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FAUSTENSTEIN

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NOM D'UN
CHIEN!

"You can do anything you want,
if you're prepared to do it badly."

— Peter Jones.

This is

DR FAUSTENSTEIN NO. 2

written and produced by David Redd.

Editorial address: "Kensington"
9 Queensway
Haverfordwest
Dyfed
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OLD GROWLER

Nostalgia

Hello and welcome to DR FAUSTENSTEIN No. 2, the magazine which makes OMNI look professional. The promised Redditorial has been cancelled because I've lost my notes and can't face having to think seriously about sf for long enough to rewrite them. Onward then, with yet another article about the junk I used to read in the Fifties.

Remember AUTHENTIC SCIENCE FICTION? The legend goes that the young H.J. Campbell strolled along innocently to the Hamilton publishing organisation, offered them a novel he'd just dashed off, and was promptly awarded the post of editor. The stuff of dreams. Be that as it may--and the early numbers did list several names in addition to Campbell's on the editorial staff--Campbell soon established his own style and personality for AUTHENTIC.

For the first couple of years the magazine was actually a series of shortish paperback novels by various pseudonyms*, one story per issue. It went through a bizarre sequence of title changes: AUTHENTIC SCIENCE FICTION... SCIENCE FICTION FORTNIGHTLY...SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY...AUTHENTIC SCIENCE FICTION... One of Campbell's novels for ASF was called THE MOON IS HEAVEN--flattery at its most sincere (And at its most mind-wrenching; Bert Campbell wrote several stories in the second person, present-tense. We shuddered.). Anyhow, out of all these predictable sagas of spaceships, planets, rayguns and monsters, (1951, remember) our especial favourites were the Old Growler tales by "Jon J. Deegan."

Over the years I collected most of the series, mainly after the mid-Fifties printing strike when the warehouses were emptied and all the unsold crud of centuries was thrown upon an aghast but reading-starved public. Imagine my painful dilemma when pocket-money was only sufficient for one book: should I choose Jon J. Deegan's AMATEURS IN ALCHEMY, or else Vargo Statten's LAUGHTER IN SPACE? Faced with that choice, most people would have given up reading. We sf fans however are built of tougher stuff than mere humans, so I went on to buy not only AMATEURS IN ALCHEMY but every Deegan title I could find. His stories featured Hartnell, Tubby and old Pop, three scientists from an immense exploring starship. "Old Growler" was the name of the ship; her gravity retractors were prone to making impolite noises at times.

(Well, all this is fascinating stuff, eh? The fascination may fade a bit now, though, because the next few pages consist solely of plot-summaries of the Old Growler stories. As the plot was the same in every Old Growler story you may find the going heavy; have a stiff drink handy. Have several.)

It all started with the second AUTHENTIC issue and RECONNOITRE KRELLIG II. Two chapters were spent establishing the characters and the background of serious scientific exploration. With commendable restraint the ship cruised at 23,000 miles per second--none of your "Warp Factor 4" fantasies here. Hartnell, Tubby and Pop much appreciated their new model spacesuits: "The gravity-adjustment motor doesn't cut into the shoulder-blades so painfully as on the Mark III and Mark V patterns." A great boon, no doubt. By Chapter III Old Growler had landed at last. Our heroes volunteered for the first outside patrol and soon encountered the alien tortoise-men of Krellig. Within a few pages they were captured by the tortoise-warriors of the evil Emperor Thung, taken to the city and slung into the execution cells. (An occupational hazard for Fifties space explorers. In fact the Old Growler trio developed quite a knack for being slung into execution cells.) The city was constructed of "solid light," a relic of the "Old Ones," and naturally the Earthmen's torches just happened to slice through the light-walls of their cells. They escaped, ran about a bit, saw some gruesome sights and were recaptured. Finally they escaped for good when an approaching asteroid wrecked the city amid storms and earthquakes....

* "Lee Stanton," "Roy Sheldon," "George Hay," etc.

As you can imagine, the story seems a little crude to today's reader, but it was a lot better than anything emanating from the guilty men at Scion and John Spencer in those days. You noticed, for example, the absence of any devil-may-care captain or pilot running the whole show from the control room; the highest-ranking named official was the chief astronomer, and the men on outside patrol reported not to him but to a duty controller. In short, the set-up did resemble a properly-organised scientific expedition. Another good point was the way Pop communicated with the aliens. He didn't use standard English (spoken fluently by many Fifties aliens) or mental telepathy (in general use among aliens who hadn't learned English), but instead laboriously transferred thought-images via a "Mattus" apparatus, referred to as new and unsatisfactory. The Mattus was a device which scientists might one day invent; the telepathy and English in other people's books were merely lazy writers' gimmicks. Deegan wasn't lazy.

Before moving on to the next book, I have to mention the official line about treatment of aliens in these stories. Exploration teams were forbidden to use their speed-gamma pistols against intelligent creatures, even to save their own lives. The natives of other planets had rights, and human beings respected those rights. Well, this was as great a contrast with the usual uncontrolled interference in aliens' affairs as anyone could imagine...the first sign that paperback sf from the cheapo publishers had the capacity to improve.

For the next adventure, OLD GROWLER (yes, that was the title) landed upon Fellik, the fourth planet of Vega. Deegan hadn't yet realised that it was more logical to risk only scout vessels on these unknown planets. Again Pop, Hartnell and Tubby were the first to be sent outside, and again they met natives--human, this time. The story revolved around Mankton the Oracle, a machine brought to Fellik from Earth by the survivors of a forgotten prehistoric civilisation. Mankton had been given to men by the "Great Ones," aliens from a galaxy beyond Andromeda who had visited Earth-space over a million years ago--and who had yet to pass back on the return leg of their unimaginably-long research trip. The oracle was the cause of friction between goodies and baddies, and our heroes had to destroy it to save themselves and prevent civil war. After some capture-and-escape melodrama they succeeded.

This story was better than the first, faster-paced and with some good amusing touches, e.g. when Hartnell purloined a vital political document and substituted an issue of "Spicy Fancies" in its place. (The natives were illiterate but the pictures must have impressed them.) I couldn't quite believe in that prehistoric Earthly civilisation, but authenticity scored another point when the Mattus apparatus was withdrawn due to operational difficulties. Consequently, Pop had to make speech-contact with the natives using the "Errüksen vocabularies." These listed numerous "most likely" speech patterns for various life-forms, and Pop found the closest-matching vocabulary by trial and error. A clever idea, although to cover all possible languages the "little volume" Pop carried should have been the size of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

The only adventure I missed reading was the third, OLD GROWLER AND ORBIS. (Anyone got a copy?) By now Krellig II had been subtly altered to just Krellig, another Vegan planet like Fellik and Orbis--Deegan had decided correctly that putting all these planets around a single star gave the series a better-unified background. On Orbis, Pop reminisced in a later story, "We lost a unique race of plant-creatures by letting them blow themselves up with a volcano." Sounds as though a good time was had by all.

In PLANET OF POWER, Old Growler interrupted her return voyage from Vega to investigate a mysterious planet hidden inside an all-concealing "electron cloud." Clearly Deegan had been thinking hard about interstellar exploration procedures, and Old Growler herself remained in space while remote-controlled probes were launched towards the planet. After the probe films had been analysed a small scout vessel (Little Growler) was sent to gather further data. I admit to being impressed by this careful step-by-step probing of the unknown planet; to a Seventies reader the sequence of explosive-payload, camera probe and manned expedition seems quite close to the stages of the real-life American lunar exploration programme.

((Please turn to page 34, dear reader.))

THE BLACKNESS

Fiction

I thought this was a good story until I attempted the revision. Before I'd rewritten two paragraphs I realised it was pointless to do any more. For one thing, it's no more than a rehash of my usual plot: snow, a man, a woman, a monster. That was fine for F&SF in 1968 but I'm not going to go on writing the same story forever. Secondly, it rips off Christianne Ritter's A WOMAN IN THE POLAR NIGHT, in which Captain Ritter frequently disappears to hunt and leaves his wife alone in the cabin. My original story-idea back in 1966 concerned Scandinavian students encountering interesting fungi on a remote island; the characters of Marianne and Dagfin date from this period. But the central idea of the Blackness itself was inspired quite recently by the Ritter book, and both characters and events have shifted away from my conceptions. I find I've borrowed too much from Christianne Ritter, and I can't turn it back into my original idea without ruining it completely. So, only in the pages of DR F. can I unveil the first draft of what I had hoped would become a really good story.

There have been reports, from travellers in the far north, of a strange black presence which haunts the Arctic seas. The people who see this dark shape are often hungry, often exhausted, and nearly always alone. The question remains: what have they seen?

Far away from her, Dagfin was a tiny human figure ascending the snow-covered slopes of Grokenburg. He had said he was hunting for reindeer, but Marianne knew better. I can't follow him up there, she thought. It's too high, too steep. She had tried to accompany her husband twice before, never reaching further than halfway. Each time, Dagfin had gone on to climb the mountain alone.

Marianne turned away. She longed so very much to be with him that it was better not to see him go. And now, since she did not wish to stand here on the ice any more, her choice was simple. She could return to their wooden cabin, that cramped dark box where she could barely stretch out or stand upright, or she could go down to the little bay of Olafshavn where sometimes a seal would appear on the ice. The hope of seeing something alive at Olafshavn was countered by the fear which came to her there. But she did not want to imprison herself in the hut again, and these few hours of daylight were very precious.

She went down to the sea.

As Marianne walked, conscious of her ungainly figure tramping along in snowshoes and all-enveloping furs, she wondered again why her husband wished to keep returning to the mountain. She had little doubt that he was seeking more burial cairns, the mounds of stones left by previous men, but why should he climb the mountain for them when there were many cairns on the nearby coast? She had no answer. There were many things which Dagfin did not tell her. And this was wrong, this distancing of her, because she wanted to be a part of him.

She came at last to the slope above Olafshavn. Here the icefield curved gently downwards into the bay, between the near-vertical cliffs of twin headlands on either side. In a landscape of unchanging whiteness the sea was grey and fluid. She could see the water's edge, where shrunken waves pawed the thin pebbles and mouthed at her with hissing, formless speech. More slowly now, drawn towards the sea yet reluctant to approach it too closely, she made her way to the narrow beach. On the headland to her right was an ancient cairn, shrouded in snow.

