

THE DIAGONAL

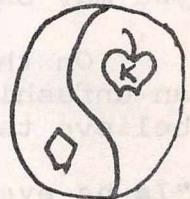
**CITY AND U.S. DIFFER
ON MEAT INJECTIONS**

2

RELATIONSHIP



Bewilderment Rife



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A DOG'S GARDEN OF VERSES
Florence van Wyck. A Yorkshire Terrier presents his fascinating views in this appealing, whimsical book. Drawings and Photo. illus. \$3.50

"Well, he done done it again."

"Yeah, give 'em a little encouragement...."

Welcome to the second issue of THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP. WE got all kinds of goodies for you this time, leading off (p.1) with NEW FAITHS, which offers three--count 'em, three--Brand New Religions, any one of which may be able to bring you happiness & peace of mind, especially if you get in on the ground floor before all the good franchises are taken.

After an inspiring message taken from a recent TV soap opera starring David Frost & someone whose name escapes me (I believe it was called Bullshit Means Sometimes Having to Say You're Sorry), we have (p.2) ON A CRUMBLING WALL, a look at the so-called "sf ghetto" from one who has never felt locked in or locked out.

I've always wanted to write a book, or atleast an article, called FUCK, and since DR is also an orgy of self-indulgence, I did it. It starts on p. 7, and it's about semantics.

Perhaps some of the more faint-hearted will return at p. 9 for SEE WHAT I MEAN, which is an attempt to analyze sf psychologically. I do believe that sort of thing won't do you any real harm if you don't take it seriously. Anyway, the approach I use is Jung's typology, and not once do I accuse anybody of writing the way he does because of sex problems.

In response to the veritable groundswell of apathy inspired by my alleged poems, I have another one on p. 12. Whatever else you may say about them, they're short.

On the same page begins MY FAVORITE HERESY, in which I defend an unfashionable & persecuted worldview. (And don't we all love to believe that our views are unfashionable & persecuted?)

"Is he ever going to shut up?"

I was just coming to that. On p. 15 I begin to shut up (well, intermittently, anyway) & present the letter column, starring Frederik Pohl & a cast of dozens. At the risk of bringing in an abrupt change of tone from the prevalent smartass, I do appreciate the letters. We've got some good people here.

Is this a good issue? As the World's Largest Chipmunk would say, "Trust me. I'll never lie to you."

"In a democracy, every citizen should have the right to create a private reality and try to sell it as the real reality."

--Robert Anton Wilson, interviewed in COVER ONE

"If you take care of your body, you can use it over and over again."

Alex Hawkins

NEW FAITHS

"Where's my God, and where's my money?"

--Rev. Eugene Mc Daniels, "Compared to What"

Marxist Meditation. I, Perfect Master Guru Mahalingam, have invented this form of spiritual sustenance for all those who think back longingly upon the days when they thought they could change the world through political action. While I cannot divulge all the secrets of the Method to those who have not gone through the preliminary exercises (like crossing my palm), I can reveal that the essence of the Method consists in repeating certain mantra (like "Power to the People") until one attains a feeling of Oneness with the Proletariat. (I wonder what Rennie Davis is doing these days.)

Fifties Faith. Once America was a paradise. Eisenhower was in the White House, and all was right with the world. Then God sent us a temptation; He allowed Russia to put up a Sputnik. Not realizing that this was His way of telling us to leave Godless science to the Godless commies, we fell, rushing to imitate them. God punished us by raining plagues down upon us, including Civil Rights, Sex Freedom, Marijuana, Long Hair, the New Left, Women's Lib, Gay Lib, Assassinations, & the Energy Crisis. But if we repent, accept David Eisenhower as our Saviour, & give up science, we may yet be saved; doowop music will come back, uppity minorities will know their place again, and we'll be able to drive around all day. (In spite of the obvious dumbness of this religion, I have a horrible feeling that if someone manages to say it with a straight face, it will be very popular. It combines antiscience, anticommunism, 50s nostalgia, & miscellaneous bigotry, which seems unbeatable. David Eisenhower not only has the Magic Name, but he may help satisfy nostalgic yearnings for Howdy Doody.)

Plasticism. A prolife religion which goes beyond mere vegetarianism. Our Holy Book, Doctor Carrot, will portray the cruel & sadistic ways in which human oppressors torture, kill, & even eat gentle, wise, loving vegetables who are In Tune With Nature. Our believers will be called upon to eat nonanimal, nonvegetable sacramental substances like Baskin & Robbins, Big Macs, & Twinkies. There is always money to be made in telling people that they must do what they want to do anyway.

Those who feel that they are temperamentally unsuited for the exploitation of religion may wish to consider another Growth Industry: Psychology.

I made a somewhat slighting reference to Dr. Wayne W. Dyer in the previous issue, and I just want to say from the bottom of my heart that I meant it. His book is both good & original, but never both at once. (See the writings of Albert Ellis & Eric Berne, among others.)

In addition, Dr. Dyer's prose style is so artificially sweetened that the FDA may investigate it. Then there is Passages, which may inspire many of its readers to feel guilty because they are not undergoing the crisis appropriate to their age, not to mention all the assertiveness books, which will convince many readers that they really should be assertive, since an authority figure told them to.

Have you noticed that every year there's at least one million-selling book which promises to solve all your problems? By the reasoning that was applied to American body counts in Vietnam, we may conclude that by now, every man, woman, & child in America has had all of his or her problems solved 2.7 times.



NOW I UNDERSTAND

"I am not a crook," Richard Nixon, 1974

"If the President does it, it's not unlawful." Richard Nixon, 1977



ON A CRUMBLING WALL

1. My Fellow Deviants

....Now wait a minute. This time I'm not trying to offend anybody. I am merely referring to the fact that many of my readers grew up believing that they were doing something disapproved & abnormal--reading science fiction.

Carl Becker has pointed out that "deviant" is something you're called, not something you are. Obviously one can be deviant only in respect to a given norm, and there are many different norms. As George Bernard Shaw says, only a barbarian believes that the customs of his tribe are the laws of the universe.

But I'm sure we all know a few barbarians. To some of these, the norm is White, Male, Protestant, Right-Handed, etc. The relatively enlightened among these believe that since the deviants were born that way, it isn't their fault that they're inferior.

Then of course, there are the deviations that people choose, such as science fiction, marijuana, and homosexuality.

Some of you may say that the differences I have enumerated are diversity, rather than deviance. If you feel that way, good for you. Defending diversity is like defending apple pie & the flag. Everyone is in favor of diversity (just ask them), but deviance is merely diversity that the speaker disapproves of, just as some people define perversion as "any sex act I wouldn't do."

But there are people who consider these groups deviant, including some members of the groups. Those who have been taught to regard themselves as deviant tend to react in several predictable ways. At worst, they internalize the stereotypes & try to live up to them, like those females who believe that silliness & incompetence make them Real Women, or to be more precise,

Real Girls. Others overreact in the opposite direction, trying to prove that they are nothing like the deviant stereotype (or to put it another way, that they can be just like the normal stereotype).

But deviant groups may become self-aware. When they realize that they are lied about & oppressed, they band together. They find role models from their own group, inventing them when necessary. (In the 20s, when the Yankees dominated baseball, Black fans whispered that Babe Ruth was passing, while Jews said the same about Lou Gehrig. Gay & left-handed people, among others, have made up similar lists.)

They then may evolve into movements. Individuals publicly declare themselves (if they are not immediately identifiable) and challenge the nonsense that has been spread about them. They may demand the right to name themselves ("Black," not "Negro").

This approach has been proven useful by many groups, but it does have drawbacks. One is the equal & opposite problem I mentioned last time. Some may decide that the whole group should live up to the deviant stereotype, adding only that the deviant stereotype is better than the normal one. Another pitfall is the Radical Self-Pity Syndrome, in which the individual comes to the self-defeating conclusion that he is so oppressed that only the Revolution can save him, so any action to improve his own condition is futile. (Of course, there are people in any movement who don't fall into either of these traps.)

I believe that the movement is a step, one which should be built upon, rather than lived in. William Bruce Cameron speaks of US groups & WE groups. US groups see themselves as objects; they say, "Look what They're doing to US." WE groups see themselves as doers; they say, "Look what WE can do."

Every movement starts out as an US group, defining itself in terms of what the oppressive They are doing to US. Thus any attempt by members of the group to make peace with Them, or even any success in Their terms, may be seen as a sellout.

Obviously, it's more fun to belong to a WE group. And many minorities are making that step. Blacks, the first movement to form, are starting to do it. They say, "Black is beautiful." Like Jesse Jackson, they say, "I am somebody." They search for their Roots. And they set about the business of freeing themselves, instead of bemoaning their oppression.

Here's another example: Historian & gay activist Martin Duberman recently wrote an article on gay people who have come out of the closet. He reports that many have found this a beneficial step, increasing their self-acceptance & honesty. He also reported an interesting side effect: A significant number discovered that they could now, for the first time, enjoy heterosexual relations.

Now let me make it clear what Duberman did not say. He didn't say that these people gave up homosexuality, and certainly not that they should. He did not say that to be "healthy," a person must be able to enjoy heterosexuality. He merely pointed out that, through self-acceptance, some people were able to add a pleasurable new dimension to their lives.

I mentioned sf a while back. I think I can find almost all of the deviant qualities I've mentioned in sf. I have read many autobiographical accounts by sf writers & fans which point out how they were persecuted as deviants--"Buck Rogers stuff," "sci-fi," & for the older ones, "nonsense about people landing on the moon."

In the 50s, sf was in the early stages of self-awareness. Closet readers hid the stuff & never admitted that they read it. Others sought out alleged mainstream people who were really writing sf, though they dared not admit it. (Some were even so hard up as to claim Ayn Rand & Herman Wouk.) Meanwhile 2 sf writers made it out of the "ghetto" in the 2 traditional manners.

