

IN SEARCH OF ARKHAM

Providence is a city raped. The Mall  
slashes the centre without rhyme or reason.  
Over the downtown, in and out of season  
exhaust from freeways hovers like a pall.  
I am not one to speak of Progress' taint,  
nor do I feel that age alone is good;  
I see no virtue over stone, in wood,  
and for itself I'd not preserve the "quaint."

But here a city stood whose history  
three centuries could boast, from Hutchison  
to eerie Lovecraft; echoes of time run  
gave our stark bleak new world some mystery.

Perhaps it had to be. Pagans in times past  
their first and fairest on their altars cast.

Marion Zimmer Bradley  
Providence, September 1971

DAY\*STAR ) FAPA Feb. '72  
ALLERLEI ) Marion Z Bradley & Walter Breen

STENCIL GAZING: IN SEARCH OF ARKHAM. As the poem on the previous page might serve to suggest, last fall I made a brief trip to the city associated with H.P.L., and found nothing old or worth seeing. Possibly I simply didn't know where to look, but not until I had left Rhode Island and driven to Fall River, out on Cape Cod (Fall River, as most students of American history know, is the place where Lizzie Borden did, or maybe didn't, her famous thing) did I find any traces of old New England. It's a pleasant city, and the famous Mall of Providence is a pleasant place to shop, but I have discovered to my shock, recently, that virtually all cities have lost any individual character they might ever have had, in favor of huge high technological centres and commercial medicine shows...I mean Shopping Centres. I suppose this is inevitable and I don't wish to get into a discussion of the rights and wrongs of it. I notice that those who rave over the unspoiled nature of any given area are seldom those who actually live there, and those who actually have to live in the unspoiled country--which usually means bad roads, unavailability of services, no jobs, and pervasive poverty --feel it could use some spoiling. And after all, it is their to say. Any artificial attempt to preserve "traditions" which are no longer living can result either in museums...good enough... or mass-produced fakery, as in the enormous number of pseudo-Pennsylvania Dutch restaurants, souvenir shops and Ye Olde Olde Gifte Shoppes, which hardly differ from Lancaster, Pa, to Pheonix Arizona, except for the names; the tourist-oriented trash they produce is all the same. (I have heard one finds the same thing from Iran to the Hebrides. One might as well stay home.)

My trip to Providence, therefore, wound up as no more than what it was meant to be--- a brief break after having written, under great pressure, a hasty pot-boiler; a few days away from the kids, the typewriter and the telephone. I stayed in a small inn in North Attleboro, Mass., enjoyed excellent fish (it's hard to get them in New York unless you go Fancy Expensive) and spent much of the time lying on the bed in my hotel room, reading paperback detective stories and enjoying the absolute luxury of having no little voices interrupt me at five a.m. or two p.m., of not having to fix a single peanut butter sandwich while I was trying to write a poem.

For I can work, and write, at home. I don't like to, especially, but I have done it all my life. Most of my books --which now number 27 or 28--have been written with one ear to the kids, nose alert for any signals that the stew on the stove is burning, and with school plays, tantrums, sibling rivalry or nervous breakdowns taking place all around me. I have rarely had so much as a room to myself in which to write; my novels have mostly been written on the dining room table or in a corner of the dining room, on a card table in the living room, and some of the best chapters have been written literally sentence by sentence interspersed with doing a week's ironing. I often wonder what I could have achieved had I ever been able to count on even four hours uninterrupted every day or so? Now that Moira is in kindergarten I may find out, since (barring unforeseen and unwanted Acts of God,) she is to be my last child.

I'm not exactly complaining. Most writers have to find some means of ~~w~~ earning their daily bread while they serve the first few million words of apprenticeship, and despite the shrill

caterwaulings of the Women's Lib component, housework is no more "shitwork" than anything else which men might have to do. I can't see that a woman is more degraded by washing dishes in her own kitchen than by selling ribbins in Woolworths or dress patterns in Macys. I would rather cook for my own family than hustle short orders in the local hash houses.

I've never wanted a career, or rather, I've always thought of writing as a career...even though I never sought it, but fell into it....and so any job I took had to be so structured as to leave enoumous chunks of time and mental energy free for writing. I discovered way back in 1948 (God, that makes me feel old) when I was writing nothing but poetry for Little Magazines and think-pieces for fanzines, that I could not survive the kind of "good job" that most of my equally-well-educated contemporaries wanted. I took one good office job, because my family seemed unhappy to see me working as a waitress or in a steam laundry. (I was a college girl, I wasn't supposed to work at such menial tasks!) So I went to work for Montgomery Ward. It was a good job. It paid me almost forty dollars a week, which for a single girl was good pay. Only when I got home at night, after a day of struggling with it, I couldn't even read, let alone write. I quit that damn job, and went to work as a waitress in Schraffts, for twelve dolla's a week and tips, just so I could think again.

Lately a lot of women, especially in Women's Lib, have been saying things in magazines like "Read a book? With two kids--forget it!" or "What I resent about housework and kids is the way your intellectual life goes to pot." I suspect these girls of not having much intellectual life to start with, and using their housebound status as an excuse. I have spent twenty-odd years in undiluted domesticity, with very little household help, and most years none at all, and my intellectual life is doing just fine, thank you. I have 27 books to show for my mental activity and physical energy. I have also edited fanzines, contributed to the underground press, founded a branch of the S.C.A., acquired a college degree and part of another one, and I still cart home ten or twelve library books a week, and what's more, I read them, too.

