



REDD BOGGS' **RETROGRADE**

Number 4 / June 1960

COGITO

THE MEDAL MONSTER

Esthetic merit, like virtue, is its own reward, and the only one anywhere east of posterity.

Popularity, on the other hand, is its own award, and the ritual of Oscaring Oscar is so absurd that such ceremonies are usually disguised under the pretense of honoring quality — in our field, artistic achievement — to give them the illusion of meaning and substance. Such solemn hypocrisy is so transparent that no one blinks twice to learn that in bestowing the 1959 Academy awards Hollywood gave the nod to "Pillow Talk" over "Wild Strawberries" as best original screenplay. Of course. "Pillow Talk" was big box-office, and thus deserved recognition, but the vulgarity of honoring it for suckering millions would make even Samuel Goldwyn blush. It had to be honored as if it were for quality.

Even so, we have been less accustomed to such bald deception in the science fiction field because, in the past, a number of really notable works have been honored at the annual Hugo ceremonies. James Blish's A Case of Conscience was acclaimed as the best sf novel of 1958, a triumph that almost vindicated the Hugo awards all by itself. Almost. I have just been looking over the list of 1959 Hugo nominations.

Even Hollywood couldn't contrive a better lineup of mediocrity for its merit badges. Except in a couple categories where there wasn't much competition (best prozine, best pro artist), there seems to have been a determined effort on the part of those who voted in the preliminary poll to weed out every meritorious performance of 1959 and leave the field to the second-rate and the insignificant. A few worthy efforts were overlooked in this elimination process, but they will be set down in the final balloting. Imagine, if you please, five nominations for "best novel of 1959" which include Murray Leinster's "Pirates of Ersatz" and Garrett-Harris' "That Sweet Little Old Lady" and exclude Brian Aldiss' Starship and Vanguard from Alpha, as well as George O. Smith's The Fourth "R" and John Bowen's After the Rain.

One would think that only Americans were eligible for these International Fantasy awards; not a single work by a Britisher was nominated, unless there is one among the best dramatic works. This Stateside bias is especially noteworthy in the "best fanzine" category, where Hyphen -- surely one of the half dozen finest fanzines of all time, which published two representative issues in 1959 -- is conspicuously absent. So

is Aporrheta; while I didn't see any of its 1959 issues, it was even better last year than in 1958, according to reliable report, and if this is the case, it surely rated among the top five.

Among the American fanzines which are missing is another of the top half dozen fanzines of all time, Oops!a, whose 1959 issues were above average even for Calkins. Void is another fanzine which deserved nomination more than several of those on the list, but the most astonishing omission is Richard Eney's Fancyyclopedia II. By all the laws of sweet reason this single publication should have been enough to make the contention for best fanzine no contest, and I trust that the committee will adjust matters to a small degree by bestowing a special award on Cy.

Ted White speaks in Void #22 about fandom as "a glorified stage, filled with play-acting and wildly false values" and of the confusion of "fannish 'realities' with mundane reality." It is this orientation that makes Fanac so popular; from a detached viewpoint the trivialities Terry and Ron chronicle so faithfully are most of them even less important than the piddling little intrigues in the world of Congreve and Wycherley. From the viewpoint of one deeply involved in fandom, of course, Fanac is "indispensable," and the fact that it nourishes our FIAWOL urge makes unimportant the haphazardness of its production and the dislocation of its sense of values. One can hardly deny that Fanac is the most popular fanzine, and deservedly so, but let that be its Hugo, and let us restore meaning to the International Fantasy awards by voting Cry of the Nameless "best fanzine." Among the five nominees, Cry seems the most deserving of the honor on merits stronger than popularity.

I am also voting for Starship Troopers, "The Alley Man," F&SF, and Emsh, and refraining from casting a vote for "best dramatic work." But it should be obvious by now that galluping the microcosm is not the way to determine artistic merit in our field any more than in any other.

