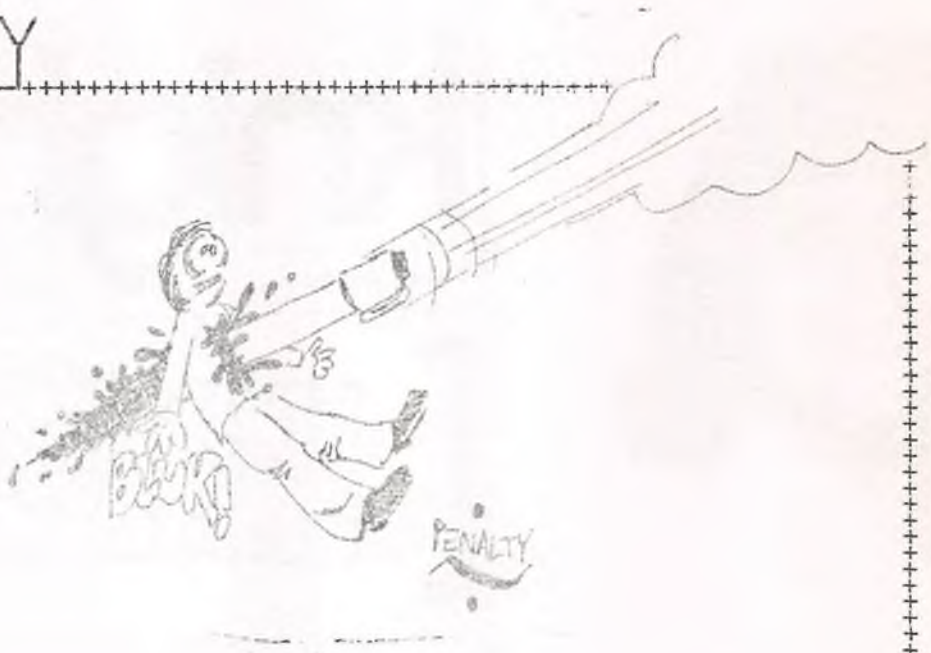
knights 13

DON D'AMMASSA · C.L. GRANT · AND MORE : $1.50


KP
SS
"HOLY PORTRAITS OF DEATH FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY"

PENALTY



It has come to my attention, through correspondence with Barry Malzberg, author of HEROVIT'S WORLD, and Jerry Pournelle, former President of the SFWA, that John Robinson's review of HEROVIT'S WORLD in last issue contained some misinformation.

Jerry Pournelle, whose letters are DNQ, questioned Robinson's source of information, and so did Barry Malzberg, for slightly different reasons, in a letter that is also DNQ. When I questioned him, Robinson stated, "The story came out of Lunacon 74, source unknown. A number of Albany State SF members who attended the con were spouting it as if it were gospel..."

It is therefore my conclusion that John inadvertantly stated unsubstantiated rumor as fact and that I made the mistake of printing it. If John were to have a tangable source, his claim would prove to be very interesting; as rumor, it remains simply that.

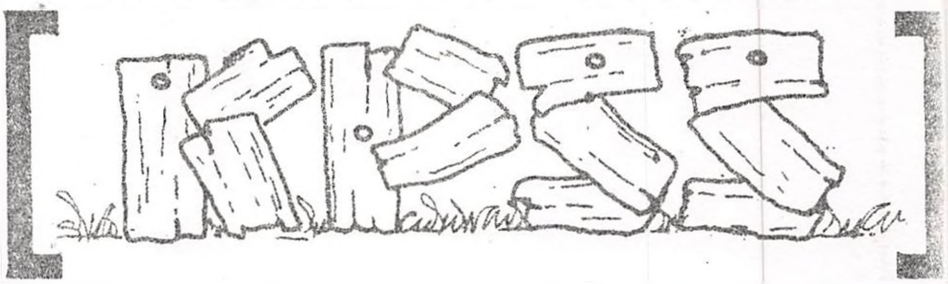
I thank Jerry Pournelle for first bringing it to my attention, and Barry Malzberg and John Robinson for co-operating in my efforts to discover the truth of the matter.

-- Mike Bracken

knights

SEPTEMBER 1975
issue 13

Mike Bracken, 3918 North 30th, Tacoma, WA 98407



This issue is available for $1.50. A four issue subscription is $400. KNIGHTS is also available for accepted contributions of Art and written material; printed LoCs; and upon Editorial whim. 'Payment' is in the form of Contributor's copies and subscription extentions.

Artists! please inform me at the time of original submission if you wish your art returned. I've had a little trouble with this in the past, and don't want to make any more mistakes. If you have not received your art back by the time you receive the issue it is printed in, please inform me.

I would also appreciate it if contributions were accompanied by a sase or, at least, return postage. It would not only save me a few dollars, but would also speed up the time it takes me to reply; frequently I've been caught without postage and I like to inform you immeadiately whether or not your submission has been accepted. I think immeadiate response is a courtesy all faneds should indulge in, and I try my best to respond quickly.

Advertising rates are as follows: back cover, $40; inside covers, $30; full page, $20; size 7½' by 10'. Half page (3 3/4' by 10' or 7½' by 5'), $11; quarter page (3 3/4' by 5'), $6. Please send inquiry if you wish to purchase back or inside cover space. No classifieds. Advertising deadline for next issue: November 15, 1975.

Dealer's rates: 20% off if bought in groups of five to twenty. 25% off if twenty-one or more are purchased.