Granted, I have been married to men who had no interest either in society or status. Brad was a loner whose idea of a perfect evening at home was to fiddle with his radio equipment all evening and drink a couple of cups of coffee, and if I had not been the kind of woman whose idea of a perfect evening at home was to read a good book or write a fanzine article, our marriage would hardly have lasted fourteen months; let alone years. (His idea of a festive evening was to see a Western movie at the local drive-in, with perhaps a sandwich at a restaurant afterward. Excellent for the development of a writer's philosophy. Parties play hell with writing time.) Furthermore, Brad, although tidy, was not house-proud, and if he came home to find me working madly against a deadline he would cheerfully fix himself--and David--a sandwich and even bring me one.

Walter, although more demndding (thank God!) of my time and companionship, is a writer himself, and knows what it is like. Not that Walter and I are anything alike as writers. He writes non-fiction and technical material, spends at least half his time in

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research, then writes in great spurts, spending eight, ten, twelve hours at his typewriter and violently resenting any interruption, even food. Ideally I should let him lock his door, or take the kids and go out, tiptoeing in every four or five hours to put down a bowl of food or a cup of cocoa beside his typewriter, and slipping away again without a word.

Me? I--well, I don't thrive on interruptions, exactly, but I have gotten so accustomed to them that I never notice. Only if interrupted for trivia (I define trivia as any childish request less important than "Please tie my shoe" ~~WALTER~~) will I yell or scream "Go away! Dammit, I'm busy!" Normally, requests for glasses of milk, tied shoes, peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, bowls of soup, or where-in-hell-is-the-address-book, disturb my train of thought not at all. Walter asked once how I did it, and after some introspection I figured out that the time I spend at the typewriter, actually writing, is just the final draft; most of the actual writing of my novels is done in my head, while I make beds, wash dishes, iron clothes, or window-shop aimlessly. It seems to be a subconscious process, and probably explains why I can seldom sleep without reading a few chapters of something gripping like a detective story--it turns off my own compulsive mental processes and gives my brain a rest. This explains how I have sometimes written a potboiler in ten days or a novelette over the weekend---that was just my typing time for the final draft.

God knows how I will feel when the kids are in school full time and I can write without these interruptions! But meanwhile, I still feel that the housewife has it all over the woman with an outside job.

Furthermore, Walter, unless he is working full time and commuting (his daily commuting time is an unholy four hours a day, by bus, ferry and subway, which means that on a 10-to-5 job he leaves home at 7:45 and returns at about 8:00) is willing and able to share household responsibilities with me. Many's the time he has, when the kiddies were small, diapered and bottled them, or spooned pap into them, and if all the bedtime stories he has read were piled up in one stack they would probably give some competition to the Alexandrian Library. (My throat usually gives out in five minutes). He takes them to the playground, fetches them from school or day camp, and while he rarely does much cleaning except in emergencies, he can cook either an adequate meal for a hungry child, or a superb meal for a discouraged and weary housewife. If all house@husbands were like him, there would be damn little "feminine rage."

But every now and then it all piles up on me, and when that happens I climb into the car and head for a convention, or alternatively kiss the kids goodbye and spend one or two days--rarely more--just Getting Away from it All in a hotel somewhere. When we get rich I'll probably climb in a plane instead. It's the only way I can re-establish firmly in my own mind that I am, inside, not that thing which stands over the dishpan or spreads an assembly-line of peanut-butter-and-jelly, or cream-cheese-and-olive sandwiches, or explains for the umpteenth time why the sky is blue and why the ferryboat lands only at the slip, but a Serious Creative Human Being in my own right. (or in my own write? Ooogh.) What I produce on these occasions is seldom salable fiction. Sometimes it's poetry, sometimes it's an essay, sometimes it's just a memory of what a church steople looks like by starlight. It can't be measured. Whatever it costs, I

STENCIL GAZINGS: page four, and I doubt if I'll keep this up much more.

put it down under "mental health." Maybe other women would choose, instead, to enroll in a college course (I did that for a couple of years in Texas) to study art, to join a Women's Lib encounter group, to take lessons in Yoga or to attend concerts. I have often thought that if I were willing to sacrifice these occasional mini-vacations I could have some of the other things. Instead I choose the most expensive of luxuries for a mother in the second half of the twentieth century; privacy and solitude. Even from the most beloved of children, the most adored of husbands, the most enjoyed of jobs and homes, I choose for a time to live as if I had no husband, no child, no friends, no duties, no deadlines, and no tomorrow. To live, in short, in a brief beautiful vacuum in which someone else cooks my meals and makes my bed, in which I am free to turn on the light at 2 AM and write a poem or go to a movie, in which I answer (and ask) no questions and make no conversations, in which I eat or go hungry, nibble crackers and choose in my hotel room or dine late and alone in the company only of a book. This kind of selfishness and privatism, carried out all through a year or even a month, would probably weary me to death, but small concentrated doses of it are life-giving and sanity-saving, and for them I sacrifice clothes, possessions, and occasionally solvency itself. An interim compromise? I don't know. Who dares too closely examine those secret compromises and changes by which we survive in an over-demanding world? Would I really cherish a secret desire to be a hermit, a hippie, a recluse? And if I did, what could I do about it? At this particular point in time, I feel that my destiny and structure is to educate two gifted and demanding children, to keep house for a talented but precariously well man, and to demand for myself only so much time and privacy as will enable me to remain myself, no more--but certainly no less. What the karmic implications of this life may be, if I question, I do so briefly and with a shrug. It may be significant that of all the nursery rhymes and proverbs I memorized as a child only one remains with me;

For every evil under the sun,  
there is a remedy or there's none;  
If there be one, try and find it;  
If there be ~~XXXX~~ none, never mind it.