The beach was only exposed at low tide. Marianne stood on the damp pebbles and let the cold seawind slide against her numb cheeks. Icebergs, small remnants of the retreating pack-ice, drifted as pale fragments in the dull grey swell. And there were no seals.

Olafshavn had known visitors before, but infrequently. It was one of the few safe landing places on Karl Johan Island, and near Marianne's hut were piles of refuse under the snow where recent geological expeditions had camped. In years before, the whaling vessels had passed this way, searching for fresh meat, and in those years the reindeer and the rare Karl Johan fox had been almost exterminated. Previously, mediaeval captains of the English and Dutch traders had paid occasional visits, each captain thinking the island a new discovery and naming it afresh. And before that, long before, there had been the little Eskimo people who sailed up from Iceland in their oomiaks and clung to a short, dismal existence beside the hostile sea. All these people, the geologists and the whalers, the traders and the Eskimo, were long since gone. But who among them had built the cairns was unknown.

Marianne felt a coldness within her as she stood facing the icy sea. She made no move to collect the few pieces of driftwood. The shifting waves seemed to growl with submerged pebbles rumbling in the undertow. So many people had been here over the years, and all had departed; defeated by the loneliness and the cruel Polar wastes.

She turned her eyes towards Grokenburg, hoping to see Dagfin, but he had disappeared from view.

Spray lining the cliffs formed white billows against the dark sea-washed rocks. On little ledges the eider-ducks nested, she knew, but they were very few in number. They too had been hunted. Marianne gazed across the sea, sensing its terrible emptiness and its absolute hostility to human warmth. She could feel the fear returning. If only something were alive out here.

Presently a flutter of wings caught her eye: two eider-ducks rising swiftly from among the broken ice. She watched them fly together, two dark specks reaching a resting-place on the cliff. But why had they chosen that moment to leave the sea?

She knew, even as the shadow began to form under the grey ripples, that the thing had returned to the bay.

It became clearer, a black shape below the water. It took form in the shallows and Marianne screamed. She threw herself away from its presence. She ran.

"Dag.... Dagfin...." He could never hear her across the miles. Her voice was weak and the black thing behind her was drawing her strength. Her only hope was to run, back to the familiar and the solid, back to the enclosing shelter of the hut.

Once she turned in her flight to look behind her, and she glimpsed the shape partially risen from the sea. Its eyes peered huge and terrible from its darkness. She went on running until she had gained the level ground before her hut, and when she looked back again the blackness had gone.

She took the last few paces more slowly. Always the blackness appeared in the bay; it had not yet come on to the land. Nevertheless Marianne could not bring herself to stay outside, where she might see it again. She tugged at the

heavy timber door of the hut, and let herself inside.

Surrounding her, as her eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, were the pans and furs and hunting equipment, the old metal stove, the food stores and the other essentials of life. She collapsed across the bunk that was too small to stretch out upon; Dagfin's bunk, above hers, was somehow an inch longer, but still too small. Her bunk with its wooden sides was like a cabin within a cabin, a prison within a prison. She lay there for many hours, not eating, not moving, until Dagfin returned.

It was dark. She heard the scraping noise as he pulled aside the door. Strangely, she felt none of the eagerness she had expected.

"Marianne!" He was closing the door. "Haven't you a light in here?"

"No."

"And the stove's gone out!"

"I didn't need it."

He grunted something. She waited, and he struck a match in a little explosion of light. When she stopped blinking she saw his face, illuminated by the glow of a candle. The corner shadows gave the cabin an inner depth, as if it was now much larger inside than out.

He kissed her, and the contact seemed to bring her back to life. She began to move.

He asked, "Why haven't you eaten?"

"I wasn't hungry. Not without you." She swung herself slowly to a sitting position, on the open edge of her bunk.

He frowned, and reached for the smoke-darkened stove door. "I'd better relight this. I've warned you before about not eating; you need all your strength on this island."

"I know," she said. "I missed you."

She had not told him about the blackness. He would not believe her.

He had brought back some eggs with him, more eider-ducks who would not be born. After the long process of cleaning the stove and lighting it, he made a large omelette for them to share. He did all this with a sure authority, and when she protested he said "No, sit down. Let me do this for you. After you've eaten you can do something."

In some ways he could be very cruel.

They sat together afterwards, in only the glow from the firebox which they left open as a kind of luxury. Marianne felt that the danger was past for the time being, but one day he would leave her again. The fear of losing him had driven her to accompany him to Karl Jchan Island, when he first decided to return to resume his geological studies. But the geology had been abandoned months before; now he concentrated on living--and on the cairns.

She asked, because he had not told her, "Did you find anything?"

"Nothing." Undoubtedly he knew that she had guessed his failure long since. He said, "I tried three cairns, small ones, close together. Nothing. Only patches of fungus on the old ground." He smiled. "I meant to bring some fungus back for you. Once it becomes soft in your mouth it tastes different.... eating something from the stones, you feel closer to the spirit of this island."

• Farther mind came the blackness, and she shivered. Anyway, the fungus was centuries old, dried and frozen under the stones. "I don't want to eat it. Didn't you uncover anything else?"

"No, nothing. I don't believe they're burial mounds at all."

"The Eskimos didn't bury their dead," said Marianne.

"I know."

"They sent out the old and sick to die in the snow, and be eaten by animals."

"But the cairns exist," said Dagfin, more firmly. "They were built for a purpose."

Marianne sighed. She wanted to keep him here to herself, not away scrambling over ancient mysteries. Rocks, geology, science she could understand, but not this.

"They are empty," she said. "There is nothing under the stones but more stones."

"Maybe. Some of the mounds appear disturbed, as if something has been inside them. Whalers looking for gold, perhaps. I wonder, should I examine those coastal cairns more closely?"

"You will do what you want," said Marianne. "Have I ever stopped you?"

"I know you disapprove sometimes."

"Can't you forget these cairns for a while? Try to remember that we are married, not strangers. We depend on each other....especially here." It might be years before the next ship called, if no scientists were coming this summer. She would have to fight against the island for all that time.

Dagfin said, "Perhaps you are right. I shall not go up the mountain again, not until we have finished exploring the coast. Perhaps I should remain closer to you. That way...." He left the sentence unfinished.

Tomorrow, thought Marianne, he would not go away. That was the best she could hope for.

Presently they closed the door on the stove, and settled into sleep for the night.

*

They let time pass in their unhurried fashion. It was three days later that Marianne accompanied Dagfin to the headland.

She paused on the cliff above Olafshavn, gazing over the treacherous edge to the grey undulating sea below. She saw only slight spray fringing the waves, and a subdued swell against the opposite cliffs. The bay seemed empty, for which she was very thankful.

Dagfin had walked on ahead, she discovered. That was typical of him. He would not miss her until he needed her. Quickly, hating her awkward running in her clumsy snowshoes, she hurried to catch him up. He must have heard her movements, for he turned and waited.

"You needn't run," he said. "We're almost there."

She shook her head, not sure enough of the nature of her feelings to express them in words. Was she running towards him or away from loneliness? She could not be certain. Their most recent days in the hut had been like all other days: their bodies close together and their minds deeply apart. So she merely drew level with Dagfin and continued walking with him, saying nothing.

There was little she could say to him these days.

Before her rose the white mound of the cairn. Dagfin had two shovels strapped with his rifle to his back; now he undid them and tossed one shovel to her. She nodded and held it patiently, waiting for his decision on where to start. Involuntarily her gaze shifted to the dim horizon, where sea and sky merged into a uniform misty haze. Out there the sea and the ice continued, unbroken, into the high Arctic.

"What can you see?" he demanded, hand reaching for his rifle. Marianne had not realised he was watching her.

"There are no ships," she said.

"Ships?" He scarcely seemed to understand.

"Nothing. No people."

"Of course not. What ships would come so far out of their way?"

With a gesture of dismissal to the idea, he led her towards the cairn. She knew his frame of mind. To him it was inconceivable that their isolation could be broken.

Following his lead, she began shovelling away snow from the face of the mound. Soon she had helped to uncover the outer stones, which her shovel struck jarringly. When they had cleared away sufficient snow they rested for a while, and then began to move the stones by hand.

It was hard work. She wished she had eaten more food lately, as Dagfin had urged her. Lifting a piece of rock, straightening her body, throwing the burden aside and bending down again....she would ache in punishment for many days to come. She lost count of the rest periods she needed before Dagfin was satisfied. It was a large cairn, and probably travellers had added to it as travellers do. She stood aside, and let Dagfin clear the final portion himself.

"Well?" she demanded, as he ceased. "Are you satisfied?"

They had uncovered a patch of bare, rocky ground. Dagfin stood on the cleared area, his face long and grim.

"Nothing. This is the rock of the headland. The cairn was only a pile of stones."

Marianne moved towards him, and she knelt on the frozen ground. It was not quite as empty as Dagfin had implied. The debris of other stones, both dust and pebbles, lay scattered upon it. And she saw little twists of leathery plant tissue: the fungus. She picked up one scrap and offered it to her husband.

"You see? The cairn was not quite empty. The fungus grew here once."

He accepted the piece, then let it fall. His manner suggested a new detachment from his surroundings.

"It's strange, Marianne. We only find this under the cairns now, but it must have grown everywhere at one time."

"Like the trees," said Marianne. There were now no trees on Karl Johan Island.

"Like the people," said Dagfin. "They have gone, but their traces should have been under these cairns."

"They grew the fungus and shielded it with stones." This idea had just occurred to Marianne, and it was so natural that she knew it was true.

"Perhaps so. It is still part of the island, and they are not."

What she had mistaken for detachment in him, she realised, was actually an extreme objectivity concerning their situation.

Abruptly he stooped, and gathered up several more of the shrunken fragments.

"You should eat, Marianne. I wish you'd share this with me."

She shook her head. "That? I can't believe it's good for us."

Wordlessly he slipped the pieces into a pocket of his furs.

There was no more they could do. Dagfin decided to restore the cairn to its original shape. Marianne ached at the thought, but she agreed. Slowly she began heaving the stones back towards the central pile; she had to help him.

Dagfin had almost finished the work, and Marianne had paused to rest again, when she saw him stop. He stood upright, and stared over the sheer rim of the cliffs at the icy sea.

"I think we've done enough," said Dagfin quietly. "Pick up the shovel, Marianne. We'll go."