Print run: 550 Published quarterly.

rt

CKEN'S
ILD
ication

contents:

---

cial Notes: John Robinson of Troy, New York (book rews) and John M. Robinson of Alameda, California (movie iews) are NOT related.

WHOM IT MAY CONCERN by Ben Indick and THE DECLINE OF BEES by Steve Beatty were to be published originally in rick Myers' THIS THING DOESN'T HAVE A NAME YET, GOT ANY AS? #2. Unfortunately he was fafia before he could publish issue 2.

editor
MIKE BRACKEN
associate
DAISY SMITH
columnists
C. L. GRANT
JOHN M. ROBINSON

HAL CLEMENT: THE ALIEN ENGINEER

BY DON D'AMMASSA

The percentage of SF writers capable of writing hard, science-oriented fiction from a position of authority has always been small, despite contentions to the contrary. Many "hard SF" writers of years past were no more qualified to write of scientific advances than their less knowledgeable readers, often less, but their cloaks of scientific doubletalk and the magic of the printed word swept all skepticism aside. Charles Eric Maine was once challenged in the letter column of John Carnell's NEW WORLDS because a space vessel in one of his stories violated the laws of inertia. Maine's reply was that until actual space vessels existed, we really didn't know that the laws of inertia would hold true in space. Algis Budrys the reader and fan once crossed verbal swords with John D. MacDonald about the background of the latter's short novel, "Shadows in the Sand", and it was clear that MacDonald didn't once bemoan the fact that SF editors picked his stories apart because their science was bad, a fact he found irrelevent. David H. Keller, immensely popular at one time because of the aura of scientific knowledge he exuded, once wrote a story in which a practical moonship is constructed in the shape of a boomerang, thereby turing around once past the moon and returning to Earth with no extra fuel ("Boomerangin' Around the Moon"). Even in the 1930's, it was known that Earth's atmosphere didn't extend beyond our satellite.

But there have always been a few writers whose training in science enabled them to deal realistically and accurately with scientific subject matter. Any habitual reader of SF would easily point out Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Poul Anderson, Jeff Sutton, and perhaps G. Harry Stine, Gregory Benford, Milton Rothman, and others. But the list couldn't even approach completion without the name of Hal Clement. Not only is Clement recognized as one of the most solidly grounded SF writers, he is also acknowledged widely as the master creator of new worlds and alien civilizations. He has achieved this reputation on the basis of a relatively small body of published fiction.

It would take someone far more qualified than I to comment intelligently on Clement's science. Clement (in real life Harry Stubes) has taught high school science for many years. But Clement is not a science writer, he is a science fiction writer, and I do feel qualified to discuss his work as fiction. If the reader of this article should detect a subtle bias towards some of Clement's stories, it should be realized that it was stories like these -- in fact, many of these very stories -- which first attracted me to SF. And many of them I found even more enjoyable in the re-reading than they were before. If the reader should detect an occasional critical remark -- and he will -- it should also be remembered that no writer (and no critic) is perfect, and that to accept inferior works by a good writer indiscriminately is to cheapen one's praise of the superior ones. So let's look at Hal Clement.

Hal Clement's first published story, "Proof", appeared in ASTOUNDING in 1942, and has subsequently been reprinted in AUTHOR'S CHOICE #2 edited by Harry Harrison (Berkley Books) and WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? edited by Isaac Asimov (Crest Books). "Proof" deals with a single phenomenon of physical science, extrapolating therefrom, a form of story typical of Clement's work. An intelligent race living within our sun has developed interstellar travel and made contact with the inhabitants of other stars. Since it is not believed possible by this race that matter might exist is a solid state, Kron - captain of a space vessel - and his race are totally unaware of the existence of Earth or humanity. Kron relates an incident from his past in which a companion vessel encountered a radiation sponge while travelling through space (Earth). There is virtually no attempt at characterization, since the story is primarily an examination of a scientific puzzle, an attempt to look at the universe from a totally alien viewpoint. There is, perhaps, too great a sacrifice of story for idea in "Proof", but in most of Clement's fiction the blend has been handled well.

"Impediment", which appeared in ASTOUNDING that same year, and which has been reprinted in Clement's Ballantine collection, NATIVES OF SPACE, is a case in point. A stranded group of insectlike aliens needs to communicate with humanity as rapidly as possible because the high gravity of Earth will cause them irreparable harm if they don't escape from the planet shortly. The aliens are telepathic, and contact Kirk, a lone human, with whom they laboriously develop a form of communication. What they don't realize is that since humans are not telepathic, our minds differ radically, and their ability to read one mind cannot be generalized into communication with the race as a whole. Clement presents an exalted view of logic in this story; "logic alone stood a chance" of bridging the communication gap. Kirk is faced with a moral dilemma, because he learns that the aliens are pirates in their own culture. Despite his personal inclination to like Talker, the aliens' spokesman, he decides ultimately not to help them.

These two stories tell us a bit about the early Clement's view of the basis of progress. In both stories, the aliens develop an advanced, interstellar civilization because of a high degree of competition on their homeworlds. Kron insists that "without the competition they provided, we should not have been forced to develop our minds to their present level." Among the insect race, "warfare was almost continuous". The logical development of this competition, we are told, is cooperation among members of the intelligent species. Talker's class combined and specialized in the art of communication in order to place themselves apart from the rest of their quarrelsome race. Thus it became logical that Talker should be the sole alien whom Kirk respects. Similarly, Kron tells his Sirian visitor that "we learned to cooperate in fighting them, and from that came the discovery that many of us together could handle natural forces that a single individual could not even approach, and survive."