And it may also be significant for those who like Instant Psychology that my daily prayers are only two in number, and that one of them is the simplest one I know;

"Lord, give me the strength to endure the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can change, and the wisdom to know the difference."

At twenty this struck me as a horror; at thirty it struck me as a cynic's way out. At forty it seems a pretty good compromise for any person who has assumed duties not entirely consonant with one's own desires. At fifty, or at sixty? I'll never know till I get there, but back when we were all wondering "Will the world survive?" and other people were making plans in case we were all blown up next year, I was saying to myself....

"But suppose we live?"

## FRAGILITIES

Successful lovers  
  may well be  
Those who early know the other's  
  vulnerability.

Those who know love best,  
  early may discover  
What the wounding barbs and prickles  
  try to cover,

And holding one another as  
  a small and fragile shell  
May hold each other precious,  
  loving lone and well.

-MZB

## SHANGRI LA

Up from the valley, dark against the dawn  
We struggled, wuth our eyes fixed on the sun.  
The peak attained, we paused within the pass  
And turned; and looked our last on Shangri-la.

But here we found a world without the sun  
Grown colder, while we dwelt within the jewel  
and heard the lotus lights; therefore we turned  
and sought the pathway back to Shangri-La.

The mountains close about us endlessly  
and all our pathways end in icy cliffs  
sharp rocks, or landslides, gaping down to death.  
And we could not return to Shangri-La.

Still in the sunless world we seek the song  
That turns to wind, and one more icy peak;  
in every face we see, we see the dream--  
For no one can return to Shangri-La.

-MZB

WB for the moment

## A FEW LINES FOR DICK SCHULTZ

CONVERSION EXPERIENCE: A couple of years too late, MZB and I have become both Trekkies and devotees of Mrs Emma Peel. We had stopped collecting even fapazines well before you left off pubbing RIGGER DIGGER, and while that zine was still being issued we did not even own a TV set, being exposed to the things principally in motels. Hence the zine meant little to us, as we'd never seen an Avengers program. But some time after moving to NYC, we began to realize the hard way that anyone whose living quarters were two hours away from concerts/operas/etc. (even were tickets available, which they usually aren't)/public libraries, money aside, needs to find his diversions in some other manner. Between this need and the equally urgent one of providing some babysitting for the kids, we finally broke down and bought a TV set. Coincidentally, during this period Avengers came on right about the time the kids were dropping off to sleep; and our usual practice was to watch some program which would not keep them awake.

Result: two instant converts. Better late than never.

We've enjoyed the exploits of Mrs Peel ever since, even though she explicitly lacks the selfconscious avant-garde intellectual pretensions of The Prisoner (which is, one must admit, the most Kafkaesque of all TV serials). But our pleasure in Avengers begins and ends with Emma Peel's tenure as a Ministry agent. Trouble is, for the often Mission Impossible-like feats demanded by the Ministry, an agent requires a rare combination of high intelligence, instant (almost intuitive) ability to integrate clues into an unexpected pattern and deduce at once a correct course of action--preferably one that has not been forestalled by enemy agents' own planning; and a tremendous diversity of special skills, from expertise in antiques and perfumes (shades of Sherlock Holmes!) to driving racing cars, karate, and major impersonations. One can believe all this of Emma Peel; one can even believe some of it of Diana Rigg, who does appear to have done much of her own stunt work; but not of whatsherface Linda Thorson. (I, WB, have never seen any of the Honor Blackman [sp?][ episodes.] And I fear that, suave though he may be in on out of his bowler, Steed/Patrick MacNee is too much of a lightweight (especially compared with Mrs Peel) to sustain interest after her departure for other roles. What would Star Trek be without Mr Spock? What would Mission Impossible be without Paris?

Evidently other people feel much the same way. Within the last couple of months we've seen numerous graffiti in the NY subway system which must have come from other Rigger Diggers. More than 3/4 of them consist of a stark rubberstamped message:

EMMA PEEL LIVES!

Others seem to be barking up a slightly off-track tree:

MRS PEEL -- YOU'RE NEEDED!

(What would she be doing in NYC?)

I would personally suggest, as an alternative to a couple of earlier button slogans,

WHERE IS MRS PEEL NOW THAT WE NEED HER?

Dick--Has anyone yet begun work on an AVENGERS CONCORDANCE parallel to the STAR TREK CONCORDANCE? Holmes had his W.S. Baring-Gould, Mr Spock his Dorothy Jones, and Emma Peel may well profit by their example.

A RIGG BY ANY OTHER NAME :: When the regrettably short-lived British play ABELARD & HELOISE hit Broadway, we broke a loooooong tradition of avoiding the overpriced B'way theatres and went to see it, partly because of its intrinsic interest for any Anachronist, partly because we had dug Diana Rigg as Mrs Peel and wanted to see how she would do in some wholly unrelated role--or perhaps even more to the point, just what could she have forsaken the Ministry to play?

The reviewers could have rubberstamped

DIANA RIGG WAS SUPERB

in the traditional manner. It was an eerily convincing performance.