Silently she followed him. Naturally she had to look down into the bay of Olafshavn, expecting to see a blackness emerging there, but she saw nothing out of the ordinary. Beneath the sea was merely sea.

"Hurry," said Dagfin, and she had to move more quickly in an ungainly run. Elsewhere her appearance had been a matter for pride and pleasure...and elsewhere Dagfin had been a different person. Or had she been looking at only the outer Dagfin?

When they were within reach of the hut he halted, still in view of the bay, and he held her arm. There was no doubt that his backward glances were directed towards Olafshavn.

"Marianne-- Tell me, my darling, do you see anything out there?"

"Nothing." The sea was empty. She had no hesitation in speaking. All the same, she was afraid of what Dagfin might be seeing.

"Then...." Dagfin smiled, a little shamefacedly, and he lifted his rifle. "We'll wake those seabirds from their sleep."

He aimed his rifle at the sea, and fired twice. Birds flew from the ledges in alarm as the shots reverberated across the snow. Dagfin stared seawards, and gradually took on a look of relief.

"I never thought it would come down from the mountain," he whispered.

"I think," said Marianne, "you have eaten too much of the fungus."

*

Inside the hut, in smoky warmth, Dagfin soon fell asleep. Marianne was left to lie awake and wonder.

In her mind she was quite sure that he had seen the blackness, although he would not admit anything to her. The only problem, which kept her from mentioning her own experiences in the bay, was that today she had not been able to see it. Why could that be? Perhaps her thoughts had been too busy with Dagfin, she mused. When she could concentrate on herself she would see it again.

Only herself and the icy slope into Olafshavn; anything more, and its appearance would go unnoticed. And what had Dagfin seen on his lonely climbs up the flanks of Grokenburg? Up there, with no retreat, he must have learned to see its faintest shadow. But here, as long as they were together, they were safe.

He was snoring quietly, not unpleasantly. Marianne looked upward from her bunk and wished she could see through the darkness, through the timber and cloth of the bunk above, through his flesh and bone into the soul that slept above her.

He had been a lively, easily-likeable personality when first she had met him. In a short while her liking had turned to love. He was a junior member of staff at the University, where not long before he had been a student. He spoke to her of his field research trips to the part of Norway called Iotunheim, and to Karl Johan Island, and as she came to know him she learned that he intended returning to the island. It was her own idea that she should go with him. Her family tried to stop her, of course, but nevertheless the marriage took place. By his family, she recalled, she seemed to be pitied. Not long afterwards she found herself one of the two human beings on Karl Johan Island.

Sleep would not come. Dagfin filled her thoughts.

She needed to be close to him, far closer. Arising, she lowered her feet to the dark floor and stood almost upright, placing her arms by feel on the

side of his bunk. Gently her hands touched his sleeping body, reaching for him through the black night. She wished she could see his face.

Marianne, at the University, had been so busy and tireless: as Dagfin had been. She recalled that part of her life with amazement. Lectures, parties, meetings, excursions, meals, affairs, discoveries....so much happening in each day, so much movement and experience crammed into each hour. Painted walls, and bright clothes, and lights everywhere. Always she had been accustomed to having people around her: as a child, as a student, and at the end as a woman. The adjustment to the emptiness of Karl Johan Island had been very painful, and she was not sure that the pain was over even now. Dagfin had been different at home, too. Perhaps she had married him too soon. She had been unaware that within the man there was another man whom she did not know.

Here, on the island, they shared everything and nothing. Their lives and their fears were parallel rather than joined. She had not told him about the blackness; that was wrong. He needed to know. In the morning she would tell him about it, and in so doing show him that he was not alone.

Her hand, almost independently of her, closed on something beside him. A piece of the fungus, fallen from his clothing. She picked it up and smelt it: stones and ice. By this too she could be closer to him, for he wanted her to share it.

She brought the piece towards her mouth, turning it slowly in her fingers. It felt flat and almost circular, the size and shape of an old battered coin. Would taking this mean anything now, if Dagfin was not awake to share it with her?

She would not awaken him yet. Marianne tucked away the fungus inside her own clothing, to keep it safe. She would mention it in the morning.

Meanwhile she was nowhere near sleep. She could not rest. She remembered other nights, long nights, when she and Dagfin had wandered for hours under the stars. If now she went outside, where those stars were shining again, she would be closer to the happiness of those nights.

He would not mind her going out for just a short while. He was at peace. She withdrew her arms from his sleeping form, then reached in once more to touch his lips with her fingers, and moved away. Even when she drew open the door his gentle snoring did not change. As silently as she could, she left the cabin.

It was much colder outside. She was aware of this, but coldness was so familiar as to be unremarkable.

She walked slowly and aimlessly, feeling the depth of the calm, crystal atmosphere around her. Karl Johan Island was a different world by night, no longer raw and hostile, but merely vast and indifferent. By moonlight the wide snowy spaces seemed pure, untainted by the grey of the sea, and the white slopes of Grokenburg towered magically into a night full of stars. Dagfin had climbed those slopes.

Marianne brought out the little fragment of plant tissue, while she still looked up at the mountain, and she placed the piece in her mouth. The fungus was hard. Dagfin had eaten of this himself, alone, on the ice.

The white horizon was not quite smooth, dotted here and there with the shapes of the burial cairns. Marianne closed her teeth on the thing in her mouth, and she chewed. It was like biting a papery wood, very ancient wood. The fungus had come from the cairns. Some things Dagfin had said began to make themselves understood in her mind.

The island must have been warmer when the fungus was growing. Perhaps the longships had voyaged here, in the warm centuries when even Greenland had been given its Norse settlements. Their people had erected the cairns, and later visitors had plundered them. And the ice had returned to reclaim its island. These thoughts pleased Marianne, for she could never believe that the Eskimos

had built the cairns. Surely the Eskimos belonged to an earlier, more primitive time, when the great ice and its terrors still gripped the world.

Marianne walked on, feeling ever closer to the people who had walked these snowfields before. The night was endless. The fungus was softer in her mouth, gradually dissolving away, when she found herself circling towards the bay of Olafshavn.

She did not, on reflection, wish to visit the bay. But it was near and familiar, and she need only pass it without going down to the sea. Moonlight was glinting from far-off icebergs.

She felt no surprise, somehow, when between her and the water a dark object became visible.

The blackness was huge, with great round eyes. She had never seen it so clearly before this. It came with a slow gliding motion across the snow, as a slug would slide across stone, and its eyes were on her.

Marianne went on more quickly, turning away from Olafshavn, but the blackness was gaining on her. She had come from the cabin without a weapon, nothing but a small useless knife. Her mood was strange. The thing was following her, and yet she was unafraid. She had known this would happen. All her time on the island the dark shape had been watching her.

The remnants of the fungus were still ⁱⁿ her mouth. If she had not eaten it, came a thought as if from a great distance, she would not be unable to run now. She tried to spit it out. Certainly, people before her had tasted the fungus, and the blackness had smelt them out. Not many had rifles to protect them.

It was against this that the dead had been shielded with stones.

She turned again, and discovered it almost upon her. The hut was too far away. She stumbled, and went down. The black shape came onwards. It swam over her, around her, into her.

And then she was no longer Marianne.

*

It took her much time, during the night and the next day, to discover who she was. An aimless searching possessed her, and her dark, formless body went roaming the wild coast as her thoughts grew stronger. She engulfed some fish, and two seabirds near the cliff. Their minds sparkled within her and were gone.

When she understood what had happened, that she was now the blackness, she wept. Huge moist tears trickled from the enormous eyes.

Dagfin.... Dagfin.... She watched him search for her, but she had to remain hidden. If he saw her new form, he would shoot. And her body itself had thoughts of its own, strange mumbling ideas left over from all the people it had ever engulfed. As she learned to control the blackness, she learned who and what it had been.

Animals were there, fading into the general thoughts. A geologist had stepped into the gulf years before, but he had sought oblivion and only his death was clear. Other people had come to the blackness over the centuries, mostly the old ones of the ice huts, sick and feeble with minds numbed by the fungus. The strangest victims had been two Vikings, duelling warriors who had fought on a rock where both were expected to die. She had claimed the two, and after that the Viking dead were burned or buried in mounds. The blackness was patient. In the end she had absorbed them all. In fear and hate the thoughts burnt out quickly, but love was eternal; within her still were old Eskimo women who possessed inner peace, and whose love had kept them distinct where harsher minds had faded.

Without her love for Dagfin, she was nothing.

And Dagfin still searched for her. He followed her tracks to their end in confusion above Olafshavn. He clung to the cliffs and explored the ledges for her body. Each day he went to the beach, in case the sea should let go her remains.

He went once more to Grokenburg and scanned all the surrounding land. Watching him, she knew that he loved her and it was only the blackness that had kept them apart. But how could she reveal herself to him? He could not know that the blackness was a mind within a mind, and that he had to deal with her and the blackness together.

She waited. Time was a meaningless cycle of days: the sun rose and set, the stars shone, the sun rose again. The blackness was unchanging and as old as life. She remembered the breaking up of the ice sheets ten thousand years ago, and she remembered being in Dagfin's arms last summer. She was patient.

He grew careless. She was able to approach nearer without being seen. Her love was so powerful that she had to be with him, even if he did see her. One more time they would be together. But it would be the last time, for she knew what the result of that meeting would be. The ancient forces could not be restrained.

In the end it was terrifyingly simple.

Silently she glided towards the cabin. He was outside the door, carving letters into the timber with his knife. He did not notice her coming.

She was so close that she could read the letters, pale and freshly cut in the dark wood. "MARIANNE," he carved. And he was busy continuing, "DAGF..."

The blackness was reaching for him. She moved quickly, hoping to take him before he knew. At the last moment he turned and saw her, and he cried out.

And then he was no longer Dagfin, just as she had been no longer Marianne.

...no trace of the couple. They must have left the cabin singly or together, and become lost. In the circumstances they must be presumed dead. The crew are uneasy, and we shall be glad to leave....

17. THE ***** (Further identifying details have been removed to protect the author responsible. Any reader correctly naming the novel savaged in this Note will receive a valueless and totally inappropriate prize.)

This is written in near-Basic English sentences and vocabulary, varied only by poor grammar and/or poor proofreading, e.g., "Now that it had dropped and there was a sense of peace. Dislocating transitions: "'Ay," the man said. "Give 'er my love." (New par.) "Hello love," his mother said...." Bare repeated phrases: George was "feeling...the warmth of the man." -- "felt the warmth of the man." Loss of focus: "He looked down at the carpet, following the red floral pattern. The cup of tea was on the table...."