Ray Bradbury was a Credit to His Race. Mainstream critics may have patronized him a bit, but they tended to agree that if all of them were like good old ~~Rastus~~ Ray, there would be no problem.

Kurt Vonnegut Jr. passed. He insisted that he didn't write that sci-fi stuff, and they finally let him into their club.

In the 60s, sf became a movement. There were media activists like Harlan Ellison. There were affinity groups like NEW WORLDS. There was a demand for recognition by the colleges. And there was the predictable counterrevolution. (Somehow Lester del Rey reminds me of an Old Leftist attacking student demonstrators.)

There was also an equal & opposite reaction. Not only would we not let them call us "sci-fi," we would call them "mundane." Otherwise intelligent people like Heinlein & Wollheim said with a straight face that the mainstream is a sewer. Mainstream fiction, they informed us, is nothing but grim psychological realism, most of it dealing with masturbation. The fact that some sf writers had borrowed or adapted techniques from the mainstream was taken as sufficient evidence that their work was no good. Others insisted that sf remain true to its old nature, eschewing mainstream temptations like characterization & stylistic improvements.

And throughout was the fear of Them. They have all the power; They are the oppressors; They wish to coopt US; anyone They like must have sold out; etc. And if academe wished to take up sf, They must be up to no good.

Freud said, "The paranoid is never entirely mistaken." That seems to apply to those who fear the academic acceptance of sf. Horrible Examples abound. Darko Suvin & David Ketterer attempt to bury the field under a mass of impenetrable verbiage, boring the nonacademic reader to distraction with their attempts to pin down sf with a definition. "Historical importance," a literary term for works which have no other type of importance, is venerated; deservedly forgotten 19th-century trash is reprinted in volume, and an entire issue of SF STUDIES is devoted to it. Ancient

dogmatism which have been laughed out of mainstream criticism reappear. (A recent attack on John Brunner for daring to suppose that hereditary factors might influence people reminded me of Lysenko.) Leslie Fiedler says that sf should glory in its pulp qualities. ("Be proud that you can tapdance so well.")

We all know what English courses can do to people. John Holt has told of a woman who said, "Thank God I'll never have to take an English course again!" She was one of the lucky ones. The unlucky ones say, "Thank God I'll never have to read again!" I cannot prove this, but I will conjecture that every stupid & oppressive form of teaching that has scared people off Serious Lit is now being applied to sf.

The last thing in Pandora's Box is hope. Instead of focusing on all the things They (enumerated above) are doing to US, let's look at what WE can do. For one thing, the academic world is not entirely composed of Them. Jack Williamson & James Gunn were probably the first of WE to infiltrate, and now Our name is Legion. Joanna Russ, Doug Barbour, & Susan Wood may be professors, but they are obviously on Our side. Our agents, led by the intrepid Gil Gaier, are reaching the more impressionable high school students. Tomorrow the Worlds!

And it's better than that. Even if the academic world were worse than it is, its powers would be limited. They can write their tiresome little publish-or-perish articles; they can pontificate on the Essence of Superfluous Fornication or Speculative Fabulation or whatever; worst of all, they can make sf seem so boring that they send the poor kids scurrying to the yellow-&-black book surrogates. But what they cannot do is make their definition stick. They can say what sf is, but they cannot stop people from reading & writing books that do not fit into their little pigeonholes.

What is done out of love is better than what is done out of fear. Look at Arthur C. Clarke & Frank Herbert, who are achieving popular success with what is unquestionably sf. Look at Robert Silverberg & Philip K. Dick, who are beginning to be recognized for their literary & creative merits. Look at Ursula Le Guin & Samuel R. Delany, who are doing both. Look what WE can do.

2. From Both Sides Now

There is another kind of deviant experience. Some people grow up without knowing that they're deviants. For instance, I have a good friend who appears to have been born with an enviable immunity to many different strains of bullshit. Presumably she heard much of the prevalent nonsense about What Girls Can Do, but very little of it took. And she is not alone.

Gore Vidal says that he grew up taking for granted that it is possible to enjoy various carnal goodies with either sex & that there is no point in sticking to one or the other. And he is not alone.

I never read sf in the closet. My father, perhaps because he is a countryman of Karel Capek's, never believed that sf has to be crap. He encouraged me to follow him in this heresy. I suppose that some of my teachers tried to warn me off the stuff, but they were also telling me such transparent nonsense as "Wordsworth is the greatest poet ever," so they were clearly not to be taken seriously.

And so I grew up biliterary, and I am not alone. O, there was a brief time when I ran with a pack of English majors & turned my back on my roots, but before long, I stumbled across a copy of *The Demolished Man*, and I was back.

It is said that when Queen Victoria was presented with a bill which would outlaw various deviant sex practices, she said, "Female homosexuality? How absurd! Whatever would they do?" Since no one dared tell her, Lesbianism was never outlawed in England.

Whatever would they do? Many of those who prefer one way cannot understand what people see in the other. Those who go both ways may wonder why anyone would restrict herself to one. And so it is with literature.

Of course, there are reasons for sticking to one kind of book --some good, some not. There are people who have accepted one of the equal & opposite stereotypes. And since there really are differences, some people will reasonably prefer one. Those who, like Barry Malzberg, believe that the purpose of fiction is to "deal one-on-one with contemporary reality" will tend to prefer mainstream. Those preferring a more visionary approach will read sf.

And yet, one is also struck by the similarities. Both sf & mainstream are diverse. Both include writing styles which range from the eloquent to the barely literate. Both may show great inventiveness, or rehash hackneyed ideas. Both may contain sex. Both may contain violence. Both may have simplistic one-dimensional characters or fully rounded characters. Both may bring a message of hope or a message of despair or no message. Both may be serious literature. Both may be mindless trash. And so on.

Let me tell you a story. A woman lands on another planet. Her mission is to discover how the place really runs. She is able to speak their language, and has little trouble communicating with the natives, though many of them are a bit odd. The heroine receives many fascinating & tantalizing hints, all of which the reader shares. But much of this information is ambiguous. Perhaps things are as they appear on the surface. Or perhaps there is a secret society that runs things. Or perhaps the secret society is a fraud....

OK. So I lied to you. The story does not take place on another planet, but in Southern California. (It wasn't much of a lie.) The book is *The Crying of Lot 49*, by Thomas Pynchon. (I placed a repeated nonverbal reference to the book in DR, and only Jeanne Gomoll mentioned picking up on it, though others probably have read the book.) It's short and it's funny. You don't have to be one of these mainstream weirdos to enjoy it. Try it.

FUCK

One of the lies they told me in school was that swearing shows that you have a limited vocabulary. Maybe they don't tell that one now. In any event, a recent sociolinguistic study purporting to verify the hypothesized negative correlation obtaining between magnitude of functional vocabulary & the utilization of blasphemous, scatological, & sexual verbiage has irrefutably demonstrated that it's a crock of shit.

They also said that you should pride yourself on selecting the precise word to express what you are trying to say. Fair enough, but as I am sure many of you have noticed, sometimes the precise word is "fuck."

There are at least 2 styles of dirty talk, which may be called the Nixon & the Johnson. The Nixon style offends because it's tiresome--the constant repetition of "expletive deleted" to no good purpose. The Johnson style, on the other hand, is creative. As Imus says, swear with flair. The "dirty" words are treated as linguistic resources, to be used skillfully. Thus, when LBJ was asked why he did not fire J. Edgar Hoover, he is alleged to have replied, "Because it's better to have him inside, pissing out, than outside, pissing in."

And yet I note that, even among people who should know better, the words are misused. For instance, the slogan of the Linda Lovelace for President Committee was, "Now let's have a good-looking cocksucker in the White House." Clearly the implications of that slogan are a vicious & unjustified slur upon our nation's cocksuckers. After all, we'd be a lot better off if Nixon had spent his 6 years in pay toilets, giving harmless pleasure, instead of in the White House, doing what he did.

It's an interesting problem. We all believe--or say we believe--that sex is a Good Thing, yet many of us use words like "fucking" and "cocksucker" to refer to Bad Things. In this issue, Carol Sather suggests that such use of words indicates an antisexual attitude. I'm sure this is true in many cases, but Carol may be giving people too much credit for thinking about what they say.

The human mind is a truly marvelous device for filtering out unwanted data, and we all compartmentalize our thoughts. Perhaps there are men who can think of fucking as something beautiful & loving, and at the same time use the word "fuck" to describe what they want to do to their business rivals, and never notice a contradiction.

I suppose that if we were truly civilized, our obscenities would be accusations of violence and/or dishonesty. ("Don't give me any of that napalm, you motherkiller.") But if we do want to keep using sex words as dirty words, we can at least try to be consistent.

Albert Ellis pointed out one ingenious solution years ago. If you want to speak negatively, use the prefix "un-": "a fucking good time," but "an unfucking bad time." Or, "I got unscrewed on that deal." In the same vein, I would like to propose the replacement of "So & so sucks" as a term of abuse by "So & so sucks badly."

And yet there's probably more to our unpleasant use of sex words than sex-negative conditioning & antigay bigotry. It may be based on a typically mammalian confusion of sex with dominance. There is a well-known experiment in which a small male monkey is placed in a cage with a large female. The little fellow immediately "presents" (assumes the female sex posture) to show that he knows who's boss.

But you don't have to think of it that way. We are not just naked apes; we are also naked apes. Homo sapiens may be the only mammal that does it with the female on top (which means, as John Sladek would say, that it's unnatural, like writing letters or brushing your teeth).

Perhaps our attitudes & our words are beginning to change together. "Ball" is a relatively new verb for the sexual act. It's the one sex word that is most frequently used symmetrically (you can say, "She balled him" as well as "He balled her") & also the only one that doesn't mean what you do to your political enemies.

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O YES, THEY REALLY DID SAY IT

"We are menaced by a flood of pornography which will inundate us all if we do not stick our fingers in the dikes."

