very, very good movie. Of those with me at a special premier showing, one said that it was just about the best ever, and another said simply, "Not bad, not bad at all!" For myself, ALIEN is certainly better than CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, although I hesitate to say whether it's better than STAR WARS, as the two are totally different types of science fiction movies. It is better than 2001, and that is an accomplishment that has taken eleven years for a movie to do!

ALIEN is the scariest movie that I have ever seen. Hands down with no competition. From the minute it starts until some time after it is over, ALIEN holds you in suspense, in complete terror. You never know what's going to happen next -- when you think something is, it won't; and when you're not expecting something to happen, it will.

ALIEN is a movie not to miss. Whether it will top STAR WARS at the box office remains to be seen, although that is highly unlikely with an "R" rating. Like STAR WARS, I plan to see ALIEN again. After all, on the ultimate trip in space, no one can hear you scream.

there's a revolution going on

By Chris Martin

There's a revolution going on out there. Most people don't know it. It's not a revolution with guns and slogans. There are no governments being overthrown, though there are profound political implications.

The revolution is in the way we handle, store and organize information. Handling information. Not a glamorous phrase, but that doesn't stop it from being shorthand for major changes in our lives.

The revolution is in computer technology -- transistors, semiconductors and chips that allow us to store more and more information in smaller and cheaper units.

At the risk of being dogmatic, I'll say there have been three previous revolutions in the way man handled information.

The first was in man's head -- the organic computer, the brain. It allowed the storage of information on hunting and agriculture. The end result was a shift from a subsistence lifestyle to one a lot less dirty and dangerous.

The second revolution came with the invention of writing. Information that previously had been passed laborously from mouth to mouth could be engraved permanently in stone, wood, clay or paper.

It was not subject to the ravages of memory. It made possible precise record keeping for business and government -- a mixed blessing, some contend.

The third revolution was in the invention of movable type -- printing -- and with that, cheap books and information. Out went the monks with pens scratching out copies of books. In came the craftsman and his apprentices.

Reading became more and more available to everyone, not just the aristocracy. It's not a coincidence that with the spread of printing came the rise of the middle class, the dethroning of kings and the advent of democracy in Europe and the Americas.

Now, another change is upon us. We may not be aware of it as much as we should because it is everywhere. Computer technology plays an important role in everything from manufacturing to printing.

Like the air we breathe, it will become so much a part of us that it may not appear to be there. The threads are everywhere. We just need to pick them up and gather them together to study the implications.

Electronic hand calculators that used to cost \$100 are now selling at \$10. Mass marketing and the new technology has brought the cost down and made the slide rule obsolete. You can buy a digital watch with light emitting diodes for under \$10.

Radio Shack is the first on the mass computer market with a home computer retailing for \$600. The price will probably drop as the market becomes competitive and mass marketing economics come into play. The market won't really take off until more accessories become available. Right now, there really aren't that many things the average person would want to do with a small computer.

You could calculate diets and calories, index recipes, make out a budget, keep track of your Christmas card list, etc. But whether you want to spend \$600 when a 60¢ notebook and a small calculator are sufficient is a big question.

The home computer market will boom with the advent of telephone tie-ins, banking by phone, economical teleprinters, inexpensive programs for computer games, and other accessories.

As computers become more and more important, the need for paper records will become less and less. It may be possible that all money transactions will be handled electronically. Instead of a checkbook, all you will need is access to a code number.

There's a variation of this already in the Washington DC area with the Metro subway. You buy a card with a certain number of rides on the card. Each time you enter the system, a machine subtracts a ride.

The combination of video and computer technology may lead to a decentralization never before possible in business and industry. It may make it easy to work at home instead of at the office or factory. Shopping through television may become common as the cost of energy for transportation becomes more and more expensive. The post office may gradually become obsolescent. Letters would go over the wires through computers and typewriters rather than through the mails.

Police departments are already using machines which send copies of warrants by telephone. A similar device is widely used by newspapers to move photographs and copy from outlying bureaus to the central office.

Such machines are still expensive (\$1,200 and up). But mass production economics and new technology could result in a more reasonable price. Variations on this could result in an electronic newspaper. Hooked into a cable television system, the newspaper of the future could free itself of a dependence on bulky presses and cumbersome distribution systems.

As great as the potential for benefit is the potential for abuse. A recent Associated Press story said that H&W computers "holding sensitive information on millions of Americans don't come close to minimum standards for protecting that information from authorized disclosure and use." A scenario where Big Brother keeps tabs on everyone through the widespread use of computers can be envisioned. Computers that monitor everything from telephone conversations to gun registrations could be used to stifle dissent.

Computers could take over more and more jobs performed by people. Less and less jobs with more and more people could be an explosive situation.

Technology has always been a two-edged sword. In the case of computers, it could promote a decentralization that could do for people's heads what cars did for people's feet. Or it could be the instrument of a regiminated tyranny that could make 1984 look like a kindergarden.

"Something's happening and you don't know what it is, do you, Mr Jones?" In this case, all of us are in the same boat with Mr. Jones.

Dancers in the Afterglow

By Jack Chalker

reviewed by Sally Syrjala

DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW is the first book I have read by Jack Chalker, but it certainly shall not be the last.

The premise used to get to the core material is that of an interstellar war between humanity and a nonhuman life form -- the Machists. The nonhuman entities have swallowed up various civilizations by force, making them adhere to the only acceptable life style -- theirs. The purpose of the Machists is to absorb all life forms into their way. It does not matter if those life forms want to be absorbed or not. The aliens know the system they have evolved is the only way for all. Therefore, it is to be forced on all.

The planet Ondine is the focus point of the novel. It is a resort planet which comes under attack by the Machists. The planet becomes militarily untenable and is left, along with its 16 million inhabitants, to the force of the enemy. This planet is light years away from the nearest human settlement and sixteen million is considered a relatively low number of people to be sacrificed, statistically speaking.

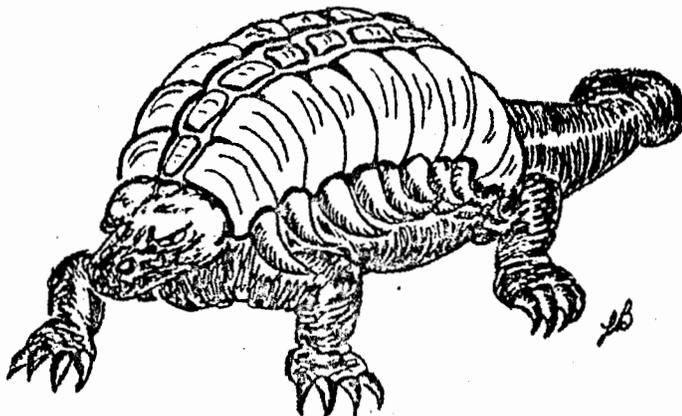
The Machists know how to conquer. They come onto a planet in force. They make the people lose all hope of escape by making a great show of blowing up the escape routes -- the spaceports. Then the people are force marched out of the cities into the countryside. Those who are troublesome and show signs of rebellion are eliminated as a object lesson to the others.

When the march ends, the people are forced to eke out a rudimentary living from the land. They are stripped of all they brought with them. Symbolically their clothes are stripped, leaving the outside bared, as well as the inside. All forms of dignity and self-esteem are gradually destroyed. When the ego is at its lowest possible ebb, the psychological retraining can commence. The manner in which the people are used to show how their past system exploited them reminds one all too much, not only of POW techniques, but also of religious cult methods.

It also reminds one of how certain large companies seek to take over their employees in many like ways. It is deemed that the company personality should be attained. Company policies are fed the employee and those policies must be learned. To question is to be disloyal. Company functions are also established so even nonworking hours can be monitored. There is no time left for the self. No time to think and question whether the style and policy is one that is conducive to the individual.

In all cases, the self, the individual, is considered something to be done away with for the common good. All must stagnate together so that no radical will break from the ranks to create problems for the system. Incentive is lost. The self ceases to exist and a mindless creation is that which is the result. It does the necessary work. It is reasonably happy. At least it is not consciously unhappy. It asks no questions and does not try to change things. From the words in the beginning of the novel, what is created are "shadows that move and flow as a single organism." There is no substance, only shadow.

The one destined to "save" the planet is named Daniel. He is the one the forces of humanity send in to help the planet liberate itself. His choice is ironic in that he is not altogether human. He is rather a step between humanity and the Machists. I rather



liked the choice of his name. It brings to mind the song, "Daniel, my Brother." Indeed, Daniel is brother to all -- humanity and nonhumanity.

It is pointed out the reason the Machists are granted the time to secure the minds of the people is the fact, under Daniel's control, all effective resistance is stopped. Instead of running small raids on camps, the groups are training for an organized attack -- an attack that proves to be a senseless slaughter. The Machists have their objective -- the minds of the people. They are ready to pull out. Also and order comes, after the fact, not to destroy the launching pads.

It is at this point that the character of the Machists is revealed. They are shown to be basically mechanical units -- minds hooked into a machine. Minds that have not held onto their original character, but have been blended into one unit. There is no individual, only the single unit. This culture finds its reason for existing in absorbing/programming new units/civilizations into their system.

Daniel, in the lion's den, is given a choice of joining these creatures, as he is also a mind wedded to a machine. However the price is loss of self into a single unit with the others. Daniel has formed an attachment with one of the people he led into the attack on the spaceport. She is used as bait for him. The conflicts revealed in the conversation between him and the Machists reveal some of the major points of difference.

