



DISCORD

EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY REDD BOGGS

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Cogito

PIZZA, PI, AND SCIENCE FICTION (A SERIOUS DISCUSSION)

The only difference between the old buildings of the lower loop and the new central library building of Minneapolis, which has sprung up among them looking as out of place as an electronic bathtub in a Chic Sale outhouse, is that they are drab dirty and ugly, while it is bright clean and ugly. But at least the girl at the library's information desk was attractive as compared with the elderly librarian types who usually handle those duties and I beamed at her approvingly as I asked, "Where is the Twin Cities Fantasy society meeting being held?" I knew the room number (253-A) but not the location, and this was lucky, for as I said those words a sound seemed to come from the sky, like a breaking harp-string, dying away mournfully, and I understood only her gesture toward the southeast corner of the library.

I took the escalator to the second floor, paused to let the nitrogen bubbles fizz out of my blood, and almost instantly noticed John F. Anderson Jr bouncing toward me, resplendent in sports coat and sharply pressed trousers. I blushed for my second-best sweatshirt and baggy pants and winced at his youthful energy and enthusiasm. He had been the moving spirit (though Ruth Berman did much of the spadework) behind this first attempt in nine years at organizing a new Twin Cities fan club, and he led me back to show me the meeting hall he had booked: a large airy room bathed in a great deluge of cold blue fluorescent light and containing 200 empty pastel-green chairs and an equally empty rostrum half a block away. John left me to occupy the premises while he went off to try to round up some more people.

I started to sit in a contour chair, then thought better of it and perched gingerly on a table. I suddenly realized that the hall wasn't empty after all, but was crowded with ghosts summoned by a breaking harp-string to this bright new location to conduct old familiar business. Oliver Saari and Douglas Blakely and John Chapman were there, in the very first row. And Arden "Buns" Benson and Bob Madsen and Carl Jacobi. And Phil Bronson, passing out copies of The Fantaste, and John Gergen and Gordy Dickson. And Cliff Simak and Kenny Gray and Richard Elsberry. And Poul Anderson in long stocking cap, flaunting a Wallace button, and Dale Rostomily and Manson Brackney arguing about women. And Morrie Dollens, surrounded by tons of photographic and recording equip-

ment, and two dozen other fans of yore were present too. And occupying the rostrum stood Samuel D. Russell, delivering his famous lecture on Weinbaum.

I knew that in a little while the meeting would break up and everybody would pile into Saari's Stfnash (long since scrap iron) and zoom down Hennepin avenue to the New Elgin cafe (long since out of business) for the usual post-meeting bullfest over coffee and sandwiches. I stood up and tottered over to the window and looked at my reflection in the dark glass. I looked solid enough, with no trace of ectoplasm rushing up from my extremities. I turned back to the room and gestured fiercely. "Fout!" I shouted, and at the sound of that dread word all the ghosts wisped sadly away.

John returned with two girls in tow. One, I knew instantly, must be none other than Ruth Berman, the first Minneapolis BNF to blossom since Richard Elsberry; the other proved to be her self-styled fake fan kid sister, Jean, age $9\frac{1}{2}$. Time, which had labored long and mightily to bring forth another Minneapolis fan, had done its work well, I decided; Ruth doesn't much resemble cynical old Elsberry, being a bright, attractive, and personable young lady. I fumbled out my fountain pen, but she was apparently too awed to ask for my autograph. Just then another fan showed up: Fred Galvin of St Paul, complete with a scholarly briefcase and the beginnings of a beard. Out of one or the other -- I didn't notice which -- he fished a copy of The Dying Earth and waved it aloft as a credential.

It soon appeared that both Ruth and Fred are math students at the university, and they conversed largely in algebrese or calculese, full of irrationals, abscissas, and pi-i's. "I used to be a whiz at long division," I said after a while. Actually this was a lie, although I was pretty good at short division, but even this boast didn't impress them, for some reason. I decided that a conversation with Jean would be more enlightening. "How's the world treating you?" I asked brightly. She looked puzzled, then remarked meditatively, "According to the dualistic epistemology, the world is composed of two sets of entities: material things and mental states of ideas. The inferred material things are existentially non-identical with the immediately presented ideas from which they are inferred, and..."

Three other people came in just then, and I wondered if they were material or mental; at any rate they were high school students and sf readers who had never contacted fandom previously. There were now eight attendees at the meeting, which was not a bad showing -- the first Minneapolis Fantasy society meeting in November 1940 had a total attendance of nine -- but the big hall swallowed us up like the expedition to the

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center of the earth. John was, I'm afraid, slightly crushed, although he shouldn't have been; he decided not to hold an official meeting but to try again at a later date. Ruth invited everybody out to her house for coffee. The Bermans and Fred went in one car, while John and I took my redoubtable Rambler. Being slightly unfamiliar with that corner of the city I made a wrong turn somewhere and drove the Honeybee in a bee-line across lots most of the way, arriving far ahead of the other car.