"Technical Error" (ASTOUNDING, 1943) also appears in NATIVES OF SPACE. A group of humans crash on an unexplored asteroid where they find a mysterious alien spaceship. Their attempts to discover its method of operation are interesting and suspenseful, but as with Clarke's RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA, the ending is unsatisfactory. The ship is inadvertently destroyed as the result of the humans' experimentation, and we never learn much about the aliens that built the ship. Although I'm not one of those who insists that all the loose ends be tied up at the end of the novel, it strikes me as the pivotal point of this story which was neglected. Clement does have a tendency toward weak endings in his short stories, as we shall see a bit further on.

The following year saw the appearance of "Trojan Fall", which appears in Clement's second collection, SMALL CHANGES, which appeared as a Dell paperback under the title SPACE LASH. Like "Proof", this story is almost entirely concerned with a scientific puzzle. A criminal fleeing Earth in a starship sttempts to establish his ship in a Trojan position but ends up falling into one of the stars, because of a basic misunderstanding of the forces involved. As with the early story, Clement eschews any serious attempt at charaterization.

A far better story was "Uncommon Sense" (1945), which also appears in SMALL CHANGES. A rich and somewhat eccentric Earthman is forced to hide from his crew on an airless world when he realizes that they plan mutiny. There he is faced with two problems. First, he must somehow regain control of his ship before the crew can make some minor repairs and leave, or his own air supply runs out. Second, he must figure out how the planet's inhabitants are able to detect his presence while hidden, since there is no air to carry his scent. Any habitual SF reader would suspect from the out set that the two problems are interrelated, but Clement reveals each step in an entertaining, credible manner that overcomes one's resistance to the coincidence. We learn that the aliens cannot smell, of course, but they are able to visibly detect the effluvia that would on a world with an atmosphere be an order. Having discovered this, the hero places some "smelly" residue near the ship, thereby luring several predators to the area while the rebellious crew are making repairs. In the ensuing confusion, he is able to enter and seize control of his ship.

One of the best of the early stories is "Assumption Unjustified", (1946), which is the remaining novelet in NATIVES OF SPACE and which also appeared in Groff Conklin's CROSSROADS IN TIME from Perma Books. Thrykar and Tess are a pair of honeymooning aliens forced to land on Earth because of Thrykar's need for a rejuvenation treatment. This is accomplished by using a small amount of blood from a donor, normally acquired in perfectly normal ways from a volunteer. Since Earth is still too primative for contact with the rest of the galaxy, Thrykar must somehow get his blood transfusion without letting Earthmen suspect his presence, He determines to waylay a lone human, render him painlessly unconscious, and secure the blood without haming the donor. Unfortunately, his unfamiliarity with humans leads him to draw the sample from a young boy, and he discovers too late that he has endanged the boy's life. A plot summary necessarily makes this novelet sound like a grade B horror film, but the quiet, unmelodramatic way in which Clement presents even the most melodramatic events overcomes the apparently ludicrous plot.

In "Cold Front" (1946), reprinted in MEN AGAINST THE STARS edited by Martin Greenberg (Pyramid Books), Earthmen attempt to convince the alien Heklans that meteorological and climatological techniques developed on Earth will allow the aliens to overcome and alter the extremely inhospitable conditions on their native world. Each in a series of proposed plans is eventually shown to be impractical, however, and the humans are eventually forced to concede that Heklan knowledge is, in at least this one field, superior to that of Earth. This fact allows the Heklans

to open normal relations with humanity without assuming an inferior position culturally.

The early 1950's saw Clement's reputation become firmly established by three fine novels, NEEDLE, ICEWORLD, and MISSION OF GRAVITY. NEEDLE (released by Avon in some editions as FROM OUTER SPACE) is one of the handful of SF novels that hooked me irretrievably on SF. Two aliens crash on Earth; the Hunter - a detective - and his quarry, a fleeing criminal. Both are amorphous beings who live symbiotically within the bodies of other species. The Hunter establishes himself within Rob Kinnaird, a teenager, eventually communicating with the boy by forming words inside his eyes. Having convinced Rob of his reality and of the necessity to locate the quarry before he harms humans or escapes into Earth's massive population from the small island near which they crash. The quarry has a warped personality and is perfectly capable of doing harm to its host, an idea thoroughly disgusting to the Hunter's species.

Rob and the Hunter begin a systematic study of the island's population. Because the absorbtion process by which the aliens enter their hosts takes a long period of time, they are reasonably convinced that they should confine their chief suspicions to those humans who may have slept near the beach on the crucial day. Their step by step investigation is a blend of SF and mystery genre techniques every bit as well as Asimov's Lije Baley novels.

There are a few rough spots in NEEDLE, but they are relatively minor. Rob's almost casual acceptance of the alien's presence in his body, along with the obvious loss of privacy, is convenient for the author's purposes, but not entirely convincing. Clement does point out that Rob is a particularly intelligent boy, perhaps justifying his adaptability on that basis, but elsewhere in the same novel he says that "Being intelligent does not mean that one's emotions are any the less powerful as many men have demonstrated." Rob eventually does have some doubts about the veracity of the Hunter's statements, but it is evident throughout that he is predisposed to believe the alien. Similarly, the decision of the school authorities early in the book to send him home because of his distracted air fails to ring entirely true, smacking of authorial invocation of the conveniet coincidence. Nevertheless, the important plot developements are more then adequately supported, none of the crucial incidents are coincidental, and the novel as a whole is convincing.