Distancing of reader: a solid paragraph of author-viewpoint church description is followed, NOT preceded, by "George stood at the top of the nave looking down the church." Dialogue appears in the wrong paragraphs: "He noted the delicacy of the texture of her skin.... (New par.) "You look very smart tonight, Mother." Mrs. Gilbert put down the poker and got up. She...." And reader is prevented from identifying with the character. George spends four

((Continued from page 24....you missed the really good pages.))

However, the crew of Little Growler consisted of Hartnell, Tubby and Pop, so once they landed on the mystery planet the plot returned to normal. Captured by giant electricity-wielding starfish types, our heroes stirred up a revolution, got involved with some human castaways, ran about a lot, invented a last-minute scientific gimmick to defeat the baddies, and escaped in the nick of time. A highly enjoyable adventure, the background well-polished from constant use, the events well-paced and enlivened by throwaway lines such as "Since modern civilisation emerged from the chaos and brutality of the twentieth century...." A good one.

Readers who waited patiently for the next yarn must have been delighted when THE SINGING SPHERES appeared in mid-1952, bringing back the Old Growler trio after nearly a year's absence. I liked it, but didn't notice then that it was no more than a skilfully-written rehash of all the most popular elements from the previous stories: bizarre aliens, goodies vs. baddies, capture & escape, revolution, an oracle left by the "Wise Ones," Hartnell's final brainwave, and escape in the nick of time. The following title, UNDERWORLD OF JELLO, was another rehash, set underwater with fish-men, capture & escape, Hartnell's final brainwave, destruction of the city, escape in the nick of time....Deegan's inspiration had run out, and Pop even communicated with the aliens by mental telepathy like ^{any} other cheapo hero. This one definitely disappointed me when I read it, although on a recent 3 a.m. rereading it seemed slightly better than I remembered. A newcomer to the series might not dislike it.

Incidentally, UNDERPANTS OF JELLO appeared in Panther Books. Yes, Hamilton's had launched their new paperback line and begun the gradual clamber up-market which was to end in the clutches of Granada Publishing (from which there was no escape.). Back in 1952 they were playing very safe with Westerns, Foreign Legions, thrillers....and science fiction. Familiar names from AUTHENTIC such as Roy Sheldon and Jon J. Deegan gave Panther some of its first titles; nobody could have guessed that later Panther authors would include Isaac Asimov, Sinclair Lewis, Proust, Sartre, Turgenev....

With AMATEURS IN ALCHEMY, again in Panther, the series seemed to show a welcome improvement. Sent to a known planet for the first time, the terrible trio aided human survivors of a native rebellion. Renewed emphasis was placed on respect for intelligent life, the author indulged in some chemical manipulations worthy of the other Campbell, and recognisable human emotions such as remorse affected the characters. Even though the plot was the usual goodies vs. baddies, capture & escape, running about, Hartnell's final brainwave and escape in the nick of time, the whole thing seemed coherent and smooth. I've never regretted passing up Vargo Statten's LAUGHTER IN SPACE in favour of this one.

And so to ANTRO, THE LIFE-GIVER, another good one in my view. However, it was the first Deegan book I read, and I can't possibly be objective about it. I read it again and again.

Probably my age hadn't reached double figures when I discovered ANTRO on the library shelves. (Hamilton's, like some other early Fifties firms, put out some titles in special cloth editions to catch the unwary library trade.) At an extremely impressionable age I met the heroic trio for the first time. Everything was new to me: Little Growler, aliens, goodies vs. baddies, capture in tunnels, escape in the nick of time. And I realise now that the situation had some real old-fashioned Sense of Wonder built into it. Antro was a wandering planet, distributing life-spores across the galaxy from its Wells of Life--installed by the Great Ones from beyond Andromeda. (Deegan had revived this ingredient from way back in the second book; this gave his setting greater depth than the careless invention of yet more Wise Ones/Old Ones/Etc Ones would have done.) Naturally the usual intrigues with the natives took place, culminating in the most effective ending of the series. Remember, the whole Inter-X background of exploration methods and ethics was completely new to myself and to the other library readers. If any British original paperback of the Fifties deserved hard covers, this one did.

After ANTRO came THE GREAT ONES. Regular readers suspected that this book might be something special. Well, in a way it was. For the umpteenth time our trio volunteered to land on an unknown planet, met mysterious aliens and human castaways, got captured and escaped, Hartnell had his final brainwave, and so forth. However, this time things were different. For a start these aliens weren't any old aliens but THE GREAT ONES themselves, now on their way home and about to annex our galaxy as a minor detail of their multi-million-year voyage. For another thing, because none of the aliens could be goodies, the intrigues were limited to arguments between the few human captives. So, what should have been an ultimate conflict between human and alien was oddly muted, with the humans being shown as divided and weakened. And worst of all, Hartnell's final brainwave was pathetically simple, lacking his usual ingenuity. Had Deegan tackled a theme too big for him to control? On this showing our heroes didn't deserve to succeed. Come to think of it, having escaped only in the nick of time from countless minor aliens, how could they escape plausibly from THE GREAT ONES?

Well, they didn't escape. Hartnell really had run out of ideas. 200 years later their farewell note was found by a passing starship.

I couldn't believe it. The Old Growler trio, dead? It was worse than say, hearing that Superman had got a runny nose and was confined to bed. I learned of other Deegan titles such as CORRIDORS OF TIME and hoped against hope that the trio had nipped into a handy time warp....but it was not to be. The next Deegan books were about a time-travelling couple called Dysart and Magda--very conventional and dull. I didn't read them all. So it really was the end for Old Growler.

Presumably Deegan wanted to end the series while he was still on form. John Brunner once mentioned that Deegan was Bert Campbell himself; if so, nothing Campbell wrote under his own name was as good as the Old Growler series. Recently I checked on Campbell's RED PLANET from the "fifties: plodding and unimpressive, although I remember reading his ANOTHER SPACE--ANOTHER TIME years ago with some interest. I can't check under Campbell or Deegan in the Tuck ENCYCLOPAEDIA because my copy of Volume I still hasn't arrived. I do know that the Deegan name appeared on two more novels, BEYOND THE FOURTH DOOR and EXILES IN TIME, both presumably concerning Dysart and Magda. A short story called BEYOND THE BARRIERS was in AUTHENTIC No. 37. Advertisements of the time mention a "long, two colour sf strip by Jon J. Deegan" in the AUTHENTIC BOOK OF SPACE, which I haven't seen. And finally, in the very last issue of AUTHENTIC (No. 85) there appeared THE LIGHTS OF ANKER-MO. This was a new tale of the Old Growler characters, woven around alien perils and the deaths of a similar exploring trio called the "three S's," who we hadn't met before. The story seemed a little tired, too short to display Deegan's full ability, but I've often wondered why it appeared at such an appropriate moment. Coincidence? Or did then-editor E.C. Tubb deliberately obtain it for the last issue? If the latter, I hope some readers remembered the part played by Deegan's stories in the magazine's early years.

And why had so many readers regarded the Old Growler stories as the very best in those early issues? 1951-2 was not a good time for quality in British paperbacks. In an era of freewheeling garbage, Deegan limited his spaceships to 26,000 miles a second, stated that lethal weapons might not be used on intelligent aliens even in self-defence, and referred to the twentieth century as the Dark Ages...his work certainly stood out from the outpourings of Scion, John Spencer, Curtis Warren and even Hamilton. The great strength of the Old Growler series was the blending of a serious background format with a more light-hearted adventure plot, thus showing both ingredients to best effect. I can barely resist comparing the series with STAR TREK, much to the detriment of the latter with its casual use of magic "technology" and borrowed plots. (Deegan only descended to the level of magic once, when he used telepathy, and although he only had one plot that plot was all his own.) I'd place Old Growler's shipload of scientific specialists--seen doing scientific specialist-type duties, and carrying out tedious follow-up work--far higher on the believability scale than the all-purpose STAR TREK characters. But of course Deegan missed his big chance: nobody on Old Growler had pointy ears.

It's easy to go nit-picking for flaws in these stories. I think you have to be charitable towards them, remembering the market and the period. Some inconsistencies were due to Deegan correcting his early mistakes, but I could mention real flaws: for example, his contact-teams were (a) organised too casually, and (b) allowed to remain out of radio contact with the ship for far too long. Nevertheless, in a field where standards ranged from abysmally low all the way up to mediocre and erratic, Deegan brought a measure of intelligence and integrity to British sf. His example didn't have any major influence on the field--- intelligence and integrity are still in short supply--but he made the attempt and both he and his readers had fun in the process.

I've a worried sort of footnote to this: I'm wondering if any Deegan influence has entered my own writing. This article has raised a few doubts. Was my interstellar-exploration background in ALTAIR PROBE last issue borrowed from vague memories of Old Growler? Are the Andromedid aliens of my unwritten MEGASWEEP series only an echo of Deegan's Great Ones? Only a Moskowitz could tell for sure. Maybe I should read through the books again, and see what other valuable ideas I can pick up....

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sentences totalling 67 words unwrapping and biting into his sandwiches, and though we know the ingredients and temperature of the sandwiches we see "his teeth cut into", he never actually tastes them!

"Saidbookisms" of the "Tom Swift" variety are avoided, but even worse, the synonyms for "said" used here include "smiled," "bending forward," and even "slung the spade down."

A candidate for World's Least Convincing Rural Soliloquy: "The confusion--feeling had no chance of resisting the importunity of the dead iron....((much deleted here)) to regain the dead stasis which he had formerly mistaken for equanimity..." (& much more.)

As a symbol of sexual invitation and arousal, we're offered not stocking-tops, not knickers, but petticoats. It doesn't even work as light relief. (*But did work in period!)

Another (good) symbol, the waterlogged rut(s) in the earth, withers from neglect.

Three consecutive sentences have the structure "statement comma expansion." The next three are simply "statement." (middle p. 61) Who is the more asleep at this point, author or reader?

18. ATTACK-ESCAPE (Bester, to Platt.)

Begin with your second-best anecdote, to attract reader's attention. Next pose a question about your subject: what makes him tick? To answer this you work around every aspect of him, the same

STORIES SOLD DOWN THE RIVER

Or, Who Pays the Ferryman?