--Richard Nixon (before he got caught)

"I'm amused at the way sex came into [Heinlein's] writing as soon as he got out from under John W. Campbell."

--Peter Nicholls, FOUNDATION 7/8

"America must move forward with the atom bomb in one hand & the cross in the other." Sen. Edward Martin (R., Pa., 1948)

"A society with a single head is stronger, more peaceful, and more in conformity with nature since it imitates the monarchical structure of the family." Paul H. Hallett, What is a Catholic?

"With God's help, we will lift Shanghai up and up, ever up, until it is just like Kansas City." Sen. Edward Wherry (1939)

"Sex is as pure & wholesome as cottage cheese."

--Marabel Morgan, The Total Woman

"'Oh, I can't explain!' cried Roderick impatiently, returning to his work. 'I've only one way of expressing my deepest feelings --it's this.' And he swung his tool." Henry James, Roderick Hudson

SEE WHAT I MEAN?

John Brunner wrote a story with that title once. The idea was that those who think in words & those who think in pictures may have so little in common that they may be unable to communicate with each other.

There are, I think, quite a few differences like that. Jung talked about several of them.

For instance, consider introverts & extraverts. Contrary to the popular belief, Jung did not define introversion/extraversion in terms of behavior, but in terms of attitude. Introverts see things in terms of the self (not necessarily their own self); extraverts see things in terms of externals.

On a philosophical level, this leads to a basic, and at times unbridgeable difference. To an extravert (like Ayn Rand), reality is real. It's what is, and that's all there is to it. See what I mean? To an introvert (like me), it is every bit as obvious that everyone lives in a separate reality, and that what we think is "out there" may be something we are projecting-- part of the map, not the territory. See what I mean?

Jung further divided people on the basis of 4 functions:
 THINKING is logical analysis & problem solving.
 FEELING is emotion--positive & negative evaluation.
 SENSATION is careful & precise perception & treatment of details.
 INTUITION is leaping from one subject to another.

Clearly these functions can be paired off in opposition. To the thinking type, the feeling type wants to mess things up with a lot of gooey emotions. To the feeling type, the thinking type is cold & heartless. Similarly, the intuition type may see the sensation type as a boring little plodder, while the sensation type may see the intuition type as a crank.

The way Jung used these classifications was to say that everyone is primarily either introverted or extraverted; everyone has one of the 4 functions as primary function; and everyone has a secondary function, which cannot be the opposite of the primary function. The opposite of the primary function is the individual's weakest function; the opposite of the secondary function may be fairly strong. This seems to check out in my own case. I diagnose myself as an Introverted Thinking-Intuition type; yet I've enjoyed, and been good at, sensation-type work. Jung did not say that there are Good Types & Bad Types, and he said that everyone includes a bit of all 4.

One other thing: I realize that these categories can be interpreted in a sexist manner. (Jung himself did so on occasion.) Men are supposed to think; women are supposed to feel. Everybody knows that. Intuition, defined as reaching a conclusion from nonverbal & subliminal clues, is feminine. Everybody knows that too.

BUT. In Iran, everybody knows that women think & men feel. Mossadegh, who was prime minister 25 years ago

until the CIA got him, used to break down & cry in public all the time, and everyone thought he was a Real Man. (Clearly Senator Muskie was born in the wrong country.)

And the reason that intuition is "feminine" is that we recognize it as intuition only when a woman does it. The description I gave above applies to what a good defensive lineman in football does. Do you want to be the one to tell Otis Sistrunk that he has feminine intuition?

Anyway, I think we can scrape virtually all of the sexism off the theory. For the purposes of this discussion we will assume that all 4 functions are human traits, & people of either sex can have them. If you wish to argue that a particular sex should be a particular type, don't do it here.

I'd like to play around with this approach as away of looking at sf. One more qualification, though: For simplicity's sake, I will speak of writers as being one type or another, but by that I mean their writings. I am analyzing books, not people.

SF has traditionally been an extraverted thinking-type genre. It dealt with externals, and prided itself on the logic of its speculations & extrapolations. The internal worlds & feelings of the characters tended to be ignored. The secondary function has traditionally been intuition, rather than sensation. Greater value has been placed upon inventiveness in bringing in many new ideas than on developing a few ideas in detail. Today Larry Niven & Mack Reynolds typify both the strengths & weaknesses of this approach.

AE Van Vogt is an almost pure intuition type. He has a new intuition every 800 words, but his sensation & thinking functions seem so undeveloped that he rarely can connect them.

Ray Bradbury may have been the first major feeling-type sf writer. That may be the reason he is often considered antisience. He doesn't really hate science--indeed he has been speaking up loud & clear for the space program--but the logical extrapolation that has been so dear to sf is almost irrelevant to him. His characters' feelings & his judgments of good & bad have always been more important to him, to the point where he sometimes slips into sentimentality.

Harlan Ellison is today's great feeling type, though more introverted than Bradbury. He talks about the evil of externals, but his emphasis seems to be on the Hells we make for ourselves. At best, this produces unforgettable stories like "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes." At worst, feeling overcomes thinking to the point where emotions cannot be meaningfully expressed, as if the author himself has no mouth & must scream.

It has been said that Alfred Bester throws away more ideas in a single page than Robert Silverberg uses in a book. Bester is an extraverted intuition type. He leaps from idea to idea, and puts on a good show as he does, but rarely gets deep into his characters or details the consequences of his ideas. Silverberg, in some of his more recent writing, has been

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an introverted sensation-thinking type. He deals in depth with the impact of a single thing--telepathy, precognition, etc.--on an individual, yet there is the cool (if you like it) or cold (if you don't) perception of the thinking type.

In his chapter of Hell's Cartographers, Frederik Pohl speaks of some of his colleagues as fiddler crabs--people with one huge talent, like the one huge claw of the fiddler crab, but otherwise undeveloped. Well, Jung said that the ideal person would have a balance between introversion & extraversion, & would have developed all 4 of his functions to the maximum.

And sure enough, we find writers today who are not fiddler crabs, and who cannot be easily typed. Pohl himself has changed--adding character development to the social extrapolation that used to be his big claw.

I mentioned Silverberg a while ago, so I should point out that in Shadrach in the Furnace, he seems to have integrated his functions. He takes ^{us} into Shadrach Mordecai's head, and into Genghis Mao's world. He has added feelings. The sensation function he always had is now matched by the intuitive brilliance of his descriptions of future entertainments.

John Brunner, in his major books, seemsto have reached this level. The Whole Man is, among other things, about finding a balance between introversion & extraversion. Stand on Zanzibar exhibits intuition in its speculations, thinking in the way he keeps to the logic of his ideas, sensation in the wealth of detail, and feeling in the lives of his characters, both major & minor. The Jagged Orbit & The Shockwave Rider do this to a somewhat lesser extent. The Sheep Look Up strikes me as the weakest of his 4 Big Books because he has let his feeling function get out of hand, concerning himself excessively with how bad things are.

Samuel R. Delany also seems to have all 4. He supports the Jungian approach in that Dhalgren, his most unfavorably reviewed book, shows a hypertrophy of the sensation function in the many minute descriptions, while having a corresponding lack of the intuition (in his case, a distinctively sf inventiveness) which strengthens books like Babel-17, Nova, & Triton.

And of course all categories (old wave/new wave, mainstream/genre, about people/about ideas) break down on Ursula Le Guin. She does it all. If she has a flaw, it is one which I think can be traced to the feeling function. When she tries to describe things she doesn't like, she descends to mere competence. The Ugly Earthmen in The Word for World is Forest, Urras in The Dispossessed, Standard Repressive Future 7A in "The New Atlantis"--all are below the high standards the more positive parts of her fiction set.

One last thing--If my theory has any validity, it would predict that readers will seek out writers of similar types. I'm not going to try to type individual readers, or even reviewers, But I'd be curious to know if you think any of this applies to you. It does to me. I've already told you that feeling is my weakest function, and as I look back, I see that I have come down hardest on writers who seem to have too much feeling.



RADICALISM

"Let 100 flowers bloom,"
said the Chairman,
uprooting an alleged weed.



MY FAVORITE HERESY

Another of those basic differences seems to be gnostics vs pagans. (I am using the terms to describe attitudes, rather than specific religions.) Pagans worship nature; gnostics worship mind/soul/consciousness. As a result, pagans--at worst--may tend to hate mind & its works (notably technology), while gnostics--at worst--may tend to hate nature & wish to conquer it.

See what I mean? The pagan says, "Nature is our Mother."

The gnostic replies, "Nature is a tyrant."

"Nature is bountiful & loving."

"O yeah? Then how come it's trying to kill me?"

"Death is a part of life. Nature is--if you must put it that way--trying to kill everyone."

To which the gnostic replies, like Yossarian, "What difference does that make?"

And so on. The argument is never resolved because the 2 parties have fundamentally different approaches.

Jacques Lacarriere, in his excellent book *The Gnostics*, says that it is as hard for someone brought up in a Christian culture to understand gnosticism as it is for someone brought up in Russia to understand Trotskyism. In either case, the established church presents the heretical view as nothing but an ancient aberration which we were fortunate enough to stamp out.

For a long time I simply assumed the establishment view that gnostics were a bunch of geeks who did bizarre things because of an abnormal hatred for their bodies. And of course some of them were.

But the Christian historians were doing what the media do with minority movements--finding Horrible Examples & treating them as typical. (Do you remember the debates TV used to have on the Vietnam War before opposing it became fashionable? The prowar spokesman was always well-groomed, soft-spoken, & apparently rational. The antiwar spokesman was a gibbering loon with a Vietcong flag who had to have the foam wiped off his mouth at every commercial break.)

If the gnostics had won, what do you think we would believe about Christians today? ("Origen, a typical Christian, castrated himself....")

I was so ignorant about gnostics that I didn't know I was one. Looking back, I can see the signs. I like Bucky Fuller's idea of "energy slaves"--machines that do the hard physical work so that more people are set free. I like the idea of sex liberated from the tyranny of reproduction.