THE ROUND FILE

A first collection of poetry by Joe Kennedy, under his pseudonym X. J. Kennedy, will appear from Doubleday sometime in 1961. # John Wyndham, introduced as Britain's #1 science fiction writer, appeared on the BBC radio program "Dateline London," taped for American distribution by the English-speaking Union. He reported just receiving the proofs of a new book to be published this autumn, a "farce" which he is afraid may not please sf fans. The program was heard in Minneapolis on 4 June. # If the title change for ASF increases its science fiction audience, so much the better. But is it the right sort of change? I remember the editorial in the centennial issue of The Atlantic, November 1957, which remarked, "Perhaps in part our longevity is attributable to a refreshment of leadership, for we have changed editors more frequently than any other magazine in our field; whenever the circulation began to sag, a younger mind was brought in." # Captain Kidd, privateer, was hanged in England for piracy in 1701. I wonder what's become of Sally?

RETROGRADE is edited and published monthly by Redd Boggs, 2209 Highland place N. E., Minneapolis 21, Minnesota. Associate editor: Marion Z. Bradley. This is issue number four, June 1960. This fanzine is available for letters of comment or by trade but not by subscription. Please let me know in good time about changes of address, hm? Artwork credits: p 6 - Dick Schultz; p 8 - William (Paladin) Rotsler. The Gafia press

THE REEL WORLD

VISIT TO A SMALL FLOP

CYRIL RITCHARD is said to have been shaken — as well he might be — at the news that Jerry Lewis would play the role of Kreton in the screen version of "Visit to a Small Planet." The "incomparable" Mr Ritchard created the role for the original TV play in 1955 and also played it in the Broadway production two years later. Although Mr Ritchard is an actor I've never seen and have barely heard of, I might have been shaken at the news, too, if I had remembered that Anthony Boucher had termed the play an "urbane and witty comedy" and had paused to wonder what Jerry Lewis was doing in such surroundings. But I didn't think about it till too late to do anything but get up and walk out of the theater, and I wouldn't do that.

Later, still faunching for the urbanity and delight that Boucher found in the play, I hastened out to buy a copy of the paperback version of the play: Visit to a Small Planet, by Gore Vidal (Signet, 35¢), and even dug up the original TV version which F&SF printed in its March 1957 issue and which I neglected to read at the time. After a profound study of both texts I am forced to marvel that even Mr Ritchard, whom Vidal calls "a gifted farceur," could infuse the play with wit and charm. These qualities do not reveal themselves in the printed versions, and most of the weaknesses of the screen play are inherent in the TV and Broadway versions.

In his preface to the published version Vidal declares that he is a novelist at heart, and turned to TV and the drama only because the novel is doomed. Then he demonstrates that the drama, too, is doomed. It is necessary for the playwright to try to write a "hit" -- a play that the entire audience will find amiable and engaging. "I was obliged to protect an eighty-thousand dollar investment," he writes, "and I confess freely that I obscured meanings, softened blows, humbly turned wrath aside, emerging, as we all wanted, with a successful play which represented me very little...perhaps a good thing."

Despite all the criticism of television, the TV play has almost as bold a "tone of witty iconoclasm" as the Broadway and Hollywood versions. That is to say, all three are quite innocuous as satire, and the fun depends largely on parading caricatures that obviously have no connection with real people anywhere. The only exception is the TV news-commentator; he is hardly as incredible as the real thing.

The screen play, it is true, omits most of the comedy poking fun at the U. S. army, and substitutes for General Tom Powers -- a role of some magnitude in the Broadway play, taken by Eddie Mayehoff -- a strangely anachronistic figure, an officious air-raid warden left over from a "Blondie" movie of 1943. But movie-goers aren't missing much, and this fun-poking could hardly have been censored out for fear of offending the army. The movie "Li'l Abner" contains much more pungent satire of the

THE BROADWAY HIT—NOW THE SCREEN'S CRAZIEST LARK!



fuggheadedness indigenous to the Pentagon than does Vidal's play. For example, we are asked to howl appreciatively over General Powers talking enthusiastically about his particular branch of the service, the laundry corps: "Major logistical problem, laundry. Mobile units. Lot of big decisions to make in that area: kind of soap to use, things like that. Decided finally on Soap Chip Flakes. Fine lather. Good detergent. Doesn't harm the fabric and has bluing already built in, which cut down our expenditures by two million dollars. All my idea...."

Vidal is evidently suffering from over-exposure to "Mister Roberts" when he supposes that service laundries are inherently funny things.