Forewarned by phone, Ruth's parents made John and I welcome. The stately Berman manse, staring moodily through a couple of black evergreens at Lake Nokomis, is a large place containing the usual furnishings and the even more important requirements for the good life: books, records, musical instruments, and hobby equipment. Ruth's father is a doctor, and was engaged at the moment in the delicate surgical operation of making pizza. As soon as the others arrived, we were ushered into a breakfast nook where we ate pizza and chatted with Terry and Miri Carr. The latter two weren't present except as mental states. Inspired by pepperoni and hot coffee Ruth grabbed the phone and dialed Berkeley (the city, not the bishop), and it was the work of but a moment to make contact with the Carrs in order to tell Fanac about this latest event in the history of Twin Cities fandom. Ruth paid for the call, but generously allowed me to monopolize the phone for several minutes, and just as generously Terry permitted me to speak briefly with his sexy wife.

Afterward Ruth showed me her Oz collection -- all those early editions featuring full-color plates by Neill! -- and Jean sat down at the grand piano and nonchalantly played Poulenc's "Mouvements Perpetuels" with her shoes off (as an encore she played Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" with a real hammer). And there was chitter-chatter and deep discussion till it was time to leave. I offered John a ride home (he lives out in this end of town) and Ruth volunteered to drive Fred at least part way back to exotic old St Paul. Before we parted we paused awhile in the Bermans' front yard to identify some of the stars and constellations blazing in the late-winter sky.

Far out across ice-locked Lake Nokomis, Norlamin's star glimmered dimly.

THE ROUND FILE

Mike Deckinger wants everybody to remember that he has moved by now to a new address: 31 Carr place, Fords, New Jersey. # Jim Harmon wants copies of Retrograde #5 and #6 containing his "Sounds of Dreaming." If you'll donate or sell your copies, write me!



Behold the tortoise: He maketh no progress
even with his neck stucketh out a mile --
unless he keepeth his feet on the ground.

REVIEWING A NOVEL written by a close friend is an impossible task. If you give it nothing but unqualified praise, those who are aware that you know the author will lift knowing eyebrows and discount three-quarters of what you say. Even if your friend has written the masterpiece of the century, nobody is going to believe it when you say so. Nor will your friend believe it when he reads your flattering review. He will be happy, of course, at the egoboo, but he'll have that little sneaking suspicion that you are just being nice.

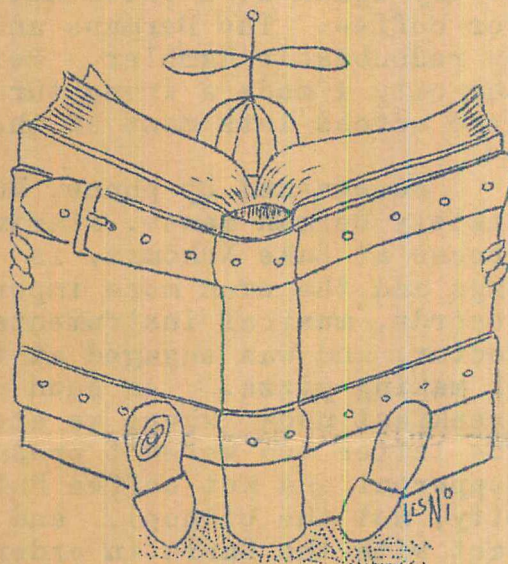
And, on the other hand, if you give anything BUT unqualified praise to it, some shadow of coolness is bound to endure for a time between the critic and the writer. If you say, for instance, that you do not quite understand what the writer is doing, he is apt to think, "Et tu, Brute?"

The review which follows must be read with this in mind and with full awareness of the tightrope which makes everything complimentary, and everything uncomplimentary, an equally perilous road for the reviewer to travel.

John E. Muller, author of Search the Dark Stars,* is -- I am betraying no secrets, for the introduction prints his real name, through what he calls "sloppy editing," and so does the blurb on the back cover -- British fan and writer A. A. Glynn, and though he has written detective stories, this is, I believe, Tony Glynn's first venture into book-length science fiction.

And a worthy venture it is, indeed. The back cover blurb truly says, "If your sense of wonder is jaded, try it." On the other hand I would hesitate to recommend the book to a modern audience whose definition of "science fiction" has been shaped by the last few years of Galaxy, F&SF, and ASF/Analog. For Search the Dark Stars includes little or no serious inquiry into the world of tomorrow's science -- or silence -- which this day's madness doth prepare; there are no careful documentaries about the day after tomorrow; no whitherings about the dooms of mankind; and no satires about current status civilizations extrapolated to their frightening conclusions. There are no investigations of alien socio-sexual customs nor any fulminations about the neglected science which will save the world.

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AND SOMETIMES
MY FRIENDS
WRITE BOOKS TOO
BY MARION Z. BRADLEY
CO-EDITOR

* London: John Spenser and Co., Ltd., 1961. Badger Books paperback. 2/6.

