

CONTOUR

DE VOID

This is CONTOUR. Sattana, or number 11 if you prefer, dated May 1957 and isn't that a wonderful time of a wonderful year?! Published by Bob Pavlat, 6001 43rd Avenue, Hyattsville, Maryland, for FAPA, OMPA and a few others.

"Get your hands off my filthy wife."

The slow stencilling of others' illustrations. The drawn-out typing of others' articles and the hunt for words in the dictionary--most of them spelled properly by the authors to begin with. The laborious blotting out of typos discovered, and the waiting for the blog to dry. The smell of the correction fluid, and of the stencils (can you smell stencils? My cat loves them) and of--dammit, the cigarette fell out of the ashtray onto the tablecloth again. (Can you smell tablecloths burning?) The conclusion of labor until the stencils are taken over to Derry's to be Gestetnered--the conclusion except that it's your fanzine and you haven't done half of what you wanted. Your fanzine, and where are you, except there behind the typed letters and the hopefully stencilled illustrations. Hopeful, since you're neither artist nor draftsman, and White said these stencils were lousy for artwork.

And what happened to that parody that you were going to write on... on...? What happened to the idea of that parody you were going to write? When did you decide not to have a letter column--or have you decided not to have a letter column? Is there time; and how about mailing reviews--OMPA and FAPA mailings as good as last time shouldn't be ignored. But the time....

Sure, you had plenty of time earlier, but this isn't earlier and why the devil did you take up that project to either make the grass grow this year or else? Who could dream that so much time could be spent trying to make grass grow? You would have had more time, too, if you hadn't spent a couple of weekends car shopping. The new Ford in the driveway is rather nice, but damn, now you know good and well you won't be able to get to London.

Is there some contrary spirit that gives out ideas when you're too lazy to develop them, and then takes the ideas away when you've un-lazed? Or is it the simple daydream: you could be a genius but it's too much trouble, but, boy, if you really tried...! Are you sure you had ideas?

Of course you did! Next time they'll be used, maybe. You have time for one more page, so you simply say: Continued on page 13.

derry
c. 1949

HUP NO MO'