This feature was supposed to have been a half-page filler, but I got carried away and it became a two-page filler.

For my first sale to the American magazines, a decade or so ago, I received a cheque for \$180.00. That was the good news. The bad news was a rubber-stamped paragraph on the back which read:-

By endorsement of this check, the payee acknowledges payment in full for the following: one story entitled Sunbeam Caress which the payee sells drawer with World first Serial Rights and option on Radio, Television and Anthologies rights thereto, with warranty of authorship and ownership, and with permission to make any changes in the title and context: Any alteration of the above clause makes this check void.

So to get paid (at the princely rate of 1¢ a word) I had to give them options on radio, TV and anthology rights over and above normal magazine publication. Did I let them get away with it? Nowadays the hardened professional simply studies the cheque and thinks "Uh-huh, one of their funny rubber stamps on the back, blast Guccione! We'll have to renegotiate the cheque...." Which he or his agent does. But back in 1967 I was a very raw beginner. This was my very first U.S. sale, and I didn't dare lose that sale by quibbling over what appeared to be their standard terms. "Any alteration ...makes this check void." I didn't alter it.

As it happens the clause wasn't too important on that particular story, which was unsaleable in any other medium (and wasn't too popular in prose, I recall) so I didn't lose anything. But if the story had been a generally-marketable narrative I could have sold myself down the river very easily. Note also that my "permission to make any changes" resulted in editorial botching of the chapter headings, which needlessly obscured the story-structure.

Every writer has horror stories of the contracts that went wrong. Yet with sf magazines at least it shouldn't be too difficult to get a clear statement of terms. My first accepted story, PRISONERS OF PARADISE, achieved this response from Mike Moorcock:-

....accepted for publication in some future issue (this will be 161 or after) and payment of £5-5-0 (1st BSR) will be made on publication.

Great! I knew what rights, when, and for how much. Everything was clear and understandable....but things were never that simple again. (Even Mike tended to take things for granted in future acceptances.) When original anthologies arrived, operating as books rather than as magazines, the situation grew greyer. Consider Mike's offer for a reprint of PRISONERS OF PARADISE:-

I should like to reprint the above story in the new NEW WORLDS Quarterly which begins publication in April 1971 (No. 202) and offer the sum of £10.0.0. as an advance against a pro rata share of royalties on the U.S. and U.K. editions which will be published simultaneously.

Not bad. Again he stated the when, the what for and the how much. But, a "pro rata" share? On what basis--wordage, or the same fee irrespective of story lengths, or some arbitrary royalty-split between editor, authors and possibly even the (un-named) British publisher? What royalties--would they exceed the advance, and was there any prospect of reprints? But it was only an offer, and I was free to haggle if I'd so wished. As you might expect I gave Mike the go-ahead, collected the money and heard no more. I realise now that I'd opened up

permission to use the story in reprints and other subsidiary ways over which I had no control. (Although, as far as I know nothing happened in this case.)

Remember the option on anthology rights on the rubber stamp? Once you lose control of rights, funny things can happen. Take the case of my own story SUNDOWN, reprinted in the BEST FROM F&SF, 18TH SERIES for \$25.00 (hardcover) and \$16.00 (paperback). Later, the story was reprinted by Terry Carr under a separate deal for \$100.00 (paperback). Now there's quite a difference between \$16.00 and \$100.00, especially since both paperbacks were from the same publisher. It set me thinking. By wordage, my story was 1/11 of the F&SF anthology, 1/8 of the other; so the totals paid to the authors were probably $11 \times 16 = \$176.00$ (F&SF) and $8 \times 100 = \$800.00$ (Carr). But I've got yet another number up my sleeve: the average payment by that publisher to its authors was \$1500.00 per book. Even if we assume that the anthology editor creamed off half that sum for the onerous task of clipping together a dozen tearsheet MSS and dictating a dozen letters to his secretary, there's still something adrift with that F&SF figure. Sorry about the mathematics, folks, but I've got some more calculations about the hardcover fee in the next paragraph.

I didn't get a contributor's copy of the hardcover, or a royalty statement or anything businesslike like that, but I can estimate the sums involved. Considering the year and the market, let's say \$4.00 per copy, 4,000 sold, 10% royalties to the authors. $4 \times 4000 \times 0.1 = \1600.00 . Allowing half for the editor leaves \$800.00 to the authors. Now what the authors actually received must have been about $11 \times 25 = \$275.00$. Where was the other \$525.00? (On the paperback reprint, hardcover publishers normally split the paperback reprint with the authors 40/60. 60% of \$275.00 is say \$164.00....roughly what we got. Fair enough.) So what are the possible explanations for the difference between \$800.00 and \$275.00?

1. My estimate of hardcover print run was too high. (By 2,500?)
2. Being an unknown author I was paid less than the others. (Unlikely.)
3. The money stuck to someone's fingers.
4. Somebody got a book on the cheap....and it wasn't the readers. If a publisher makes an unusually low offer for an anthology, is it really in anyone's interests to accept?

From all this you can see that something very odd happened to the BEST FROM F&SF, 18TH SERIES, and if anyone can provide a reasonable explanation I'd like to hear it.

I'm not raising a belated complaint about that deal--if I thought it was worth following up at this late date, I'd do it through my agent. No, my purpose here is to point out that the people responsible for authors' money are not editors or publishers or agents, but the authors themselves. A quick comparison of money available with money offered can be a useful guide to a deal's worth. Consider another reprint of my PARADISE story, in a paperback for high schools. 7500 copies @ \$1.80 each, say 10% royalties making \$1500.00 available for authors. Say my story was 10% of the wordage, 10×150 (my advance) = \$1500.00 advanced to the authors. The figures agree, so clearly that reprint sale was a good deal. By arithmetic and common sense you can avoid selling yourself down the river.

Halt! Stop the article! I hear Chris Priest is covering the whole field of story contracts in a forthcoming SFWA bulletin, so I won't try to duplicate his efforts here. (He'll do it better, anyway.) I will, however, suggest that it's time somebody else reprinted PRISONERS OF PARADISE.

THE JAWS THAT BITE, THE CLAWS THAT CATCH

Fanzine reviews

Only one fanzine arrived during the review period: Dave Langford's TWLL-DU 14. Mainly devoted to a Silicon 3 report; as the events described are nearly a year old I'm afraid that the humour is really too dated for review here.

Review

This was one of the first few Street & Smith ASTOUNDING issues after they had taken over the discontinued Clayton title. Understandably desperate for a circulation-boosting gimmick, new editor Orlin Tremaine labelled the most original feature stories as "thought-variants." This issue the label is given to Nat Schachner's ANCESTRAL VOICES, in which the new original idea is that the time-traveller actually does kill his own ancestor, and all the victim's descendants suddenly vanish. Elsewhere Schachner notes that two descendants of the one ancestor are a Jew and a German—deliberate satire on his part aimed at Nazi racialism. Barbed stuff for 1933 and for some years after, but really the character I liked most was the upper-crust Bostonian who saw his wife evaporate, then shrugged and went off to his chorus-girl.

The other stories are mostly hack adventures, dismayingly dated, a couple of them being straight horror lacking any scientific elements. One genuine sf yarn is Donald Wandrei's FAREWELL TO EARTH, following the hero of a previous story who pursued his girl and the villain a million years into the future. By a slight miscalculation he has arrived 1950 years too late. He now begins roaming a deserted Earth, learns its history, fights giant amoebae and intelligent trees, and finally heads out into space with a remote descendant of his original girl. I read this story with more interest than I expected, but I've no idea why. (It occurs to me that if the better Thirties stories could be rewritten or at least translated into competent prose, some genuine classics might result.)

Pause for two favourite clichés. The sense of wonder in stories written before the golden age seems to be an awareness of great vistas of time and space, derived probably from science popularisations such as Wells' works or Sir James Jeans' THE MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE (1932). Maybe the theosophical ideas which presumably inspired Stapledon also inspired others. Anyway, I'm personally very grateful that sf became better-written, but I can see why old-timers didn't like the replacement of "sense of wonder" by mere plot and character.

After that pause we come to the most interesting story in the issue. This is Jack Williamson's TERROR OUT OF TIME, in which reporter Terry Webb sends his mind into the far future, resulting in a three-way mindswap between youthful clean-living Terry, a pathetic degenerate future Earthman, and a vicious evil Martian conqueror. No prizes for guessing which one clobbers the other two and gets the girl. Already the Great Divide of sf is opening up in this one story, sense of wonder versus professional adventure formula. See what happens.

The opening is strictly 1933, good enough in its way. Then we enter the mind of Ato Lu, a furry human in the bleak, dying Earth of the future, and this sequence is hauntingly atmospheric. But all too soon Terry's Thirties mind returns, and the Thirties plot also returns, unfortunately. After letting us glimpse a struggle for the survival of humanity, Williamson restricts the rest of the story to little more than a punch-up in the laboratory. Anti-climax isn't the word for it. Neither does Williamson let us guess the futility of Terry's success, future humanity being doomed to fail (cf. Tucker's ICE AND IRON). All this reminds me of my reactions to Simon Harvester's thriller NAMELESS ROAD, in which a pointless spy-melodrama first third turns into a gripping and convincing exploration of a captured society, followed by a ridiculous action ending. The central imaginative feat is so much better than the main story that any responsive reader is bound to feel cheated.

And this, I suppose, is the reason why sf of the kind shown in this issue of ASTOUNDING had to evolve into something different, or die.

Well, it did evolve. As we all know, John W. Campbell took over from Tremaine in 1937, and promptly began steering the course of sf straight into the darkest science and technology. After Campbell's "Golden Age" had come and gone

the sf field was barely recognisable. As I happen to have the December 1951 issue of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION to hand, I can soon discover what changes have been wrought by fourteen years of Campbell's editing.

Not a good choice—something of a let-down after October and November, which featured Russell's ULTIMA THULE, del Rey's THE YEARS DRAW NIGH, and Frank M. Robinson's HUNTING SEASON (required reading for Sheckleyologists). The best story here is J.C. May's DUNE ROLLER, with characters genuinely resembling real people at times. The "Dune Roller" itself is a legendary underwater monster which surfaces to kill off isolated humans on the shoreline dunes....the treatment is very Fifties, if so vague a label can be meaningful your honour, in that the hero is an active scientist and the monster is blasted to pieces by high explosives at the end. There's only the slimmest hint of Seventies psychological subtleties; the problems faced by my characters in THE BLACKNESS (this issue) wouldn't have troubled May's hero at all. The final 20% of the story provides a spectacular climax but tells us nothing new about the people or the monster—I suppose this loss of depth prevents DUNE ROLLER from being quite the classic it should be.