What is there, then? Escape, and suspense, and adventure, laid against a galactic background. Battles in space. A hero escaping with the aid of a beautiful mutant girl. Alien planets and startling views and sudden, unexpected horrors. Do you begin to get the picture? Search the Dark Stars is pure space opera, of a type that has not been written since Planet Stories fell to a loud chorus of lamentations from those who liked cosmic adventure and were, like myself, pretty indifferent to the emotions of the wife and baby of the first spaceman to get lost between Earth and the moon. It is almost a classic space opera. It starts with Darrel Kain, second-stage mutant, escaping from the pursuing spaceships of the Interstellar Empire under dictator Gundaarson Escario (suggestive, perhaps, of Iscariot?), and it keeps the hero on the run, escaping dangers at every turn, picking up chance companions here and there and losing them again, until the final climactic struggle lands them all safely in the hidden refuge world of the Mutant League, deep in the Gulf of Dark Stars.

If you conclude from this that Search the Dark Stars bears a sort of family resemblance to Isaac Asimov's The Stars, Like Dust and to middle-period Van Vogt -- of Empire of the Atom -- you are perfectly right, although it moves more rapidly than either, with a higher quality of chase and suspense. There are terrifying scenes -- as in the Fringe, an inchoate area of horror on the planet Cresna, where Kain and the mutant girl Leii struggle through projected terrors and tangled strands of horror -- which tend to suggest that the author has also absorbed and taken unto himself some of the fantastic imagery and power of the Kuttners and Hamiltons who lent such scope and beauty to fantasy-adventure in the late 1940s and early '50s. But it is not imitative, entirely; Tony has many original, personal qualities. Chief of these, perhaps, is an instinct for pace and movement that was probably never equalled by any of the above writers. Some of the fast action, such as the scene which features dodging in and out of "warpflight," is written at such a high level of tension that reading it is emotionally exhausting, and from the first page to the last, the reader literally never gets to draw a restful breath.

Perhaps it is this unique Tony Glynn quality of superfast movement, of keep-the-reader-off-balance, of crowding every page with fantastic new ideas, that makes Search the Dark Stars exciting and fascinating. It is never quite clear to me just what Darrel Kain is escaping for, or what the secret plots of the Mutant League are all about, or why the Interstellar Empire should develop into such a sinister dictatorship in the first place, or -- a most compelling question -- whether the Mutant League's slogan of "The Mutants are the inheritors of power and wisdom; their right to rule the star-worlds peacefully cannot be denied" does not at least hint that they are simply trying to depose one "evil" dictatorship with a self-styled "benevolent" one. I doubt if the writer bothered to answer these questions in his own mind, or even to ask them. It's a little like a childhood game of cops and robbers; you're never sure what the Bad Guys have done that's so awful, or what the Good Guys have done that's so worthwhile, or what the mysterious plots are all about, but it's all very exciting and for heaven's sake who cares? While it's going on, you forget to ask the awkward questions; you just live through it and enjoy it.

(Concluded on page 8)

little less, taken a second startled look at some of his specimens to be sure they aren't dreadful fakes after all, and even been cautious enough to leave out, say, "I, Robot," as a sign of good taste and earnestness.

One hates to admit it, out of respect for a mind that could invent both science fiction and radar, but the truth is that Hugo Gernsback is the biggest bore our field has ever produced. Indeed, one faunches away from saying it as his eyes glaze over in recollection of the old saying, Like father, like son. The only alternative to admitting tacitly that one's complete file of Amazing is a soporific unequalled in the annals of habit-forming drugs is to prop one's self up in an attentive pose while Hugo drones on and on and pretend that what he says is profound and amusing. I find myself attending on him like an adoring puppy dog, ready to wag as soon as he gives a sign that he is joking when he says things like Around the World in 80 Days is a highly imaginative tale concerned with science or that he realizes, somewhere in a dusty little cell of his mind, that science fiction written by an electronic monstrosity is a prospect calling for something besides a thin humorless smile. O Papa Hugo, if only once before you are laid to rest with a copy of the winter 1930 Amazing Stories Quarterly in your hand you would write an editorial or an essay that would not put me into profound slumber within three sentences and that I could reflect back on without falling prey to such wicked sensations of derision and contempt!

"I, Rocket" can be written off as very early Bradbury, pausing only to note that he was still making a forlorn and foredoomed attempt to write conventional science fiction. By identifying with the spaceship he creates the only rocket in his stories that doesn't vaguely resemble a gargantuan Fourth of July skyrocket, although even here his descriptions have the dithering air of a woman trying to explain a car engine malfunction to a garage mechanic. Considering the year in which this story was written (1944), the glorification of war and the tear-blurred affirmation of the myth that there are no atheists in foxholes are even more strikingly conventional attitudes. "A Baptist is an atheist who took a trip to the moon" is the most eyepopping line in all of Bradbury. However tiresome Bradbury later became, "I, Rocket" makes the reader impatient for the day when Ray pays back all this borrowed sugar, cup and all, and works with ingredients from his own pantry.