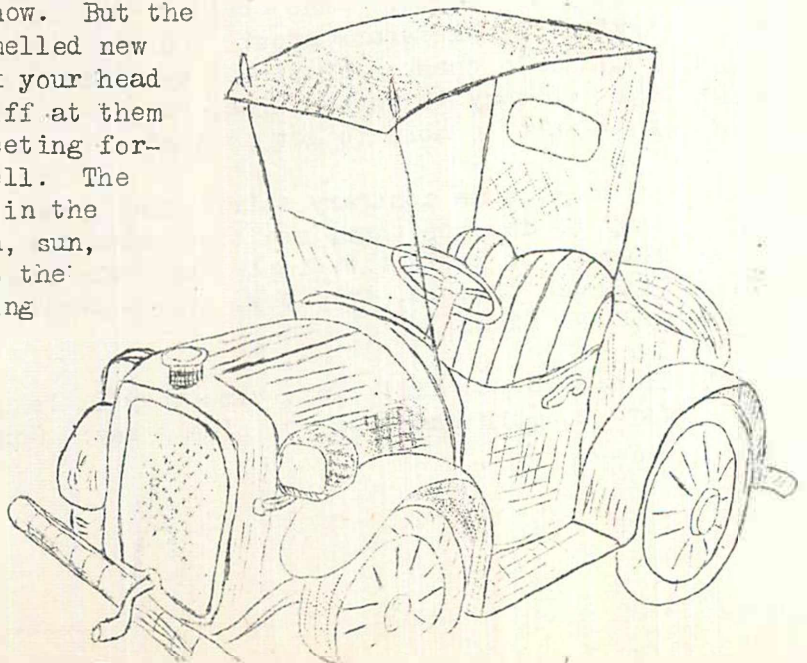
HUPMOBILE

BY DEAN A. GRENELL

There is so much in autos, inanimate that I know they are, that arouses feelings of sadness and nostalgia in me. I think I find it more depressing to drive past a car-graveyard than a people-graveyard, though prob'ly I wouldn't if the people's place had the inmates lying about on the surface decomposing, all shattered and torn and stretched out in attitudes of agony. I see these old jalopies and I can't help thinking that almost every one of them at some time was a joyous focal-point in someone's life. Every one of them was once selected and its color perhaps carefully picked out and the owner-to-be sat and waited impatiently for the factory to deliver it and one day the phone rang and it was the dealer saying your car's here, come down and get it and he drove his old car (which; too, had had its day) down for the last time, having carefully turned the seat-cushions in search of odd coins and removed the jack and tire-patch kit, and he drove it into the lot and shut off the switch for the last time and handed the keys to the dealer and Yessir, there she was! a brand-spanking new 1934 Hupmobile Eight with its big disc wheels sparkling black and its deep bottle-green sides reflecting bulgy buildings and fat people with tiny heads in its curving panels and its interior upholstered in light green plush and not even a speck of ground-in mud on the nubbled rubber of its running-boards and the little oval window of its speedometer showed the odometer dial standing at 9.4...rather, 00009.4...and the big wooden wheel with its four precisely dovetailed quadrants was smooth and gleaming and sensuous to touch and the smell, ah, the smell of the thing was best of all! Let Bradbury prate of his scents of sarsaparilla and be hanged. There is not in all the world so rich and opulent a smell as the inside of a new car, the winy tang of the tires, the exotic fruity fragrance of lacquer, the indescribable mélange of a hundred tiny smells merged to an unforgettable whole.

So maybe by 1934 the Hupmobiles had hard-rubber steering wheels, I don't know. But the point is all of those cars once smelled new and now look at them. Don't stick your head through that broken window and sniff at them now in hopes of capturing some fleeting forgotten memory of that one-time smell. The scent of an old car, rotting away in the mercilessly patient attack of rain, sun, snow and ice, is as distinctive as the smell of a new one and as depressing as the new one's is heartening.

I never look at a field of old cars but I think of that original owner, proudly driving it back home and in my mind's eye I share his moment of glory as he feels all eyes on him in envy (whether they are or not is immaterial, the feeling



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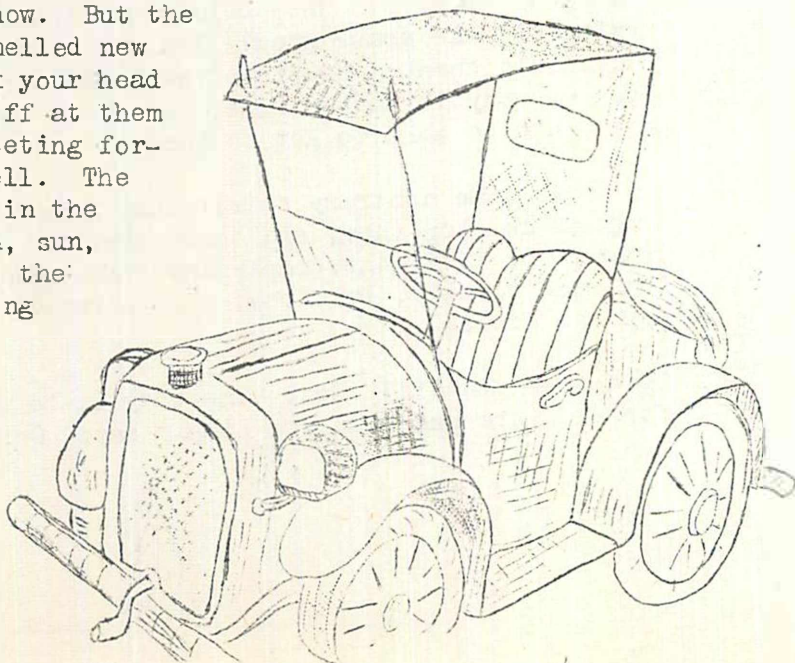
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I never look at a field of old cars but I think of that original owner, proudly driving it back home and in my mind's eye I share his moment of glory as he feels all eyes on him in envy (whether they are or not is immaterial, the feeling



is there) and I sense the excitement as he turns into his driveway and his wife and children come running to see the new car and he proudly shows her the features (Look, dear---four-wheel brakes, the man said they're safer!) and the little boy runs around the car, his dog yapping at his heels and looks up at the radiator cap which has a little disc-shaped protuberance sticking up with a column of red fluid to show when the radiator is too hot (make that year 1928 or 30 now, uh?) instead of the symbolic spear-shape that will be there one day, making the cars appear bent on assembling a pedestrian shishkebab and back by the rear wheel, the dog, with true canine irreverance, is in the act of baptizing it into the family...

Yes, old cars depress me just as it does to drive past a home for the aged, looking at the people sitting there on the benches like condemned ones in some open-air death row from whence there is, finally, no appeal. I can't help skreening back and seeing them as babies (and babies they must have been once), as kids, as adolescents, as young-marrieds just coming into parenthood and so on to where they are now.

I don't know whether I feel the sorriest for them or for some young chap, whose name I've already forgotten. He was 19 years old and he'll never know the feel of hard bench slats on his stiff old rump and the bitter frustration of staring enviously through his rheumy old eyes at the kids going by, the kids whose only virtue is that they were born after him, kids he used to regard with affectionate contempt because he was a grown man and they were---well, they were kids---and now look at them. Somehow they've taken over the whole earth and a cruel fate has refused to make an exception in his case and he's gotten old and tottery and semi-helpless and there's just nothing can be done.