No, in searching for the satire and fun-poking that supposedly exists in this play, we must probe deeper, to subtle depths that advertising agencies, TV sponsors, and Broadway playgoers would never penetrate. We must remember that Vidal's previous excursion into science fiction was Messiah, a study of "religious cultism." With this as our clue, we are able to see that "Visit to a Small Planet," despite some feeble farce about war, TV newscasters, teenage love affairs, and such matters, is essentially a comedy-satire about religion, a burlesque of the Second Coming.

The screen version opens with the camera focused on a half-acre of knee-deep white fog left over from "A Guy Named Joe." Despite the flying saucer that Kreton pilots to Earth, it is clear that we are viewing heaven, geegawed up with a few science fictional trappings, for the beings of this existence, having conquered "the ultimate disease, passion" (Kreton tells us in the play), are obviously angels, and the father image, Delton 4, is obviously God or at least an archangel. The place is not another planet, according to Kreton, but another dimension, "in the suburbs of time."

Kreton, an immortal, arrives on Earth and passes a number of miracles designed to demonstrate his power and omnipotence. Furthermore, he can read the human heart (or mind) and lay bare its secrets, and he tells people the unpalatable truth about themselves: "your mother dislikes your father but she is too tired to do anything about it so she knits and she gardens and she tries not to think about him. Your father, on the other hand, is bored with all of you. Don't look shocked; he doesn't like you any more than you like him."

His disingenuous manner having brought confusion to the world, Kreton is in the end taken back to heaven by Delton, the father image. In the Broadway play Delton intervenes as a result of a "prayer" by one of the human characters. The screen play makes the parallel even more explicit. As punishment for his acts, Kreton loses his invulnerability and becomes human; mankind turns on him and his existence is imperilled

when Delton 4 appears and takes him back home. Delton tells him that he should have learned his lesson at last: "You have felt the pain of being human, the pain of hunger, the pain of being burned..." And Kreton adds, "Yes, and I've felt pain pain, and that's the worst kind!"

Like any supernatural being, Kreton cannot be measured by the six-inch ruler of our moral standards, but neither can he be measured by the yardstick of "heaven," for he is "retarded" (isn't his name a clever touch, though?), an escapee from a nursery. He came to Earth, moreover, not to heal nor even to harm, but merely to pursue his hobby: we are his hobby, and his visit is in the nature of fanaticism. Thus — alas for our theory about messianic parallels — his Coming hardly constitutes even "fragile satire," for it has no moral significance, even in reverse. The parallels traced above are probably archetypal and unintended, which is too bad because if Vidal had emphasized the parallels the play might have been more interesting. A messiah in reverse, a retarded child leading us to war, would cast a very strange light on Christian values.

Vidal calls "'Visit'...the happiest of pro-war plays," but it is hardly good burlesque to depict a heavenly cretin playing his war games, in which he almost succeeds in setting off atomic destruction, when we have our own Earth-bred idiots who can do the same thing just as adroitly. If they can't suspend all the rifles in the world 15 feet in the air, at least they can put up a spy plane over Russia, and the resulting furor amounts to the same thing.

But we dwell overlong on this matter of a minor little movie comedy that scarcely deserves to be seen, much less reviewed, except by anybody who thinks Jerry Lewis is funnier than the beast from 10,000 fathoms.

THE SECRET MUSEUM OF FANKIND

Dear Redd;

Thanks, muchly, for the copy of TYMPANY which was sent to me awhile ago. I particularly like the review of the Swedish movie by 4e Ackerman.

Keep up the good work on this---one of the nicest little news-zines I have seen yet! By the way I would like to arrange a trade. I am the editor of a zine ASTRA'S TOWER which will come out within a week or so the first ish that is; I'll send you a copy, and will if you like continue to trade pubs.