Of all the exhibits in Amazing's annish, Edgar Rice Burroughs' "John Carter and the Giant of Mars" is the story left farthest behind in the slow shuffle of science fiction progress. Of course it was dreadful and outworn trash compared with the best in science fiction on the very morning RAP whipped it down to the printers to be smeared over tons of cringing woodpulp. The same month that this story appeared (January 1941) Astounding Science Fiction published "Mechanical Mice" and part 1 of "Sixth Column." Twenty years later even the editors of Amazing would react normally -- which is to say by erupting in peals of unholy laughter -- if this story were offered to them as anything but a curiosity. Not long before this reprint appeared, John Anderson Jr lent me a copy of Thuvia, Maid of Mars (1920), and a comparison of the two makes it uncomfortably plain that Burroughs had not improved or refined his writing technique in more than two decades. Indeed, after nearly three decades of writing ERB was unable to discern the destructive absurdity of naming his villain Pew Mogel or of creating a giant named Joog as a menace by

lumping him together out of several tons of white ape carcasses. Hilarity reaches new heights when Kantos Kan wires his air fleet to break formation "and assemble beside the flagship immediately"!

The Nowlan yarn, "Armageddon -- 2419 A.D.," which (like five of the seven stories) I'd read before, stood up stoutly after 33 years and was, I think, the surprise hit of the bunch, even though it probably does not reek with the scents of wonder as much as the others. Nowlan seems deliberately to suppress and underplay such elements as would evoke wonder. "I had no thought that I had been unconscious more than a few hours, although it seems that the radioactive gas had kept me in a state of suspended animation for something like 500 years." Thus does Nowlan casually toss away the most dramatic moment in the story, although at this remove, after all those years when Startling required every lead-novel hero to undergo "suspended animation" or its equivalent, one may feel strangely grateful. Fictionally and philosophically Nowlan's world lightly foreshadows Robert Heinlein's. The story has no plot, few characters, and the setting is often badly visualized. The blur resulting from poor handling of the viewpoint doesn't obscure the fact that Nowlan possesses the power to imagine in great and convincing detail and is especially skilful at describing military action. These are Heinlein's strong points, of course. It's quite understandable why Campbell was able to praise Nowlan's early work at a time (1940) when he was publishing the early Heinlein classics. "Armageddon" does not suffer too greatly from comparison with a work like "The Roads Must Roll!"

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concluded

A word should be said about the style of the story. Like all space opera it has the fault of saying "warpflight" or "nerve-suit" or "mutant" and letting that word carry the weight of what might really demand at least a little explanation, but for the most part it is written in a fresh and facile manner, and is less cliché-ridden than the stereotype that has made the term "space opera" anathema to a whole generation of literate readers. Tony Glynn is potentially a fine writer of adventure-fantasy who deserves, and may in his next novel discover, a slightly more thoughtfully-constructed universe in which to suspend his really fine sense of story value, pace, and inventive imagination.

Search the Dark Stars is, in any case, an excellent example of a kind of science fiction -- the novel of escape and adventure against a background of stars and streaking spaceships -- that has unfortunately fallen into disrepute. If more writers had shown the same powers of inventiveness and spellbinding suspense, it might never have so fallen, and if Tony Glynn continues to write in this vein, it may yet come back. The reader who is jaded with too much Zenna Henderson, Theodore Sturgeon, and Phil Farmer, too many strange kiddies, psi-powered bums, and sex-crazed robots, will put down Search the Dark Stars after reading it, crying "More! More!" There are signs (such as the growing popularity of Amazing Stories) that the trend of psychological or satirical science fiction may be waning and that the adventure story may rise again to prominence and good repute. Tony Glynn's very fine space opera may be, not a revival of an old and beloved, but outmoded, genre, but an advance scout of the new. So be it!

KAREN ANDERSON

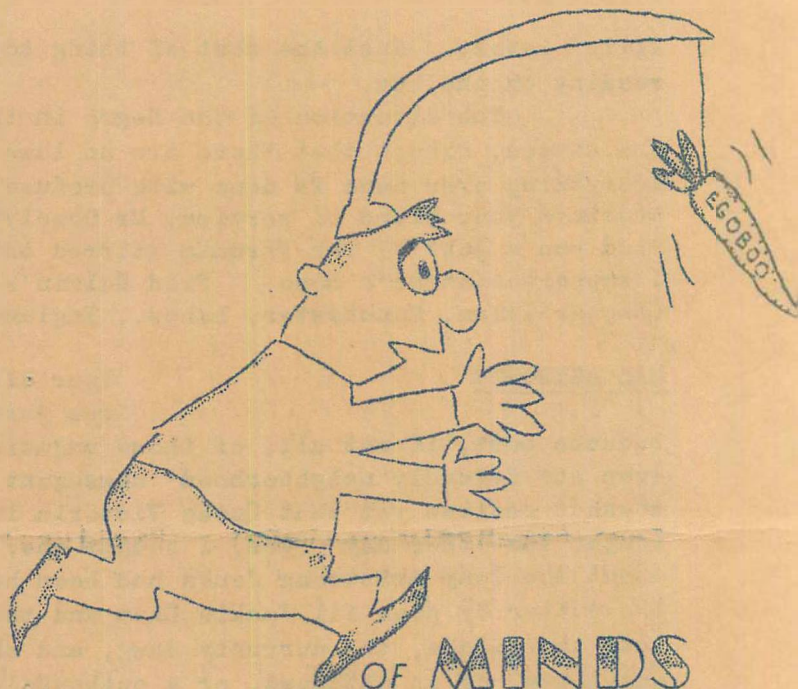
The Baycon committee would appreciate announcements in Discord. Dates of the fourteenth annual Westercon (Baycon) are 1 and 2 July 1961, and it will be held at the Leamington hotel, Oakland, California. The registration fee is the usual \$1.00, but it will be raised to \$1.50 after June first. Miriam Carr, 1818 Hearst street, Berkeley, California, is in charge of registration.