No, as I say, this 19-year old escaped from all that back in 1870 which is when it said he died on his tombstone which sticks up at a wry angle in the little cemetary at Brownsville. I idly noted it while waiting for a customer to meet me there a few months back so we could measure up the school (for a furnace) across the street. I spent a pale sad morning speculating on poor what's-his-name, on what he'd missed and what he'd escaped and what not. It even gave his name sort of like "Peter Newcomb's son, Thomas" as if he wasn't a full man on his own hook yet.

I've even thought of looking up the backfiles of the local newspaper, if it goes back that far, to see if it says what happened to him. It's a pity really, that he died so young because he was one of those favored ones who picked the year of his birth with skill or luck. If he was born in 1851, he'd have been too young for the Civil War though old enough to enjoy the excitement of it and he'd have been much too old for drafting by the time the Spanish-American War came along...ah those lucky generations that are born between wars!

I shot pix for the Milwaukee Journal a couple weeks ago of a wreck where an Imperial had sub-MEARED a 54 Olds. A sad sight, both from Chicago, one going on vacation, one returning. The Imperial was the most de luxe model possible with air-conditioning and everything...seven gees if a dime...both of them packed with the junk people lug along on vacations. I could picture them stuffing it into the car and hollering over their shoulder, hey dijja get the thermos jug? well get it! and like so, little knowing that in a few hours it would be the least important thing in the world whether the thermos jug was along or not.

You know, I think sometimes if a person could fully comprehend the intrinsic tragedy of life itself he would go quite mad in an instant.

'T'ORUS by ED COX

INS'T'ALLMIEN'T'

((Any datedness of the material herein should be blamed on the editor's procrastination and not on Ed Cox, who has been most patient. The writing, of course, stands the test of time.))

HIGHER EDUCATION
IN COLLEGES DEPT:

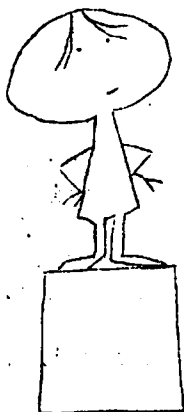
There is a course at Los Angeles City College called Home Economics 8. It's a three unit course which lasts four hours one night a week and covers basic principles and techniques of cookery by means of lectures, discussions and actual participation in the foods lab. Under-

scoring is mine.

I may take this course. Reason is the way a student in my English One class described it to me from what a friend of his, who took the course last semester, told him. It seems that each night (one per week of course) the whole class prepares a full-scale meal. Chicken, or steak, or roast beef or something like that. One girl will cook potatoes; another vegetables; others the main event; others salad or soup; others the muffins or something. They divide up all the work and all get to eat a real dilly of a meal. So our idea is to get in this class. Imagine for only \$2.50 (student body fee for registering no matter what or how many courses you take) you get 12 or 14 weeks of this! Hell, anybody (like me) can fry an egg or boil water or something and then dig into roast chicken!

For poor, hungry bachelors like us, it looks like a good deal. But there must be a catch in it somewhere. I wonder who washes the dishes and pots and pans?

DAMNED IF I CAN
FIGURE THEM!:



True, and I'm not especially referring to women. Some of the most interesting, as well as disgusting, and odd things I've ever met up with were done by people. People is damned funny, sometimes. One of the most recent manifestations of this business was a minor item. Puzzling just the same. Kid name of Benny Sodek, in Texas now, sends me a copy of his faaazine, TACITUM, addressed to me at my six-months-abandoned Hermosa Beach address. ((There, warned you this might be dated.)) This in itself isn't so odd, you say. True. But it is when I had to pay three cents to get it (which doesn't bother me as much as the principle of the thing) when emblazoned at the top of a page within said zine is my full, current address!

DEPT OF MISC: Has anybody ever read a mystery story where the hero, for a change, comes up against an ornate wall?

REAL GENUINE BOOK TYPE
BOOK REVIEW DEPARTMENT!:

Now that the semester is over, I can devote lots of reading time to unrequired reading in the realm of fine literature. So, squeeze in among issues of OTHER WORLDS, I read a short little tome by a poet name of J. A. Mitchell. THE LAST AMERICAN was published by Stokes & Bro., New York, 1889. Its full title is "The Last American, a fragment from the Journal of Khan-Li, Prince of Dimph-Yoo-Chur and Admiral in the Persian Navy." Edited by J. A. Mitchell. It's a small volume; possibly duodecimo. It has seventy-eight pages from Khan-Li's journal with many cuts and full page illustrations. It is primarily a satire depicting the ancient, lost race of Mehrikans and how horribly they lived. Their rapid-paced existence, terrible customs, manners, worship of money and so on. The Prince Khan-Li and his small crew, including Nofuhl, Lev-el-Hedyd, Ad-el-pate and Bhoz-ja-khaz, sail the Zlotuhb into the harbor of Nhu - Yok, the legendary city. They explore the crumbling remains that stretch as far as the eye can see; sail past the enigmatic monuments in the river, and find quite a lot of evidence as to how awful the lost race must have been.