Again good luck on Tymp although I really can't see the relation to stf. (but that is)

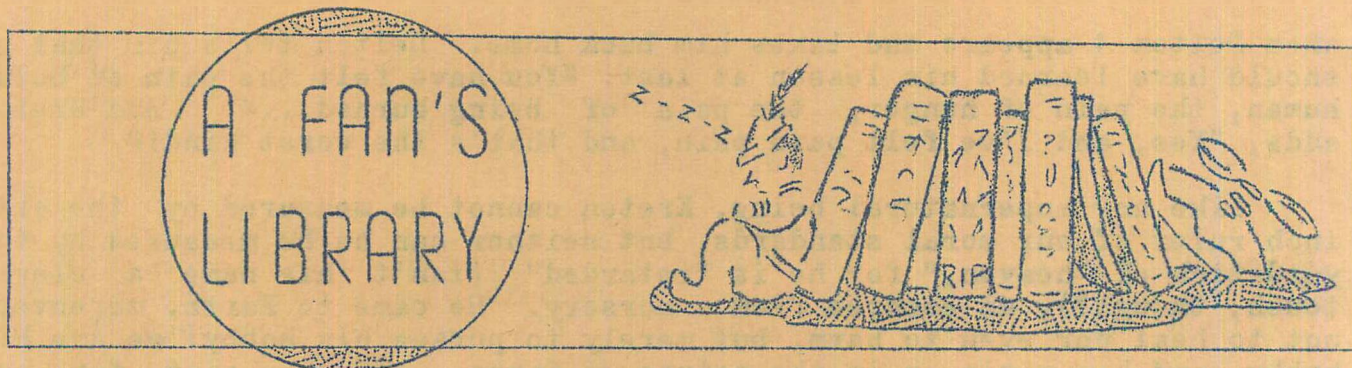
Sincerely--

"ASTRA"

Marion E. Zimmer

June 16, 1947

EXHIBIT #3. Postal card from Marion Zimmer Bradley (then Marion E. Zimmer), RFD #1, East Greenbush, New York, postmark date illegible, which launched the 13-year correspondence between us. Gestefax copy of the original.



THE EYE AND THE THUMB

These are thumbnail reviews of some of the new books in my library that I have saccadicated with my eyetracks.

Slang, said Walt Whitman in an essay collected in his book November Boughs, is "an attempt of common humanity to escape from bald literalism, and express itself illimitably, which in highest walks produces poets and poems, and doubtless in prehistoric times gave the start to, and perfected, the whole immense tangle of the old mythologies." The sidewalk -- and gutter -- poetry, the embryonic mythology compressed into the new Dictionary of American Slang make it a sockdollager of a book for browsing, though it is probably less valuable as a reference work than the Berrey-Van den Bark American Thesaurus of Slang, also published by Crowell. "Yaffner" is Negro slang for a dishonest, untrustworthy person; "boz-woz" is carnival talk for bragging; a "lush Betty" is, or was c. 1848, a slang term for a whisky bottle; "Spokane" is archaic hobo for pork-and-beans; "honyock" is a farmer; "blue rain" is bad gin. These terms -- all new to me -- I pick at random from a browse of the book.

Although Wentworth and Flexner follow the OED practice of citing, if possible, the earliest known occurrence in print of each term, this feature is not too valuable because, as the authors point out, nearly all slang is used orally, sometimes for years, before it reaches print. The dictionary is unique, however, in including heretofore taboo expressions combining the so-called "four-letter Anglo-Saxon words" with figurative meanings. As Mr Flexner says in the preface, "Standard non-taboo words referring to sex are so scarce or remote and scientific that slang is often used in referring to the most romantic, the most obscene, and the most humorous sexual situations. Slang is so universally used in sexual communication that when 'a man meets a maid' it is best for all concerned that they know slang." This book should therefore be invaluable to wolves (= a seducer or would-be seducer).

To ex-GIs like me, this dictionary will bring back recollections, fond or foul, of the war years, since it contains copious amounts of the slang popular in the armed services during the second world war. Hubba-hubba, Piccadilly commando, short arm, repple depple, file thirteen, and thirty-day wonder are defined here, along with less printable terms. Although the propaganda that women's groups caused to be tacked to company and squadron bulletin boards declared that the United States army has a tradition of using "clean language," you won't find much evidence here of this tradition. The dictionary spells out such terms as "snafu"

that Milton A. Rothman teased FAPA with in Milty's Mag c. 1943. However, with reference to Burbee's famous yarn "Four Letters to Victory" in Stefantasy, it is unfortunate that F. Towner Laney's favorite expression in either expurgated or unexpurgated form has somehow been overlooked.