Guest of honor is Fritz Leiber; Jack Speer will be fan guest of honor.

Advertising rates in the Progress Report are \$1 per half page and 75¢ per quarter page. (Orinda, California)

EC: Baycon with two good eggs.

A MEETING



OF MINDS

DR ANTONIO DUPLA

For some time, and through the comments of Yandro about Retrograde and afterwards Discord, I was very much attracted to what looked like an utmost personal and intelligent fanzine. Now, thanks to your kindness, I have reached it and to my great satisfaction I see that the compliments were right.

First, you like Mozart, and that is a fair point. In the fanzines I read plenty of words of unknown meaning (stenciled, Dittoed...) about editing them and so I can't say what is your trick, but the result is the neatest and best work of all I know. In the text, your errand through the newsstand was fun of good quality. Your critique of the stories in Amazing hard but sound and well deserved.

As for the letters, and about the much-discussed problem of censorship and pornography: I see the soundness of Mailer's -- and your -- argument, but I do agree with Helgesen in that some control is necessary. Much can be attained by means of education by parents, teachers, et alia, but the moral remains of the ultimate extrapolation of the matter: "The Weapon" by Fredric Brown.

For another matter, I belong to a country much and rightly blamed for rigidity in too many things. But for us, who are the offspring of all the races that through more than 40 centuries have come to Spain, the racial problem as it is in your country seems fruit of a mentality far more "retrograde" than ours.

All in all, a splendid and quality fanzine which I look forward to getting from now on. (Dr D's full address is: Po. Ma. Agustin 9, Zaragoza, Spain)

ALAN RISPIN

Was down at Dave Hale's place in Stourbridge the other weekend and he had some of these damn pulp papers there, Teenweek, and like that. Some teenage vamp was telling us that we shouldn't feel out of it if we haven't gone out with a gal when we reach the old, old ancient age of 15. Then she said that she wondered why grownups don't treat her more like a mature person. There was a set of pictures of the gal dressed a la Monroe, Bardot, and Lollo, with the caption, "I CAN PASS FOR A FILM STAR SO WHY DON'T THEY TREAT ME LIKE ONE?" or something like that. There is a purely British type of rag for teengals, though. Full of romance stories and a couple of pages of raves about

Elvis' latest. Just the sort of thing to cover up that copy of Amazing when you're reading on the bus.

The situation of the Negro in this country is similar to his treatment in the states, except that there are no laws preventing him from doing this or that. Everything over here is done with profuse apologies: "The customers don't seem to appreciate your brand of service, Mr Obmolytu, so perhaps our cleaning department can find you a job?" Bob Farnham stirred things up with his letter, if nothing else, so I support what he's done. Fred Galvin's story was good in sort of a eeeeechh way. (Higher Irlam, Manchester, Lancs., England)

MAL ASHWORTH

Your bit in Discord #9 about the magazine headings was just terrific. I know exactly what you mean because most, if not all, of those magazines are coming over here these days too and even our friendly neighborhood newsagent at the end of the street, who probably doesn't realise yet that Queen Victoria is no longer with us, is selling them. One I bought the other day (yes, I bought one; I'll explain in a minute) had an article about how Tony Armstrong Jones had been helped and financed and generally drug out of the gutter by poor lil Jackie Chan and then he went off and deserted her and married into the palace, the durrrrrty dawg, and she went off and sat in a penthouse -- or a washhouse, or an outhouse, or a nuthouse -- I forget the exact location -- to put her ravished soul together again.

Really, I expect one day to come across one with a heading "Buckingham Palace Harem Secrets" or "The Inside Story of the Lustful Vatican Sex Orgies." In fact, I shall be surprised if they haven't already been done. Howsoever, I fancy these magazines may just have a rather shorter run over here than they think they are in for. I don't think the market will stand for quite the swamping that it seems to have taken in the US, mainly because, I think, the readers will soon tire of pure, unadulterated crap. They like it adulterated just a little and, anyway, they have been used to getting that sort of thing from the Daily Mirror and the News of the World for many long years now, and they are probably just a little bit conservative about it. We shall see.