The combined forces of humanity manage to retake the land mass of the planet, but not the people. They are changed. They will never be what they once were. However, they will also not be what the Machists had originally intended they be either. Changes will be brought into their lives and those lives will be altered once again by the changes.

Here an interesting comparison with Red China can be drawn. For years the Chinese people were kept isolated to maintain their way of life. Now strangers/foreigners are being allowed inside the country. They are bringing with them new ideas and ways not previously encountered by these peoples. People interact with other people. That interaction is bound to bring about change and growth. Just as it is interesting to contemplate how the population of Ondine will react to its second conditioning, it is also interesting to speculate upon the changes that might transpire in Red China. There are like circumstances in both cases.

This book is one of self-determination and individualism. It shows how a complete loss of self can result in a form of death, a form of non-being. This is an excellent book and one I highly recommend.

DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW by Jack Chalker

Del Rey Aug 78 \$1.75

* * * * *

BORN to exile

By Phyllis Eisenstein

reviewed by A. D. Wallace

QUESTION: How does one go about composing a story in which the otherwise human protagonist is given transhuman capabilities? (Here Alaric is not of the heroic type, though a pleasant and talented person.) Eisenstein fails to give a satisfactory response to the query. Alaric has the faculty of teleporting himself from where he is to any place where he has been, instantaneously. No other preternatural gifts are accorded him. Since many, if not most, fantasies are a jumble of unnatural, miraculous rubble, one should be grateful for Eisenstein's economy.

It is fair to say, I believe, that there are no personae, only blurred identity tags.

Alaric exudes only mildly aggressive humility or stolid determination, moving linearly with episodic lateral arabesques, rarely by choice getting deep into a problem zone. His journey becomes a father-quest, but subordinate to the desire to someday marry Princess Solinde. He sings and plays his way through the book (which is, at best, too loose in the joints) carrying a sword but not using it. Perhaps the only other character worth mentioning is Mizella, the stock whore-with-the-heart-of-gold, who returns to her profession when she learns that Alaric enjoys, but does not love, her. "Having sex" and "making love" are apparently not sufficient for her, and she yearns for better things, even with lesser men.

It seems to me that a defect in the story is the lack of a recognizable prose style, this being a binding element that makes a tale cohere. There is a vast spectrum from Vance's exuberant chromaticism to LeGuin's appealing, compelling simplicity, from which an author could select an appropriate linguistic style. But apart from this lack of organic unity, the author does not write a good picture, because, I feel, she has insufficient command of the argot, jargon, lingo of the subgenre. The impression emerges that the book is anachronistic rather than archaic. In a quite different vein, there is no comedic intrusion (except for the jester quite early) and the resolution is vapid.

No doubt Eisenstein has a clientele, a following, toward whom she directs, in part, her books. This is natural and reasonable. Not being, as yet, of this ilk, but merely an eclectic reader, I venture the suggestion that she pay more attention to basics -- of which style and characterization are essential components. The notion of a teleportive minstrel is, so far as I am concerned, a device, a conceit.

BORN TO EXILE by Phyllis Eisenstein

\$8.95

DREAMSNAKE

by Vonda N. McIntyre

reviewed by Mary Frey

Reptiles are not something with which I have ever felt very comfortable. Given the chance, I will gladly by-pass any snake house in any zoo and abandon work in the garden upon seeing anything slither nearby. However after reading DREAMSNAKE I am willing to at least grant tolerance to the scaly ones.

The protagonist, named Snake because of her profession, has the same kind of relationship with her partners in healing that other fictional characters have had with dragons, cats, Wookies, etc. Because Ms McIntyre has portrayed Snake so well, I am willing to admit that such partnerships might very well be possible.

But the real beauty of this novel is not in the spiritual kinship of healer and her snakes, but in the infinite care and beauty with which their world is described. There is a rhythm of life in this culture which the reader can almost immediately become a part of. Snake's sense of frustration at the prejudices of others can be keenly felt and shared. By the end of the first few pages, the reader is utterly convinced that this woman is right and that somehow she must win.

Snake is not the only unforgettable character in this book. The gem miners in the desert and their plight grips you ferociously. Jesse's death is unavoidable, but truly tragic and noble in its horror. Melissa's life until she meets Snake is genuinely pitiful, and you have to feel overjoyed that she is taken away from her mountain home.

Admittedly, some characters were not so finely portrayed. Despite the fact that Arevin is Snake's one true love, I never really felt I got to know him. The ultimate villain, North, seemed rather static too. Gabriel, an outcast forced to stay with his family for a ridiculous "sex crime", seemed rather forced.

The novel itself deals with three young girls who have recently graduated from high school and are still fairly innocent in the ways of the world however much they may pretend to themselves and others that the opposite is true. The three go see the Wonder Show and their lives change through interaction with the Show personnel. The ways in which they change are predetermined by the sort of people they are. Each attracts precisely that which will accentuate her basic personality. For one, it leads down into the darkness; for another passion and for the third adding a whole new dimension to life.

I will also state that I found Haverstock, distasteful as he is, a much more realistic result of the problem of being a psi-gifted man in a world where most were mind blind. Reamy shows us his incredible loneliness very well, as well as the megalomania it has led to. Thus Haverstock loves Angel who is the only other of his kind he has yet found, but will not hesitate to kill him if he becomes a threat. He has lived with the fear of being called "witch" much too long and all the empathy he might have had has been boiled out of him.

The novel deals much more with psychological change than with fast action. The plot line is simple but the book is not. It raises some exceedingly complex questions for which we, as a society, do not as yet have any answers. It is sad to think that this will be the only novel ever from Tom Reamy. It truly deserves its Hugo nomination.

Read it.

BLIND VOICES by Tom Reamy Berkley, August 1979 \$1.95
* * * * *

a heritage of stars

by Clifford D. Simak

reviewed by John DiPrete

The Grand Master of science fiction seems to have a bone to pick with technology. The many novels of Clifford D. Simak (from the early 1930s to the present) fall mostly into the "wilderness vs. the city" category. Normally his protagonists are country-bred, peace-loving, and just plain, ordinary folk -- devoted to a simple life in the country. Many of Simak's stories delve into the degeneration, destruction, and gradual break-down now occurring in major cities. He tells of a return to simpler modes of existence.

Most clearly this can be seen in CITY (his classic winner of the International Fantasy Award), as well as minor works such as A CHOICE OF GODS and, to a lesser extent, RING AROUND THE SUN and ALL FLESH IS GRASS. The vividness and reverence in Simak's "nature" writing seem to reveal a quiet dislike for urban surroundings.

This is repeated in A HERITAGE OF STARS -- Simak's newest work. Unsurprisingly this novel tells of the break down of cities and the reemergence of simpler modes of life. The setting, in this case, is a college campus; the latter a repository for lost survival and learning skills. In effect, it is a last vestige "holdout" for civilization.

Common Simak story elements are all here: a slow, restive pace; well-defined characters; fine evocations of mood, setting, and atmosphere; a wonderful sense of tradition.

For its high level of entertainment, it's definitely recommended for SF fans of all ages.

A HERITAGE OF STARS by Clifford D. Simak Berkley, 1978 \$1.75.
* * * * *

Clifford D. Simak is one of the GoH's at Denvention II in 1981.

titan

By John Varley

reviewed by Dennis Jarog

DSV Ringmaster with its captain, Cirocco Jones approached the Saturnian system with the intent of exploration. They discovered that there was a satellite, Themis, which could only be artificial due to its configuration. They arrived at the moon; it swallowed them and set them on a journey through a myriad of lush forest, desert ---meeting with several sentient life forms and on the way meeting the Goddess, Ghea, master of the moon and akin to many others like her throughout the universe.

Upon awakening by herself, Jones acquainted herself with her surroundings and quickly made contact with some of her crew. She met the Titanides, locked in battle with the angels, acquired Whistlestop, a floater, and reached the decision to seek Ghea whom she knew dwelt in the center of the torus. After a long a perilous journey, she met the maker of this world and came away with the strangest of all jobs.

This book, TITAN, was the first thing I have read by Varley and I enjoyed it immensely. The author began with a couple of ideas that are common stock -- an artificial satellite in orbit in the solar system, with a wildly distinctive ecosystem. But then Varley moves on to create his story and does a marvelous job at it. His sentences are crafted beautifully, are a joy to encounter, and starkly unique yet real at the same time.

The Goddess Ghea is one of the most delightful goddesses I have ever read about. Typically such are stunningly beautiful with a body to move the most callous, prancing about in a sumptuous garden setting with legions of devoted servants. Varley gives us Ghea, a matron well on in years who would not be out of place in Victorian England. She is a school marm or the sort who inhabits the offices of plastic surgeons, looking for a new lease on life. Here we have a goddess who has fallen on hard times and possibly has fallen arches as well -- a real goddess if I ever read of one.

And in how many novels does the protagonist leave the novel with a pay increase, and a really different sort of job?

TITAN by John Varley is a wild novel, a unique combination of SF and allusions to older myths. I recommend it very highly.

TITAN by John Varley

* * * * *

THE SECRET SEA by Thomas F. Monteleone (a quick review by Lynne Holdom)

Lately authors seem to be milking the classics for plot ideas. I recently read MORLOCK NIGHT and now this. And how much recent SF borrows from Arthurian legend?