As for the play itself, it was excellent but so much over the heads of the audiences as to allow them to miss some of the best lines. British audiences no doubt were howling in the aisles at some witticisms which were not enough to bring even a dozen chuckles on B'way, and the difference is entirely attributable to USonian audiences being as innocent of a classical education (or of a knowledge of the Middle Ages even suitable for a British schoolboy) as of Tibetan. Some of the sharpest punch lines, the wittiest sallies, the most ingenious verbal pyrotechnics, were completely missed. Two or three times we found ourselves joined in laughter by only a couple of other people in the audience. And the reviews sounded more bewildered than superior--quite a change from Clive Barnes's usual tone among others.

It follows, then, that the audience also missed the profound parallel between the times of Abelard & Heloise and our own; between this pair of intellectual mavericks and our own dissident/dropped-out/radical types; between Heloise and modern feminist thinkers; between Abelard and any present-day scientist who still tries to preserve his own integrity in the face of contradictory Establishment fads & pious frauds. And it was this very parallelism which gave the play much of its pungency & poignancy.

The fate of Abelard is the fate of most of society's Prometheans. Abelard's real crime was not that he had an affair with Heloise: it was that in the name of truth he showed his Paris students, and the clerical university faculty incongruously assembled, that their verbal juggling was in fact a series of dangerous games rather than an honest search for the truth. He made it plain that a genuine search for the truth was likely to be attacked as heresy, so deeply had the commitment to pious fraud and delusion gone. Abelard, in a dangerously honest moment, was heard to say 'But I can prove anything from the writings of Augustine.' To anyone trained in logic, the consequences were horrendous: then he could



also prove the contradictory proposition! With a mind like this on the loose, no sacred cow was safe. Sooner or later one of Abelard's students would use the techniques of Sic et Non on holy scripture, using diverse texts (all allegedly equally divinely inspired even unto the begats) to prove first one thing then its exact opposite till neither the divinity of Christ nor the Trinity nor holy Mother Church itself would stand unshaken. If you can prove both a proposition and its negation, at least one of the two must be false to begin with, quite possibly both. And if Church dogma can be proved false by human reason, then is reason no safe guide to identify heresy.

And so Abelard had to go, and--like Leary and Wilde and (at the other extreme) Savonarola and Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy--to go in greatest disgrace lest a Napoleonic comeback ensue.

All these world figures became great only to fall; all questioned Establishment axioms; all were (at least in their own eyes) valuing truth and integrity above current status games or sacred cows. Leary and Wilde and Abelard also were thought to exemplify one or another of society's gravest fears: Abelard, that the Church's logical basis was sheer delusion and heresy could be validly proved; Wilde, that the poet or dramatist or artist would inevitably be a sissy and a sexual deviant; Leary, that the seeker after eastern religion and mystical enlightenment would not only drop out of Establishment status games but induce enough other good minds to do likewise to endanger their continuance.

Whether or not one believes that Savonarola and McCarthy were justly attacked, they believed they were attacking ancient abuses, and they too exemplified a major source of panic: namely that one's most secret thoughts and feelings--no matter how juvenile, how evanescent, they might have seemed at the time--would be permanently held to one's discredit (like one's FBI dossier), this principle extending equally to failure to condemn a neighbor's deviations ("guilt by association").

Had Abelard contented himself with issues incapable of affecting pious frauds, he would have lived in as high honor as Aquinas. Had Savonarola attacked only commercialization of spiritual things, he would have been a prime candidate for the papacy. Had Wilde either confined his attentions to his fellow club members and others of his own class, or had he kept his street boys in bed and avoided publicly dining with them, he would have been tacitly allowed the same foibles as many other members of the Albemarle Club or almost any public-school graduate throughout the U.K. Had Sen.McC. confined his attentions to reasonable places like the AYD and the Jefferson School, nobody would have thought of starting a move of censure. Had Leary restricted his investigations to within pages of PSYCHEDELIC REVIEW instead of holding public festivals and enticing college people to drop out, he would probably still be on some Ivy League faculty, as immune to prosecution as Alan Watts, instead of being a fugitive in Switzerland.

Heloise's problem was of altogether another order. As much an intellectual giant as Abelard, she had the misfortune to be a woman, fatherless, and the ward of a major church figure. In that day of arranged marriages, no honorable course was open to her.

Given the churchly laws and social sanctions of that day, for Heloise to do the Mia Farrow trick would have seemed little short of blasphemy, in some superstitious quarters thought to risk plague or other divine disfavor--which might strike indiscriminately at her baby and her relatives (even the nonconsenting ones), if not the entire town. (People believed then that there were few or no real accidents. If you got sick it was because somehow you had deserved to--a position curiously echoed in scientology.) Given high death rates of the time, women were precious and thought to need protection especially if in a position then or later to inherit, or manage for the heir, any kind of estate. To lack any such protection--specifically parents or husband--was to invite predatory nobles to start a war, just as to fail to produce a male heir was to render title to land a matter of doubt often settled only by land sharks' wars. With no husband for protection--under-age virgin, widow past childbearing, or "dishonored" and therefore not marriageable--a woman's sole recourse would be to enter a convent, allowing her nearest male relatives to assume the duty of keeping the family lands out of invaders' clutches.

Heloise's uncle had neither son nor nephew; his sole option was to find her a titled husband, preferably one who could command a small standing army to protect the lands and perquisites due to Heloise after his own death. Obviously Abelard, despite his tremendous repute, would not do; after all, his calling was not armed defense of territory but intellectual games, i.e. the Church and university.