Nofuhl, who seemed to know a lot about them, explains that the climatic changes which occurred around 1990 became so extreme and rapid in fluctuation, that the race perished. Then they sail down to what was Washington, D. C. and amid the ruins of all the great old temples, they find the remains of the Mehrikan race there. Three people. They lived in a huge broken down temple which had a tremendous dome in the middle.

Through the stupidity of Ja-khaz, who insulted the Mehrikan's young female, a tragedy occurs in which several Persians are killed and the last Mehrikans die. So, saddened and puzzled, the Persians leave with a few relics and the skull of the last Mehrikan for the museum at Tehran.

I thought it a fine little story and marvelled at the fact that unlike so many others of the genre, no atomic catastrophe annihilated the Mehrikans.

POME DEPT: No issue of ESDACYOS or ESDACYOS-like column is complete without a pome-type pome to round off the otherwise jagged middle. I often think that readers would rather be satisfied with jagged middles, if they had their druthers, but I'm mean.

So being of a literary nature tonight and having dolve (past-tense of delve: to delve, to have dolve, and like that) back into the 18th century nursery rimes, I come up with a rare bit of ancient, pre-Little Willie type verse. Entitled:

SHORT VERSE ON THE REMARKS OF A YOUNG CHILD IN HIS
NURSERY WHO IS DISPLEASED WITH HIS NURSE (in ramshackle verse)

I like not the way that you waddle
toward the door
(which is locked)
because you put milk
(instead of gin)
in my nursing bottle.

Often my temper you rankle
But I'm not always this mean
(you old bat!)

So waddle on back to me
(you're also too fat!)
And I'll unbind each of your
wrists from its ankle!

As you can see, it's in good, cold, sober taste like the later Little Willie pomes that flooded the universe with their innocent fun.

HEALTH Everybody likes to keep in good shape, even down to keeping the minor,
DEPT: but very discomforting, ills in control. Like headaches, upset
 stomachs and such. Recently a new thing came out. Called FIZRIN. It's
 supposed to ease these and similar ills. You've heard of it or used it. Well,
I hope it's working all right for you. I'm having a hell of a time.

The other morning I woke up with a slight (two or three quarts) headache. Well, I thought, now to try this instant type FIZRIN. I read the directions very carefully. "Pour the Contents of 1 Packet into a Glass." I did this. "--then fill HALF full with water," which I did. Then it says, "Drink while effervescing."

God, I tried!

But I simply couldn't. By the time I was reconcilled to my failure, the FIZRIN was stale. I was feeling off-beat, so the next time, I sat down and tried. I sat there like a heavy rock in a mud-puddle.

Two of my ten packets of FIZRIN gone. So hell, I was real careful. Got a dry glass, poured in the contents of the little foil packet. Took a pre-measured HALF glass of water, poured it in real quick and then really bent to it. I braced my feet and everything. But no luck. I have never felt so helpless!

Damned if I could effervesce! So I poured the stuff down the drain and took a couple of Bufferins.

I hope you are having better luck.

DOINGS AROUND A few Sundays ago Lee Jacobs happened to drop by. I think
 he wanted to pick up a rock & roll record of his he left here.
TOWN DEPT: He uses my phono since he no longer has a hi-fi system. While
 he was here, he snapped a tendril and cursed. "I forgot to
bring tickets!" he husked. I was sort of raspy too, so we drank the quarts of
foul ale he happened to bring with him. By the time we finished those and
planned to get more, I'd found that: a), he forgot to bring his discount Roller
Derby ticket; b), I had some and; c), I was feeling devil-may-carish and what
the hell, I'd go too!

So it was that we were inhabiting a couple of bars downtown and sipping rapidly (known as gulping in lower circles) beer after beer while waiting for "Game" time.

It was about three o'clock Sunday afternoon in downtown Los Angeles that we started looking for a place to eat. Suddenly Lee Jacobs started hiccoughing, or hic-upping, whichever. It was explosive, whatever it was. Especially from C. Lee Jacobs, walking stiff as a board in the best of military manners, wearing old khaki pants, red (glaring ((and he means glaring))) sports shirt, floppy moccasins and crew cut. There he went scuff-scuff down South Hill Street on

the wide side-walk in the warm afternoon sun, "HIC!", "HIC!", "HIC!", "HIC!", every few paces, timed remarkably well, while I, innocent type bystander, tried to mingle with the thin straggle of pedestrians as if I didn't know him.