There's no way HELL'S PAVEMENT (by Irving E. Cox, Jr.) can be called a classic. It's the kind of story you forget totally as soon as you've read it, if not before. Despite the author's grasp of writing-school plot mechanics, there are too many unexplained assertions and incomprehensible motivations for us to care what happens to the characters. Basically the situation resembles that of Eric Frank Russell's LATE NIGHT FINAL (1948), where the process of Earthpeople's mental suggestions defeating totalitarian invaders is described in terms of the protagonist's inner struggle....except that Cox's main character doesn't struggle, he merely lets events change his mind for him. Why Campbell had to buy this story when he had already bought Russell's earlier and better story on the same theme is a puzzle beyond my solving. Noticing Cox's sentence "The scientific restriction of language....automatically limited the scope of thought" reminds me that there are several good ideas here, undeveloped.

Possibly a modest interest in other people's mistakes can prevent me from repeating those mistakes. On this principle I've less to learn from Chad Oliver's THE EDGE OF FOREVER, which competently assembles a story out of some mysterious aliens, a planet with truly awful weather, a neatly-twisted little murder mystery and a desire to put across powerful images without quite knowing how. Nice Rogers illustration above the title, well, not pretty, but fits the mood of the story. THE EDGE OF FOREVER is early Oliver, written when he was still dragging himself up from the lettercolumn, not yet displaying the unique quality of his later, more individual work.

You know, this issue is so worthy and dull that my review is becoming worthy and dull to match it. You can hardly believe that magazines such as GALAXY and F&SF were published in the same year....

And last comes the serial instalment. Worthy and dull like the rest. It's the conclusion of Hal Clement's interesting novel ICEWORLD. An alien police agent from a high-temperature planet has tracked down an illegal habit-forming drug to its source on an incredibly cold planet—Earth, where a human family has been trading tobacco for noble metals, unaware that their trading partners are drug pushers. (Wouldn't they have guessed sooner?) The conclusion isn't as good as the earlier episodes. The police-agent bit is designed to maintain our interest while the more cerebral scientific exploration is going on—a function it carries out efficiently but not brilliantly. The main interest comes from watching the aliens discover the physico-chemical nature of Earth, because we want to see both how our world looks to the aliens and also how well the aliens are doing at working out the true nature of substances such as hydrogen oxide (water to you and me.) This part I did enjoy. The secret-agent plot is less enjoyable and less believable, although not as unbelievable as the humans' dialogue. (For his next novel Clement concentrated on the things he could do well and he came up with MISSION OF GRAVITY, a genre classic which is intelligent and readable throughout but for its dialogue.) I recommend ICEWORLD as an interesting experiment in hardcore sf, poorly written but well imagined. Good van Dongen illustrations, the best I've seen from him.

So much for the December '51 issue. I'm glad that's over. (I should think you're pretty relieved as well, if any of you have managed to struggle through that page.) I suppose I'd better maintain critical integrity, if not readability, by taking an overview of the 1951 stories. Campbell's crusade has had its effect; there's no atmosphere of strangeness in any of these stories. Science and human initiative can tackle anything---even the Dune Roller is made less mysterious by scientific analysis, and in ICEWORLD Clement's aliens are more believably human than his human beings. And most of these stories are no more effectively written than stories from twenty years earlier; they've dated equally badly. You'd need to be a historian familiar with then-current ideas to read old sf with any real sympathy or understanding.

And so to August 1978, with ASF metamorphosed into ANALOG, published by Condé Nast, and edited with true Campbellian grit by Ben Bova. Now read on.

The cover has a computer-recognition symbol printed on it, just like a packet of frozen beans. Looking inside, I think I'd prefer the beans. I discover an article and guest editorial on biological subjects---another of the dreaded Bova "theme" issues? The del Rey book reviews are adequate but unexciting.... short letter column, only about two pages from genuine readers....no ANALYTICAL LABORATORY (Huh?)....announcement of forthcoming "state of the art" features about sf....

Ten pages of interior ads, mostly for sf books or games. The ad for the Dickson/Odbert HOME FROM THE SHORE calls this author/artist collaboration "an exciting new concept in Science Fiction publishing," a claim immediately scotched by the few samples of Odbert's art they dared show.... (Change of mind by DR FAUSTENSTEIN; author/artist collaboration is the ideal format for Redd's turgid story SUNBEAM CARESS, mentioned earlier. What a brilliant idea! Quick, who's the dynamic and visionary publisher involved?) As for the wargames ads, I sigh for the days when readers actually read stories instead of playing them. Still, the critics who tell us that stories are based on conflict can't complain if stories are suddenly replaced by pure conflict formats. And so further richness is stripped from our lives. The very name ASTOUNDING calls forth an emotional response, whereas a label like ANALOG calls forth nothing. And look at the layout of the 1978 issue: murky illustrations, some illegible white-on-black type, and the continuity is unspeakable....you can't tell immediately whether a picture is an illustration or an advert, whether a bunch of words is a title or a blurb, whether a story has ended suddenly or in fact does continue after the next filler. SF readers are generally rugged and adaptable---they have to be, to hack their way through this challenge to their perceptions. But this is one of Bova's last issues; Stanley Schmidt is in charge now. What changes does Schmidt have in mind? I don't know. Personally, I hope he changes the name back to ASTOUNDING.

The August 1978 issue also contains seven pieces of fiction, one of them by Jack Williamson. If I possessed any integrity as a critic I'd read them.

TEST YOUR SF KNOWLEDGE (A Quiz For All The Family)

Simply study the following list of well-known sf authors, and use your skill and judgement to determine which author uttered which quotation.

Choose from:- (a) Isaac Asimov (b) Harlan Ellison (c) John Brunner

Quotations:-
1. "I realized long ago that I couldn't write good, so I write a lot."
2. "I will not insult my potential audience, which I conceive of as being the most intelligent, witty and perceptive audience in the world.... myself."

ANSWERS:-
1. (a) 2. (b) The correct choice. 10 points.
1. (b) 2. (a) A pardonable assumption. 9 points.
1. (c) 2. (c) No score. Mr. Brunner would never express these sentiments so crudely.

Letters

((First, a letter from our most valued and loyal reader.))

DAVID REDD, Kensington, 9 Queensway, Haverfordwest, Dyfed, Wales.

Why the Sapristi on your cover--did you plan an article on Jules de Grandin and only come to your senses in the nick of time? And tell your man Cheapo to bury that dead biro he uses for cutting stencils, and invest in proper equipment. I hope the cover's better on the second issue.

Your editorial had almost enough bits of white space to stop it looking dull. But then, devoting an entire page to REDD'S 100 NOTES ON WRITING was sudden death. Who could possibly be interested in a mere filler so soon in the issue? Not even you, sir. And look--an entire double-page spread devoted to a review of AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION! That's bound to encourage a hasty turning of the page. As for the fiction, you know I only read the blurbs and skip over the stories. That leaves only your attempt to whitewash yourself over your COAL SWAMPS disaster and some pointless 'fifties reminiscences. Nothing else, is there? Next time, leave out the fiction. Nobody reads it, anyway. I happen to know that of all the fans, writers and intellectuals on your mailing list, the only one who actually reads sf is Buck Coulson--and he's only getting DR F. free because of your guilt-complex about taking YANDRO for 99 years without once sending in a single comment. Yes, leave out the fiction. Leave out the articles, too.

((So much for my most loyal reader. However, I consoled myself with the knowledge that somewhere out in the great world were serious-minded intellectuals composing deeply-considered comments on DR F. Here's the first--))

DAVE LANGFORD, 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berkshire RG2 7PW.

Here's a grotty fanzine.

((What? Is that your response? A mere four words?))

Many thanks for DR.F., which will live in the reader's imagination for the rest of his life.

((In his imagination, not in his memory. I see. For compliments like this I cranked a duplicator for two hours? Look, Dave, I know you're saving your brainpower for THE JOURNAL OF ESCHATOLOGICAL MORPHOLOGY but can't you think of anything to say?))

I've been thinking of some really good letters to send you; perhaps you'd like to add to your Notes a word or two about the excellence of the letter E. I have found this letter really useful in nearly all the writing I have done; its inclusion gives my prose a fluency it otherwise lacks; I'm sure you will not be too proud to take this advice from a writer with many years' more inexperience than yourself. (In the fifties my age varied between -3 and 6 and so I was deprived of your stunning sf background.) With regard to your fourth quote, has anyone ever discovered how Duncan Lunan ends a remark?

((Your proposed Note about E does seem more practical than the ones I've jotted down. Did you pick it up from an ASIMOV'S rejection slip?

((As this was my first zine I fully expected Dave's letter to be the forerunner of a vast horde of responses. Imagine then my incredulity the next day, when the postman walked unhesitatingly past our gate without delivering so much as a circular for GREAT AGES OF THE WORLD'S WILD ART GALLERIES. Nothing. Nobody cared.

Even my mother couldn't finish it. After that crushing blow I lived in a grey and hopeless world, all dreams of Huge and Nebulous awards cruelly shattered. Mentally I shuffled forward to accept THE ANNUAL THUD-F AWARD FOR LEAST APPRECIATED FANZINE OF THE DECADE. This long nerve-wracking silence between responses--it lasted an entire twenty-four hours--was broken by Ron Bennett. I had a good reason for expecting to hear from him: when I'd sent him DR F. I'd enclosed money. (By now it was pretty clear that I'd have to pay people to read it....)))

RON BENNETT, 36 Harlow Park Crescent, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 0AW.

I'm extremely pleased with this. Really. Great to find that someone who has been on the fringes of the zinescene (good grief!) for such a length of time has finally taken the plunge into fan-publishing. Oh, sure, I know that the range of contributions is a little thin on the ground, but how can it be otherwise with first issues? No, I like the mag...nice and swinging without resorting to four letter words all over the place (which seems to pass for swinging anything these days.).