And then I found what I consider the literature of gnosticism--sf. Here was a vision of the mind of man cut loose from its shackles--from being trapped on an insignificant planet out in the ass end of the galaxy, from the pettiness of the kind of things many of us have to do to sustain ourselves, and ultimately from what Jerome Tuccille calls the final tyrant: death.

I was never too keen on the idea of "conquering" or "subduing" nature, and now I have abandoned it. (If nothing else, we're outgunned. It's as silly as the SLA believing that 12 of them could overthrow the government.) Rather I thought of the Asimov heroes to whom "violence is the last resort of the incompetent," (It isn't, by the way; it's the first resort of the incompetent & the last resort of the competent.) To me, technology is the great weapon of the Human Liberation Movement. At its best, it relies on cleverness rather than force, using the strength of nature rather than opposing it, but even at worst, I can see its excesses as those of any liberation movement which feels that it has won, like the mass murders which tend to follow political revolutions.

And so I was, and am, suspicious of the Ecology Movement. Ecology, properly considered, is the study of the consequences of our acts. It is a survival trait. The Ecology Movement, which I consider essentially pagan, is something else. It struck me from the first as antimind & antihuman, and I was able to find examples--from Philip Slater, who believes that the individual is an appendage of "society" & that intelligence is always destructive, to a witch who told a group of us that he was more concerned with trees dying than with people dying, because people would be reincarnated.

I was, of course, doing what the Christians did with Gnostics.

So the pagans are really human, but I am still not going to join them. When they speak about a zero-growth world, they are talking about a situation mathematicians call a "zero-sum game," where the only way one can win is for another to lose. When they speak of not exploiting nature, the only option they leave people is exploiting each other. They say that once we accept limits, we will have a world where everyone is content with relatively little, and no one tries to oppress anyone else. I believe that we will have such a world as soon as we can get the Easter Bunny & the Tooth Fairy to run it, & no sooner. I favor a world where our species cleverly exploits nature, breaks out of Prison earth, & cooperates in the knowledge that helping others need not mean harming oneself.

I am also a Taoist. If I wish to bring light into the darkness, it is with the realization that light can never conquer darkness, that light cannot exist without darkness. (As Alan Watts said, light shines in darkness because where else could it shine?) So it may be with spirit & matter. Perhaps neither can exist without the other, and people may take either side, but they should be aware that neither side will ever "win." I burn no witches, but I know which side I'm on.



Isn't it hard to forgive others the wrongs we have done them?



TWO MYSTICS

"Utterly impossible as are all these events they are probably as like those which may have taken place as any others which never took person at all are ever likely to be."

--James Joyce, Finnegans Wake

"Things are more like they are now than they ever were."

--Dwight D. Eisenhower



The Wheel of Karma is fixed, but it's the only one in town.



"There is a secret society of seven men that controls the finances of the world. This is known to everyone, but the details are not known. There are some who believe that it would be better if one of the seven were a financier."

--RA Lafferty, "About a Secret Crocodile"



NASTY FANTASIES

1. John Norman meets a 6'9"^{300-lb} gay Gorean who decides to teach him the joys of submission.

2. A real-life version of "No Exit," starring Philip Slater, Phyllis Schlafly, & the Pope.

3. Someone hits 75 home runs or runs for 3000 yards. When asked the secret of his success, he replies, "Well, Howard, I'd say it's all the dope I smoke. Or maybe group sex. And by the way, unfuck the State." Perhaps then we would be cured of the quaint delusion that athletes should be Examples to the Young.



I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, except as enumerated in Title II, Section 7, Part B, Paragraphs (a)-(j).

FROM SILENT TRISTERO'S EMPIRE

15

"The Devil made me do it the first time;
The second time I done it on my own." Billy Joe Shaver, "Black Rose"

I love that line, but it really doesn't describe DR. Here are some of my unindicted coconspirators, and I'd like to thank each & every one of them. I've cut most of the letters, because there was so much good stuff, and I've made a few cosmetic changes. I hope no one minds. I grouped all the comments on redundancy. My remarks are in double parens. ((You didn't really think I'd shut up.))

FREDERIK POHL 386 W. Front St. Red Bank, NJ 07701

I read DR with appreciation and pleasure, not unmixed with rue. You see, the Diagonal Relationship is in fact real, and not a mere flight of Cyril Kornbluth's fancy, as I had first assumed. I became aware of this not long after the story appeared, when I observed the astonishing success of a mutual associate—well, hell, we're all friends; I'll say the name. It was Isaac Asimov. It had to be the DR; there was no other explanation possible. So I made the long journey out to Levittown, Long Island, where Cyril lived under the approach patterns for what was then Idlewild Airport, and asked him. Pride prevented me from coming right out with it. I put it only as a matter of intellectual curiosity. Cyril smiled and said, "When you really want to know, Fred, come and ask me again." For months thereafter I beat around the bush at every encounter, but he only shook his head. He insisted that I ask the direct question. Once I thought I had it. He was on the telephone to a young fan from Cleveland, Ohio, and a thrill of excitement shot through me as I realized he was about to explain the Diagonal Relationship. I heard the words, "The basic concept, Harlan, is—" And then there was a roar of engines overhead as Flight 842 from Porlock came into the final leg, and I heard no more.

I stole away, crushed. And I never saw him alive again.

LYNNE HOLDOM PO Box 5, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442

You do sound like you once had a run in with a psychiatrist. Now what does this ink blot remind you of? I was given this test where you have to make up a story to go with a photo. With the first one, I spun off five different possible plots (the advantage of having tried to write sf). Anyway the tester never gave me the rest of the test; she said I was too sophisticated for it. Also said I have a good sense of reality. So why do I like sf? Actually I don't think fans are that unrealistic, but that's the image.

JOHN THIEL 30 N. 19th St. Lafayette, IN 47904

What Harold Bell Wright is saying there is that he lives in New York City, near the Bedford-Stuyvesant. By the way, I haven't seen the novel he used that line in, if it was a novel. He dassn't show it to Mrs. Southworth.

I liked the last line of "An Elaborate Lie," but I think that's Elgin you're discussing, not communism.

((What makes you think there's a difference?))

How about "I went to the fuck the other night" or "Fuck Macabre" or "See the throng fuck along on the bridge of Avignon" or "Fuck with me, Henry"?

((Funny thing about that. I'd forgotten it, but "dance" was a euphemism in that song. It was originally "Roll with me, Henry," but that was considered terribly suggestive in 1955.))

PAT BONTEMPO PO Box 721 Hillside, NJ 07205

I won't pretend to have followed everything you were saying in DR, but I liked what I got. Especially liked your thoughts on communication. We are constantly told that we are bombarded by too much media, too much information, too much talk and noise. And yet such things as the phenomenal growth of CB (and zines?), the way people avidly seek out the media, and the ever-growing problem of rumor networks show that people apparently are not satiated. They want more and more talk, communication, information. They will even pay a shrink \$50 an hour for talk. They feel they know/understand so little; they follow dumb-dumb religious messiahs blindly. Would they do this if "normal" channels of communication were functioning properly?

((There are limits to what the mass media can do, since they're aimed at the lowest common denominator & there's no direct feedback. I'm in favor of CB & fanzines & anything else that gets people talking with instead of being talked at))

A. D. Wallace 2119 NW 21 Street Gainesville, FL 32605

For the grace and favor of the glorious # 1, so very many thanks.

Did you know that Horatio Alger, jr., preferred little boys to big girls?

((So they tell me. Perhaps he could have given us some insights into one of the ways the poor-but-honest office boy really gets the big boss to promote him.))

A quote from Simone Weil: An intelligent man who is proud of his intelligence is like a convicted felon who is proud of his prison cell.

((Perhaps Ms. Weil opposed intellect because it is incompatible with certain forms of religious belief. I myself am not polytheistic perverse enough to join any creeds which require me to sacrifice my intellect, and that lets out quite a few.))

A piece of artwork for # 2:

Portrait of an anemic girl on the way to her first communion in a blizzard (after Alphonse Allais, 1854-1905). This is also identical with the Null Set from Alexandroff-Hopf's TOPOLOGIE.

JEANNE GOMOLL 143 W. Gilman # 303, Madison, WI 53703

Ahem: That sf scenario you can't recall having read before—see Woody Allen's "The Whore of Mensa," first published in THE NEW YORKER, and subsequently in his book, WITHOUT FEATHERS. Either you read it before and forgot, or the duplication of ideas is incredible.

((I read it & forgot. It's not quite the same thing, but I can see where Allen probably influenced me. For those who haven't read it, "The Whore of Mensa" deals with the sale of intellectual conversation. There were other influences that I was conscious of: PLAYBOY did an extended analogy between sex & talk about 10 years ago; the ideal is for both partners to reach a conclusion at the same time. Both Alan Watts & RD Laing have spoken of psychiatry as prostitution, but neither discusses the criminal implications. In A TIME OF CHANGES (did anyone recognize the first line of DR 1?) there is a taboo against telling people your troubles, but it's socialized as religion, instead of as crime, so the problems I suggested don't arise. And so on. If anybody ever wrote anything completely original, no one would understand it.))

RICHARD E. GEIS PO Box 11408 Portland, OR 97211

THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP is the best personalzine I've read for years. Really. It's ALL stealable. Too bad it's copyrighted. The whole mag is a gold mine of fillers.

You come across as well-read, perceptive, and Wise. What more can a reader ask? Oh, yes, witty, too. You are that.

And seriously, may I use some of your bon mots in SFR? Full credit always given of course.

((Be my guest. I've cut some of the praise from other letters out of false modesty, but I could not resist printing this tribute from the man I--& many others--consider the # 1 fan writer/editor.))

GENE WOLFE PO Box 69 Barrington, IL 60010

It was startling--in a satisfying way--to find you acknowledging your debt to Geis on the last page, because you do come on very much like him--a little less mature, a little better educated, but quite similar.