ICEWORLD, which appeared as a three-part serial in ASTOUNDING in 1951, never appeared in paperback until Lancer issued it in the 1960's. As with NEEDLE, a group of aliens journeys to an unsuspecting Earth, this time a group of drug smugglers who trade precious metals for highly addictive tobacco. The aliens cannot survive unprotected on the Earth because their normal environment is much warmer; Earth is in fact the Iceworld. Sallman Ken is an alien chemist who infiltrates the drug ring only to find himself a virtual prisoner, ordered to establish contact on a wider basis with Earthmen, with an eye toward developing a tobacco farm in a closed environment on Mercury.

The only humans in contact with the aliens are members of the Wing family. Wing has ni idea of the use to which his tobacco is being put, for he assumes that any aliens having space travel would be some form of govermental or scientific group. He has been secretly dealing with the aliens for several years, ever since his accidental discovery of one of their probes while on a camping trip. He and his children become increasingly involved with the aliens as Ken begins to make short trips to the planetary surface, hoping to somehow turn the tables on his employers.

Ken becomes addicted to tobacco himself, as a method by which the criminals can

insure his loyalty. The leader of the drug ring, Laj Drai, is outsmarted when Ken clandestinely secures a small sample of the tobacco on one of his exploratory trips. With the aid of Drai's engineer, Ken is then able to maroon the smugglers at their base on Mercury while the two of them return to their homeworld for help.

The characterization of the aliens in ICEWORLD is simultaneously very good and very bad. As humans, they would be quite well drawn; but as aliens from such a dissimilar background, their minds seem to work too much like those of human beings. As Clement himself points out, Ken's mind works almost exactly like that of a human. Clement may be assuming that all intelligent thought must follow pretty much the same thought patterns, but even the rudimentary differences indicated in NEEDLE are absent here. The alien's total absence of knowledge about worlds as cold as Earth seems not to conform to their portrayal as possessors of a highly sophisticated interstellar civilization.

The third novel from this period is MISSION OF GRAVITY, a four part ASTOUNDING serial, Galaxy Novel, and Pyramid paperback. It is without any doubt Clement's best known novel, for it features the planet Mesklin, a giant world whose gravity varies from 700G at the poles to only a few gravities at the equator, as a result of the planet's squashed-sphere configuration. Mesklin is inhabited by a race of intelligent beings with a wide variety of civilizations, beings who physically resemble armored centipedes about 15 to 18 inches long. Charles Lackland is a human researcher manning a station at the equator; his job is to establish contact with the indigenous race in order to retrieve an expensive experimental rocket which has failed to take off after landing at one of Mesklin's poles. To accomplish this purpose, he developes a common language with Barlennan, captain of the BREE, a sea-going ship composed of a large number of interconnected rafts. Although Barlennan consents to the plan in return for radios and other considerations, it is increasingly obvious throughout the story that he has hopes for a far more substantial reward, in the form of advanced scientific knowledge not presently possesed by his race.

Their journey is punctuated by a series of adventures. They encounter a race who use rolling boulders in the heavy gravity to smash their enemies; another that seems to closely resemble human Polynesia or Africa; a third who have developed a method of gliding through the air, despite the incredibly high gravity. They are faced with and overcome giant carnivores, a hurricane, and the necessity of climbing a mountain swept by gale force winds. In Mesklin's enormous gravity, even a very short fall is generally fatal, and Mesklinites find it psychologically distressing to have any solid object above them.

Where NEEDLE and ICEWORLD dealt with the attempts by the characters to solve mysteries or problems, MISSION OF GRAVITY is a fairly straightforward quest story, against a background of scientific extrapolation and exotic cultures. The crew of the BREE encounter each obstacle separetly, and overcome them in the same order. Although it involves much more complex scientific extrapolation than NEEDLE, it is basically a much simpler story, and it is in some ways unfortunate that the earlier novel has been almost completely overshadowed by the later. Which is not to say that MISSION OF GRAVITY is anything less than an excellent novel, only that Clement's reputation is disproportionately linked to a single work. Clement's subsequent works have suffered unjustly for the same reason.

Clement did not stop writing short stories when he started writing novels. "Halo" (GALAXY, OCTOBER 1952), reprinted in SHADOW OF TOMORROW edited by Fred Pohl, Perma Books, dealt with a race of enormous space travelling beings who harvest lifestuff from worlds, but who are unable to clean off the Earth because of

the high incidence of meteoric matter they must encounter to do so. Well written as far as it goes, the story doesn't end so much as wander off. "Critical Factor", which appeared is STAR #2 edited by Fred Pohl (1953), Ballantine Books, is a far better story. A race of beings living inside the Earth's crust have no knowledge of existence on the planet's surface, and no awareness of the force of gravity. Clement speculates on the reaction of a scientifically minded being who is first exposed to gravity, and has no muscles or means to move against it. Still not a strong ending, but this is one of the best of Clement's stories which attempt to look at normal physical phenomena from unusual perspectives.

The pre-eminent position of MISSION OF GRAVITY in Clement's work is particularly unfortunate, in my opinion, because it has led to the relative obscurity of CYCLE OF FIRE, a 1957 Ballantine original. The plotting here is far more complex, incorporating both the quest plot and an intricate physiological mystery. Characterization is immeasurably better. Nils Kruger, the spacewrecked human, is far more real a character than Charles Lackland. Dar Lang Ahn, the Abyormenite glider pilot, is every bit as well portrayed as is Barlennan, and has the additional advantage of differing detectably from humanity in his motivations, a far more alien alien than the basically human Mesklinites. The physical aspects of the planet Abyormen may not be as unique as those of Mesklin, but the biological and social aspects are far more so.