It wouldn't have been so bad had he stayed away from the cave-like entrances to stores. Here the "HIC!" would echo resoundingly. This was almost as bad as when he spotted a Vampira-type ticket-girl in a movie we passed. I guess she was mildly alerted the first time we went by, but by the third or fourth time the apparition passed; she probably grew definitely alarmed.

But by this time, we'd remembered the location of Clifton's Cafeteria which is well-known in old Los Angeles fanlore. Here we loaded up trays, and Jacobs, hic-ups diminishing, led the way to a table upstairs. Amid the many tables, as we unloaded our trays, I told Jacobs, "Ghod, what a spectacle you made of yourself!" and promptly dropped a large salt shaker into my glass of milk, shattering and splattering milk and glass everywhere.

SUMMER HINT FOR CHOOSING BATHING SWEETS: For summer bathing suits, of course. I am tempted to reprint, without permission, in its entirety, a small item from today's paper (the Mirror-News, which is an untabloid size semi-tabloid, if that helps any) which describes in detail how to choose a swim-suit (same thing as a bathing suit only you get wet in it). One paragraph I will daringly reprint herein (or Pavlat will daringly ditto; I only write this colyum) which will bring down a crushing, saddening weight in the heart of the idealistic fan-artist who draws beautiful women of noble proportions and gravity-defying super-structure.

"Get into the bra portion of a one-piece or top of a two-piece the same way one gets into a regular bra--" There it is, lads, the fateful prelude to the actual, awe-destroying, devastating TRUTH revealed at last, in a common, ordinary public like newspaper written by a lady-female type colyumist. Brace yourselves, kids; here goes with the...the Worst! "...by leaning over into it and then hooking or zipping."

I presume the crushed, young fan-artists didn't even comprehend, or get as far as, the hooking or zipping bit, and will be drawing, instead of bosomy, gravity defying females, rocket-ships, monsters and machines in their fanzines from here on in.

Oh, ghod, I hate myself.

DEPT OF PREDICTION: Ever since Nostradamus, people have been trying to give a hint as to what's due in the future, whether it be which horse in the third tomorrow or when Man will raise a cloud of pumice dust on the Moon. I suppose a few people have had a measure of success whether it be a gossiping Mrs. Grundy over the back fence fortelling that that girl across the block would marry young Jack McSnorp (and sure enough they do get married !...and about six months later....) or the sickening "Criswell Predicts" on television, who is right a good number of times because anybody with researchers and statisticians and so on are going to come up with



W. R.

predictions the layman in the street isn't going to be able to predict without facts.

But to get back to the Moon. Fans have always been guessing at The Year in which Man Trods on the Moon. In polls, over beers during fan-gatherings, in fanzines, in enthusiastic frenzy and so on.

But not only fans. From a blurb before a letter in the December 1945 "Brass Tacks" column of Astounding Science Fiction, we find the estimable Mr. Campbell saying, "Personally, I think you are over-conservative. I'd say we should reach the Moon by 1950." This, you realize, was shortly after The Bomb caused immediate cessation of hostilities on an active level between Japan and the Newnited States.

Two letters further, he says, "First sale of Astounding on the Moon by 1955, I'm betting!"

I should have bet.

STATISTICS, ((Ed intended this to open the column. Obviously, I goofed.))
VITAL, DEPT. It suddenly occurred to me the other day that many of you may possibly wonder (for various reasons) who is behind the by-line of this sterling column. Since Bob has mentioned that this zine has circulation outside of FAPA and considering the fact that many new people may join FAPA, in the next several years, I ought to fire a brief autobiographical sketch of myself.

But I can't draw.

However, I'll go through the usual routine of acquainting fans of my mundane and fannish past. To begin with, I was born. By the time this sees print (I'm also optimistic!), it will have been a few days over 27 years ago. ((Too optimistic, it's now about 27½ years ago.)) Cambridge, Massachusetts was the site and up until 1943 I inhabited various parts of Boston, mostly Somerville. I had a normal upbringing, including school and church. But in May 1943, the family moved to Maine.

It was here, somehow, that I discovered science-fiction and started reading it something tremendously (I can't spell "voraciously"). Like a bowling ball rumbling down the gutter, it was inevitable that I discover sfandom. I did with a vengeance and was soon letter-hacking and such stuff. This gained me notoriety with the postal people in Lubec because, as they complained, I got more mail than any other person in the town. In 1951 (10 Jan) I joined the Newnited States Army (RA all the way) to escape the postal people and after discharge, like any good Fan, moved to Los Angeles. Here I loaf for Douglas Aircraft Co, Inc, Ltd, for a pittance.