THE SECRET SEA mines several of the works of Jules Verne. Bryan Alexander, while exploring his aunt's old house in Vermont, comes across a manuscript that hints that Verne may have gotten all his plot ideas from a visitor from a parallel world --- and one where time moves much more slowly. Therefore he gets the idea that he can meet Captain Nemo if he can only get to the right gate. He succeeds in meeting not only Captain Nemo but Robor the Conquerer and his great uncle who disappeared mysteriously. The novel has all sorts of allusions to just about every Verne novel published in English and is a lot of fun to read if you don't insist on taking it too seriously.

THE SECRET SEA by Thomas F. Monteleone

Popular Library 1979 \$1.75

LETTERS

R. Laurraine Tutihasi
1217 Majestic Way
Webster, NY 14580

To answer James J. Wilson, although I'm not a new member of N3F, Harlan Ellison happens to be my number one favourite author, not just among SF writers but among all authors. However, I don't vote for a work just because he's written it.

He also happens to be my number one pro favourite SF personality, but that's a different question. I think Fritz Leiber is a good writer aside from his sword and sorcery stuff.

As for Sally Syrjala's question about "Battlestar Galactica," if the atomic warheads were completely vapourised by the lasers, there would be no radioactivity or debris.

What really prompted me to start this letter was Sharron Albert's question about I, ROBOT. Harlan Ellison was, not surprisingly, dismissed from the project, probably after one too many arguments. Someone else, whose name I have forgotten, is rewriting Harlan's screenplay. All we can do is hope for the best.

To Linda Frankel, maybe Chris Martin is taking lessons from Harlan.

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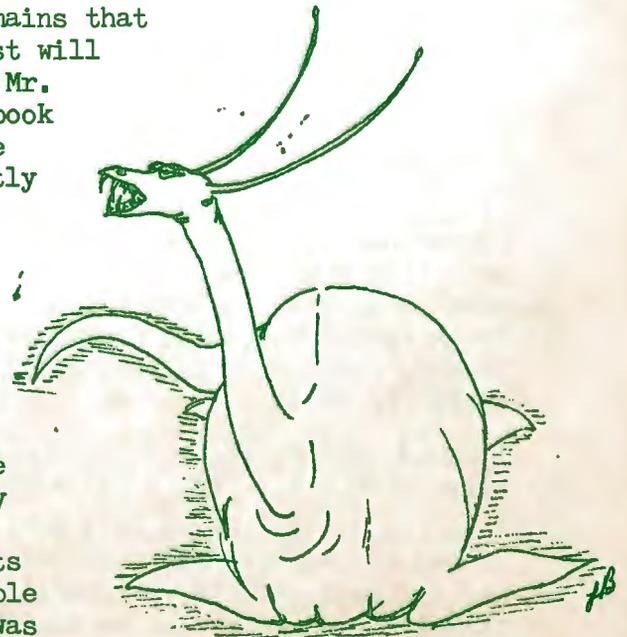
Paula Crunk
1359 Deanna
Cottage Hills,
IL 62018

Elaine -- a very dedicated "unsung heroine" if ever there was one -- has put in so much time and effort on the Birthday Card Project, I feel it would be a shame to cancell it. I was pleased and touched to get a card from her on my birthday; it made me feel, briefly, as if I was really part of the group --

a feeling that so far has eluded me. I guess I'm just not socially active enough in N3F.

Don Franson's idea of offering a sample of N3F zines is a good one, if the logistics could be worked out. So far, I guess I'm one of the "deadwood" group. I'd like to join a department or committee but, lacking personal contact as I do with other Neffers or even general SF fans, I don't really see how I can help. Any comments on how people on the fringes of N3F could become more active. ((You are a member of the Writers' Exchange right now so are hardly "deadwood."))

Steve Duff's story? article? re Mack Swain was very touching and insightful -- the author's name sounds familiar but Steve's ending was a bit farfetched leaving me wondering if the whole thing wasn't fiction. I assume that it was. ((Yes.)) Steve has a real talent for making the unreal seem real. I would imagine that this sad little story is more typical of what happens to aging writers than we would like to believe. Those of us who write, however haphazardly, all have dreamed of making the "big time." But the fact remains that of the few who ever make it into the pro ranks, most will wind up as absent from the public consciousness as Mr. Swain. Take a look through the remainder or used book section of the bookstore or the back shelves of the library: note the faded stars that shown so brightly but a few years ago. Sadder still, note the names that never became familiar, not even in their own times. I personally think that one has to love SF writing or film making if one is going to try to become part of the profession; any external rewards -- fame, applause -- one seeks are reserved for that one in a million. Talent, imagination, ambition -- all these are necessary for a young or beginning writer to have; yet when I see what is actually published, and the overall quality thereof, I begin to wonder if these are the prime factors for success. Is the main requisite contacts with pro writers, or writing on currently fashionable subjects? Any comments? ((Well, for someone who was personally asked by MZB to join the Writers' Workshop





Jeeves

at DarkoverCon, you seem unduly pessimistic. You also should have as much information as I do about this.))

The only review I can respond to (I haven't read the other books) is Mary Frey's critique of THE FADED SUN: KESRITH. This book is my personal favorite for the Hugo this year, though I'll go out on a limb -- again -- (last time it was sawed out from under me) -- and say I expect THE WHITE DRAGON to cop the prize. Cherryh's haunting story may be too complex

and grim to stand up to the competition from a colorful, charming "cult novel." ((Particularly since Linda Frankel and I seem to be the only people who weren't impressed with WHITE DRAGON.)) Of course if one of the other competitors is awarded the Hugo, I'll be almost as happy; the top novels of this year seem to be of uniform quality. THE FADED SUN: KESRITH, to me accomplishes a very difficult feat: without sentimentalizing the Mri, or hiding from the reader their bloodthirstiness and rigidity, Cherryh involves the reader with them to such an extent that we -- most of us, anyway -- are pulling for them to survive, and survive in a manner that will allow them to retain their pride and integrity, by the end of the book. On the other hand, we can appreciate, if not totally respond to on a "gut level", the difficult positions of the Terrans and Regul involved. I would recommend this novel to anyone who is curious about how the "game" of political intrigue and strategy really works -- that is, if one doesn't mind an unsettling dose of grim realism.

I have already issued one statement concerning Poul Anderson. Yes, it is a matter of taste; but I do believe Anderson's novels will still be read when the current trendy authors' works languish in the remainder bins of the bookstore. The man is a supreme wordsmith; his characters have depth and appeal; the situations and themes he discusses are seldom handled in a simpleminded manner; the sad, pessimistic undertones of some of his later works seem much more in keeping with the "human condition" than the latest Goshwowoboy adventures of Bucky-and-his-Droids-versus-the-Evil-Empire. What can I say? I too enjoy stories in the STAR WARS or SUPERMAN vein, as a heady escape from grey, mundane reality. But perhaps I'm a bit old to be satisfied with the "Big Macs" of SF no matter how tasty they are.

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Perry Glen Moore
1326 Burton Valley Rd
Nashville, TN 37215

Why isn't it fair that WHITE DRAGON be up twice? I hope it wins in both places. I say WHITE DRAGON is SF, but very "soft" SF at that.

Every Darkover novel would be an automatic Hugo nominee if all those who subscribed to or read the Darkover Newsletter nominated it (with a subscriber list of over 1000, that's more than nominated this year). Although as much as I like Darkover, I do not think STORMQUEEN was a Hugo caliber novel. My top two choices were WHITE DRAGON and THE GENESIS MACHINE (which didn't make it, unfortunately). Don't forget too, that STORMQUEEN isn't as good as FORBIDDEN TOWER was. ((STORMQUEEN came in 6th in the balloting. Also in my estimation, STORMQUEEN was better than FORBIDDEN TOWER.))

I would tend to agree with Don Franson over ads and new members (for a rare time, I agree with him). You'd get some new people, but not that many.

I really don't like to kill reviews, but I must do so to Susan Schwartz's of DRAGON DRUMS. Of the six paragraphs, three are plot summary. She has blown the book for anyone who had not read it. (Me!) She almost gives us the entire plot to the book. Shame! Shame! (and you got on me for that.) ((You're right. I should have caught that. See what happens when an editor gets harried.))

Mary Frey does a much better job with the Kesrith review. Not too much plot summary, just the right amount. I agreed almost totally with everything she said.

James Wilson: He asks, "Who keeps voting Ellison or Fritz Leiber their Hugos?" The fans do -- the N3F is not a representative sample of SF fandom (as I found out.) Some fans like Ellison. As for Leiber, he hasn't won in several years. Leiber is a good writer too. It would please me to no end if Ellison never won another Hugo. Card's "A Thousand Deaths" is better than any story in its class up for a Hugo this year, certainly Ellison's.

Chris Mills: One brief thought -- much as I liked the Covenant trilogy, I'd place Hogan and Longyear above him as best new author. Hogan is going to be the "hard" SF author of the 80s, and Longyear is to IASFM as Card is to Analog -- both fantastic discoveries.

A.D. Wallace: Agreed with what you said about THE WORLD IS ROUND. It was way too long. Rothman didn't know when to stop. Another good idea down the drain, you might say.