Of such conflicts is tragedy made. At the outset, Heloise could not bear to dishonor her father's memory and her uncle's life by open defiance, nor could she bear the idea of an arranged marriage with someone who inevitably shared no more common interest with her than do you or I with the average sharecropper. (Serfs were much the same kind of thing then as sharecroppers today, except that they were slightly less literate.)

After Heloise had decided on the least evil course, that after all there was nobody else with whom she'd willingly share life more than Abelard, for awhile she did live with him outside of wedlock, not caring that she was regarded as his whore. If the average cleric could keep a mistress, why should she be above being mistress for the greatest of them all? Not only did she love him, but they were obviously in some weird sense meant for each other: equal minds of like interests.

And so it was only when she eventually sought to regularize the relationship, to marry Abelard and legitimize their child (no bastard could attain churchly rank any more than he could inherit land, save by papal dispensation), to give the child at least the open choice--and to avoid breaking her uncle's heart--that tragedy struck. Her uncle became blinded by paranoid rage. Heedless of the effect on her and her baby, he hired an oafish lout to castrate Abelard. Unprotected, Heloise had to seek refuge in a convent. Abelard left public life for a monastery. Nowhere else in Christendom could either one continue to be assured even of daily bread.

Before Women's Lib could become an imaginable concept, let alone a reality, women had to become something more than the precious transmitters of heritage (and property); primogeniture had to go down the jakes.

In losing a protected status, women had to lose the disadvantages that went with the advantages. This could ensue only when the protection became less biologically urgent, i.e. when infant mortality went down, and wars over unprotected estates became less common.

Diana Rigg's interest in the role of Heloise becomes understandable. Mrs Peel is as much a maverick intellectual giant as Heloise, and with somewhat comparable disadvantages. For her even as for Heloise, a conventional married life as half of a husband-and-wife team would inevitably be a comedown, even if she were lucky enough to live in a part of the world where she could get her housework done by someone else hired for the purpose.

#### A FEW LINES FOR THE L.A. CONTINGENT

AND MANY CHEERFUL FACTS ABOUT THE ... So great a flood of tosh and drivel has been said and written of late about the Aquarian Age in recent years as to render anyone who even mentions it suspect--or even liable to ridicule for perpetuating nonsense.

For all that, in my own work, one of the commonest questions asked me to date has been "Is it true we're entering the Aquarian Age--and when? What do Aquarius people have to do with it? What does Uranus have to do with it?"

The answer is very simple, altogether unlike what one might expect from a mere knowledge of Sun-sign astrology, and likely to be a disappointment for the more gullible.

The usual mythology about the so-called Age of Aquarius is that it is to be a new Golden Age, its social forms characterized by equality, justice and peace, human misery supposedly near its end even if human struggle is not to be. A few have even gone so far as to claim that existing technological advances (whatever their cost to the environment) are the direct means to reach these goals. Many of the formulations appear to derive from a confused mishmash of vague idealized nonsense about the sign Aquarius, its "ruler" Uranus, and the solar eleventh house (counting from Aries as the first). It can be quickly and easily shown that these are one and all irrelevant.

The "Age" to which you or I, or anyone of any given year or historical epoch, belongs, is defined in one and only one way: by the name of the constellation (not the sign) in which the Sun is located at the spring equinox. In European sign-based astrology, the spring equinox defines the beginning of the sign Aries, but it can occur in a different constellation. Since about A.D. 221, the spring equinox has occurred when the Sun has been passing through the constellation Pisces. From about BC 4100 to BC 1963, it occurred when the Sun transited the constellation Taurus; from BC 1963 to AD 221, the constellation Aries. (Hence the names Taurean and Arian/Arietic ages, though these names were not in use during those periods.) The Aquarian Age will not begin until the spring equinox begins to occur with the Sun in constellation Aquarius. This will happen beginning in A.D. 2376, though most probably some religious and other social institutions which are to dominate that epoch will have begun to appear before then. However, to confuse the properties of the constellation Aquarius

with those of the Sun sign of that name is precisely to commit the very same error of which many astrologers have been unjustly accused--i.e. ignoring the precession of the equinoxes.

Precession is the name given to the visual effect of a small wobble in the earth's rotation, such that the North Pole projects a small circle among the fixed stars in a period of almost 25,800 years. One of the side effects is the perpetual retrogradation of the Sun's position among the constellations at successive spring equinoxes--about 50" of arc per year, 1° per 72 years, 30° or one constellation per 2160 years.

When the Greco-Roman astrologers gave the 12 Sun signs or solar houses the names by which we now know them, the spring equinox occurred while the Sun traversed the first few degrees of constellation Aries. Partly in confusion (the belief that this would remain true for at least a few more centuries, precessional rates not then being accurately known), partly because the constellations were then an excellent visual marker of the signs, these astrologers fell into the habit of referring to sign and constellation by the same name. However, the ensuing couple of thousand years has produced enough precessional motion so that sign and constellation no longer coincide.

And so the Aquarian Age has nothing in common with the Sun sign Aquarius except the name, and that is a coincidence.

However, it is legitimate to ask what kinds of social changes are to be expected as the Aquarian Age approaches. The question is well outside the purview of astrology--which is just as well, all things considered--and comes ultimately under the heading of longrange social rhythms, of patterns in history. Even a little familiarity with the latter--even if one does not go in for speculative edifices like those of Danilevsky, Spengler, Toynbee, Sorokin--will show that from one astronomical Age to the next, one dominant group of religious and secular institutions has given way to another; which is another way of saying that a particular type of institutions characterized any one given Age. Examples:

Taurean Age. Cults of the Mother Goddess were all but universal. Women tended to be found at the heads of extended families and religious centers. Society tended (with a few exceptions) to be organized as tribes, which were usually too preoccupied with survival to waste much time in open warfare. Toward the end of the Age, invaders of "Arian" type began overrunning many regions, driven away from their own homeland by drastic climatic changes.