I have some hair, brown, eyes (two) also brown; weigh 178 lbs in my Adlers which bring up to 5' 3". I like women and chocolate cake and beer, not necessarily in that order. I've petted little dogs and have been known to smile. I hate celery and olives. I'm a confirmed bachelor and believe the world will end in 1946. I've never sold a story and haven't ever solicited for my sister. I don't have a sister. I believe in cleavage. Well, that gives you a hangnail review of the life, up to now, of E. Mitchem Cox, Esq., except that I meant to mention that television will never replace drive-in movies.

And remember, Y U G G O T H S A V E S ! M O R E !

8

--Ed Cox

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FRED CHAPPELL

Vernon McCain once said that Ackerman's contributions to fandom and stf were easy to reckon, while the influences of Laney, Burbee, and such latter day Isaiahs as Elsberry were difficult to evaluate; and that, furthermore, it was entirely possible that Laney, Burbee, etc. made no definite contribution to fandom which could be reckoned in the same way that one might calculate 4sj's. In this connection, I might quote a letter which I received the other day:

Dear Mr. Chappel (sic):

As a reader of science fiction, you know all about how Univacs and Eniacs communicate. But, how do humans?

DIANETICS 55
by L. Ron Hubbard

is the textbook on human communication.

Anyone working in the sciences should study these exact formulas of human communication.

Send three dollars....

Well, it so happens that I do know how Geniacs and Eniacs communicate, unless the latter means to imply that they communicate with each other. I don't know anything about that. (Details about communication of electronic brains will be sent to anyone who sends me a dollar. Bibliography included.) But it's not because "as a reader of science fiction." At least, not directly. Indirectly perhaps (and emphasize that perhaps): stf interested me in writing, which interested me in poetry--or rather strengthened my existing interest in poetry--which in turn provided the impetus for an interest in the criticism of poetry, and William Empson's 7 Types of Ambiguity led me to Langer's books, Korzybski, Weiner, and the rather frequent Scientific American articles.

"As a reader of science fiction, you know...." The hell I do. I read stf four years before I knew a maniac from MANIAC, but I'm willing to bet that four years ago I'd have read that first sentence and nodded to myself and passed on, saying "Sure, that's what 'Izzard and the Membrane' is about," or something similar. Having swallowed that bit, I'd be completely prepared for the phrase at the bottom: "Anyone working in the sciences...." Immediately I'd think of myself as someone working in the sciences, a serious student of the science of information, eager to know the "exact formulas of human communication."

Today I find the idea of exact formulas of human communication a bit ridiculous, and I shan't beat that phrase other than to mention that the very exact and exacting art of poetry has run (probably) almost contemporaneously with homo sapiens, and that

some of the greatest minds that ever existed seem to have missed discovering those exact formulae. (Shall we now have a panel discussion on the topic: "Is Hubbard Smarter than Shakespeare?")

It is then my contention that the Laney-Burbee-Insurgent attitude has made a very large contribution to fandom and to stf: it has made a large number of fans more aware of the gobbledegook which they can be expected to swallow. The Insurgent attitude has put them in a position in which they are more capable of examining themselves in (to use Walker Gibson's phrase) their role of the mock-reader. The stfan, accustomed to thinking of himself as more intelligent, more aware, more "think in other categories"-type than non-readers, undoubtedly swallows large shovelfuls of this stuff whole. Laney, in declaring that fans were no more intelligent, indeed, appreciably less so, than other people may have made a dent in the fan's metallic attitude that he knows more about science, and sciences, and scientists than other people, which in turn would lower the fan's susceptibility to the hogwash continually thrown to him, e.g., this letter.

I'm not very interested in whether this form-letter would induce some gold-laden neofan to part with three dollars or not; or even whether Dianetics 55 (obviously a revision of the '54 model, and it already '57. Science fiction looks ahead!) would give him some cockeyed misinterpretations of legit psycho-analytic literature. I might even buy the book myself; it might be good for laughs, or, not to judge it before even seeing a copy, it might even set forth a valid approach. BUT: I do object to any fan, not qualified to do so, thinking of himself as knowing about electronic brains because he has read already three issues of Amazing. The attitude of mock-reader, which could easily be permanently grafted to the personality of a continual reader of stf because stf requires the role of a mock-reader more continuously than do other types of literature, is actually inherently dangerous to an individual: it gives one a false, pretentious, know-it-all cast. (This is probably one division of fugg-headedness.) In fandom, this attitude is good for raising and maintaining feuds which is O.K. for guys who like feuds, but in the cold, cold macrocosm it is merely the object of scorn and suspicion.