Naturally I'm sorry you don't like ^{my} stories. I can only say that I suspect you are too far from my ideal reader. I'm not talking to you; I'm not trying to do it to you, to use your sex analogy. I seem impotent to you, you seem frigid to me because there are three of us in this bed. To come down to earth after the flight of fantasy, I love A. A. Milne and Dorothy Parker; but Dorothy Parker detested Milne. She was urban, often-married, he rural...but you know all this.

I loved a lot of the short quotes, though quite a few are wrong, or wrong-headed. Charles Fort did to others what he wanted them to do to him--he left them alone. Kids in school get little meaningful feedback; paranoia is a kind of hell; the male doesn't have to be predatory and often isn't, the woman doesn't have to be coy and seldom is; and so on. Still it was fun to read. (No, that isn't the main idea, but it's okay.)

((I agree that kids in school get little meaningful feedback, but they do get told how well they've done. Acute paranoia (paranoid schizophrenia) is hell; moderate paranoia is fun, creative, and a survival trait. Ishmael was talking about What Should Be, not What Is--and, as St. Lenny said, What Should Be is a dirty lie.))

JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON Box 5688, University Station Seattle, WA 98105

Fascinating--I never thought (or hoped) I'd see a Geis/Gaier pastiche fan writer. Next time, let's see you do a D'Amassa/Thompson pastiche! You could go on forever that way, become the Lin Carter of the fan world.

((Gee, thanks.))

A problem. I did enjoy your zine, but I am not motivated to discuss any of these topics because YOU weren't serious so how can I get serious? I mean, you talk about religion, sexuality, drugs, politics, all sorts of loaded topics. But always in a flippant tone. You don't offer Real Insights, nor Educational Viewpoint, nor Irony, nor any Points for Heated Discussion. You do offer a little light entertainment, which I suppose is enough. But for someone who starts out boasting he's a degreed philosopher, and walks off seeming like a blue Henny Youngman, you do manage to leave something out.

Probably no one else will agree. You'll get a lot of serious response re religion and sex--from yunkers who mistake filler joke writers for Lenny Bruce--and have a really interesting, topical fanzine.

It's lonely tonight. Sherri has locked herself into the bedroom to study for an exam tomorrow. This is Lump night (a critique circle), but I can'T work

up energy to go because last one was a bummer. Bubbles trashed me for being a feminist and taking my own perspective on her story (she wanted me to adopt her perspective and critique it from what she wanted the story to say/be. Some other members agree; "ya can't criticize a story on a feminist basis if it isn't a feminist story" which is too asinine to even correct: it's like saying you can't criticize the whole fucked up world from a feminist point of view, because it ain't a feminist world. But so fucking what. If people want their stories critiqued from their point of view, let 'em critique their own fucking stories, etc. etc. fuck fuck ad infinitum. You can see I'm a little upset. I don't swear much usually, not out loud at least). So I miss the Lump, but wouldn't enjoy it, and I miss Sherri, and to top it all off I received your fanzine, and oh shit what else can go wrong today? I'm also broke. And there's no food in the house. Woe is me.

((You can't please everyone....I hope no one else thought I was trying to sound like Geis & Gaier. I find it hard enough to sound like me. One other thing: I didn't say I am a philosopher; I said I've been called one. I got my degree (BA) for writing about sense data & the ontological argument & like that, and you should be glad I don't run down that shit here.))

THE DEPARTMENT OF REDUNDANCY DEPARTMENT
(title stolen from Firesign Theater)

LYNNE HOLDOM

I liked your comments on not appreciating Gene Wolfe. I've noticed that I don't like many of those who write for ORBIT as I am admittedly lowbrow in my taste--well, not lowbrow enough to like Conan or ERB. But I am lowbrow enough to like stories and novels where it is more or less obvious on the surface who is doing what and to whom. However, I was never an English major or minor, so I never had to figure out these minute points in a work and could read more or less as I chose.

SHERYL SMITH 1059 W. Sheridan Rd. Chicago, IL 60660

The reason why you like Gene Wolfe in his personal manifestations, and yet do not like his stories, is most likely the fact that the creator and the creation are not the same thing, and therefore need not evoke the same responses. Simple?

((Not that simple. I was not talking about Gene Wolfe as a person (I've never met him), but about literary qualities like wit & insight, which I find in his letters, but not in his stories (which doesn't mean they aren't there).))

I do not quite understand what you mean by redundancy in literature, but I suspect it is something like "clear explication": in any case, your term seems ill-chosen. For instance, "nonredundant" poetry is often redundant in its sound patterns (resonant, that is). Even your poems do it a little, though I can't say much else for them.

((I was using the word "redundancy" in its cybernetic sense, as verbiage beyond that needed to transmit the information. In that sense, I don't know what redundant sound patterns would be, and if I put any of them in my poems, I assure you I didn't mean to.

((Of course, since we are talking about human, rather than machine, communication each of us decides what we will consider information. To those who place primary emphasis on "story values," the lengthy descriptions in DHALGREN were redundancy or (again in the cybernetic sense) noise. To those of us who enjoyed the book, the descriptions themselves were information.))

DONALD L. FRANSON 6543 Babcock Ave. No Hollywood, CA 91606

19

I believe that authors should not blame the readers for not understanding their stories, or finding them hard to read. I am on the side of Rudolf Fleasch, who says, "Easy reading is hard writing." I think obscure authors are just lazy, like some painters. Or perhaps they think obscurity is a form of suspense. If the reader doesn't know exactly who the main character is, where he is located, and what he is doing, he will keep reading to find out. A good story tells all these things in the first paragraph, and then goes on from there.

((I disagree. Some of the easiest reading in the world is nice, easy hack writing. I would never say that people like Joyce & Pound wrote the way they did because they were too lazy to do it right.))

DAVID A. TRUESDALE 611-A Division St. Oshkosh, WI 54901

Your distinction between "making the reader think" and "inspiring the reader to think" is a good one. Off the top of my head, I would say the earlier (mid-late 60s) "New Wave" experiments tended to emphasize the former in their structural approach--much like the examples you gave of Gene Wolfe's stuff--and many times failed, because in attempting to make the reader think by leaving out the link in reader association they committed the cardinal sin that happens in bad poetry when a crucial ellipsis, or transitional bridge, is left out. To elucidate, ahem: Poetry deals in images; poetry that also deals with philosophy, much like Emerson's stuff with the idealistic metaphysical bent, must, if not to lose the reader, supply comprehensible links or bridges of common associational patterns whereby the reader is not lost. If these bridges, usually from line to line but they may vary, are too obscure, with too great a mental spacing to link the mental associations of the poet together so that understanding becomes possible for the reader, the poem fails or at least is rendered impotent by its obscurity. The poet must supply the proper links, must give the reader the proper dosage of hints in order to inspire him to follow, not just write spaced-out stuff (associationally) and sneer at the nonunderstanding reader.

A fine line to tread, and the same technical analysis applies to fiction. I do think, however, that for the most part this problem of inadequate ellipsis has taken care of itself. We no longer are given thick books like Judy Merrill's ENGLAND SWINGS SF--albeit a good collection--wherein much immature experimentation is given life through the printed page.

The problem of proper ellipsis raises other highly interesting corollary questions. First, what is the proper relationship between author and reader? How much should the author take for granted in his imaginary and never-seen audience in order that his ellipses succeed and the reader is inspired, not made, to think and understand? And if the author wishes to share some inner insight more or less literally, with no audience in mind save himself (although he submits a work for publication; not a paradox really), and therefore cares not a twit for supplying the associational links, then what? Well, there are possible answers, but I don't feel like throwing them out right now. Besides, you've got ideas of your own as to what they might be. All I felt like doing was posing some of the, to me, fascinating byways intimated by your distinction between "forcing" and "inspiring" the reader to think.

((At this point, I cannot resist quoting something Kate Wilhelm said in HEDGEHOG 1: "You can take out one of the elements we generally expect to find and do something very remarkable without it. And...in my work, sometimes it will be time, and sometimes it will be the rationale; and if I have a very clear idea myself of what it is, I feel that the absence of it, while it may be puzzling to people, they will feel that there's something

there." I would also include Wilhelm in the category of "Good Writers (I assume) Whom I Don't Enjoy Reading." Now I know why.))

20

DOUG BARBOUR dept. of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
CANADA T6G 2E1

i must say that even though i find ~~ye~~ comments anent reader plus writer congeniality interesting & in many ways valid, im sorry you dont like gene wolfe's stuff. cos i think the guys great. still i know a lot of writers about whom i can speak as good writers & yet i do not like them. personal taste in these matters is the final arbiter, though occasionally your taste can be changed by a really good "teacher." your comments on redundancy are also interesting. as someone who reads & loves a lot of poetry, & who therefore sees some real value in delany's reference to symboliste poetry as a kind of forefather to modern sf, i can really get off on someone like wolfe who refuses to be redundant in the way you seem to be asking the sf writer to be. on the other hand, although i havent yet read ILLUMINATUS! (tho im beginning to feel that im just going to have to, having read interviews with the authors & various comments which make it sound halfassedly intriguing, if probably overdone & too long), what ive read about it suggests that it is heavily into certain kinds of nonredundancy. on the other hand, given the fact that it has to explain so many conspiracies, it is redundant where it counts.