Kruger encounters Dar Lang Ahn as the latter is about to succumb to thirst in the desert. The human revives him and the two begin to learn each other's language, though both have grossly mistaken ideas about their fellow's origins. Kruger believes the almost unbearably hot planet Abyormen to be uninhabited and assumes that Dar is another stranded space traveller. Dar believes Kruger to be an outlandish lifeform native to the unexplored deserts of Abyormen. Dar's people know the exact date of their deaths, because their planet pursues a course through space that periodically warms the atmosphere enough to alter its composition. Kruger eventually learns this from a surviving member of a species which thrives under the opposite conditions, so that the two races exist in a leapfrog fashion on Abyormen through the years.

Clement's realization of the aliens in CYCLE OF FIRE is one of the novel's trongest points. Other writers have created satisfying alien beings, creatures whose motivations obviously preclude their being basically human in an altered body. Brian Aldiss did so, for example, with the Utods in THE DARK LIGHT YEARS. But where the Utods are perceived as objects of great worth being destroyed, the Abyormenites die as people. Clement has successfully walked the line between human and alien charater traits, without edging too far in either direction. Popularity to the contrary, I firmly believe this to be Clement's single best piece of fiction.

In 1958, CLOSE TO CRITICAL was serialized in ASTOUNDING, and was subsequently released in paperback by Ballantine. It was to be Clement's last novel for nine years, his last novel of note for thirteen. Once again Clement has developed a fasinating, convincingly alien environment. Tenebra, satellite of Altair, is another high gravity world, though not so high as Mesklin, where raindrops are enormous enough to completely enclosed the planet's inhabitants, where earth tremors are nearly constant, and atmospheric pressure is nearly 800 times that of Earth. A human research group, reminiscent of thet we saw in MISSION OF GRAVITY, lands a highly expensive robot, nicknamed Fagin, to study the planet, controlling it by remote from an orbiting base. Fagin steals some eggs from the intelligent but primitive native intelligence in order to raise young beings who are able and willing to communicate and cooperate with the humans.

The novel becomes complicated when an experimental bathyscape with two children -- one human and one Drommian -- breaks loose from the base and lands on Tenebra's surface. The humans must somehow convince the Tenebrans to locate the ship, guide them through some necessary repairs, and instruct the children in how to raise the ship before the high gravity and inadequate supplies aboard the bathyscape have disastrous consequences. They succeed of course.

CLOSE TO CRITICAL is another well conceived novel with consistent, thorough extrapolation. It suffers occasionally because of uneven pacing, and the scenes aboard the orbiting base seem to have been written more from a sense of duty than from actual interest. The Drommian diplomat and his human counterpart provide a rather forced subsidiary conflict, and the research team members are rather unrelievedly dull. The action on Tenebra, contrarily, is almost always interesting, well paced, and internally consistent. Clement seems much more at ease with his aliens than with his humans, a notion I find peculiarly attractive.

Clement continued to write short stories through this same period and into the early 1960's. Some of these were extremely technical, and Clement's usual ability to sugar coat science lessons with interesting plots occasionally lapsed. The two worst of these are "Dust Rag" (ASTOUNDING, September 1956) which appeared in Asimov's anthology WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? and in Clement's collection, SMALL CHANGES. Electromagnetic phenomena transform lunar dust into a highly dangerous substance to two moon explorers. In "Sun Spot" (ANALOG, November 1960), which aslo appears in SMALL CHANGES, a team of scientists ride a ball of ice into the sun's photosphere.

One of Clement's worst short pieces was another attempt to look at normal phenomena from an unusual viewpoint. "Planetfall", which was reprinted in Robert Hoskins' Lancer anthology, STRANGE TOMORROWS, originally appeared in SATELLITE in Febuary 1957 as half of the novel, A PLANET FOR PLUNDERING. A first contact story written totally from the point of view of the alien, "Planetfall" was so awkward that the editors interwove chapters from the human viewpoint written by Sam Merwin. The additions were even worse than the original, however, and the whole experiment would have been better off unprinted. The alien comes from a race that is physically so slow moving that geological phenomena present definite threats to their personal existence. This particular alien, who can move and react at our speed because of special equipment, is not able to accept human bodies as organic, and assumes that they are machines either directed by or occupied by the planet's true species. He seeks to warn our population that criminals of his race have planted earth burrowing missiles within the Earth which will cause orogenic upheavals, in order to lay bear mineral deposits needed by the interstellar civilization. The basic misapprehension of our nature on the alien's part prevents any meaningful communication. He eventually leaves, and leaves the reader wondering what point of the novelet was supposed to have been.

On the other hand, Clement wrote another short story published in FUTURE (February, 1960)that has never been reprinted, and should have been. "The Lunar Lichen" relates the story of a scientist named Ingersoll who claims to have discovered plant life on the lunar surface. When his co-workers set about trying to prove or disprove his claim, Ingersoll determines to kill them rather than allow exposure of his hoax. There ensues a chase and duel across the lunar surface before Ingersoll is subdued. Not a classic, by any means, but a highly entertaining and convincingly motivated story.