Arian Age. The usual religious archetype was worship of a diversity of gods under one cosmic father figure. Matriline and matriarchy gave way to primogeniture and patriarchy. Warfare was increasingly common and an increasing threat to survival of even the largest settlements, so that women became an increasingly protected group, with corresponding loss of freedom/autonomy/decision-making status. An increasing divergence between home life and work or intellectual life became manifest. Tribal or clan or extended-family organization gave place to city-states or fortified towns ruled by a patriarchal hierarchy.

Piscean Age. A rigid monotheism prevailed. Unlike all previous religious systems known to me, those of the current Age discarded direct experience as a phase of religion, in favor of belief in the unknowable, the unperceivable--blind faith. Even surviving forms from previous Ages--Judaism, some forms of Buddhism--eventually dropped the expectation that God would answer prayer or in any way manifest his existence. Oracles, which were once major foci of ESP/precognition/healings etc., were abandoned or destroyed. Patriarchal families eventually gave way to "nuclear" families (husband, wife, and their children, and nobody else); inheritance by the male line gave way to inheritance by bequest; Warfare became not even a small-scale trial by ordeal (so to speak) but a thing hitherto unheard-of (outside the Battle of Kurukshetra in the Bhagavad Gita, if that be taken as having any historical basis)--vi . total war. City-states gave way to nations. Apparently uniquely to this Age, man's image of himself has consisted largely of animal/material body and immaterial soul as opposed types of beings with opposed aims, each a drag on the other; development of either was thought to be at the expense of the other. Such views did not exist in Arian or Taurean religions/cultures, and we may conclude that they will not exist in the Aquarian Age to come.

Aquarian Age: Will differ in dominant religion(s) from any preceding. Will probably abandon the Piscean Age "blessed are they that have not seen and have believed" in favor of direct experience religion. Will abandon the notion of body opposed to soul. Will have some other form of family structure than the nuclear. Will probably not be patrilineal or patriarchal. If Arian or Piscean Age religions survive into this period, they will do so only after drastic changes. The big cities will also be unrecognizable then, either because of massive decentralization or a back-to-the-land movement. But nothing more definite can as yet be said, except that any current Establishment institutions are Piscean and will pass away.

Towards the end of the Taurean Age, invaders of Arian type (patriarchal worshipers of the Sky Gods) began to move into European/Mediterranean lands. Towards the end of the Arian Age, barbarians were knocking at the gates of Rome with their peculiar customs. Towards the end of the present Age--probably already though hardly recognized as such--external or internal proletariats (in Toynbee's phrase--there is no familiar term which quite fits. Deviant outgroups? Oppressed minorities? Near, but not quite near enough.) have begun/will be beginning to make footholds; and some form of the Aquarian Age religion to come has most probably already begun in some as yet unrecognized form. If it were fully recognized, of course it would be crushed by those now in power, even as the Roman emperors tried to crush seventy-odd forms of Christianity, Gnosticism, and Manichaeism, those being the major political threats. In all likelihood, the unrecognized and possibly still unrecognizable embryo of the religious/cultural basis for 24th-25th century man and his descendants can even now be found in some freaky commune.

--WB

## A FEW LINES FOR POUL ANDERSON

Having just finished reading both TAU ZERO and THE BYWORLDER, I regretfully conclude that the old complaint "when did the best novel ever get the Hugo?" applies in this instance, literally and beyond doubt, at least to TAU ZERO.

I suppose that many before have said it--I have not been getting the fanzines which might have contained reviews--but TZ is pretty much the ultimate treatment of the "Return from Zero" theme. Of course, as far back as AEV's VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE series we find the notion of a survivor of the time before the end of the previous mahayuga, before the great contraction which preceded the big bang-cum-expansion. But only in TZ is the theme adequately treated.

However, I assume that with the possible exception of Jim Blish, Jon DeCles/Don Studebaker and one or two others, few have earlier pointed out in print that TZ is in at least implicit contrary motion to Karl-Birger Blomdahl's space opera ANIARA. In the latter, the basic situation is that of a crew realizing that their self-contained space ship, fit for a journey of vast stretches of time, if in fact lost beyond possibility of return. But ANIARA is a tragedy, suggesting the fundamental religious parallel: man, on an endless voyage on Spaceship Earth, has lost his God and his purpose, his origin and his destination alike. Whereas TZ is not only not a tragedy (despite the perpetual exile from Earth), it ends with one of the grandest triumphs since Olaf Stapledon, so far outdistancing the usual AEV formulas as to make the latter seem ridiculous. In AEV the paradigm is "Little man suddenly realizes he is, and has been all along, really the Galactic Controller in a clever p(l)ast(ic) disguise which had fooled even himself." In TZ, it is "little group of humans find out that their accident was--no matter whether by chance or design--the necessary ingredient for giving homo sap a second chance, a new rebirth." The Book of Revelation's almost Ouspenskian line "Behold, I make all things new" is here shown as being fulfilled in a way its author might never have suspected but which--were it to happen--would be certainly worthy of such a prophecy.