Vernon Clark: (and boy does he blow it!) I quote, "hopefully then everyone will see how to treat SF on the big screen, hopefully." First -- what does he think 2001 and STAR WARS for that matter, were? 2001 was, until recently, the ultimate SF movie. ALIEN has now replaced that. If people don't know how to treat SF after seeing ALIEN, then we can finally give up on them. And from what I've heard, both the STAR WARS sequel and the STAR TREK movie will bomb. The storyline for the STAR TREK movie is old. I feel STAR TREK fans will revolt after seeing that one. (One minor point -- if by "Kobol" you mean the computer language, then it should be Cobol for Common Business Oriented Language.) ((That was a meager attempt at humor.))

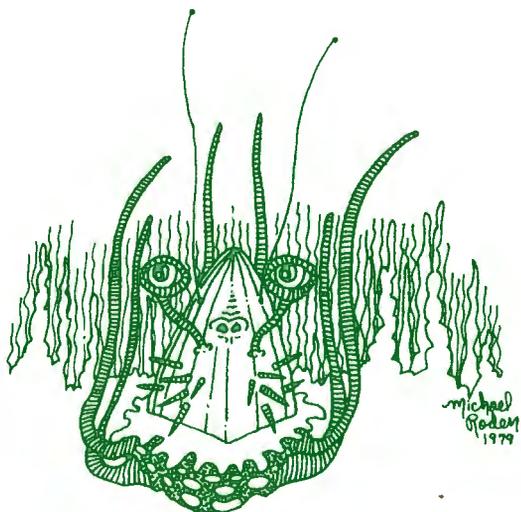
& & & & & & & & & & & &

Barbara Tennison If Yog-Xipkode is the patron of the empty mailbox, he's alive and
1834 $\frac{1}{4}$ Selby Ave well in L.A. My mail comes in irregular bunches and dribbles. I
Los Angeles, CA have a personal theory that the Post Infinity dislikes the Mississ-
90025 ippi River and will not transport anything over it without prior
 authorization from Yog, who is out to lunch. In my mailbox.

I have no birthday (my Sign is Tangent, the Lost Chord), so please send any lost birthday cards to someone more deserving. Thanks.

To Sharron Albert (and all the alien-character discussion participants): One of the earliest and perhaps most extreme and refreshing examples of a feminist/matriarchal utopia is HERLAND by Charlotte Perins Gilman. This was written in 1915, so the language is a bit dated but the ideas are not, which may give you some notion of how far the feminist movement has (I mean hasn't) come in 64 years. I don't entirely agree with everything in the book; for one thing, the female characters are too idealized. The author is definitely a proponent of the all-people (or all women) -are-basically-good school. I disagree; all people (women included) are not basically good, reasonable thoughtful beings. All people are basically irrational. That doesn't mean that more people (or more women, in an all-female society) wouldn't be good, rational, thoughtful beings in a society where the war-between-the-sexes conflict, and (as some feminist historians have pointed out) its derivatives, class conflicts and race conflicts, etc., were nonexistent or much reduced. What I do want to say is that however well-designed a society is, all its members are not perfect. If they are, it is not a human society as we understand the individual human character. In fact, in no human society are any of the members perfect all the time. People will be selfish or jealous or whimsical occasionally, no matter what. HERLAND seems to have eliminated this element of fallible humanity from its all-female society.

However, HERLAND, in having created an all-woman society has also created a culture which is believably different from our own: an alien culture in some ways. This points out how alien men and women can be to each other, and how much a culture can differ from other cultures of members of the same race. Men and women are, after all,



members of the same race, requiring the same environment, same nutrition, same necessity for overcoming natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. If members of the same race can be so mutually incomprehensible, why do you think members of different races will be understandable in any important way?