"The Green World" (IF, May 1963) is another unreprinted Clement story, novella length, extremely well done up until a rather disappointing ending. Once again we

follow a group of researchers attempting to ferret out the secrets of a hostile world, this time one covered by jungles and swamps, full of predators and poisonous lizards. The reader - but not the characters - is aware that at least one of the local carnivores is being manipulated somehow by an intelligent force. As the team begins to learn more about the planet than the unseen intelligences wish them to know, the carnivore is used to kill one man and disrupt the entire project. The story then plunges to a premature and rather annoying ending as we - but not the humans - learn that some type of intelligent being exists under the planetary surface, meditating, and use the fauna on the surface above to preserve their privacy.

"Hot Planet" (GALAXY, August 1963) is probably Clement's most widely reprinted short story, having appeared in Pohl's EIGHTH GALAXY READER, Judith Merril's YEAR'S BEST SF 9 (Dell), and SPECTRUM FOUR edited by Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest (Berkley Books). Yet another research team is revealed to us, this time on the planet Mercury, where it is endeavoring to discover why and how that small world is acquiring an atmosphere. It results from a wave of vulcanism that endangers the entire expedition, and the steps taken by part of the crew to delay the flow of lava long enough for the rest to return to the base camp makes up the bulk of the story.

A distinct pattern emerges from close consideration of these last few stories, for each group of scientists includes one individual who doesn't quite fit in, as with the grumpy mechanic in "Sun Spot", the unbalanced Ingersoll in "The Lunar Lichen", the opinionated archaeologist in "The Green World", and a rather tactless radioman in this last story, "Hot Planet". But as if he were suddenly aware of his own rut, Clement's next story broke the mold and broke into fresh territory.

"Raindrop" (IF, May 1965), which appears in SMALL CHANGES, is easily my favorite shorter Clement. An overpopulated Earth has established an experimental biosphere in orbit, an enormous globe of water seeded with life, a sort of algae soup in the sky. The government rather shortsightedly sells the project to a private company, which we learn is controlled by a group of genetically altered humans who plan to live inside the raindrop, rather than use it to develop new food sources for the masses on the planet below. These altered humans are reacting against the "usual predjudice against people who are known to be significantly different", but their representative is driven to attempted murder before he realizes the selfishness of his group's plan. Clement raises genuine moral issues in "Raindrop", and the fact that he offers only a partial solution indicates his awareness that there is no easy way out of the complex social problems of modern, technological society. Like Asimov's "Waterclap", it is an untypical story that shows the author's uncertainty about the direction in which our society seems to be moving.

1966 was an uneventfull year for Clement's short fiction. "The Foundling Stars" (IF, August 1966), which appears in SMALL CHANGES and THE SECOND IF READER OF SF edited by Fred Pohl (Ace Books) is another technical story with a tacked on ending. Man is portrayed as a trivial insect with only the power to cause minor irritation to a race of intelligent stars. "Fireproof", which appears to have been an original story in SMALL CHANGES, is a rather horribly bad short story about a spy in an orbiting missile station. Bent on sabotage, the agent is foiled by his unfamiliarity with weightlessness and the lack of any thorough briefing by his superiors. The agent's interception and capture are melodramatic and heavy handed. The incompetence of both the saboteur and the officials who sent him is so utter as to be incredible, and it doesn't make sense when one considers that the saboteur was transported past the outer defences of the station in the first place. Neither can the reader believe too fully in a character who thinks in terms of "these people who preferred the pleasures of personal liberty to those of efficiency."

"Mechanic" was the cover story for the September 1966 ANALOG, and also appears in SMALL CHANGES. Rick Stubbs (note the last name) is working off his two years of pre-college draft labor on a seagoing hydrofoil, helping to monitor the ocean's lifeforms and artificial pseudolifeforms. A freak accident disables the ship and injures most of the crew. Once again the plot is merely the frame for Clement's speculation, but this time the speculation is interesting in itself. We are shown a variety of aspects of the surrounding civilization in a relatively short span of words. If Clement had done a bit more to end this story rather than just to stop it, this might well have been a serious award contender that year.

Clement's increasingly obvious interest in marine environments culminated in his 1967 novel, OCEAN ON TOP, serialized in IF and published in paperback by DAW. The novel opens with an interesting, if unoriginal, situation; several government employees have disappeared in the same part of the Pacific in a short period of time. An agent in a powered bathscape descends to the ocean floor disguised as a bit of wreckage, and discovers a nation of undersea dwellers, genetically altered several generations earlier. Outside of an interesting battle of wits between the agent and a group of men bent on capturing him in the early chapters, OCEAN ON TOP is dreadfully dull, a novelette strung out past any justification for its existence. There is a simpleminded plot dealing with a case of unrequited love, but little else to keep the story moving along. The agnet is almost as dumb as the government which (1) apparently already knew of the existence of the undersea nation but didn't much care and forgot to mention it to anyone (2) went to the bother of providing a highly sophisticated bathyscape to solve this nonexistent mystery, and (3) takes no futher steps after yet another disappearance despite the stated fact that a single government submarine could have cleaned up the entire matter in an afternoon's work.

Toward the end of the 1960's, Clement appeared once more, with "Bulge" in the September 1968 issue of IF. An old man who is the sole occupant of an orbiting power station is confronted by a gang of criminals who plan to hijack his supplies of fuel. His superior knowledge of life on the asteroid allows him to outsmart them in highly entertaining fashion. This is one of those stories where you know the villains will be foiled in the end, so you can just sit back and enjoy the process as they are led down the pathway to disaster.