Oh yes, I was going to explain how I came to buy that magazine. Well, it featured an article on Lucky Luciano. Now, I don't know quite why but I have taken Lucky and the boys to my heart and I buy and read everything I can concerning them. I like to keep up with their movements which -- I am happy to say -- is more than they do for me. Anyway, the gist of that article was "we don't like Lucky Luciano" and it said very little more on the subject.

I think I have never come across a better argument for ceasing to ram Shakespeare down schoolchildren's throats than that beautiful and unintentional one in Martin Helgesen's letter to the effect that they will miss the "objectionable" bits in Shakespeare because of the "language barrier." The point being, of course, that they miss just about everything else at the same time. (Bradford 2, England)

ANDY YOUNG

For some time now, I've been eating Wheat Chex (remember the days when they were Shredded Ralston? I bet Jim Harmon does) for breakfast and as my midnight snack, and in that hazy, mindless state which immediately precedes or follows sleep I have been reading the label on the package. Hereon are listed the ingredients which make it what it is, which distinguish it from all competitors, which constitute its essential being; and among them are two, so mellifluous and yet so sinister and carcinogenic sounding that they threaten to take over my mind: butylated hydroxyanisole and butylated hydroxytoluene. Now and then, when I feel hungry, I remark to the world at large: "Well, I guess it's time to have another bowl of butylated hydroxyanisole...." But wothell is spike-nard?

I too received a review copy of The Journal of the Interplanetary Exploration Society. I felt the kindest thing I could do with it was not review it. The sincerity of the contributors (with the exception of the one reprinted from Pravda) was matched only by their incompetence to discuss their subjects. Of them all, the one over which I wept the most mental tears was Poul Anderson's article on the speed of propagation of gravitation. This is the saddest of the lot, because it is not only a subject on considerable interest to physicists and astronomers, but a subject to which a considerable effort has been directed by some of the most high-powered theoreticians alive today, and because Poul's nineteenth century approach was so sadly in contrast to the methods which are being used to investigate the subject today. Only a few years ago I attended a colloquium at HCO which was given by Bondi on the subject of gravitational waves. This is a controversial subject, and I am not myself competent to say much about it, for I am not familiar with the general theory of relativity nor with the mathematics on which it depends.

Anyone who wants to go into the subject at all should look up the various published articles in the scientific journals; I believe Bondi has some in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society during the middle and late 1950s, and others in Proc. Roy. Soc.

I think Liz Wilson (not to be confused with Liz Taylor)'s letter was very perceptive in saying that JWC feels restricted by physical "laws," and feels that they could be "broken" as easily as social "laws" if one only had the boldness to do so. I do not wish to go into a discussion of the nature of physical "law" here, distinguishing in detail between the man-made formulation of the regularities of the universe and the regularities themselves -- the true Campbellian, of course, strives to confuse the former with the latter, to make physical "law" man-made and hence violable. (Somerville 43, Massachusetts)

ART CASTILLO

It would seem to me that Wollheim and Leman, both from their own narrow points of view, have a perfect right to criticize Heinlein and Reynolds, not merely for using their fiction as a vehicle for political propaganda, but for bluntly advocating totalitarian systems. Heinlein's system remains a military hierarchy presided over by a Leader in the name of "necessity, the tyrant's plea," while Reynolds repeats the pyramidal structure in the name of economic necessity. Reynolds even goes so far as to write, "I'm not so sure there's as many differences between the West and the Soviet Complex as we usually think." Well, sure, of course not. In ten years Russia and the United States, by virtue of sheer rational evolution, will come to resemble each other so much, economically, industrially, technocratically, and politically, that it won't make a bit of difference then who conquers who. And it might be instructive for the short memories of those oblivious to Black and Red Fascism to recall that the German word for Leader is "Fuehrer"; the Italian word is "Duce."

Dusby's Aesopian language of the "wolves and sheep" seems, as is usual with limited distinctions, rather meaningless. What is one to say of the horse, which is neither? (Probably, also, this is why Swift admired them enough to make them the heroes of Gulliver's Travels.)

Certainly no one has the right to petition for the suppression of such works as Starship Troopers or "Soviet Complex" anymore than they would have the right to hold a mass-burning of all editions of Mein Kampf and Das Kapital, both of which are highly useful and informative books, if only in a largely negative way.

The only real solution to such impasses that I can see is to adopt the Castillo Perpetual Peace plan. Let us draft Heinlein, Calkins, Dr Teller and the AEC, as well as the more belligerent desperadoes in the Pentagon. Possibly Khrushchev may find it convenient to round up some of his more belligerent generals and certain members of the Chinese Communist party. All of these men will be sent to the Belgian

Congo where, upon landing, they will each be handed a spear and an Ashanti war-cap, and left to their own devices.