I don't think Poul Anderson is a "great writer." I think he's an excellent, competent, entertaining writer (most of the time), which is what he's paid for. What is a "great writer", anyway? I don't deny that an incredible proportion of SF/F writers are competent and entertaining, but the term "great" is not only overworked, it's inspecific.

~~~~~

George Laskowski  
The Lanshack  
47 Valley Way  
Bloomfield Hills, MI  
48013

All I have are accolades for Steven Duff's "Whatever Happened to Mack W. Swain". It was emotionally stirring; something like this could only happen in real life -- had it

been written under the guise of fiction, one would not think it possible. Alas, I do believe Steve's final lament will be all too true; after consulting all the resource books I have on SF, the only Swain mentioned is Dwight V. Swain, who wrote a novel called THE TRANSPOSED MAN. Nowhere is Mack Swain mentioned. And so few now remember him.... Perhaps Steve can cause a few ripples -- tell the story at a few cons. Fans can do much by word of mouth.

Sally Syrjala mentions the movie SUPERMAN and its acceptance by the general audience as a "hero search". I very much agree -- and cite the acceptance of STAR WARS as a similar search. In the day of the gloomy movie, STAR WARS stood out because one could identify with the hero and heroine, but especially because the hero, Luke Skywalker. This farm boy gets wrapped up in interstellar intrigue which leads to action and adventure. SUPERMAN shows us a hero in the classical sense, endowed with special powers and work on the side of good.

As Sally also says, the movie is affecting the comic book -- more in the characterization of the characters, I would say. Over the past few months in Superman, the writers have shown how Lois and Kal-El are very much in love, but one is not smothering the other. Lana Lang comes along and tries to get Superman back for herself, and Supe comes on with some of the best explanations of a good, sound relationship I have ever read.

In fact, why stop at Superman? The other comics have been doing the same. In a recent Justice League of America, Batman says words to the effect that they fight for "truth and justice", but not necessarily "our way." A little more tolerance of the other person, foreign customs and culture, is advised. This can hit the reader pretty hard. (And people say you can't learn things from comic books!)

Some controversy about alien aliens? Two of the best writers of non-human aliens are Hal Clement and Larry Niven. Their science backgrounds do them well in creating such races. For human-like aliens, C.J. Cherryh is tops. I heard C.J. speak at ARCHCON II last summer, and she knows what she is talking about. Given certain ecological conditions of a planet (weather, climate, flora and fauna, life/death cycle, food chain etc.) and the way in which a race of human form adapts to such conditions, what philosophical rationalizations result? How do they view the world, their world? What behaviour results? C.J.'s aliens are real because she devotes a lot of time to the background of her aliens, although she may not put all of it into her books. One thing that happened during the question-and-answer session after her talk which really blew my mind was a question about her characters the nri, which she answered in terms of the novel and the world CJ had built. She did not justify things in human terms, but in those alien terms. That in-



dicates a world well developed! Frank Lee Linne says that aliens don't have to be incomprehensible -- and they don't. He points to Anderson; we can also point to C.J. Cherryh. Mary Frey, in her review of THE FADED SUN; KESRITH, says that the possible shortcoming of the novel is the main characters being too characteristic of their respective cultures. Shortcoming or not, through them we do see the cultures, their similarities and differences, extremely important in the novel. And this supports Greg Hills' desire for non-terrestrial, or true alien cultures.

In support of Vernon Clark and others about Anderson, he has accrued a total of 21 nominations for the Hugo and Nebula awards, garnering a total of 7 awards. He must be doing something right.

I started reading Marion Zimmer Bradley when she first published her book THE DOOR THROUGH SPACE. I then started reading all the works she produced afterwards, because I recognized her as a good writer, and with the Darkover series, something which would develop into a super collection of well-developed novels. This was long before I had heard of fandom. Like Sharron Albert, I never forgot the stories or the author. I may have wandered from reading her consistently, but I still enjoy what I read.

\* \* \* \* \*

A.D. Wallace #18 is a plethora of pleasure, in particular Steven Duff's 306 E. Gatehouse Dr H piece on Mack W. Swain. Metairie, LA 70001

A dragonflagon of winged worm wine in token thereof! A big , big bong on the dragongong, and so on.

The idiosyncratic prose is inspired by McGaffrey's continual agglutination. She is not, of course, the only aggregationist, and drifted into mental view because of Susan Shwartz's review of DRAGONDRUMS. Indeed, this process of agglomeration is a mark and sign of SF & F, though more frequent in fantasy than in science-fiction. I can give no reason for this and would be happy to hear of some.

Next to Duff's piece, I most enjoyed Greg Hills' overview of Jack Vance, containing a review of PLANET OF ADVENTURE. Hills adverts briefly to Vance's satirical skill, to which may be added an acidic and sardonic humor, the like of which is rare in Sf & F. This alternates with a dead-pan travesty of common human foibles. But as Hills notes, his prose is regularly baroque and rococo, this generating a notable irony, sometimes of an explosive character. Many of Vance's novels are straightforward, narrative adventures, with problems and conflicts for the protagonists, and adequate action mixed with uncertainty and excitement.

What is most notable about Vance is that he writes purest fiction and is a master of pretense. Too much of SF is merely fact-mongering in the guise of fiction; it is over-researched. While Vance delights with spurious marvels, his miraculous constructs are no more counterfeit than the "extrapolations" so common in the genre.

I place Vance along with Ursula K. LeGuin among the very best writers in SF & F.

On to Chris Mills' explication of Elizabeth A. Lynn's WATCHTOWER: it is a parahis-toric novel, which is to say that it is "with" or "beside" historical novels, but not one of them, as two lines are parallel. Examples of such, in addition to Lynn's piece, are Gene Wolfe's THE DEVIL IN A FOREST and Peter Dickinson's THE BLUE HAWK. These two and Lynn's contain no "real magic" (to quote Mills) or at least none that could not be avoided by a simple erasure, mutandis mutandis. Parahistoricals are stories sited in an imagined geography or an imagined demography, an invented milieu, an constructed anthropology. The reader of a historical novel (which might be termed orthohistorical, real or true historical) is assumed to have some knowledge of history. In parahistoricals, the situation is otherwise. The writer establishes the background, which is

patterned on anthropology, ethnology, culture and so on. Note that the word para is also used to mean against, as in paradox.

There are no hard and fast rules and definitions in literature, which is another way of saying that literature is not science. A novel may be both parahistorical and fantasy, as U.K. LeGuin's WIZARD sequence, where there are fire-breathing dragons who think and speak, among other things. Her DISPOSSESSED is pure science-fiction with no fantasy at all. Jack Vance uses both science and fantasy in the same story; MASKE-THAERY.

I think it important to continue the search for definitions of fantasy and science-fiction. Of course I do not believe that such can ever be attained. One may say that fantasy is the rationally inexplicable and for science-fiction, one strikes the "in". There is no place for the buck to stop. There is always in making definitions, an infinite regress, or a circular definition.

Conan-Doyle's THE WHITE COMPANY offers a definite contrast to the books mentioned above.  
\* \* \* \* \*



Anji Valenza  
593 5th St  
Brooklyn, NY  
11215

Hello, hello! Bet you thought I'd gafiated, dincha? Nope, I'm back, to spread fear and loathing. Blessings on ye all, except for Yog-Xipcode, who'll get his later.

I met a lot of you at MiniCon (yes, that person wearing the badge that said 'Fa' was me...) and I will not ask you all to forgive me for not getting back to you because I won't do anything unless it's inexcusable. I will, really, some day Real Soon Now.

To James J. Wilson -- you're the first person I've encountered, ever, who didn't like Fritz Leiber. But then again, I can't STAND Ellison.

If I hear/read another thing about SPUERMAN or STAR WARS being a hero-search, I think I shall go mad!!! Arrrrggghhhh!

(I'm sitting here reading these locs, looking for something to loc back. And y'know what? I haven't the damdest idea what's going on...) (This is normal).

GATEWAY had humor in it? Gee whiz, where? I read this story twice (it was the only book in the bathroom at the time) and didn't notice any.

To A.D. Wallace: the Tassaday, among others, are neither competitive or aggressive. Or weren't until a few years ago. ((Well what does that tell us? Who knows how many peaceful cultures were wiped out or absorbed by the warlike aggressive ones?))

To Vernon M. Clark: I have my doubts that the STAR TREK movie will show anyone "how to treat SF on the big screen." I may be prejudiced but their treatment of SF on TV was often decidedly poor, and what with the same folks working on it all over again, one can do little but expect more of the same. I think that if I were to hold up an example of a good SF movie, it would be THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, which to me is still the #1 SF movie of all time.

Also, I disagree with "without any common ground there can't be much relation with the alien. Humans and earth animals have yet to overcome this barrier." Have you ever owned a horse? Also, how does one define "relation"? (I mention the horse specifically not only from experience, but even the ancient Greeks commented that the horse was the only

animal which could truly feel for its owner -- thus the centaur came into being, or so my Ancient History teacher told me.)

Thank you, thank you, Greg Hills -- your comments on the alien question reflect what would have been my own. But enuf already.

I think I will leave off here, because I see I've done nuthin but kvetch. Usually I don't kvetch (this much). Oh, by the way, does anyone know or would anyone be interested in starting up a zine for SF game oriented computer buffs? If so, I am a very interested party.

\* \* \* \* \*

Roger Waddington  
4 Commercial St.  
Norton, Malton,  
North Yorkshire,  
YO17 9ES  
England

Definately, I shouldn't have invoked the wrath of Yog, re the remarks in my last letter. Mail has been piling up by the millions in sorting offices all over the country thanks to strikes and staff shortages. There have been calls for private enterprise to take over and the women who allocate the stamps and money orders to the post offices have gone on strike, so that soon we won't even be able to post any letters. You remember

the Bull that the Pope invoked against England for the marital activity of Henry the Eighth, thus cutting it off from the rest of Christendom? ((That was a bit before my time.)) Methinks Yog has just invoked a postal Bull of the same dimensions.

Not the least of the effects was that the March and May issues of TB came in the same week.

The comments that you invited on the way of attracting new members: I must admit at never being too happy with the Twofor deal. As you say, it makes calculation for each new issue difficult and with an issue of TB and TNFF there's always the impression of an outsider looking in. No, what I would prefer to see is a publication that's aimed directly at the intending Neffer, and sent to all answerers of adverts. Maybe a short history of the N3F, chatty reports from each department head showing what each department does and how new members can help and maybe even an inspirational message from one of our big names such as Bob Tucker.... As I say, printed especially with only the slight updating needed as departments come and go; thus leaving only such issues of TNFF and TB to be printed as will actually go round the actual membership. This zine would only need to be reprinted if and when the original supply runs out.