In 1971, Clement transported two characters from his earlier novel about Mesklin - Barlennan and his first mate Dondragmer - to the fourty gravity world of Dhrawn, a world described either as a planet or a star, depending on your definition. STAR LIGHT, serialized in ANALOG and published in paperback by Ballantine, is primarily the story of the plight of one of the Mesklinite ground vessels which becomes damaged oh Dhrawn's surface, where the Mesklinites are conducting research and exploration impossible for humans. Complicating matters is the fact that Barlennan doesn't completely trust the human half of the research team (which, as usual, resides in orbit) and has secretly established a second base on Dhrawn as part of an elaborate plot to gain control of one of the human's interstellar vessels for the still planetbound Mesklinites. Barlennan succeeds completely, a statement which cannot be applied to the novel, despite its nomination for a Hugo.

As in two of his previous novels, Clement alternates action between the aliens on the surface and the human observors in orbit. In MISSION OF GRAVITY he kept the latter to a minimun, and the novel's pacing was excellent. In CLOSE TO CRITICAL, he necessarily developed the human characters further, and the transition back and forth interfered with the novel's flow. In STAR LIGHT, at least half of the plot unfolds in orbit, and the action on the surface is rather dull as well. The result is a regular alternation between two rather slow paced stories with

little to spur the reader's flagging attention. There is little revelation about Dhrawn itself after the opening chapters, for the plotting and counterplotting among the human and Mesklinite characters has been forced to stage center, and Clement's facility for creating an intriguing alien environment is kept waiting in the wings.

In 1973 Clement jumped back in time to present a story set on Meslin after contact was established with Earth, but before the events chronicled in STAR LIGHT. "Lecture Demonstration" appeared in the Campbell memorial anthology, ASTOUNDING, recently released in paperback by Ballantine and edited by Harry Harrison. A human instructor at a college for Mesklinites is trapped with several of his students in a cave in, and is unable to demonstrate his superior knowledge of physical science by finding a way out. This is another scientific puzzle story, done with style and thorough knowledge. It's not a story you talk about for days, but it's a satisfying bit of light entertainment.

"The Logical Life" appeared in STELLAR ONE edited by Judy-Lynn Del Rey, first in a series of original paperback anthologies from Ballantine Books, reminiscent of Pohl's old STAR series. A human, accompanied by a giant alien, explores the oceans of a strange planet on a raft, seeking the source of the plankton that fills the ocean. They are grounded on a mysterious island which seems to rise and fall for no discernable reason, until the human realized that the island is a single giant lifeform and that it is breathing. This story has a much more definite ending than many of Clement's stories, but still leaves several threads of thought open. I suspect the background for this planet might be one Clement is considering as the basis for a new novel. If so, it indicates that he is paying more attention to the ecological system than with his last novel, which might as well mean that the next novel will return to the techniques which made him so successful in the past.

"Mistaken for Granted" (IF, February 1974) is Clement's most recent appearance in a prozine. A young boy from Earth foolishly ventures out alone onto the lunar surface and becomes lost. The lunar community must then find a way to guess what steps he might have taken in order to anticipate his position and locate him before his air is exausted. I'm a pushover for a good moon story, and this is one of the better ones. Clement shifts back and forth from one character to another at just the right pace to keep the plot moving rapidly but deliberately.

And so we come to the present. This article has not mentioned everything Clement has written, but I think it has covered all of the easily available fiction, and all that is significant. There are definite patterns of theme, plot, and characterization in Clement's work, some of which have been pointed out above. Clement has been criticized for writing the same story over and over, but so long as one writes the same story -- or at least the same type of story -- well, I see no reason why there should be any obligation to experiment. And he does write the technological story well, in most cases, just as he does have strong abilities both to create unusual environments and to examine certain "facts" from alternate viewpoints. Hal Clement writes the traditional, Old Wave type of story, but that's where SF started, and it will always be an important pasrt of the field. We could use a few more Hal Clements.

-- Don D'Ammassa

BRADBURY

"The Pedestrian" and "The Murderer"

Thesis

The ambitious purpose of BRADBURY IN DEPTH, as it were, is to dissect Ray Bradbury, the man and his work, a task yet to be undertaken in any large degree in fandom. Comments on it are greatly appreciated. Send such mail to David McDonnell, PO Box 554, Bethany, West Virginia 26032.

Parts of this installment originally appeared in THE COMET #2 and #3. BRADBURY IN DEPTH also appears in UNREAL (35¢ from Rod Snyder, 3600 Ripple Creek, Austin, Texas 78746) as well as THE COMET (#4 is 25¢ from Larry Johnson, Rt. 4 Greenfield Ave, Ballston Spa, New York 12020)

Analysis -- "The Pedestrian"

"'What's going on?' Montag had rarely seen that many house lights.

"'Oh, just my mother and father and uncle sitting around, talking. It's like being a pedestrian, only rarer. My uncle was arrested another time-- did I tell you?-- for being a pedestrian. Oh, we're most peculiar.'" 1

Thus, Ray Bradbury sets the stage for the events that take place in one of his most popular books, FAHRENHEIT 451. That novel