Bongo! Bongo! Bongo!
 How I wanna leave the Congo!
 Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes!
 Bingle! Bangle! Bungle!
 Kasavubu's in the jungle,
 And Lumumba's a mess!

Katanga can go fly a kite!
 I've learned might doesn't make right!
 Civilization, give me a chance!

(San Francisco 11, California)

LARRY M. HARRIS

Here is that half of Mark Phillips again, writing in response to your review in Discord #10. I don't object to negative reviews of my work, as Harris, Phillips/2, or any other of the 28 pen names I have nurtured over the years. As you know if you read Xero #2 or #3, I can write my own negative reviews, too. Some of my work is much worse, when it hits print, than it was when it left the typewriter; I suppose you have had this same experience. When I notice the poor quality of a job, I speak out, whether I did the job, or whether Redd Boggs did.

And Redd Boggs has, I'm afraid. I do object to your review of "Occasion for Disaster," not because it's negative, but because, for most of its length, it's meaningless. For a quick example: I should like you to provide any basis for the statement that "Mark Phillips' world is sub-literate." "Sub-literate" is a word with a very distinct meaning. There are sub-literate sf writers -- Ellison, Mack Reynolds, Silverberg, and others. Garrett is not, nor am I. We can read, and we can write grammatically and with some attempt at grace. Please back this statement up with some proof. In going over the Phillips novels, I can find none.

The idea behind the Phillips novels was really a twofold notion. Campbell came up with the original thought: psionics might be acceptable, or more acceptable, as humor, than it has been either in serious-fiction form or in Campbell's editorials. Frankly, I do not give a damn whether psionics is acceptable or not. Thus the second thought: the humorous possibilities inherent in psionics are vast enough to stagger the mind. I thought (and still think) that the teleporting teenagers were pretty funny. I thought (and still think) that Queen Elizabeth I (Rose Thompson), Brubitsch, Borbitsch, and Garbitsch were pretty funny. I'm fond of the Society for Psychical Research, too, and of Kenneth J. Malone himself.

Admittedly, there are no Intellectual Concepts residing in the Phillips novels. Why should there be? These novels are funny. They do not teach, they do not preach, they do not intend to carry a Message. I do not see why they should so intend. This Message thing can be overdone. Is there no room any more for Jerry Lewis, for Jonathan Winters, for the Marx brothers, for Max Shulman? All these are not only comics, but low comics. So is Mark Phillips, though his heritage is not in that direct line. His direct ancestors are only the Marx brothers and Thorne Smith, his median ancestor Craig Rice.

Now, you may not like this style of humor. Your privilege. But -- if you do like the Marx brothers, or Thorne Smith, or Craig -- then you must start from the premiss that Mark Phillips is attempting to do the same thing. If we've failed, then you're under some obligation to point out the difference between our failures and those successes.

As for "ignorance of the craft, disdain for the field," I find nothing to say. If (on my side) 15 years of reading and writing science fiction, of earnest attempts to discover the principles, if any, of this particular field, make either for ignorance or disdain, I am greatly surprised. And "the last scrap of integrity" has not gone. I am attempting to do something I believe worthwhile -- I am attempting to amuse. I find my position defensible and rational. I do not so find yours.

One last word on integrity. I have completed a 30,000-word story, which was submitted to Campbell. He requested a rewrite, and he was right; I did the rewrite. He has now requested another which, in my best judgment, is harmful to the story. I'm no monster of integrity, but I am not doing the rewrite, nor do I intend to do it. Nine hundred bucks is a lot of dough. I do what I think I ought to do -- with that which Campbell has rejected, and with three Mark Phillips novels which he (and a great many readers) has (have) accepted. Okay? (New York 9, New York)

EC: Mark Phillips' world is sub-literate when "literate" is defined (as it is in the New Collegiate dictionary) as "Pertaining to or learned in literature; literary." And considering Phillips' ancestors, no wonder his world is sub-literate, not to mention a little dusty, outmoded, derivative. Science fiction of the 1980s that was inspired by Jerry Lewis, William Brinkley, and Mickey Spillane will, predictably, possess the same characteristics and die as quickly as Gnut's imperfect mocking bird.

ROBERT A. W. LOWNDES

Two items struck me as particularly interesting in the January and February issues: the dissections of Keller and Phillips. As one who was especially fond of the good doctor, back in the 1930s, it's disheartening to see now how just this dissection is for the bulk of his output. I must concur. The simple style was more often simple-minded, as were the simple characters. But now and then DHK hit a story about simple people which was exactly right for his way of thinking. More often than not, this was in the fantasy and weird or horror field. "A Piece of Linoleum," for example, seemed to me to be effective both on first and much later reading.

On the other hand, the "great" sf stories are now laughable -- even though some of them still have their moments. "The Abyss" remains chilling, despite the fact that it is one of the most ineptly written and ridiculously planned stories I've tried to read. Infuriating, but it got me on several occasions. I was considering reprinting it in Science Fiction Stories -- if the author would agree to editorial revisions. Decided that not only would the author not consent, but that the thing would have to be rewritten from end to end.