Selling for a dollar perhaps and (I don't know if the treasury can stand it) that dollar going toward the first year's subscription -- if they take up membership. Maybe they could send a logo clipped from the cover as a proof of purchase instead of keeping a great list of names of purchasers. The number of classified ads that I've seen in Stateside mags inviting you to send money, and their success always amazes me. I don't think the N3F would find any lesser responses.

I appreciated the Well World cover, though not the news in the last TB that the Well's running dry and there'll only be one more novel. I read and enjoyed MIDNIGHT, bought QUEST only to find out that exiles came before it and so I've been sending off in all directions for the latter, hoping it'll come before I go frantic, thinking of the reading pleasure on the shelves that I can't even taste. But, of course, writers have to advance if they want to stay writers and not become mere potboilers. However much we might wish it, it's very unfair to demand the same book over and over again, not to mention selfish. Sometimes I wonder what we've done to A. Bertram Chandler, for example, that he should keep churning out the admittedly entertaining Commodore Grimes novles in lieu of a more serious body of work which he's certainly capable of ( see THE BITTER PILL). I know that if I met him, I'd probably apologize to him!

And I was just about to give voice over Greg Hills revealing all the plots of the PLANET OF ADVENTURE series (and indeed Vance's Basic Plot) when I suddenly realized that it wasn't what I read Jack Vance for... The words and the language; yes -- the fascinating and alien societies with their strange customs and otherworld morals as well; but like the Nero Wolfe novels, the plot is the last thing that interests me.



Fred Jackson III  
70 Illinois  
Pontiac, MI 48053

Sorry to drop off the face of  
the earth the way I did but  
life has a way of taking one  
where it leads and we can but

follow.

Sometime last year my life was plunged into total chaos on all fronts. Severe crises personally, financially, occupationally, relationship-wise, everything hit the fan at once. Lack of time, money, and personal worries and problems prevented me from participating in fandom in any capacity whatsoever. Earlier this year I began to see daylight and, as of now, I will be able to participate in fandom on a very limited basis. Now that my life is once again in some sort of order, and finances are a little more flexible, I can indulge in some of my hobbies, like fandom. I'm studying for a new career in counselling and am working on becoming a professional gag cartoonist (doing both my own stuff and writing gags

for other professional cartoonists.) I'll let you know how things go.

Part of that fallout will result in Frejac carttons appearing in fanzines again, which will be about the extent of my active participation in fandom for the foreseeable future. I have absolutely no time to do apas anymore (I had to drop all 5 -- sob -- that I belonged to) nor will I have time to do fanzine reviews anymore. I simply cannot read that many fanzines and then write them up. This will allow me to send out illos to more zines than previously so it's a fair trade. My humor 'toons mean more to me than other forms of fanac, although I did love doing that fanzine column.

I apologize to those in N'APA for dropping out, and to the zines that never got a reply from me. I'll try to keep TIGHTBEAM "stuffed" with "Frejacs" meanwhile...back to the drawing board. I've got a lot of practice to do to get my art up to sufficient professional levels.

\*\*\*\*\*

Duncan Lucas  
12 Beattys Rd  
Pukekohe,  
South Auckland,  
New Zealand

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA was released down here as a hodge-podge of the pilot episode and various scenes from the series spliced in, apparently for no reason at all. Ghu knows what Horrendous "Mutilations" it underwent. I guess you'd have to see and compare both to decide if it "suffered" (the term is relative for there are degrees of "suffering"...) )

(I could go on about how most TV shows are aimed at the Moron Market anyhow, and thus are an insult to anyone with a modicum of intelligence, but as I might offend someone, I won't say it.)

Scott Bauer speaks of Special Effects. All the glossy media rags (I flatly refuse to award them the status of 'magazines') rave about the "Special Effects" (to be spoken in hushed reverend tones). It seems that a lot of effects are used to no apparent puropse -- it's a case of "Hey, let's put an effect here, you know, flashing lights and noise, wow, lot's of noise!"

Special Effects should not be used just to heighten our Suspension of Disbelief, they should add to/enhance our Sence of Belief; and for that, you would need a plausible (even remotely) story line, and then actors to carry it off and then, you might just have The Greatest SF Movie Ever Made. (But such a movie will never be made. SF is a minority genre (if you think about it) and is basically incomprehensible to anyone not "in". Anyway such a movie would be --

- a/misunderstood by the moron market (again)
- b/unprofitable for the movie companies
- c/acceptable only to a minority of fen, and
- d/untrusted by the rest.)



"Come unto me, all ye  
Jeeves who are hungry...  
... so am I!"

Simple special effects, well planned and executed, would be, to my mind, infinitely more satisfying than having to reel out of the cinema, wondering if you've just experienced something akin to an LSD trip. Indeed, one can't help wondering if the current emphasis on special eddfects is a sort of kickback from the Drug Culture, whereby those dear teenagers with the sense/fortitude to hold out against getting hooked on on or trying drugs, try to experience the next best by indulging in a vicarious drug trip...is there a better reason for all those flashing lights and strange animals?

On the upcoming STrek movie: why the reverent awe when speaking of this momentious movie occasion? Vernon Clark, this barb is aimed at you, "Hopefully then everyone will see...etc" -- I hereby declare that the STrek film will not be SF, but

a contrived and poorly scripted "Soap Opera on a Starship" (as it always, excepting a very few of the early episodes...), full of melodramatics and kitch. (And I also declare that William Shatner/Jim Kirk will be seen shirtless within fifteen minutes of the thing beginning...)

On aliens; how can anyone confidently construct an "alien" psychology when we don't know everything there is to know about our own? And we could get into an argument on the difference twixt sapience and sentience? There is one you know. (Is a sapient alien necessarily sentient? And vice versa? And what means have we of truly establishing proof of either? .Or both?

No writer, I think, is truly capable of constructing a true alien -- to do such, he'd have to think himself into a truly alien situation (there's that word again...) and then through any number of alternate world-views that the creature would have (Could you comprehend an organism that is subjectivist in outlook? Existentialist? Phenom-inologist? Really? Could you...)

So an alien must be believable -- to be thus, it must have some characteristic that is recognizably HUMAN, be it Western, Eastern or Eskimo. And what characterizes an original alien? Not necessarily a true alien, but more than something which could be Jim-Bob next door, in leotards and fur. Any alien used in an SF story is from that author's imagination, therefore its reasonable to assume that it contains some traits which the author finds interesting/valuable to the future development of his plot and the advancement of the underlying theme behind his/her (non-sexual pronouns, anyone?) work. If there is one. Unless the alien plays a major part in the story, then it is really necessary to comprehend it?

\* \* \* \* \*

Deirdre Murphy Let me say in preface that I have received 4 (yes, four) N3F zines  
6688 N. Sioux this month, and my comments will probably include all of them. Don't  
Chicago, IL expect any order to the comments, though.  
60646

I loved the cover on the May issue! I don't seem to remember any place known as Well World, although my (D & D stricken) brother called the creature a mandrake, as he tried to tear the zine from me to look at it. ((It's a Czillan, and comes from MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS, EXILES ON THE WELL OF SOULS, QUEST FOR THE WELL OF SOULS, ~~ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE WELL OF SOULS~~ -- all by Jack Chalker.))

JANE DUSEK: I think your idea is marvelous. Not only does it make sense that not all Terran personnel are from hot worlds (80° temperature in the buildings notwithstanding,) but think how surprised the Darkovans would be to find a competent Terranan. A Terran who had managed to train his/her laran to an appreciable degree would also be interesting.

CARING ABOUT N3F HISTORY: I care about America's history, but there's a great deal of it I wouldn't want to repeat. America's history holds a period when people with

dark skin were property, and another when people of Japanese ancestry were put into concentration camps, though, of course they didn't call it that. Now I am NOT saying that N3F has such great big bloopers in its history, but can any one of you call it perfect? ~~If you can, I expect you to tell it to the world. You'll be hated long before I take pity on you and retract it.~~ The past ought to be learned from, not blindly repeated for the sake of tradition. Tradition, like fire and so many other things, is a good servant and a poor master.

SUSAN SHWARTZ: I am interested in the quality of the writing, and I have a book to recommend to you. It is THE FACE IN THE FROST by John Bellairs. I think it is the most beautifully written book I have ever read. Freshmen English turned me off, but only off such courses. And my Creative Writing teacher liked SF&F so well that she didn't even want to know the difference. She called the combined genre SciFi -- I wonder if she knew the term is not appreciated or hit upon it by accident? But I can't complain, she graded fairly despite this prejudice. I got an "A" on the fantasy short story I gave her, and it was really way out (to use her phrase). I plan to revise it and type enough copies for the Writers' Workshop.

SHARRON ALBERT: Stop bragging. It isn't polite. Anyway, I can imagine your sunset/sunrises. If you must brag, brag about the Aurora Borealis. I have never been able to imagine that to my satisfaction.

J. OWEN HANNER: You forgot the address of your fungus-filled vacation spot. How can the masochists among us (or anyone else for that matter?) go there without one?

I enjoyed the stories, the NASA picture, and receiving so many zines in one month. Now, if I could only receive a Darkover Newsletter... ((They were mailed out right after the DarkoverCon to anyone who didn't pick one up there.))

From Aug 25, '79 to May 5, '80 I will be living at  
Badin Hall, Room 414  
U of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

Unfortunately, this is NOT A MAILING ADDRESS-- Why the people at ND can't send me the important things first, I'll never know.

As a last note: I found an interesting definition in an Irish dictionary of my father's, and here it is:

FANAC: seldom, hopeless, uncertain, aimless, scarce, useless.

& & & & & & & & &

Dennis Richard Brown      Hello, Neffers. Yes, I'm back. I wrote a ~~tail tale~~ letter to  
4510 Centre Ave            the September TIGHTBEAM saying I would not be answering letters  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213      and such -- or at least that answers would be delayed. That was  
                                 no excuse to stop writing me!

Really, this letter has a few porpoises, and that's no fishy story. I wrote before that I started Grad School; I finish on August 10th. (Yeah, I know. Now everyone is thinking "Now maybe an answer to my letter?") Well, unless I get a job Real Soon Now, I'm going back to school for one more term to pick up one more degree (~~celsius~~), which will let me be unemployed in January, not September.

Anyway, I will most likely have a coa come January and will probably not know till then what it is. Just thought I'd warn you.

I would like to notify everyone that I am trying to drop the name "Dennis" and substitute "Rick" in its place. Several things prompted the change. 1) I am sick of "Dennis the Menace" jokes. 2) I am nauseated each time it is misspelled "Denise" which is a feminine form. ((Dennis Jarog has a sister Denise so you can imagine the confusion there.)) 3) I never liked the name anyway. 4) I have an opportunity to change it by using my middle name on resumés and such like. I'm taking advantage of it. Please cooperate.