The name of E. B. White on the title page as co-author of The Elements of Style (with William Strunk Jr) is probably the factor that made this small book into a best seller. The bulk of the book, however, is by Strunk and was first copyrighted in 1918. White first read the book

Dictionary of American Slang. Compiled and edited by Harold Wentworth PhD and Stuart Berg Flexner M.A. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell company, 1960. \$7.50.

The Elements of Style. By William Strunk Jr, with revisions, an introduction, and a new chapter on writing by E. B. White. New York: The Macmillan company, 1959. \$2.50. (Also available in paper covers.)

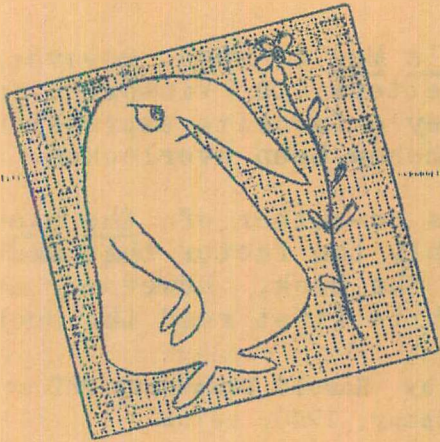
Sex Kitten. By Richard E. Geis. Chicago: Newsstand Library Books, 1960. 35¢. Paper covers.

as an undergraduate and the pink dazzle of first impressions still in his eyes he imagines that it retains the pith and vigor he saw in it 40 years ago. Actually in 1960 it strikes one as about as inspiring as the Harbrace Handbook, and no more useful. Rudolf Flesch (The Art of Plain Talk, The Art of Readable Writing, etc.) is a better teacher of "cleanliness, accuracy, and brevity in the use of English," and George Orwell in his essay on "Politics and the English Language" (available in his Anchor book A Collection of Essays) penetrates more quickly and surely to the heart of the matter.

Aside from the introduction, White's contribution consists of a final chapter, "An Approach to Style," which is excellent but hardly worth the price of the book. His final word on style points toward a solution to the dilemma encountered by all writers who attempt to write in the "plain vernacular": as Cyril Connolly says, "As the writer goes out to meet [the masses] halfway he is joined by other writers going out to meet them halfway and they merge into the same creature -- the talkie journalist, the advertising, lecturing, popular novelist." White repeats the old adage that "style is the writer," and adds that the writer's concern for the reader "must be pure: he must sympathize with the reader's plight...but never seek to know his wants. The whole duty of a writer is to please and satisfy himself, and the true writer always plays to an audience of one. Let him start sniffing the air, or glancing at the Trend Machine, and he is as good as dead, although he may make a nice living." If you must buy the book, tear out the pages containing these observations, and throw the rest away.

The prostitution of talent necessary to satisfy certain readers is feelingly described by Richard E. Geis on page 75 of his novel Sex Kitten, wherein he prints the formula for writing "a sex novel, a real sex novel, the kind sold in skid-row bookstores specializing in that sort of thing." In other words, the kind of novel Sex Kitten is. The magician who pauses in his act to reveal the gimmick behind the trick must be a master to pull it off afterward, and Geis proves himself a capable novelist by keeping up the illusion even after his audience is both in-

(Concluded on page 10)



CHORUSPONDENCE

ONE DISADVANTAGE of publishing a monthly fanzine, I've discovered, is that all the comments on an issue are not received when another issue goes on stencil. As long as Retrograde hits a monthly schedule, therefore, letters commenting on a given issue will not be printed till the second issue following. This time we have further comments on issue #2; next time we will have comments on #3, only a few of which are here so far.

HAL SHAPIRO

It would appear that, comparing material in your previous fmz with Retrograde #2, that you could use on the average of a month per page to round up good material, whether it be self-written or no. You may recall, Redd, that in years past I have chided you a bit about the seeming mediocrity of your fmz. Now comes this nice specimen with amazingly good writing, content, etc. It was nine months in the making and has eight pages with which I can find no fault. In fact, I showed it to George Young and he commented that he found more meat in eight pages of Retrograde than in many more pages of Tesseract, Void, and other well-known fmz.