Poul probably would never have thought of TZ this way, and he might well repudiate the description, but TZ is in a very real sense a religious classic in a class with several of Stapledon's. He is dealing here (as did Stapledon) not with Mr. G and Mr. JC by any other names, but certainly with cosmic forces far transcending human control and ultimately transcending human understanding. And his theme here is in part the confrontation between man and these forces--and the longrange consequences. This is precisely the primordial theme of religion, millennia before the Roman church obscured everything. Anciently--and in some cultures to the present day--religion consisted not of theology with superstitious observances, but of man's attempts to tune in with these cosmic forces, to adapt his own type and level of consciousness and life style ("tune in") so as to co-operate with these forces, not to ignore them or combat them. (If you doubt me, check any of the relevant anthropological literature, from Malinowski to Carlos Castaneda.) That it should turn up in Poul's writings is a little more surprising but not in the least absurd. A perhaps more clearcut statement can be found in THE BYWORLDER, where the Sigman has taken Wang, Skip and Yvonne around Saturn, to allow them to react to the awesome spectacle of the Rings. And awe is the precise term, for does not Yvonne say (p.138) "If we could tell them when we get home...Tell them in a way to make

them believe. How little we are, we humans, how big we could be, how squalid our intrigues and quarrels." But this is precisely the kind of content of many religious revelations (once you manage to get beyond the linguistic framework and down into the true inwardness)--whether induced by Sacred Mushroom, peyote, LSD, or "spontaneously" i.e. after long meditation, yoga, prayer&fasting, etc. Man is seen in cosmic perspective: a sentient particle enmeshed in vastness, the arena for forces beyond control and (for most of human history) beyond understanding, forces creating design and pattern on a scale and of a complexity it has literally taken generations and centuries to assimilate even in small part; and that we co-operate with these forces, else we perish.

Conceivably one may deplore the way Poul ended BYWORLDER, but the ending can be read in more than one sense. It would be superficial to characterize it as merely another political tract attacking Red China. It would be far more accurate to say that here is a tragedy following on one intelligent and basically good individual's confrontation with his own programmed (brainwashed?) version of nationalistic paranoia.

For it is. in the strictest sense of the word, paranoid for a nation, tribe or culture to adopt the view that it is surrounded solely by enemies intent on its imminent destruction. This particular delusional process in an individual outside that particular culture is correctly identified as arising from dysperception or patterned, even systematic, misinterpretation of perceptual inputs--viz. schizophrenia or drug poisoning etc. But in a culture such as the Mundugumor, the Kwakiutl or the Red Chinese, etc., such a view in an individual is likely to assume the guise of superpatriotism, and thus immune to deprogramming, as by shock therapy, major tranquilizers, etc. Even otherwise relatively less insane cultures such as our own have gone through recurrent periods of local or national paranoia. Examples include the millenarian idiocies, the persecutions of the 1200's, Salem of 1692, and some areas of Middle America in recent years--not to mention the grisly examples of some Southern areas ever since the Reconstruction period, and Germany under Hitler.

Of course other kinds of delusional processes exist in groups, tribes, or cultures. The Millerites of the mid 1840's, who sold everything and retired to the hills to await the Second Coming and World's End, were surely deluded, but they seem not to have been paranoids.

But the lesson is clear enough: even the most innocent, intrinsically nonthreatening person can become the victim of a carrier of nationalistic paranoia. For "Sigman" read "dropout," "antipolitical man," or even "hippie" in the original sense of the kids who want to S.F. with flowers in their hair, trying to build a New Community which at worst scavenged the leavings of Consciousness I & II rather than parasitized it. For "Wang" read "political activist," "revolutionary," "McCarthyist" (Joseph R, not Eugene!), or "John Birchler." And if Poul, with his basically cautious conservative political views, refuses to say so in so many words, still the implication is clear enough. Political /nationalistic paranoia is still mass insanity and potentially fatal no matter what color its flag.

Speaking of hippies brings us back to the question of religious experience, since many of the true idealistic ecstasies among the Flower Children were trying to promulgate philosophies/lifestyles based on a series of experiences which they subjectively interpreted as religious. Note that in BYWORLDER Skip and Yvonne reach the conclusion that the

Sigman experiences the flow of time at a different rate from ordinary human consciousness; and that he/she/it is biologically adapted to a greater rate of sensory input than is the human in ordinary states. Only during the passage round the Sun do the humans have even an adumbration of the latter; and Skip offhandedly alludes to it as psychedelic. I do not know if Poul ever experimented with psychedelics, but he is saying plainly enough that the greater sensory input and altered experience of time do alter one's outlook--hence obviously the Sigman's differences in psychology from the humans'. A head writer would have put it more simply and plainly. the Sigman normally reacts like someone on a trip--but he is always spaced out, and able to cope anyway.

One implication of all this is concealed from the average reader but is clear to all occultists and most heads. The flow of time is not one of the basic properties of the universe independent of man. Immanuel Kant might have found his answer to that question, had high-grade hashish or charas been available in Königsberg in his day. Ouspensky, peaking on mescaline, addressed Kant: "Think in other categories!"

What we have learned with great difficulty, with the aid of the most powerful chemical catalysts known to science, turns out to be what initiates of the mystery religions had known millennia before: time/space is a construct, an agreement among the created on how to perceive and describe their surroundings. From which it follows that in certain circumstances one can perceive it differently (but equally correctly); in other perspectives, sometimes standing outside it altogether: "opening up the doors of perception to see things as they really are--infinite," "infinity in a grand of sand, eternity in an hour," "A thousand years within Thy sight / Are but as yesterday just past / Or as a watch within one night." TZ is a lyrical and even awesome exploration of some implications of the relativity of time.