While I'm on the subject of names, I (think I) convinced someone at DarkoverCon that my name was really Dyan Ridenow; that's what my name tag said. And name tags don't lie, right?

I would also like to go on the record as liking BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. Almost everyone who was at the Darkover Grand Council Meeting II could have figured that out with my entering the masquerade as Lt Starbuck, complete with cigar. (The cigar was a sacrifice; they smell. I prefer a pipe.)

One other thing, gang. I had been hiding something from myself and refusing to even consider the idea. However, I would like you to know (now that I have my head together on this) that I'm gay. I'm also proud of being gay. Just don't expect me to give you lurid details of my ~~non-existent~~ sex life, nor try to convert you to my life style. I wasn't that way even when I was a Jesus freak; I don't expect to change now. If it bothers anyone, sorry, but you're the one with the problem, not me.

I would also like to advise one and all that I would like to start a Private Project. The subject is Psionics/Parapsychology. Basically, what I have in mind includes finding out the better methods of training various talents, discussion, possibly doing readings (Notice: I'm a novice in this area and will NOT guarantee anything.), and maybe a zine --- if there is enough interest shown. "Enough interest" is defined as more than one person writing articles and expressing opinions. "Enough interest" also means more than can be comfortably accomodated in a RR show some willingness to share such things as techniques, methods, examples, etc. Maybe if there's enough interest, we can ask to become an activity. It all depends on you. (God, that sounds corny.) Write me if interested. I am very open to suggestions, if you have any, of what you would like to do. ((Well, I have no psi abilities so couldn't participate in any case. pwd ))

I'm also thinking seriously of starting a zine of my own. I'd like advise from faneds out there. Any advise. I'm new to this area of fandom. ((I hope you like to type. pwd))

Quick question: How do I find if a name has been used for a zine before now?

Anecdote from Graduate School of Library and Information Science: This summer I took a class called "Popular Culture Collections." One of the requirements of the class was to do a bibliography of some subject and then give a talk on it. My subject was SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM. I think I can safely say it was rather easy to do. I also loaned a lot of material to a teacher friend (who is attending SEACON -- yes, she's a fanne.) for her to give a talk on SF in general. Then there was another fan who gave a talk on "SF -- Juvenile Literature" and a Trekkie whose talk I missed (\*\*Shudder\*\*).

In three terms I have managed to do three papers on SF; for a periodicals class, I did a collection of SF periodicals and I have just related the Popular Culture Biblio on Fandom. I also did a Book Talk on THE RUINS OF ISIS by Marion Zimmer Bradley; the teacher said "I didn't know that science fiction had so much to recommend it; I thought it was just junk." As you can tell, I kept my hand in here even though I wasn't very active. ((I suspect English teachers and librarians consider it their mission to uplift the reading taste of the public so that they consider WAR AND PEACE light reading.))



"Some fen are not what they seem to be in all respects."

with apologies to Dennis Brown.

I support the JOHNSTOWN IN '83 Worldcon bid. May I suggest that the fan and pro GoHs be short, thus making it easier to (\*glub \* \*\* \*\* \* \*glub) them?

The Department of Special Collections, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA is beginning a special collection of science fiction fanzines. They already have some comix fanzines that someone donated. If anyone wants to send a copy of his or her own zine, it would be appreciated. If you want to get rid of some old zines, they'd take them too. The address is:

Department of Special Collections  
Hillman Library  
University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Attn: Charles Astin

\* \* \* \* \*

Al Fitzpatrick This is not so much a loc, or come to think of it, even a letter; more  
38 Northfield a series of ramblings (more my usual style than precise letters).  
Barlby, Selby First off, ironically, I'm not in much of a position to comment on  
North Yorkshire this issue of TB as there was little in it to interest me. The reason--  
Y08 7JS quote from new members' listing in TNFF. "Says he hates magazines  
and short stories". Alas, this is basically true. Now apply that to  
TB 109 and form your own conclusions. ((I don't read short stories much either and have  
not read those in TB 109 either. Now you see a genuine TB. pwd))

Also I prefer all typeface in a zine to match. I don't know why I do but I do so a quick  
flip through the zine was not calculated to impress. Still it did show a good clear lay-  
out and that I appreciate. (I have little to do with fanzine publishing but do work in  
the printing trade so have some idea of layout.) ((Your problem is that you did not start  
with a genuine TB. I use only one print face because that's all I have to work with.pwd))

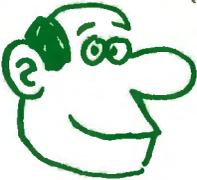
I know a lot of effort has gone into trying to define science fiction and fantasy in  
exact terms and I've been involved in discussions on the subject. ((I haven't as it bores  
me but different strokes...pwd)) I'll admit I've never come up with a good definition  
and prefer to stick to my own when I do have to separate out my SF and fantasy books. My  
definition is 'For my own purposes SF and fantasy are whatever I nominate them to be'. It's  
the only workable solution I found because some novels show aspects of both genres.

Still what do you do with a Western where half the baddies are Zombies or in which a flying  
saucer lands? I filed them under Westerns as they belong to a longish series, or what do  
you do when you get books like the "New Avengers" which feature cybernauts. I think you  
will find no matter what one's definition, there are still going to be borderline cases.  
So why waste time on definitions, why not just read? ((My sentiments exactly.pwd))

As to continued books, I do think the publishers if not the author should be required to  
indicate such a work is to be continued. I like series books but prefer to read a set  
together. Zelazny's NINE PRINCES IN AMBER for example, I'm still waiting to read but from  
reviews of THE COURTS OF CHAOS (I believe that was the last of the projected series) seem  
to indicate 'an open ended ending'. I'm not sure that I'm interested in reading them and  
may just write them off as a waste of money. (I probably won't and will read them but  
may not be happy with them.) ((I have never been able to figure out how anyone could read  
anything by Zelazny but... I have started three different books of his. pwd))

Yes, I have felt like jumping up and down on Phil Farmer but not over the RIVERWORLD books.  
When the first two came out I knew there was more to come so simply shelved them and  
waited. ((I wish I could be that patient. I'd like to go on a hunger strike in his front  
garden. I have just heard that the fourth novel will be out in January. pwd)) The ones  
that caught me were the WORLD OF TIERS books and when the final? one came out, I reread  
all four previous ones then THE LAVALITE WORLD at which point I felt like screaming 'cop-

IF THERE WERE ONLY SOME  
WAY WE COULD HARNESS  
ALL THE HOT AIR THAT  
FLOATS THRU THESE PAGES  
WE COULD SOLVE THE  
ENERGY CRISIS.



frejac

out'. ((Me, too. pwd)) I have a couple of other bones to pick with Farmer. First I'd like to know the projected run of the Hadon books and secondly when is he going to pick up THE STONE GOD AWAKENS again? This last reads to me, not like a novel but as a novel sized prologue.

With series books I think all the novels should either be complete within themselves, or a serial type with a definite end even if the author plans further books in the same setting with the same characters and all that information should be clearly stated on the book cover. I doubt if it will happen and in the end, I suppose I'll get fed up and quit reading SF.

\* \* \* \* \*

Vernon M. Clark I like Chris Martin's  
6216 Janmer Lane reasoning on why a posi-  
Knoxville, TN 37919 tive growth outlook is  
essential to N3F taking

a more serious place in fandom. It just seems to make plain and simple sense to me. Doesn't the name of the organization begin with National. That should mean it provides services for all and is available to a large cross-section of SF and fantasy fandom. A no growth outlook for N3F seems to want to keep the in-groupishness and inner squabbling which seems to have plagued N3F's past. I would hope the club would be more forward looking and progressive than it is now. Nostalgia for the 'good ole days' of fandom isn't why I joined N3F, though it can have an important place if it's treated in the proper manner. I'm sure many of the older, long-time members have much to offer us younger fans. Thus, in some ways I think we should be sincere toward their wishes. They've been at this a lot longer than us. But I hope that they see that if N3F stagnates now it will fall onto hard times once again and be left behind by the majority of fans.

I address these comments to James J. Wilson: you're a fucking plain and simple asshole. Your remark on how you don't know how Fritz Leiber can get printed, let alone win awards is a very apt indication of how little you've read of Leiber's fiction. Thank God there aren't many people like you around who give their opinions on fiction instead of valid criticisms. It seems that you criticise Leiber because he has won a large number of awards and you dislike Ellison because of his personality. If I took your reasoning to heart, I'm sure I could find some petty fault that disenchanting me with every author ever published. I suggest as a cure for your lack of any literary perceptions that you flush your brain down a toilet. That way your brain can be with what it's full of. ((After that I am almost afraid to admit that I could never finish one of those tales of the Grey Mouser and his overgrown friend. Is this a crime? I have liked some of Leiber's work such as THE BIG TIME. But I do not like S&S -- even Leiber's. pwd))

\* \* \* \* \*

Chris Martin  
213 Morgan Ave  
Elkton, VA 22827

Ah yes, there I was having a satisfying dialogue with reality (you like it, it likes you). I was drifting away from fandom when along comes the May TIGHTBEAM, jolting me out of my trance. (I haven't received my May TNFF. Is Nick Grassell doing his job? ((No))

Should Irvin Koch fire his ass?) ((Nick quit as he wants to do TIGHTBEAM.))

Lessee, first things first. Riff through the pages and catch all of the references to me. My, my. I count 11 direct references, two indirect references to myself. There are probably more comments devoted to my letters than anybody else's. Glad to see that everybody has things in the proper perspective. Lynne, you suggest that I get the brickbat award for the May issue. I agree. Chris Mills raised the possibility that my taste is "execrable" (say wha', bro?) Scott Bauer terms my opinion of Anderson "utterly ridiculous." Arthur

Hlavaty holds no grudges, but he has turned my name over to Certain People. A.D. Wallace makes some repugnant comments about human relationships. Vernon Clark finds my opinion of Anderson's fiction to be 'downright ridiculous.' Frank Lee Linne says 'dismaying.' Linda Frankel endows me with a talent for offending so many folks at once. Lynne agrees. Linda rakes me admidships for comments about MZB and ILLUMINATUS! Hokay, say mean things about me. I'm not Bill Bridget, so it doesn't bother me. Frankly my dears, I don't give a damn.

An excellent cover by Maureen Garrett. I still don't know who Patrick William Duncan, 'the other half of this team,' is. Check one of the following: ( )co-editor, ( )husband, ( )lover, ( )fiancee, ( )editorial helper, ( )platonic friend, ( )all of the above, ( )some of the above, ( )some of your blood. ((Most of the above. pwd))

Excellent illo as usual by Helen Steere on page 3.

Irvin Koch has considerably toned down in the President's Message. I must confess that I'm disappointed. I once thought that Irvin was the Strong Man that fandom needs to get the convention shuttle buses running on time. But I'm not sure any more. I am glad to hear that somebody else was offended by Rovacon. The organizers have shown their true colors this year. They're having a media con. Liz Taylor may make another so the fans can fawn over her gross corpus. Excuse me while I puke. Slans, indeed.