In the February issue we have Mark Phillips. (I think that you overstate the case by allotting one head to the two authors; well, perhaps on alternate Tuesdays...). I agree with every point, but the worst one of all is one you didn't make: namely, that here is a horrifying exhibit of what ASF has become. When this series becomes actually the most enjoyable reading in nearly every issue in which an installment appears, winning by default, you can see what has happened to the fiction in the rest of the magazine. In the four issues wherein the serial appeared, there were only three other stories that I would have finished had not my sense of duty to a long-standing hobby kept me wearily turning pages -- and of those three, only one had comparable entertainment value.

Which brings me to yet another revision of my views on the necessities for "good" science fiction. Dicta: entertainment need not be the end of sf writing, but it better be the beginning. There's no limit to what a story can or should be in addition to being entertaining; however, the end of the field is in sight when the bulk of it fails to meet the initial requirement.

Limitation: obviously, everybody could agree with me, and we could all disagree on which stories are therefore "good" or better. I find both Phillips and James Joyce "entertaining"; others will find entertainment in -- well, let them name it. JWC's editorials remain interesting, despite the increasing erraticism, and there's likely to be something stimulating and valuable right in the middle of the most exasperating nonsense. Like the distinction between "power corrupts" and "immunity corrupts" -- it's simple, in that it seems obvious once you think of it, but he brought it home to me. (Suffern, New York)

RICHARD ELSBERRY

Discord #10 enjoyable reading. What's this about "autovisual" programs in your Seacon ballot? Does this mean we can only vote for movies seen at drive-in theaters? Voting for Hugos was easy this year. I'd read only a handful of novels, so it was easy to tick them off: A Canticle for Leibowitz, Deathworld, Rogue Moon, The High Crusade, Drunkards Walk. I decided Vonnegut was not eligible, and the only other novels I'd read were "To the Tombaugh Station" and "Out Like a Light." I note that you did not list this Mark Phillips novel in your rundown; don't blame you. Wow. JWC's judgment must be all out of whack. You really get a strange idea of Analog when reading the Harrison, Phillips, and Anderson novels on successive nights, as I did.

I haven't read "Occasion for Disaster" yet, but based on the previous two novels by the unholy two, your remarks appear to be in good taste, except that you are carrying the attack in these pages to two working men who are probably trying to keep body and soul together -- are they entirely to blame? Somehow Campbell, the instigator, comes out unscathed. JWC accepted the novel -- probably commissioned it. He liked it because it parrots back to him, in thin disguise, his own thinking. I think the real fault lies with Campbell. Mark Phillips could, and would, do better if Analog required it. It does not. Dianetics may have been bad, but it didn't inflate JWC's ego as psionics has, as illustrated by the appearance on Analog's cover in the past few issues of JWC's name. Campbell apparently believes that more people will buy the magazine if they can plainly see that he edits it; I buy it in spite of that fact. There is a long unbroken tradition around my house about buying Analog (even when it goes unread), which I just don't feel right about breaking. Also I feel that because of his higher rates Campbell will likely get first crack at most good stories and buy a goodly percentage. With its prestige and budget, and under the guiding hand of a Boucher or a Knight, or even, why not, a Boggs, Analog could be the outstanding science fiction magazine in the field.

Oh yes, Starship Troopers. Finally read it, and can't figure out what all the furor is about. I don't know Heinlein's motives, but the novel does require one to think and to accept or reject Heinlein's moral and social theories. You accept or reject them as is your wont, but you don't toss the book aside if your ideas differ from his. So the man thinks differently; a refreshing change in this world. Those people who disliked the story, disliked it, I think, because it shattered some pre-conceived notions they had about Heinlein. Their hero let them down.

If you can't cut back on the letters, then I'd appreciate more editorial comment to balance the book. You see, I consider letters in a fanzine like ads in a magazine. The balance should never exceed 60 edit, 40 ads, except during the six weeks prior to Christmas. (San Jose, California)

HELEN URBAN

What? Consolidate states? Redd! Think of the consequences! Think of all those state senators and legislators who would be thrown out of work. Think of their poor wives and starving children. Are you against children or something? Now my plan would increase employment and buy lots of dead rodent fur to wrap around necks legislators' and state senators' wives, and the kids can eat the carcasses, if they like, with sugar or salt, either one. Break up the 50 states into, say, 150 or 200 independent, squabbling money filching, law writing units. Then when the taxpayers complain they won't be so apt to stand and just sputter; they'll know what bugs them because like I mean state government will be an intimate thing. Every state just like your own back yard. A state capitol in every city hall. Think of the employment for slogan writers. Why, the need for slogans alone could employ 700,000 men for a good 20 years. That'll buy a lot of mink-dyed dead weasels. (North Hollywood, California)

Held over till next issue: letters from Jim Blish, WBreen, Phil Harrell, Rick Sneary!