The mock-reader, in case the term is unfamiliar, is a projection of the self which takes care of such passages as:

To compensate for this, Galactic law requires that two automatic-break circuits be built into the cybernetic governors of all hyperdrive ships, in case of drive failure. The first of these is an instantaneous molecular disruptor that can, and will, volatilize the ship's every milligram of mass immediately upon emergence from hyperspace within critical range of what is defined as a Stress Area.

("Quick Freeze," Bob Silverberg. Some real lulus can be found in JWC's Incredible Planet.)

The reader sets up a straw-dummy projection of himself which understands every word of the preceding: with any background whatsoever he immediately supplies the "cybernetic governors" with transistors and printed circuits to insure them space enough to be included in the bowels of a spaceship. "Hyperdrive" and "instantaneous molecular disruptors" he swallows whole, without any analogues to back up his conception of them, if indeed, he bothers to try to make an image of them at all. A great percentage, probably the majority, of stf stories require some kind of mental setup like this to get over the bald parts. Although they may not be essential to a comprehension of the story line, there is often a feeling that something is missing if such passages are omitted. And though the reader may not know an atom from a zygote, his mental projection

of himself makes excellent sense out of these passages with a pseudo-"understanding." After a steady diet of this sort of stuff a fan might easily consider himself an expert. In other words, having read van Vogt does not make one a semanticist, and no matter how many times you read that the great scientist Zwogly of the thirty-third century discovered Einstein's essential error and made interstellar travel possible, you still don't know from nothing about the Special Field Theory.

And, although these fans might consciously deny knowing anything about science, my guess is that subconsciously they think that they do. (I Guess: I was once startled by a Boggs statement that "Subconsciously every fan wishes he was Campbell or Gold." I don't believe it.)

This attitude is the one that Laney and Burbee are excellent antidotes for, and I think that this contribution to fandom is somewhat greater than Ackerman's. The kicker is that I don't agree with them: I'm willing to accept that at least 50% of fandom is more intelligent than the average nonfan. No matter how gregarious they are at conventions, and no matter how many juvenile things crop up again and again in fandom, I believe that most fans are rather more intelligent and aware than most people, and that they fall into Riesman's "inner-directed" classification. My belief is that fandom holds a good many fine second and third-rate minds ((?!)) and that some first-rate minds are fringe-fans. (The one that comes most easily to mind is Al Ashley.) Whether psychologists would consider their interest in stf healthy or not, I don't know. Also I don't care. That point is sort-of irrelevant.

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On the other hand, "fandom is a way of life" is a quotation embodying sheer nonsense, just as it would be if you were to say that "the numbers racket is a way of life." Both fandom and the numbers racket may be excellent ways of making a living or satisfying a hobby urge, but neither one is a way of life because life is life and there ain't no ways about it. Unless you deliberately are trying to drive yourself into psychosis.

So that phrase is out, or should be after the Insurgents, Elsberry, Boggs, McCain, etc.

But "it is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan" is a true phrase, although its emotional context is silly, petty, sentimental, and self-pitying. Some of the semantic burden of this dictum is strengthened by stf itself, although the main emphasis of meaning derives from some fan's (either Ken Beale's or Dave English's) sudden vision of the microcosmic aspect of fandom. The attitude of loneliness and pride in that loneliness (here thinking of loneliness as a by-product of a single individual's severance from society) is more often the attitude of the heroes of stf stories than any other single attitude. It is, as Henry Bamford Parkes (Modern Writing #3) mentions, one of the metamorphoses of Leatherstocking.

How many stf stories can you think of wherein the protagonist is, at the beginning and continuing through the story, a satisfied member of whatever society he belongs to? Damn few. Most of them end up either by changing their society or by escaping from it. (Or in Final Blackout by both, or in 1984 by being submerged by it.) Heinlein is almost the sole exception. The protagonist vs. society caper shows up in most writers blatantly: Bester, Hubbard, Kuttner, van Vogt, knight: you name it, it's there.

Sturgeon presents a rather curious case: his protagonists in rather Kafka-like gestures seem to burrow down into society and nestle away from it into their own private, self-created universes wherein weird and wonderful stories can happen to them: some guy always drinks tequila down at Rudy's, or has a guitar which he plays for beautiful blondes or has a copy of the Analects on rice-paper. More Than Human has the queerest cast of outsiders since the last Brick Bradford serial.