And concealed within the classical Lorentz factor [ $\tau = \text{root}(1 - v^2/c^2)$ ] is a corollary long known to occultists, ESP researchers, etc. Anything having zero rest mass will continue to have it--and age not at all--while traveling at  $c$ , with  $\tau = 0$ . The human soul/spirit/thetan has zero rest mass, by definition; astral journeys (and, apparently, thought) travel at  $c$  or very near it, for which reason--since it is a relativistic matter of point of view whether you travel past a given locale at  $c$ , or you are at rest and the point is traveling equally rapidly in the other direction--a seeming few seconds may turn out to have occupied many clock hours, or more often a journey subjectively lifetimes long will turn out to have occupied a few clock minutes, like many hours- or weeks-long dreams. Which also puts a different face on the famous sotires of apparitions of the living (or, usually, dying) from the late Padre Pio all the way vack to ancient Greece--to name only one of a vast series of implications.

Poul Anderson thus takes his place in a long and honored tradition, whose representatives can be counted on one's fingers: Olaf Stapledon, Ted Sturgeon, Arthur C. Clarke--and know Poul himself. All of these are as devoid of theology as a like number of computers or atheists, yet all are creators of novels mm nearly as profound in a specifically religious sense as many of the great archetypal myths. I trust that it may not take too many generations for the fact to be appreciated.



LEAVES FROM AN UNKEPT DIARY:

I must assume that Providence has either lost its original Puritan character, or that I should not lose any more weight unless I wish to encumber myself with a chaperon on my further travels. On this recent trip I have been receiving propositions as I did in my early twenties, and have not received since my daughter's birth. (I except s-f conventions, where I assume that something other than my gross physical charms is the attraction.) It is my habit when I dine alone to shield myself by intently reading a book, lest boredom and curiosity lead me to stare about me in a manner which--when I was young and naive--some male recipient, he believes, of my random glance, falls under the misconceptions that I seek or would welcome his attention.

On one occasion during this last trip, having replaced my book in my handbag while I awaited my bill (are they called waiters, I wonder, because one spends so much time waiting for their ministrations?) a gentleman stopped by my table and asked me to join him in the bar for a cognac. Since he had already partaken all too freely of his proffered tippie, I refused the honor courteously (in any case I dislike both bars and cognac.) On another occasion, a gentleman seeking his room invited me to ~~XXXXX~~ accompany him to a movie. He may have simply been lonely for his six daughters (who, by his years, probably were of my years) but, although tempted, I also declined. Tempted, yes, I certainly was: Walter dislikes most movies and I am not fond of going alone. But not tempted enough to risk anything further than this blameless entanglement. And on yet a third occasion, as I was innocently examining the contents of a rack of detective fiction (for which I have an addict's passion) a man about the age of my oldest son addressed me as "blondie" and suggested we might get to know one another better. I don't know what he had in mind, and didn't trouble to find out--I rarely speak to strangers in public unless they are hippies, since I can always trust the hippies not to be either importunate or offensive --but I doubt if it was a solicitation to accompany him to Evensong in the Cathedral.

Although once, on a subway train, an obviously lonely foreigner asked me to go to church with him, and I directed him to St. Patrick's Cathedral and walked there in his company, although I did not attend the service: and on another occasion a grandfatherly gentleman with a Yiddish accent, telling me his wife was in the hospital, asked me to spend the day with him at the racetrack and promised to take me to a Broadway play that evening. I was, on this occasion, severely tempted; and I am, furthermore, certain I could have gone in safety; the man was upwards of seventy, frail, and far from dissolute in speech and manner, and after all, rape or even importunate impertinences would be unlikely either on a subway train or at Aqueduct raceway (where I have never been); but alas, I could not that day spare the time!

So much for my career as a reluctant siren!

K A T W E N

(Before the birth of every mortal child  
a Veiled One stands, offering a golden cup  
and silent words;

drink and be born; forget.

But Katwen was not thirsty on that day  
when she was thrust, too soon, into this world.)

and now;

She stands as one who hears, unborn  
the music of an unformed ear  
called out too soon, condemned to hear  
the music of an unheard song.

Before her eyes unfolded on  
the world of kitten, doll and toy  
she watched, bedazzled, where beyond  
a still new world of wonder grew.  
And blooming from an inward look  
uncoiled, on her own secret spring  
a world too lost for listening.

The music from a secret star  
the far-off pipes of pixyland;  
not moving to a different drum  
but not yet knowing; which is drum, which I?

and dazzled into silence, till her eyes  
unlock, and her stilled lips unfold  
a tale too choice for prattling.

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This has been DAY STAR/ALLERLEI, combined with one another and  
issued for the February, 1978 issue of FAPA by Walter Broen and  
Marion Zimmer Bradley, currently domiciled at 2 Swaim Avenue,  
Staten Island N.Y. 10312. Of late one or two friends have  
handed us envelopes addressed to us at the above direction, which  
have been returned to ~~VENETIANE~~ their sender with the stamped  
statement "NO SUCH ADDRESS"--which is, of course, a damn lie. If  
you know of any such returned mail, please contact us; we are  
currently attempting to Raise Hell with the Post Office over it.  
Credits, OE: MZB pp 1-6, 17-18, WB the rest.