Chris Mills may 'find no common ground to communicate with him (me) at all. (In short his taste is execrecable).' Mills attacks my assessment of Anderson's body of work, even though he admits that "Anderson has produced much work that does not come up to the standard of the preceding stories." (My emphasis on the much.) Mills cites several stories that he considers outstanding. "I suspect that Martin made a blanket statement about all of Anderson's work and neglected to think at all about the subject. But I do think that if h  considers the above stories to be 'second-rate' that I could find no common ground to communicate at all. (In short, his taste is execrable.)" Talk about your blanket statement. I wasn't discussing the works that Mr Mills mentions as outstanding. I was discussing the body of work. I have thought about Anderson, but I shall think no more after this letter. He's not worth the effort. I was tempted to drag out the issue of the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction and reread "No Truce With Kings." All I can remember about that was the usual half-baked rightwing philosophy. I suppose that comes from living in California. I don't see any reason to subject myself to it again. "Call Me Joe" strikes me as having the kind of dated fifties sentimentality that a high school student such as Mills would find to be Hot Stuff.

Incidentally, I had a good idea of what execrable means, but just for curiosity's sake, I looked it up in the dictionary: '1. Deserving to be execrated; abominable, detestable. 2. Very inferior; of poorest quality.' Deserving to be execrated, eh? Execrated means: '1. To call down evil upon, curse; 2. To speak abusively or contemuously of; denounce scathingly; 3. To loate; detest; abhor -- v.i. to curse.' Excuse me while I roll on the ground; my clothes are smoldering. Well, Mr Mills, I have had enough of your execrations. While I admire your parents' taste in first names, there's only room in fandom for one person with the initials CBM. It isn't you. I could smear you through guilty by association by pointing to your involvement with DIO, but I won't. Some of us have the taste to exercise restraint. Thank God, (I hate this 'h' crap) I'm not one of them.

Arthur Hlavaty wishes to 'reassure Chris Martin that I hold no grudge against him, and when/if we do meet, I will not attempt to do him any bodily harm merely because he does not care for ILLUMINATUS!'

I don't know how you can reassure me, Arthur, when you haven't even assured me. Is that why you're a semi-pro writer instead of a pro writer? Your grasp of the English language seems about as shaky as your grasp on reality. I'm not worried about your carrying out any threats. Based on my reading of DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP, I doubt that you could carry out a coherent thought, much less a threat or grudge. DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP makes me wonder whether sentience was an evolutionary step forward. Based on your profile to date, I'd say that you've been following at least one of the Rasta commandments to the letter. Got any brain cells left, Arthur? ((Actually I like DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP. pwd))

THE LETTERCOL IS THE BEST  
PART OF ANY ZINE.  
I JUST LOVE THE LOLCS...



IT'S JUST THAT SOMETIMES  
THE PICKINS ARE SLIM...

Bauer, Clark, et al. Judging from the roars of outrage, I have wounded a sacred cow when I commented on Anderson. I don't want this to turn into one of those putrid controversies that occasionally infest the pages of TIGHTBEAM. ((You don't??!!! pwd.)) I will state my position and say no more about Anderson. A detailed dissection is not worth my time.

I feel as if I'm the child that said the emperor has no clothes. Dare I say it? Let's face it. The man is a hack. I know this is heresy. Fortunately they haven't revived stake-burning in fandom yet. So he writes scientifically accurate space opera instead of scientifically inaccurate space opera. Big fucking deal. I'm supposed to be impressed? Space opera is space opera. Trash is trash. ((What do you think of Lin Carter? pwd))

The man is a craftsman, not an artist. To be sure, some of his work has approached the level of art. But he's not an artist. And his work won't last. The

attitudes of the 1950s spawned Anderson. Once the generation he is part of passes from our ken, he'll be viewed as an interesting anachronism. Of course, since much of fandom is rooted permanently in the fifties, maybe that will never happen.

His characters are stock (as Lynne points out, they tend to blend together). When it comes to characterization, Anderson is only one step ahead of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. Wouldn't Dirk Benedict make a wonderful Flandry. He has the smirking and narcissism and dashing callowness to play the role. ((I see Roger Moore as Flandry. pwd)) Richard Hatch has the pompous earnestness to play a marvelous David Falkayn. Jeez, the characters aren't even likable. ((I thought that was the point. pwd)) When it comes down to the end, Flandry is just a rogue. He uses his so-called concern for stability to fuck with other people's lives. You would think we would have learned something from Vietnam about the dangers of cultural imperialism. Falkayn is a fatuous ass. Van Rijn? A conscienceless bastard. I've always wanted to see a story in which Van Rijn lands on a planet, tries his wiley trader tricks on the natives, and gets a sharpened stick in the belly for his efforts. His eyes glaze over as he collapses making incredulous whimpering sounds as he tries to push his guts back into his belly....

Anderson has only one theme, the fear of dissolution. Upon closer examination, this is based on the fear of his own death. ((You're positive of this? pwd)) That would certainly explain his increasing pessimism as he grows older. He's a frightened man. There are enough frightened people in science fiction as it is. We don't need any more. For more along that line, see my comments below to Linda Frankel.

Much of Anderson's work is a technical exercise. The plot and characters are something to hang on the framework. To draw an analogy, Anderson is the C.S. Forester of science fiction: ((This is bad? pwd)) technically accurate, capable of playing one note and playing it well. Read the Horatio Hornblower series. Compare it to Anderson's work. You will find the comparison most illuminating. (Certain People have ruined that word for me). The comparison goes a long way to put Anderson's work into perspective.

((Okay, I can see that much of Anderson's work is competent hackwork. So was much of Kipling's and Twain's -- good story tellers both. Sometimes Anderson approaches genius though hardly in his Van Rijn, Flandry or Falkayn tales. He has to make a living at writing, after all. Horatio Hornblower...umm...I can see the parallel. But whom do you consider to be a great writer? pwd))

Linda Frankel: I don't want to read MZB. Friends of Darkover is part and parcel of the medievalism that is a cancer in fandom. Anderson is part and parcel of this. He's a founder of the Society of Creative Anachronism. There are too many people in fandom who cope with reality by retreating into an infantile preoccupation with costume and ritual. The number of space cadets, fantasists, neurotics and maladjusted in fandom astounds me. These medievalists and adventure fans pass themselves off as science fiction fans. They're not.

There's a school of thought which writes off fandom as the haven of the socially inept, those afraid of the opposite sex, the bent, the psychologically warped. It's the medievalists and space cadets who have gotten this label pinned on us. I was appalled at the number of twonks, nerds, flammers, twitches and just plain wierdos at Balticon. And the irony is they think they're better than everybody else! You don't have to spend much time at a convention to discount the fan as slant theory. There's a lot of sneering talk about mundanes; but some fans are worse than mundanes. They're mediocre. The impression one gets is of a lot of cogs in society who huddle together for warmth. A lot of librarians who retreat into medievalism and space cadetry as an alternative to their daily drudgery. If they find the daily reality they are presented with unacceptable, they should work to change it, not compensate by ignoring it whenever possible. The world, science fiction fandom and they would be much better off.

\* \* \* \* \*

((Whew. I wish Lynne were here to answer this last but... First I have absolutely no interest in medievalism myself and cannot understand its attraction for some people. The closest I ever came to it was when at age 12, I dreamed of being D'Artagnan. To me, considering I slept through history classes as I hated them, the middle ages represented poverty, filth, fanaticism and disease rather than knights in shining armour. I wanted to live in 2300 rather than 1300. And some fans do go much too far. Lynne is in Darkover fandom and some people involved in that have fancy Darkovan names and make themselves Darkovan outfits. One has gone so far as to write her Darkovan biography and refers to MZB as 'mother'. Honest, I'm not joking though I wish I were as I consider this really sick. I often wonder if anyone can so little self esteem to want to assume a whole other persona. (Here I'll state that this is excusable in an adolescent but later on.... But not all Darkovan fans are like this. Some are even aware of the problem -- here I'm thinking of Mary Frey.

I too, put off reading the Darkover novels for ages because I thought I wouldn't like them. I grew up with Heinlein, Asimov and Clarke. Now I have read them and consider two of them excellent; two putrid and the rest somewhere in between. One has been assigned as required reading for a college course on Women's Studies. When THE RUINS OF ISIS is better known, it could well be also. And I assure you, I am allergic to books set in pseudo medieval times where magic works.

Another mistake that I see in fandom is that often fans assume their favourite author knows the answers to everything simply because he/she has written a book they admire. This is nonsense. Authors can be as fucked up as anyone else. Sometimes these neuroses contribute to the brilliant creativity of a novel. It's better than becoming an axe murderer. However I do not see why people dressing up in medieval costume annoys you so much. I would tend to suggest that these are not SF fans but fantasy fans who wish life were simpler, always forgetting that that they'd probably be the equivalent of serfs in any 'real' middle ages. I sometimes get the fiendish idea of subjecting the SCA people to a lottery whereby 1% can be nobles, 1% clergy and the other 98% servitors and serfs. I bet that would kill a lot of interest in the SCA. pwd))

Final fiendish thought: Lynne is going to be stuck with handling any letters these comments bring as I only agreed to help out with this one. Heh, heh.

I'm supposed to list a WE ALSO HEARD FROM LIST. Actually a lot of these letters will appear next issue: Paula Crunk, writing on TB (July), Pat Turner (next issue, even if you are one of those people who check income tax forms for the gov't.) Richard Jasinski, who tells why it's not quite the same in Poland; Anita Cole who also hates series books; Michael Rodan, next issue; Fred Jakobcic who thinks Anderson fen are a bit thin skinned and has taken up D&D, Matt Hickman talking about some fan's idea of boycotting Wisconsin because Sen Proxmire dislikes the space project; Greg Hills, next issue. I hope that's all.



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**P-19180**

**PROBING JUPITER'S ATMOSPHERE** — Red-hot nose cone separates from probe portion of Galileo spacecraft as it "hangs on the shrouds" and samples the atmosphere of the largest planet in the solar system. Painting depicts key moment in flight of Galileo, the new planetary project planned by Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The Galileo spacecraft would be launched in January 1982 — the first planetary mission aboard the space shuttle — and would arrive at Jupiter late in 1984. The probe will enter the sunlit side of Jupiter's atmosphere and provide the first direct sampling of that planet's atmosphere. Jet Propulsion Laboratory has over-all management responsibility for Galileo. NASA's Ames Research Center is responsible for development of the probe.



Galileo