The attitude of alienation, then, is easily picked up by fans, even by those who normally would resist the attitude. Ray Nelson and others try to resist this fission by proclaiming a fusion with the Outer World: Fandom is to normal fans just a hobby, a form of recreation. But any hobby which carries the stigma of the cultural expatriate is more than a hobby, and considerably less than a way of life. This attempt at fusion would, because of the non-fan background of some fans, and did reach the point of the ridiculous, notably in Eva Firestone's (???-- or G. M. Carr's) "Christian slans in slandom reading slanzines."

There is nothing wrong ethically or intellectually with being a cultural expatriate, of course. Such a thing is an American prototype, both in Literature and in history, but there is the danger, rather common to neofans, of falling into a pattern of rejection. Because they belong, however loosely, to a group whose main sympathies are with rejection, they reject, without knowing why, or for that matter, just exactly what it is that they are rejecting. Lose a lot of fans that way; they find that they have rejected things they enjoy, and figuring (correctly) that fandom was the cause, give up fandom. I can hardly blame them: there is no use in fitting your square peg into round holes. Of course, one may have made a mistake, and the hole was not round after all, but why take the chance? And anyone who says that fandom doesn't exhibit a dominant rejection pattern is either blind or lying to themselves--or just plain lying: the fact is almost self evident.

Matter of fact, I suggest that without the rejection pattern fandom wouldn't exist in any recognizable form at all. I don't mean to say that every fan is at heart a Futurian or a Fanarchist or that he believes that stf can help to produce a better world of the future. But I do think that he's got an irk and a peeve against the outer world. This doesn't necessarily make fandom an escape, or at least no more escapist than a thousand other activities, but it does insure fandom with a cohesive quality which it probably doesn't recognize and anyway (thank Ghod) can't capitalize upon. It certainly doesn't make fans more articulate: I have to disagree with Bloch, given the medium and the opportunity, any old crock of people would be as articulate as fans. What with the prevalence of letter columns and the editors' perennial lack of material, I'm shocked that 100% of fandom hasn't had something published in fmz.

Now should come the clincher, the point, the moral of this article. There isn't any. I wanted to make a bunch of separate points and I was too lazy to write a bunch of articles. The points:

1. That the Insurgent influence had a definite contribution to fandom which is easily ascertainable, more so, in fact, than Ackerman's.
2. Science fiction requires a mock-reader; the mock-reader attitude, if continued in a personality as a trait, is harmful, and can be counteracted by an injection of Insurgentism.
3. That the alienation attitude definitely exists in fandom, and is, in part, fostered by the nature of science fiction.
4. The the alienation attitude is a cohesive force in fandom.

And many others.

DE VOID, continued from cover.

There are a couple of letters to be quoted. The first is a postcard from Aelsoa (nee Nelson) M. Griggs:

"In the August issue of CONTOUR, Ed Cox points out (in the DEP'T OF RELIGIOUS MANIFESTATION) that you will see the familiar sign "JESUS SAVES" most anywhere these days: on roadside signs, on a car, on a boulder, and even on the Richfield Tower in downtown LA. Yes, you'll see JESUS SAVES anywhere. Except on a bank."

Told you that boy was a fan.

Next, is an anonymous letter. To you, that is, not to me. The fan hasn't said she wishes to be nameless. In fact, she hasn't said much of anything to me recently. But she did write the following after the visit of Lee and Larry Shaw to the British Isles way back last Spring:

"We went to supper with Lee and Larry to the Elizabethan Room of the Gore Hotel in London, where they serve dinner exactly as it used to be served in Elizabethan days. Complete with recipes, drinking soup out of bowls, rushes on the floor, candles and buxom wenches. They served Mead and Claret. I didn't have much but it was enough. I was O.K. until I got up to go and then I giggled all the way downstairs to the car which we had hired for the day. It happened to be raining and the windscreen wipers were a source of great amusement to me. Apparently I kept pointing and giggling and saying 'Tick, tock - funny tick tock!' Finally everyone joined in with 'My Grandfather's Clock' and a rollicking good time was had by all. I'm told I behaved very well, but my husband did take the precaution of seating Walter between us on the front seat - he thought I might interfere with his driving - silly man!"

And then there was also a recent conversation here that rather struck my fancy. It all started when we sat down to a highly unusual fish dinner on a Thursday (we have religious scruples against eating fish on Fridays):

"You mean there's nothing in the bible about eating fish on Fridays?" asked my brother Frank.

"No" was mom's reply.

"Hm... What was the name of that fisherman?"

"Paul?" I answered, too quickly.

"No, Peter" corrected mom.

"You aren't intimating that there might be a bit of crass commercialism behind this fish on Friday business, are you?" I asked.

"Well...Yes" Frank admitted.

Mom looked vaguely like she thought she should be shocked, but a grin broke through. "After all," she said, laughing, "Peter was a Jew."

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