HARRY WARNER JR. 423 Summit Avenue Hagerstown, MD 21740

I can't claim to be an instant comprehender of every Gene Wolfe story, either. But I haven't read enough of his total output to be sure how highly I'll eventually value his literary corpus. Most recently I read "The Death of Doctor Island," which should prove how far back I am on reading important science fiction. In this case, I'm prejudiced, and it's my fault, not that of the author. I don't care much about anyone's fiction in which most or all of the characters are severely handicapped, mentally or physically or emotionally. It's not that I think it's wrong to write stories about handicapped people, it's just a case of being chicken-hearted and miserable when I am caused to think about people with such problems. I think this has a great deal to do with the whole issue you raise, about why a reader does or doesn't enjoy a story. There is a sort of zeitgeist in fandom which causes most fans to agree on a few basic matters, like the importance of Ursula Le Guin as a writer and the failure of EE Smith to make his characters as lifelike as those of Charles Dickens, but each reader comes equipped with an elaborate array of buttons & switches, any combination of which may be pressed by the particular elements in a particular story and will affect the reader sufficiently for any general literary excellence which the Eternal Verities would prove the story to possess to be received in the reader's mind in somewhat distorted form.

((I now see 2 more analogies between sex & reading. The first is that the individual act of intercourse depends on the entire relationship. I couldn't make head or tail out of the first 30 pages or so of STAND ON ZANZIBAR. But I told myself that I should trust Brunner since he'd written THE WHOLE MAN & THE PRODUCTIONS OF TIME & good stuff like that. So I persevered, and soon I began to understand it. I think it's one of the best sf books ever.

((The second, as Harry suggests, is compatibility. ILLUMINATUS! relates to a lot of my tastes. I gave a list of Good Things in the last issue. ILLUMINATUS! includes all of them, except pro football. (Nobody's perfect.) Thus the nonredundancies didn't bother me. (Some may be the publisher's fault, since several hundred pages were cut.) Similarly, my mind is enough in tune with those of writers like Disch & Sladek so that I have little trouble following them. Others, obviously, are compatible with Wolfe & Wilhelm.))

LOREN MACGREGOR Box 636 Seattle, WA 98111

As you may have guessed, I do/did disagree with your argument. From the standpoint of writing, a writer has failed if s/he has to stop the action to explain what's going on. Poul Anderson failed in A MIDSUMMER TEMPEST because, in the middle of a well-done Alternate Universe story he felt he had to stop and explain that This Really Isn't Real, Kids: You Know, Parallel Time Tracks And All.

If you don't get the information, either you or the author is at fault; if the author has to stop and explain, the author is at fault.

I basically feel that your entire argument is erroneous. You cite Gene Wolfe especially, solely, and I suspect that it's largely because a lot of people have responded positively to his writing and you are rationalizing your inability to enjoy what he says. Why not, then, just say, "I don't like his writing," and leave it at that?

Because, you see, I get a great deal out of Wolfe's material, and I've never had the feeling that I'm working terribly hard to do so. I do know that, often, I'll read one of his stories again and find that there was more there than I originally expected; I don't get the feeling (as, apparently, you have) that he's being deliberately obscure and that I missed something because Wolfe hid it—either under a prosaic leaf or between the lines.

"The Island of Doctor Death" is a unique, exciting story within a story, and Tackman Babcock is a delightful character; and, as one of the characters within Tackman's story observes (obliquely), he is a character—he just hasn't realized it yet. In THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS Wolfe presents a gestalt, a novel that is greater than the sum of its three parts—and again plays with the idea of multiple meanings, as the parts comment on and refer to other parts of the story, without being more than loosely associated.

SF may, by its very nature, require (as you say) the transmission of a great deal of information, but if that information is transmitted poorly (broadly, or in great dollops of doughy prose) it becomes doggerel. And, though doggerel may be fun, it offers nothing beyond the doggerel, nothing beyond the surface meaning. This doesn't mean that the meaning must be deep, must be ponderous; nor does it mean that one has to work very hard to enjoy the story. It means, if the author has performed hiser job adequately, that the story can be enjoyed on several levels. It means you can get out of it whatever you're willing to put into it, because there is more than one thing to be gotten.

I hasten to add that this does not mean that the author has put in everything that you will get out; as Ursula Le Guin once remarked, if you aren't willing to listen to your unconscious, then you aren't a writer.

And none of this has anything in the slightest to do with the Protestant (not Puritan, please) work ethic.

((Obviously, you & I start from different assumptions. The prevalent view, which your comments seem to support, is that a story is a thing, which can be evaluated objectively. It is good or bad (with gradations in between, of course). If it's good, then it is objectively the reader's fault if s/he does not appreciate it. If it's bad, it's the writer's fault.

((I don't accept this view. To me, a story is a transaction in which the reader participates. I can speak only of the story as I read it; you can speak only of the story as you read it. Each of us comes to a story with different likes, dislikes, standards, previous literary experiences, etc. In that sense, no 2 people ever read the same story.

((Of course, there are areas of agreement. When certain literary standards are accepted, there can be some agreement on how a given work measures up. But people may disagree on which standards are important. (How important is creative speculation in evaluating an sf book?) And I have found that even when standards are agreed on, there are many people who do not like all "good" books & dislike all "bad" ones or vice versa.

((What I was trying to do was to present a theory whereby it is possible for a reader to dislike the work of a given writer without either of them being a no-good shit. "Fault" is not something that exists independent of human judgment; it is a label that we attach to things. I do not find it useful to attach this particular label either to me or to Gene Wolfe.

((By the way, your belief that a good writer should never stop the action to give a lengthy discussion is not shared by all critics, or even all who speak in terms of objective literary merit. In the current F & SF, George Zebrowski defends Stanislaw Lem's use of that very technique as the best way to present scientific & philosophical questions. My own approach, as I said last time, is that I do not object to such interruptions when the material presented is of sufficient interest, as in some of Lem's work & some of Mack Reynolds.

((I do not, however, demand easy explanations. In your Hedgehog article (which I enjoyed, by the way), you mentioned Delany as a writer who can present a very different society without resorting to great lumps of exposition. I agree. I also mentioned Silverberg & Le Guin last time, and I would add Tiptree, Disch, & Gotschalk. I don't find it work to find out what's happening in their stories, and so I am able to get to the deeper levels. I know that you & others do not consider it work to read Wolfe, but I do. To me, Wolfe does not succeed in presenting the surface level in a manner in which I can pleaurably assimilate it.))

OK

GIL GAIER 1016 Beech Ave. Torrance, CA 90501

FLASHER ALERT! FLASHER ALERT!

So you've finally joined us perziners. ("And what do you think of this choice piece?" he said, exposing another part of his hlavaty.) It was an excellent first effort: imaginative, varied, amusing. "Intercourse" was just enough askew to be fascinating. "How to Tell Civilized People from Savages" was my kind of fun. And "Equal and Opposite" was subtle and humorous. I admire the hell out of your first foray.// DR is a neat title, too. (Ought to appeal to all the sickies.) // The first page intro was wonderfully challenging. May you be chewed from one end to the other for your various honest opinions. (Lordy, you're just perverse enough to love it!)// Geis and Gaier indeed!

FLASHER ALERT! FLASHER ALERT!

((Thanks, Gil. You put on a good show when you open your raincoat, too.))

BEN P. INDICK 428 Sagamore Ave. Teaneck, NJ 07666

Unhappily, you have failed completely to annoy me, although you practically promised there was something to annoy everyone. I happen to be a liberal, bigoted, white, Jewish, straight old man, and perhaps this combination was too much to catch. I feel certain future efforts will pay off.

I would hope that future issues will have a liberal amount of yourself again, for you do come over well; however, it will, I think, be useful to have other voices. You have some characteristics in common, fanzinewise, with Don D'Amassa's MYTHOLOGIES, although since your ideas are your own, there is no, as you would put it, redundancy.

Your sf scenario isn't bad, but the notion of satirizing by turnabout is getting

worn, so I'd suggest you file it for now. I liked the Barth quotation, however ("I'm also a bastard."). I was reminded of L. Frank Baum's immortal quotation (used in the film as well). When Dorothy accuses the Wizard of Oz of being a "bad man," he replies, "No, my dear, I'm a good man; I'm just a bad wizard."

I regret your admiring vexation with Gene Wolfe; can't you accept the fascinating ambiguities of CERBERUS without worry? I approve, in any event, your accolade of a writer who has not received his just due yet. In fact, this fine book, and a nonfantasy novel as well, have been remaindered. A good bargain for us, but unfair to Gene.

You have some preoccupation with sex, and may be interested in this: I have a customer (in my pharmacy) who is a projectionist in a porn house.

I asked whether the flicks had toned down yet; he laughed. Now, he said, we have a live act too—every 1½ hours. I asked what it was. The same as the movies, he said. And they can make it every 90 minutes?, I asked, because I can scarcely make it every 90 days at my advanced age & inclination—don't they fake it too? He acknowledged they sometimes did. I asked how the audience responded to the "act." He said that they usually cheered and whistled—and laughed. Oh well, sex semper tyrannis.

((Nowadays people got no respect. I saw a live show a while back. If the performers got any pleasure out of what they were doing, they didn't let on.))

MURRAY R. WARD PO Box 3693, Stn. B, Winnipeg, Manitoba CANADA

I should point out that the quotation is not original with me. I was paraphrasing Harry Browne in his book HOW I FOUND FREEDOM IN AN UNFREE WORLD. Read it some time; I recommend it.

((I had noticed the similarity of ideas, but liked your phrasing. I recommend the book, too.))

Yours is the kind of zine I would do if I could afford to do a zine: all writing, all my own stuff except LOCs, no art. I can't draw worth beans, but I love to spout off on my opinions. If, however, you hand-picked your audience the way you did me, you must know you will have few detractors, as I agree with almost everything you said. So much for controversy.

((I can't find 100 people who agree with me on everything. In fact I can't find one person like that. (And just as well.) A large portion of the mailing list came from people (like you) who wrote letters that I liked, so there is some bias towards people who agree with me. But I did include some people whose opinions differ from mine, as well as people about whom I know nothing except that Susan Wood liked their fanzines. Of course, fandom is a somewhat selective group, and some opinions—like the more idiotic forms of racism & sexism—may not be represented at all.))

CAROL SATHER 6461 Lane Ave. N #1, Brooklyn Park, MN 55429

Like most people, I tend to think that people whose minds work like mine are brilliant; by that criterion, you are brilliant. I agree with a great number of the points you made.