I agree, too, that some of your writer's notebook entries are incomprehensible, but nevertheless they're interesting and you should continue with them. Item in the mag which I most liked was your correspondence with (and against) Ace Books and associated merry men. I think that your conclusions there were just a little over-self-critical, though. I can't help seeing you involved there as a pawn by people whose vested interests were certainly colouring their writing.

((Credit for the COAL SWAMPS article should go to the man who inspired it and provided most of the wordage: Terry Carr. As for the range of contributions being thin, as I run out of ideas it'll get even thinner...gulp. The absence of four-letter words is not a reaction to recent VECTOR controversies but is due to (a) my own neo-Puritan personality, and (b) my printing set-up. See inside front cover.

((Ron's missive renewed my confidence. Yes, people were going to read and enjoy DR FAUSTENSTEIN. Sure enough, two more letters arrived the very next morning.))

WILLIAM C. TAYLOR, Circulation Director, FORTUNE, Ottho Heldringstraat 5, Amsterdam

You're hard to find.

Locating the individuals who have the income, position and business interests of FORTUNE subscribers--yet are not already FORTUNE subscribers themselves--is like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

And now that I've found you I don't want to lose you. That's why I intend to make you an offer you can hardly refuse.

....As you may know, FORTUNE is now published 26 times a year instead of 12. Therefore, you'll be getting more of what FORTUNE has always been famous for. Reporting in depth. Wide-ranging coverage. Authoritative analysis. Revealing profiles. But now you'll also get more quick briefings. More late-closing coverage. More articles of every kind. So FORTUNE's now more current. More thorough. Even more useful.

Every issue, in fact, is packed with information you simply can't get anywhere else.

((Sounds like a good deal, William. You send me a copy of your fanzine and I'll send you mine.

((And with William's letter again boosting my confidence I opened the next envelope.))

DAVID S. GARNETT, The Warlord of West Ferring, Not That Other David Garnett.

Dear Dr. Faustenstein,

Thanks for sending me the copy of your new fanzine DAVID REDD.

Funny that you should have mentioned NEL and RAY GUNS/GALACTIC BASTARDS-- because that is where the script is at the moment. Yours was a timely reminder for me to ask them what had happened to it, which I have done. It's odd, or maybe it isn't, but I wrote that some 4 or 5 years ago . . . and because it had the honour to be the only book Hale ever rejected I automatically assumed that I'd also sent it everywhere else. It was only recently that I dug out the script and realised that it hadn't been submitted anywhere else . . . so it is now being finally rejected by everyone.

Maybe you can serialise it after you've finished KING OF THE COAL SWAMPS, which I'll chorus as replacing Redd's 100 notes.

What you need, I think, is a review section on major sf stories of the Sixties, like "Quiet Kind of Madness", "Way to London Town" and such neglected and unreprinted classics which no one has ever heard of for the past decade.

((Already in this issue I've subtly worked in mentions of most of the major stories of the Sixties, e.g. SUNBEAM CARESS, PRISONERS OF PARADISE and SUNDOWN. Still, maybe I should give them the full critical appreciation they deserve. The only trouble with an article like DAVID REDD: THE GREAT YEARS is that by way of research I'd have to read all Redd's fiction--a task too terrifying for your average critic. Hold the presses; Dave's sent in another letter tacked on to the bottom of his first. This one's actually addressed to me.))

Did you ever rewrite your Milford story -- both of them? And how about Chris's? Maybe that could be another high point of your magazine-- other people's stories as rewritten by you. I haven't touched "Crossing The Line" from last year yet, or even "Moonlighter" from the year before -- keep waiting to hear from Chris who wants it for Son of Anticipations, or so he claims.

((Your CROSSING THE LINE was a work of genius. As for my THE BLACKNESS, which you saw at Milford, I didn't rewrite the thing, so you must find this issue even more of a dead loss than the first. Chris Priest's story? Yes, I did rewrite it. Then he rewrote it. Then I rewrote it again. Then he removed the few remaining good bits and immediately sold it to ARIES 1. If you like semicolons, you'll love this story. In fact our correspondence on the collaboration is so much more fascinating than the story itself that I'll probably run the letters here in DR F., unless Chris somehow gets wind of my plot.

((By the way, Dave, I deleted from your letter all your repeated mentions of the Hugo, Hugo, Hugo and Nebula. You shouldn't let your private obsessions spoil your image. And let us know if NEL buy your GALACTIC RAYGUNS/BASTARDS FOREVER.))

ANDREW STEPHENSON, 19 Du Pre Walk, Wooburn Green, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 0QJ.

SAPRISTI C'EST DR FAUSTENSTEIN NUMERO 1 NOM D'UN CHIEN! quite took me by surprise. Not merely because of the title, which must be something of a record; but also because that's a strange thing to call a dog.

Is this your contribution to your local St David's Day Eisteddfod? Or another outbreak of regression-to-origins that seems so prevalent these days?

((Yes, I'm really into regression these days. You should see my stack of RUPERT annuals, so much prettier than my stack of unsold DR F.'s. Musically I've just discovered the Bee Gees "1st", which is definitely their best yet.))

It would, I'm afraid, be far better without the fiction. I have a long standing aversion to fiction in fanzines, excluding Rob Holdstock's MACROCOSM which was intended to be more a fictionzine than a fanzine. Though your precept of not publishing anything of yours which has been bounced by another market is, on the face of it, an excellent one, I think it still misses allowing for the possibility that you may be blind to the faults in your own work. Now, I only actually read the first, LIVING LAND, and thought it okay, in that lacklustre way that would cry out for Milfordising. If its criticism you're looking for, this is the wrong approach. If it's exposure for your work, ditto, since this is the wrong kind of exposure. Besides, it so drastically upsets the lovely tone of the remainder. You are far more adroit at observation, such as in the numbered notes on other peoples' works, and reviews, such as the Amazing retrospective, which cast a totally new light for me on the antique pulps. Jeez, I even began to imagine some of them might possess literary merit!

And KING OF THE COAL SWAMPS was professional autobiography almost worthy of, say, HELL'S CARTOGRAPHERS, ((My article wasn't that bad!)) a book that lately has been entertaining me during my visits to the launderette. As for the old hacks who perpetrated childrens' sf-in-hardback, like the works of Capt. W.E. Johns, well, I was back there in a flash, amongst those oddly close-crowded worlds populated by virtually human beings of lofty ideals and super-intellect that somehow had time for a couple of kids and their Professor-uncle (or whatever format variant you prefer): one begins to comprehend the saying that Burroughs' Martian novels have to be discovered when one is still young, else they seem (as they do to me) ridiculous or worse.

Anyhow, many thanks again. Try it without the fiction, huh?

((Congratulations, you're the first man on Earth known to have read my AMAZING review. Men have received knighthoods for less. But listen, I can't drop the fiction; I have all these unsold stories lying around, you see, and anyhow just consider how thin DR F. would be if I didn't use them. Not to worry, just for you I have devised the astounding compromise which I hope you've already discovered on page 23. And you'll be just delirious to learn that I'm running short of stencils and don't have room for a second piece of fiction this issue, curses, foiled again. THE TRUTH ABOUT ANGSTROM has been held over until issue no. 3.

((My wife Meriel was quite impressed by your other comments. "Not a bad letter," she said. "If you cut out the criticism it's quite complimentary." Most letters to DR F. are like that. The glimpse of your life-style--reading HELL'S CARTOGRAPHERS in the launderette--was fascinating. More, please. I once wrote part of the famous forgotten sf story SUNDOWN in a launderette; it reads exactly like something written in a launderette. Sorry I couldn't reproduce the beautiful electric type-face of your letter. And your mentioning my 100 NOTES reminds me that there have been only 1 1/2 Notes so far this issue.))

kind of technique used in TV soap opera, where they examine a situation from a succession of different viewpoints, then resolve it. Illustrate with more anecdotes. At end sum up: this is he, this is what accounts for his output/success. Close and illustrate with best anecdote.

19. THE MAN-EATER OF MALGUDI (Narayan).

Comedy of irony, exaggeration, inversion * Customer calls to order visiting cards, will call back tomorrow. "Fourteen days later..." * Busy & incompetent printer spends months and money in hilariously minutely detailed preparations for pointless and profitless festival * Assistant Shastri is the competent printer (competent in everything) * Printer ridicules speech on "country's failures"

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Really good letters

JONATHAN P.R. PALFREY, 29a Priory Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1LL.

I realised that I'd already bought one of your stories, in Andromeda 3, though I haven't got round to reading all of the collection yet and just read your story today. Neither of the stories in Dr. F is up to the standard of Brother Ape. Altair Probe reads like a longer story which has been cut to fit the space available, and I don't think there's enough of it left to make its point. Living Land is a fluent little moral tale which works well enough. The main problem I have with it is that I strenuously reject the moral!

You seem to imply that technological progress is too dangerous and should be abandoned. I propose that technology, as a whole, has produced a net benefit to the community; presumably you agree with me, or you wouldn't remain in this technologically advanced country. Indisputably, there have been problems of unwise and selfish uses of power which have reduced the extent of this benefit; conceivably, such misuses could be the extinction of our species. Conceivably, you could get killed crossing the road. It has happened! Better stay inside.... The point I want to make is that there are net benefits to be gained from technology. Very considerable benefits.

Even if advanced technology died out with the whites of your story, the Newars would get it in the end; they'd rediscover it for themselves, because their descendants would want it. Obviously we haven't found the optimal path into the future, but we can and should seek to approach it rather than stopping the clock at some arbitrary point because we're too scared to go on. Assume that your Newar King has control over what remains of humanity. If he can retain that control, and if his successors in government could retain it, they could afford to indulge in technological progress if they a) made sure that the really dangerous weapons were few and only in their control (or keep none - why does a world government need weapons of mass destruction?), and b) allowed different geographical areas to experiment with different ways of living, with freedom of travel between each area.

We already have some freedom of movement between countries at different levels of technological advancement. Some people really prefer to live at a low level of technology; they can do so if they wish. But, for most people, the disadvantages associated with technology exist only because our social organisation hasn't evolved sufficiently to deal with technological progress. The problem of misuse of power becomes more acute when there's more power about, true; but it is a social problem and not a technological one.

Existing societies aren't well adapted to cope with change of any kind. If they were, well, misuses of power would still happen, but they would be seen and corrected; or, they would occur under controlled experimental conditions. A forward-moving society must experiment consciously in its attempt to find the best way forward; our leaders don't seem to have grasped this yet.