Your fan's library seems to lean heavily to essay-type stuff. I assume that the books listed there are meant to be kept permanently. In this we differ. About the only things I bother to keep are reference works or a few favorite expensive things that look good on the shelves. All magazines and most books I pass on, when I'm through with them, to other fans, hospitals, or others who will enjoy them.

I note that you are trying to make people think I am nothing but a pen name for some other person. Else, why on the last page would you list my name in the same place as the obvious pen names like Joe Kennedy, Billy Joe Plott, Wilkie Conner, Bob Farnham, et al? (Detroit 38, Michigan)

EC: Billy Joe Plott is NOT a pen name.

LEN MOFFATT

Despite my incurable optimism I must agree with Jim Harmon that things do look grim for the sf magazine field, and for fiction magazines in general. But hope springs eternal.... For instance, some of the mags devoted primarily to "fact articles" and "true life" stories do include a bit of fiction each ish. New fiction mags do keep appearing, some of which use sf or fantasy material, but they seem to have trouble surviving. I understand that Fear is going to fold, if it hasn't already, which really bugs me, as it uses new stories. Shock seems to be mostly a reprint mag. I was generally pleased with the first ish of Fear; it seemed to be an honest attempt to produce a good mag.

I think that a good fiction mag could survive if given support -- namely, publishers willing to risk more money in promotion and distribution. But seems like a new mag has to Make Money in its first few issues or quick like a bunny they fold it and try some other tack. Years ago, when there wasn't as much competition from other fields -- in fact, no TV at all -- a mag had a good chance to prove itself in two or three issues. But not any more.

Why am I hopeful? Because surely somewhere the right combination will appear: a publisher with both the money and the desire to publish and promote a top-notch fiction mag, be it sf, fantasy, adventure, or a combination of all of 'em.

It pleased me to see Louis Russell Chauvenet appearing in your lettercol,

just as he was pleased to see Widner's familiar signature in the "Museum" corner of the first issue. And just the other day Rick loaned me his copy of Chauvenet's waiting-list-type fapazine. Really took me back. I used to explain how lrc was (in my mind, anyway) Right Up There with Widner and Tucker and Speer and all those Grande Olde Bhoys, and what an interesting and provocative writer he was. Now I'm happy to report that Rick agrees with me that by Foo this lrc is everything I said he was.

If there is a God it matters not whether he is "perfect." The thing that matters is what he has done, what he is doing, what he is going to do. How much he can do or not do is, as lrc says, out of our ken.

Louis will remember when I used to think otherwise, but nowadays the existence or non-existence of God doesn't bother me as it did when I was writing my preachments for VoM. I can't honestly say one way or the other -- I have an open mind on the subject. No one (and no group) has been able to prove to my satisfaction that God does or does not exist. I have my own private theories but I'm not about to preach them; I can't prove that my theories are "right," so why disturb others with them? (Downey, California)

SETH JOHNSON

Sounds like you're a western fan. Only westerns I ever really cared for were the old "Henry" stories they used to run in Argosy All-Story. About a town drunk who got elected sheriff as a joke and then put things over by enforcing the law and catching all criminals and convicting them. Had a Swedish employee and a cat who got drunk on the mash from the prune whisky they distilled on the ranch and went out battling all creatures in sight. Wait a minute -- that wasn't a cat, but a rooster. Must be 20 years since I enjoyed those stories, but from what I've told I suspect you might recognize them if you are a trufan of westerns.

Hardly blame the parents for not particularly cottoning to The Catcher in the Rye. After all, describing a guy taking a prostitute to his room and then being unable to do anything is hardly reading matter for young girls. I can't say I cared for the book or the protagonist for that matter. But it was strictly for adults.