I certainly fit your definition of a "crank," though I never understood before that I do think diagonally. Some of my interests are sf, history (on a personal level), cats, music in almost every form, writing, sex, photography, cooking, words and word usage, old movies, bicycling,....

Your point about pleasing yourself, loving yourself, and feeling good about yourself was meaningful to me. I am in the process of getting a divorce because of my realization--at last--that my primary responsibility is to be true to myself. Only if I am what I want to be can I have an honest relationship with someone else. It seems so obvious now.

I don't know about your other readers' reactions, but you'll have to work at it to offend me. I'm comfortable enough with my beliefs and values that I don't need the reinforcement of others' acceptance of those beliefs and values.

((I like to think I don't need it either. But doesn't it feel good?))

Just found something that we have very different attitudes about: dancing. I think it is like sex: Almost everyone can do it, and lots of people can learn to do it well, but the people who are best at it and enjoy it the most seem to have an inborn talent.

((I wasn't born with the talent, I don't enjoy it, and I've given up trying to become good at it--dancing, that is.))

Right. There is only one person who can set you free. It takes guts to break the chains, though.

I have a theory that a man's attitude toward sex is betrayed by the way he uses those basic Anglo-Saxon words like "fuck." The man who uses "fucking" as a derogatory adjective and "fuck" as an expression of utter disgust is telling more than he imagines about his potential as a lover. I'm trying out this idea on you because we seem to share some ideas about words. Do you think it's valid?

DOUG BARBOUR

im sure you have achieved yr objective of offending everyone at some point (but i wont tell you mine). i do appreciate the horatio alger quote, but could he possibly have meant it to be that funny (if he did say it)?

((See AD Wallace's letter. Perhaps, like Paul Goodman, he was warned of the "vileness" of heterosex by authority figures to whom homosexuality was literally unthinkable or unspeakable. The quote appeared in ESQUIRE'S "200 years of Dubious Achievements" under the appropriate heading of "Ragged Dick."))

tho i find your numbers a little too large for comfort, i will tell you that i like your choosing "also" over "nothing but." i agree, but i wonder if, even when we think we should think that way, we dont, at least in some areas of thought, commit the "nothing but" fallacy against our own best intentions.

im afraid youre often dumb, but you aint unintelligent.

AVEDON CAROL 4409 Woodfield Rd. Kensington, Md. 20795

Your fanzine didn't look real pretty, and I'd just finished going through a real crudzine I'd gotten in the same batch of mail--one which actually looked better than yours, but wasn't worth reading at all. But I saw one line that was interesting, and ended up reading the whole thing, and realized that I liked it a lot more than most of the zines I've seen since I've been in fandom. Imagine that. I seldom find enough in fanzines to justify reading one all the way thru.

I found that I agreed with most of the things you said. There was practically nothing that inspired a negative comment. This amazes me, especially since

you wrote mostly about politics and social science. Most of the zines I've read seem to be edited by people who were obviously more influenced by The Donna Reed Show (and I don't care strongly they swear they have avoided TV; they still sound like they think Shelley Fabares is the most real person they ever knew) than by any reasonably quotable sources.

((Let that be a lesson to all of you. Beauty is only skin deep (which is easy to say if you're not beautiful)).

((Even in my worst TV-addict days, the Donna Reed Show was beneath me. I was influenced by the Addams family. It's the only sitcom I can remember where the parents liked each other & neither was an idiot. And who would have thought that some day Lurch the Butler would get to be president?))

I still believe that I can't really be free until everyone is, but I'm freer than I was before I got into radical feminism.

Some savages also wear rings in their earlobes. Civilized people have rings on their fingers, or ring around the collar. Anita Bryant believes that bad weather is caused by fellatio.

No, the word "dance" in a song really does refer to dancing; the dancing itself is what means fucking.

Yes, I thought it was such a joke when the Shrink Assn. declared that homosexuality was no longer to be considered "abnormal." Homosexuality is abnormal. The problem is that these people have gotten so hung up on normality as a goal that they've forgotten that "normal" is not synonymous with "healthy." It is normal for children to get measles, mumps, and chicken pox (or it was, at least, when I was a children). It is normal for amerikan women to get debilitating menstrual cramps (that's the word my doctor used when I told him that one tablet of codein wasn't strong enough—"normal") and to tear in childbirth (these conditions are not considered normal in many other countries where it is still believed that women, and not doctors, have the babies). No one would argue that these conditions are healthy. Having an IQ over 130 is not considered normal by a long shot—but neither is it considered necessarily sick, or against god's will, or any other such rubbish. It does tend to separate one from the rest of "normal" (stupid) society, but that's another story. The point is, normalcy has become such a fetish among a rather large group of people that now the virtues of said condition are extolled even when we have proof that many of the members of this society are unhappy precisely because they are normal, or because normalcy has been inflicted on them. Interestingly, however, normalcy only counts when it is their particular brand of normalcy. In other areas, they still remain proud of their differences, such as they are. Can you imagine? "But, dad, it's not Normal to be a carpenter! Most people are not carpenters! And they're not Jewish, either!"

((I see where a robed cretin out in the Midwest just acquitted a man charged with rape on the grounds that his alleged crime is getting to be normal in these permissive times. The next step, as someone suggested, would be a ruling that it's normal to punch judges in the mouth when they make idiotic decisions.))

The only women, libbers or otherwise, who have never hated men are Lesbians. I have been convinced of this by several years of study. When I first got

into the movement, my straight friends and I were disappointed to discover that the dykes didn't find it interesting to talk about all of the fucked up things the men we'd known had done. They didn't give a shit about what men did enough to hate them. They'd never cared or trusted a man enough to feel that badly betrayed by one. I still feel that I can be a lot more sympathetic about men when I am not involved with one.

((If you put it that way, I guess I've hated women at times. But I did realize a while ago that while woman₁, woman₂, etc., may have done me some harm, WOMEN never did.))

Parenthood must be a "mature" activity--all of its adherents seem to hate it so much. They only stop bitching about it when you tell them you don't plan to join their ranks. Even so, their praise of the "joys" involved is usually smothered under all the cliches about how Mature you must be, etc.--sort of trying to intimidate you, I think, with a challenge: "If you were a mature person, you would do it whether you like it or not."

I was writing somewhere recently about this phenomenon as expressed by people who are always trying to talk me out of being a supporter of free abortion on demand. They ask me a question which goes, "What if your mother had believed in abortion?" What they mean is, if my mother had believed in abortion, she would not have had a child. They seem to think that no woman would have a child if she had the choice. The fact is, my mother had aborted a previous pregnancy. That was the only lesson she needed in using the diaphragm consistently. She never had another accident. She planned all of her kids. But these people seem convinced that having children intentionally is an impossibility. I can only believe that they did not want their own children, which is why they feel these things. Or maybe they were unwanted children. Well, I feel sorry for them, but I don't see why anyone else should subject themselves or their children to the same thing. And certainly not for the sake of proving how "mature" they are.

((Beautiful! It reminds me of something I used to hear in the 60s: "What would it be like if everybody did what they wanted to, & told the boss to drop dead?" The idea that there might be situations where people would not want to tell their bosses to drop dead was beyond them.))

That line about LSD causing insanity and brain damage in people who didn't take it was a nice touch, there. I remember a particular issue of LIFE that was full of people being chased by giant orchids and so on...whoever came up with the story must have been drunk.

HARRY WARNER, JR.

I enjoyed the first issue of DR. A loc on it is a project I approach with some distrust, because you are so epigrammatic in some places and so firm in others that I suspect you of doing it that way on purpose and not really thinking that those matters are as simple as you make them sound. I work for the local newspapers. Once I wrote a column about the silly methods which are being proposed for conserving energy like cutting back on Christmas tree lights while important measures like a ban on frost-free refrigerators are ignored. I proposed in this column other steps parallel to the Christmas tree lighting idea, like planting plastic trees on Arbor Day because planting real trees on that occasion creates the danger that they will grow and obstruct the illumination from street lights. The state forester wrote me a letter scolding me for this proposal because trees are useful in many ways which do more good than the small amount of shadows they cast around street lights. I don't want to write a loc that will be too much like the forester's letter.

And you realize, I suppose, that you reduced by perhaps 10 % the wordage in the locs which you'll receive on this first issue, when you blew the cover on the title. When a new fanzine appears with a distinctive title whose derivation isn't immediately obvious, there's a sort of ritual which causes many letter writers to ask about the title and speculate on where it might have come from, and the editor responds in print with a hint or two, which provokes more comments, until eventually he discloses six or eight months later that he got the title from the name of the servant girl in one of Otis Adalbert Kline's unpublished Burroughs imitations.

((Now you tell me. Anyone want to play like I didn't tell you what the Diagonal Relationship is, and make up interesting guesses?))

I haven't declared war on OM. But I do feel it's a little silly for the newspapers and TV networks and tabloid weeklies and such sources of information to keep pretending there's something new and unusual in dishonest politicians, unbalanced clergymen, bribe-taking policemen, and the other individuals whose weaknesses are billboarded while a brutal murderer who has never held public office or other position of trust is ignored. I think the tendency to play up the occasional hankypanky in high places might result simply from the infantile dismay which always occurs when the father image turns out to be that of a human being, not some kind of god who can do no wrong.

((This may be a regional difference. You live in Maryland, where everyone expects corruption & it isn't even news. (Have you yet run a headline which said, "GOVERNOR NOT INDICTED"?) On the other hand, in NY we have the Daily News, which has never been accused of paying insufficient attention to private crime, especially the more bloodthirsty sort.))

I haven't noticed all the propaganda urging people to become parents that you write about in "Equal & Opposite". Isn't it possible that people have children mostly for the same reason that other forms of living creatures reproduce: evolution has built a race propagation instinct into humans and other animals? (I'm not altogether satisfied with "evolution" as the cause for instincts, but I haven't figured out yet what other cause might be assigned without a religious explanation.)