((Most leaders are professional decision-makers who try to suppress trends until they can't be ignored, then follow them. You cover a lot of interesting ground in your comments, but how can you be simultaneously so logical and so muddled? Of course technology properly used can do more good than harm, i.e. improve the conditions of life. Certainly the Newars of my story will eventually want technology themselves—I understand that in real life they are far more "advanced" than the story admits. Your logic is faulty in that you ignore self-interest; who is going to use power responsibly? Nearly all altruistic uses of power, e.g. endowing colleges, or unpaid public service, are shaped by powerful social traditions. Your idea of a world government's capabilities seems rather optimistic; "Why does a world government need weapons of mass destruction?" Simply to

ensure that it remains the world government, whatever its citizens want. Of course it's a social problem. The main reason for the Newar King's attitude is the threat of an alternative power structure which might exclude him....but if this theme is to be given adult consideration it needs adult length, i.e. a novel, in which many of the possibilities you raise would be covered. The setting and characters of LIVING LAND wouldn't really fit into such a treatment.

((Your last paragraph is spot-on. I've attempted to write several stories on just the points you mention, as Milford attendees know to their cost (unless merciful Nature has blanked their memory circuits.). You've shown me that I ought to try again.

((Generally, then, yours was a long and much appreciated letter which I'm sorry to have had to compress. Minor details: On gameszines such as VORTIGERN, I am vaguely aware that such things exist but can summon no enthusiasm for the activities they deal with. On ALTAIR PROBE, I have of course deleted your all-too accurate analysis of its flaws--Novim's inadequate motivation and Sue's ill-defined psychological state. On ANDROMEDA 3, you possess a copy? I'm astonished. I know several people who had or should have had contributors' copies of ANDROMEDA, but you're the first person I've encountered who ever actually bought one. Even Meic in the next letter has never heard of it.))

MEIC HARRIES, 78 Howarth Close, Milford Haven, Pems., W. Wales.

Thanks for DR. F no. 1; I was about to write to you when it arrived & it's given me something to write about. The editorial kicked off a little bare, left me wondering what was going on, but at the bottom where you quote Greg I find myself in total agreement & sympathy with your aims; as you say, we've ALL felt like this & few have made the effort to try even as far as DR. F. I assume with this magazine you're hoping to uncover the SF fraternity of Pembrokeshire & try to get some co-action going. I'd like to know:

1. How many people are you sending it to?
2. Do you intend to build it up?
3. How much does it cost to produce (at present?).

100 notes on writing... 1. Fine as far as it goes, but I think the REAL weakness of the latter phrase is that it's a cliché from the Hippies' pseudo-Biblical/Lord of the Rings days-- "Tall they were and golden-eyed" etc. L.O.T.R. is the chief villain behind the whole sub-division of fantasy & even a certain element of SF writing, where consciously or unconsciously the writers try to ape the "oral tradition" whilst not understanding that tradition. Consequently it's seldom well-done as they write recognisable clichés which conjure up stereotype & instant images, prefabricated imaginations. E.g. that example given in your first point conjures up a tall dignified old man, long white beard and balding long white hair, stylish robes.... In the end our hero, guided by Vanamonde's wisdom (stemming from GOOD) will defeat the baddies, partly by brute force but partly by exploiting pure evil's inability to understand the motives & actions of Good, and groovy cosmic apathy will descend once again!

The real oral tradition, in Welsh anyway (which is the oldest current oral tradition) is based on Bardic poetry's rhyming on the consonants, not the vowels which eliminates the need for regular or at least orthodox spoken metre, & leaves far more choice of words, enabling the speaker to build "sounds to suit the sense of the subject he's speaking about."

2. Montraldo. Whilst agreeing with you I think you must be careful when making rules; indeed the whole concept of "rules for writing" is open to

debate (at least). Strict adherence to rules leads to formula writing whether in genre--Woman's Own love stories, the "Western", Mickey Spillane and his clones-- or in the case of an individual mining out a single successful vein--compare the freshness & mystery of Sax Rohmer's first three Fu Manchu books (especially "Face of Fu Manchu" & "The Devil Doctor") with the wooden caricatures of these books that he produced later.

I could go on point by point but I won't. Advantages of the "100": stimulates thoughts about the techniques & "tools" of writing. Disadvantages: it's been presented in too personal a fashion...most of the books you mention I haven't read, so I'm quite unable to follow some of the points. ((So am I!)) Maybe it would be better to open it out, include fewer entries each issue, but in more detail?

The Book Reviews were interesting--I'm looking for the SF market in this country. I thought there was no market left here since the demise of SF Monthly. I don't see a great deal of mileage in "Destruction of the Temple" - type reviews though, especially as that particular book has been remaindered. ((But the words "NEL, remaindered" were my favourite part of the review!))

I can't send you any fiction of my own at the moment; most of it is unwritten or partly written & what IS written is being overhauled. Soon though, I hope.... Part of the trouble, the block, on my output is lack of communication. Since I left Cardiff to go to Scotland in Oct 76 I've had no one of a like mind to bounce ideas off. Same old story down here too. Here in the engineering dept. at Withybush Hospital I am part of a team of 26 as opposed to 600 men & can't get distanced and detached enough to do any writing. The work is so boring anyway I find it difficult to get in the mood there or at home. Leaving aside the total lack of success during that period, my most prolific time was during nightschool at Cardiff when I had to produce something week to week & show it to people who could talk about it. Generally I'm into (writing) fantasy more than science fiction. I'm not very well up on sciences & where I do write science fiction science usually occupies the role of the "baddy" or the threat rather than the saviour. Minor interest in "wargames" of the map & counter (as opposed to little soldier) variety, one article published in wargames magazine, one accepted, one more commissioned.

((I had to cut this one too; who's writing this zine, you or me? Hand-written, green ink, six foolscap pages....I wish I still had that kind of enthusiasm, instead of being worn-out and apathetic. Oh, I didn't put in the dots to indicate omissions from yours and the preceding letters. Sorry, y'all.

((Your problem of a dull day job leaving you too blank to be creative is my problem also. I'm going through the usual suburban trip: semi, job, car, mortgage, bills, kids (one here, one on the way), bills, bills....and the longer my secondment to the refinery job lasts, the more unfit I become for writing. I once tried living in a cabin in Scotland for some peace and quiet to write THE LUNDQUIST ANOMALY, but the result was even more tired than usual and got torn up without too many regrets. (That answer your question which I cut, Jonathan?) Actually, DR F. is more of an ego-trip than you give me credit for, intended not to contact the mythical Pembrokehire fandom but to have some harmless fun. In a worthwhile really good (I'm serious about this) fashion. The print run was only fifty--appallingly low for a fanzine--split into (a) a third to especially brilliant sf writers, and Bob Shaw, (b) another third for sf fans not known to me personally but whom I thought might respond with interest (they didn't), and (c) back issues for anyone foolish enough to send money (nobody did.).

((Most of your comments on my Note 1 are irrelevant to Clarke's THE CITY AND THE STARS, which predates the appearance of LORD OF THE RINGS and in fact takes its clichés from earlier pulp

(Good grief, I just saw what I appear to have typed about Bob Shaw. And it's too late to correct it. Sorry about that, Bob—I wouldn't wish to insult anyone in these pages, even people like Holdstock who write long, fascinating responses marked "not for publication" to DR F. No, that bit on page 48 should have read as follows: "(a) a third to especially brilliant sf writers of my acquaintance, and Bob Shaw." I hope that sets the record straight. Now, where was I?)

Clarke's THE CITY AND THE STARS is good stuff, such clichés as it contains being borrowed from pulp sf such as Campbell's TWILIGHT, and possibly West's MEMORY BANK. But the sort of thing you object to is all too prevalent in 70's sci-fi, not that I know anything about it because I don't read the muck, although I do empathise with the groovy cosmic apathy.

((The Welsh oral tradition, and other oral traditions, can't really offer much to modern prose. I remember Duncan Lunan tried to write a prose story-sequence patterned after the techniques of Scottish ballads, and the unpublished sample I read was terrible. (His story-ideas were actually quite engaging, but the antiquated treatment didn't work, just as in my Note 13 where a respectable technique in music looks plain barny in prose.) Sure, there can't be any rules for writing, or you end up with formula garbage. But there are a number of best-choice solutions for certain problems of story-technique, and it's sensible to discover them and use them as appropriate. This is craftsmanship, surely.

((And good luck with your writing, Maic. Some good strong situations in your story in the Feb/March HONEY. I liked it, and my good lady liked the free hand lotion that came with it.))

THE NAUGHTY BITS

Hot Gossip

.....Latest thrilling press release re ARIES 1 (David & Charles): most contributors have now seen proof copies of their stories. Seeing any payment for said stories is a somewhat rarer experience.....We can reveal that in Haverfordwest, PULSAR ONE (Penguin) sold an amazing three copies..... in Haverfordwest, that's a genuine best-seller.....

.....what can you call a magazine which features ARTHUR C. CLARKE ON SPACESHIPS on the cover, and inside reprints a few mood paragraphs from his 1959 CHALLENGE OF THE SPACESHIP accompanied by 18 unrelated paintings?..... you could call it OMNI.....But look here, OMNI's Ben Bova has finally burst free from the ANALOG straight-jacket: after fearlessly buying Chris Priest's STATIC GRAVITY, he's shown genuine good taste by purchasing Patrice Duvic's BUTTERFLY story from last year's Milford Conference. (Info courtesy Dave Garnett)sure makes a change from Bova's previous fiction choices, widely unread but believed to be hot contenders for the Arnold Tharg Memorial Trophy..... And George Locke is the subject of this issue's where-are-they-now which nobody will answer.....Note that DR F. No.2 has come out early because the next one will be late.....The Man Who Knows reveals Hall: June of that ilk, ex. Ffaabbeerrss & Sphere, now a freelance agent, also British scout for Pocket Books, Sim. & Schh.....ATTENTION FREELOADERS! All ye who remain silent, your trial subs expire with this issue, if not sooner. Issue 2 has been exactly like Issue 1, only more so; thus the comments you thought up for No.1 but never wrote down are still valid.....If nobody writes in, issue 3 will have as small a circulation as the legendary A.J. Budrys fanzine MINISCULE which only ran to top copy and carbons.....The most popular feature last issue returns in a fantastic double-page spread; just turn over the page.....

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