How the heck they are going to do The Bishop's Jaegers on Broadway I don't know. Ninety per cent of the story was about people in the nude, not only in a nudist colony but in police court and wandering around Coney island. Even the New York theater couldn't get away with that. And if they clothe the characters, then most of the horse laughs vanish automatically. (Vaux Hall, New Jersey)

MAL ASHWORTH

I received this elegant Retrograde (a rather backsliding title for a forward-looking fanzine), thank you. I think the thing that hit me the hardest about this issue was that small portion in "Letter from Mount Carmel" regarding the state of magazine science fiction and the magazines in general. Reading all this was, to me, rather like coming to realise the reality of some faraway disaster through hearing that a close friend has been killed in it. Until I read this I had not even fully realised that there were no longer any pulp sf magazines anywhere on the horizon. I have, in fact, been indulging in one of the advantages of living in a neck of the backwoods -- not thinking about what was going on elsewhere, without actually going so far as to bury my head in the sand. Since we hardly ever see any U. S. sf magazines over here anyway, it has always been rather easy to believe that "over there" would be plenty and abundance, science fiction right left and centre. And suddenly to realise that this is not so comes rather hard.

And yet, deep-down, I think I am an incontrovertible optimist. I do not quite believe that magazine science fiction is in its final death throes; somewhere within there is a still small voice which says that it will come again. Even if it is only speaking from hope, I haven't the heart to let cold reason in to argue with it. "But still, at the same time..." as Jurgen would say, there may be more to it

than simple faith. There have been ups and downs in the past, ebb and flow of demand for magazine science fiction, and I doubt that the tenor and tempo of society has altered so basically in the last few years as to preclude any possibility of a further flow. Then again, if the detective and western fields are also badly hit, it seems to me a matter of some comfort that sf has weathered the storm even as well as it has, up to now.

Speaking once again from intuition only, I feel that the future of the magazine field for some time may lie with fantasy rather than sf. And because I feel that way, I am at one with the mighty hordes condemning John W. Campbell for his Analog gamble. There will, I feel certain, be no shortage of magazines devoted to serious science articles and factual space-travel treatises. But nowhere anywhere -- so far as I know -- is there any magazine proffering a happy hour of romance and fantasy, dreams a la Lewis Carroll and Robert E. Howard.

The fact of the matter is that as reality is clambering uphill to meet fantasy (and here I mean by "fantasy" "flights of the imagination" so that the term embraces much science fiction too), fantasy is rushing downhill to the meeting with outstretched arms. This, I maintain, is the wrong thing to do. Fantasy should be climbing still -- seeking out new, quaint crevices and further fantastic crags. At a time when peddlers of reality are ten-a-penny, the peddlers of fantasy are throwing away all their old stock and joining the crowd. Shop-soiled escapism is being cleared at bargain prices and shining new reality offered in its place. And, strangely, there has probably never been such a fine potential market for escapism as there is today. (Bradford 2, England)

LARRY SHAW

You and I seem to be the only two people in the world who remember "Jimmie Allen." I don't remember much about him, actually, but I remember in great detail the circumstances under which I heard his debut, and the way he dove through the window of the radio room at the end of the first episode; I remember sending away for the genuine photo of Speed Robertson, and being well satisfied with his personal appearance but disappointed to discover that his fabulous Bluebird was just an ordinary and rather old-fashioned-looking biplane; and I remember how, at the end of I believe the second year, the show went off the air before originally scheduled to, or something, and the announcer had to summarize a whole mess of scripts before presenting the final episode. I know I liked him, as I did all air stuff then, but have no more idea than you do whether he was really any good or not.

Yes, it is the same Daniel Keyes, and he would not deny it. He got me a job as assistant comic book editor in 1952, incidentally, and this led fairly directly to my becoming an auto magazine editor. (Staten Island 6, New York)

A FAN'S LIBRARY

(Concluded from page 7)

formed and insulted by his revelation. The background of the novel, a Portland department store, is vividly realized, and Geis has a sharp eye for colors and shapes. If all the luscious women in the story are -- as Wentworth and Flexner put it -- "considered solely as sexual objects," at least they are partially humanized by occasional well-chosen detail. The novel fails, however, to penetrate the emotional and psychological depths of the situation, and the lack of a sense of causality prevents the story from becoming anything more than a series of incidents relating to a selected group of people. This, too, is part of the formula, I suppose: the reader's impulse in such a novel is essentially voyeuristic -- hence non-participative. Sex Kitten is dead, and perhaps depraved, matter infused with a joie de vivre that makes it seem to live and move. Our man Geis has talent, and let's hope he is not content merely to make a "nice living" putting out formula stuff for the pimple-face trade.