((We all notice what we're sensitive to, but I think there is a lot of pronatalist propaganda. It's just subtle. We're not heavy-handedly told that we must have children; but textbooks, media, etc. tend to assume that everyone does it, or at least should do it. It's like racism. None of my teachers ever said, "Children, today we will discuss inferior races." We merely used texts which assumed that all Americans are white, and presented Europe as a great culture while presenting Africa in terms of Little Black Sambo.))

Now I see that every paragraph of this letter with the exception of this one and one other starts with the vertical pronoun. I try to avoid such obvious display of my ego, but some evenings I just don't feel up to thinking of longer words to start paragraphs with.

((Anyone who publishes as much of his own stuff as I do will refrain from casting the first stone.))

DON D'AMMASSA 19 Angell Drive East Providence, RI 02914

The question of whether or not every individual has a right to children is a complex one. I'm somewhat uneasy with my own decision, which amounts to saying that while everyone should have the right to beget children (assuming he or she can find a willing partner), they shouldn't necessarily have the right to raise them. The difficulty is deciding who is and isn't entitled.

But I've seen, read, and heard of so many cases of child abuse--both physical and mental--that I really can't in good conscience say that everyone should be entitled to the custody of one or more other human beings for up to eighteen years each.

((The question of "rights" entangles us in many philosophical questions I did not feel like dealing with. On a practical level, I do not trust the State to determine beforehand who is fit to have or raise children. My assumption, or perhaps pious hope, was that encouraging people to think for themselves about parenthood, rather than blindly assuming that they should do it, would significantly reduce both the population problem and the child-abuse problem without requiring coercive intervention.))

ROBERT DALY 411 W. Highland Denton, TX 76201

I see your interests come near to paralleling mine. I am also an sf fan, rock fan & ex-psychology major who has dabbled in oriental philosophies & psychopharmacology. I dropped out of school, however, before I could be molded into a dyed-in-the-wool, behavior-modifyin' Skinnerian. (I'd rather let everyone else wander into their own foolishness, rather than trick them into mine.) I've also become a Christian and prefer now to debate against eastern religions rather than to join the majority in scoffing at the apparent self-contradictions in Christianity, so I'm sure you'll offend me sooner or later, but that's alright--I need the practice.

((What majority? I'm sure the majority of Americans have never even thought about the alleged contradictions in Christianity.))

I hope, in future essays, that you don't fall into the trap that catches so many philosophical critics of dealing with any silly or stupid doctrine or practice of individual churches within Christianity as representative of the entire philosophy/religion. Horror stories based on centuries-dead Roman Catholic doctrines or actions are poor criticisms of the Christian faith & nothing new.

((I'll try not to fall into that trap. Every religion which has been accepted by those in power has been used as an excuse for bigotry, oppression, & even mass murder. We all know that Christianity is no exception. That does not invalidate the entire religion. Obviously there are many Christians who do not share the more oppressive views of Torquemada, Cotton Mather, or Anita Bryant. I would say that I am also a Christian because I consider Christ to have been an Enlightened One who saw His own divinity & told us that the Kingdom of God is within us. I am not just a Christian because, as Alan Watts said, Christ did not become the great man He was by accepting someone else as His saviour.))

LOREN MAC GREGOR

Learn history: The medieval church was not run by pious celibates; quite often, especially in Italy, a priest's son followed him into the priesthood. The rule of celibacy was established by a pope who was impotent. Until that time it was believed that having a family (though not marrying) was important to the role of a priest. The attitude you mention is a much later development. I suggest that you read Chaucer who was a devout (reasonably devout, anyway) man, but one who talked about sex in almost all its forms throughout his career; and then

follow that with almost anything about the Middle English years.

((G. Rattray Taylor, in SEX IN HISTORY, says that by the late Middle Ages, sex was hated & feared wherever the Church reigned. I'm sure that many medieval priests did not practice what they preached; nevertheless, it was the public statements of the Church which influenced people, and these were morbidly antisexual. (One example, from Taylor: marital sex in the canine position was punishable by 7 years penance.)))

HOWARD LEVI NYC

I have just ^{re}read your DR #1, and have just felt again the delight it inspired. I think that part of this feeling is the comfort that comes to one who senses that what his shortcomings come short of need not be taken so seriously; that our agonizing is unnecessary, and that we can stop forthwith, without the slightest modification of our feckless ways. BUT...I confess to an uneasiness which resists your wholesome messages. Some years ago I made a commandment, to wit: "Thou shalt not get mileage out of other people's folly." I still believe this, and deduce the corollary that after helping to release us from useless commitments to shallow purposes, you are obliged to provide some hint as to how we may seek better ones.

((I like to think that Maslow was right--that we all tend to be "self-actualizing" at best, and someone who had cleared her head of all the bullshit we've been told would know what to do. But this is somewhat hypothetical, as I am not such a person & do not know any such people.))

GOLDIE KURTIN New Rochelle, NY

Don't quite understand your reference to Richard Kostelanetz.
((See THE END OF INTELLIGENT WRITING. Kornbluth foresaw his theory better than any sf writer I know of foresaw the moon landing.))

Couldn't agree with you more about psychiatrists; however, as a former teacher who enjoyed teaching, I would resent being classed with that group.

((I'll stand by the comparison. Each of the 3 can be harmful or helpful; each can be done for love or for money; each can be done well or badly. And each would work better if the State kept its hands off.))

David R. Haugh 2017 Elm St. Forest Grove, OR 97116

It's a surprise that you actually live in New Rochelle! I always felt that NR was a mythical place in the East made up by the movies.

((Yes, Virginia, there is a New Rochelle. It is perhaps typified by the fact that we have a street called the New Rochelle Memorial Highway. And....))

CLAI PLUNKETT Tuscaloosa, AL

Keep it up, man, & you may make it as the best writer in New Rochelle. That's mean, I'm sorry.

((Not that mean. EL Doctorow lives here. I'd settle for being the best-paid writer in New Rochelle.))

FRED JACKSON III 70 Illinois Pontiac, Mich. 48053

The opening paragraphs in which you described yourself and your interests was informative. We seem to have quite a bit in common, which came as quite a surprise to me. Most fans seem to be logically/scientific/rationalistic/materialistic/etc. oriented. I lean in the opposite direction. My interests are (besides sf) oriental religions, psychology (I favor Jungian, third force, etc.), myth symbols, dreams, metaphysics (a dirty word in sf circles),

the paranormal, esoteric philosophies, magick (with a k).

((That's what I meant, too.))

I don't practice real magick, but I have a passing interest in its practitioners (like the Golden Dawn et al.). Natural food, herbs, jazz, classical, how our mind affects our immediate environment and vice versa, the common ground between science and metaphysics, etc. I could go on, but you get the general idea. Fandom seems to scoff at most of the above, so it is gratifying to find, in fandom, someone who also has interests along these lines.

((Interesting, how someone can say, "That paranormal stuff can't exist," & think that he has made a scientific statement. The true scientist is a skeptic, and that word does not mean a dogmatic refusal to believe. I suspend both belief & disbelief about psi etc. I think there's something there, but I know it's damned easy to be fooled, bamboozled, & generally Urinated upon.))

I got my BA in psychology. I took courses in oriental religions (and even one on general semantics!), but I never took a philosophy course. It just never interested me that much. I guess I feel that most schools of philosophic thought are about as relevant as organized religion, and mainstream psychological thought. All three add up to zero.

((When I majored in Phil (1960-4), it was all British linguistic ho-hum. Even Existentialism was considered so bizarre & far out, it was given only in a no-credit underground course. (Which I took. Friends, I read BEING & NOTHINGNESS, and lived to tell about it--just barely. Did you know that NAUSEA was based on a bad peyote trip?) Anyway, a few years ago, a friend in California told me that she was majoring in Phil & taking courses in Tantric Yoga & Drug Mysticism & like that. Needless to say, I informed her that this was a disgraceful betrayal of academic standards and otherwise made it perfectly clear that I was jealous as all hell.))

When I started work on my BA in Psych, I thought psychology had the Answer. As my classes progressed, I realized that it wasn't even too sure what the question was. They laughed at Jung and didn't take the third force theories THAT seriously. Stimulus-response is still God. Well, I started reading Jung on my own and what he had to say tallied pretty closely with what I had been studying in the area of metaphysics. I was impressed. If and when I go back for my masters degree, I will try to specialize in Jungian psychology. Mainstream psychology sucks.

ROBERT A. BLOCH 2111 Sunset Crest Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90046

It's impossible to speak for the other six normal people, but I liked DR very much--and thank you for sending it. All the best to you, and here's hoping you continue in fanpubbing.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: William Rotsler (a very nice letter), Lesleigh Luttrell (who publishes an excellent zine), & Joseph Napolitano.

BELATED ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The comment by Sheryl Smith in DR 1 comes from KHATRU 1 (edited by Jeff Smith). The comment by Murray Ward is from MAD SCIENTIST'S DIGEST 1 (Brian Earl Brown). The idea of monasteries fulfilling some of the functions of jails & asylums is from Robert Anton Wilson's SEX AND DRUGS, a book I recommend very highly, and not just to those who are interested in one or both of the subjects mentioned in the title. (Come to think of it, do I know anybody who isn't interested in either of those subjects?)

O, well, peace everybody, Hail Eris, power to the people (who agree with us), etc. See you in 3 months (I hope).

Arthur

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_____ I have published your letter (a) to amuse & enlighten other readers; (b) to inflate your ego; (c) to inflate my ego; (d) to show the kind of sick, disgusting hate mail I've been getting; (e) none of the above.

_____ You have gained the enmity of an old gypsy woman with Powers, and things like this are going to keep happening to you.

_____ You have warped my mind, contributed to my delinquency, & otherwise Made Me What I Am Today. (And unlike WC Fields & the woman who drove him to drink, I hereby thank you for it.)