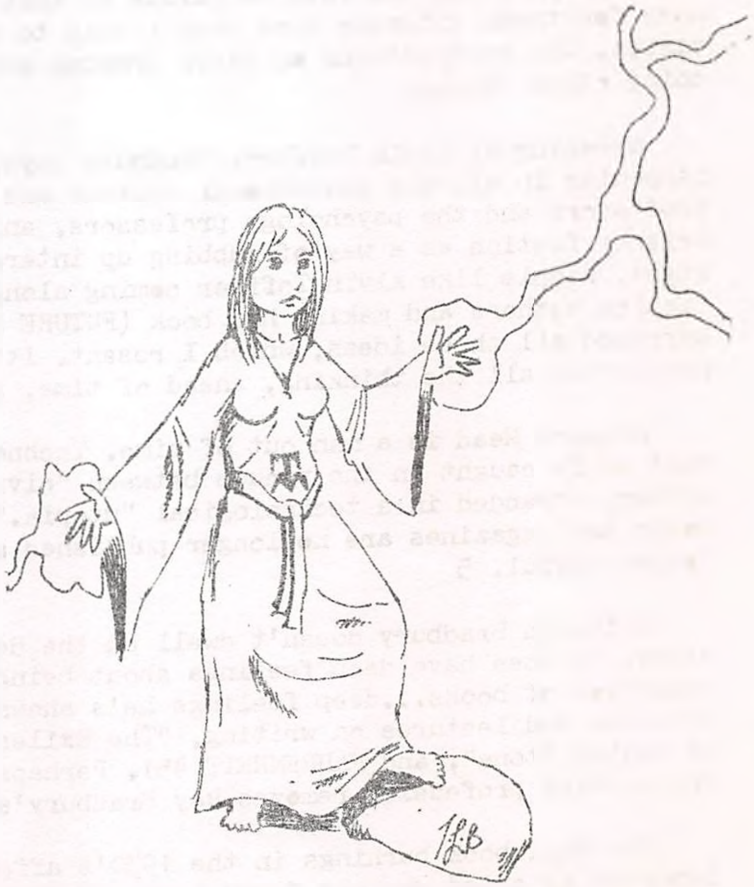
IN DEPTH

by DAVID McDONNELL

concerns a future world where books are outlawed and the job of firemen is to burn them.

As I can reconstruct it, in writing "The Fireman" (the short story which was enlarged into FAHRENHEIT 451) about 1949-1950, Bradbury included mention of an "uncle" who had been arrested for being a pedestrian. Around 1950-52, Bradbury used the idea to develope a frightening short story, "The Pedestrian." (Of course, "The Pedestrian" could have been written before during the same time as "The Fireman.")

Bradbury makes no bones about his fear of technology and what cruelities it can inflict on the common man. That fear is manifested in such short stories as "The Exiles", "Usher II", "Piller of Fire", "The Garbage Collector", and "The Murderer" as well as FAHRENHEIT 451. Indeed, Ray Bradbury is so "fearful of the effects of technology on modern man [that] he does not drive a car and has never flown. He discarded his electric typewriter because it made too much noise." 2



Since Bradbury does not drive, the thought of making walking a crime holds its own constricting horror for him. In fact, Bradbury takes the other tack and regards cars as a horror unto themselves (a thought briefly expressed in "Skeleton" and "The Crowd"). In

a recent interview, he said "The automobile, on the other hand, is a danger which must be controlled. Either we must become better drivers or the cars will get us."3

Briefly stated, it is November 2053 A.D. Leonard Mead, the "pedestrian," is walking the streets of the city. No one else is in sight. Everyone is home watching their giant "TV" view screens. Mead has walked for more than four hours every night through that city for years. During those trips, he has never met another human being. However, on this particular night, the one police car that remains operating in the entire city stops and arrests Mead for being a pedestrian. He can make no protests since the car is fully automatic and operated by robot police.

Once again Bradbury has screamed out concerning what technology can do to man. As he has explained in other pieces of fiction, his vision of the future is a scrub-cleaned, antiseptic world where books are outlawed, personal freedoms are few and constricted for the good of society, superstition is struck down in favor of technology, and television has taken over the minds are all. No imagination is allowed. Even long-dead, buried corpses must be exhumed and cremated to satisfy science's struggle against superstition.

Thus, back in the very late 1940's and primarily in the 1950's, Bradbury predicted what has come to be known, via Alvin Toffler, as "Future Shock." That condition states that technology is changing at such a rapid pace that man connot adequately handle the reverberations of that change. With the technology doing so much for them, citizens have very little to do in their leisure time save television. The restrictions on their freedom and imagination prevent them from legally doing other things.

Speaking of Alvin Toffler, Bradbury says, "Now we have this tremendous thing happening in all the educational systems and all the colleges, where the sociology professors and the psychology professors, and the political science people are using science fiction as a way of rubbing up interest in their own fields; and it's so right. People like Alvin Toffler coming along and borrowing from all the science fiction authors and making his book (FUTURE SHOCK). That's all the book is. He's borrowed all these ideas, which I resent. It's a non-book for me, because all these people did all the thinking, ahead of time, and they deserve all the credit." 4

Leonard Mead is a man out of time. Technology has changed his world so quickly that he is caught in the vacuum between "civilizations"-- a man of the past, a writer, stranded in a technological "utopia." The "future shock" for him is that books and magazines are no longer published and that writers themselves are no longer useful. 5

Although Bradbury doesn't dwell on the death of the writing profession in this story, he does have deep feelings about being a writer, censorship, and the destruction of books...deep feelings he's shown to the world in various interviews, articles and lectures on writing, "The Exiles", "Usher II", "The Wonderful Death of Dudley Stone", and FAHRENHEIT 451. Perhaps because the destruction of books and the writing profession removes Ray Bradbury's only chance for immortality.

The Nazi book burnings in the 1930's affected Bradbury strongly. It has been reported he cried when he first learned of the burnings. Indeed, such a theme became notable in his work (especially FAHRENHEIT 451). Noted British author Kingsley Amis believes "the suppression of fantasy, or of all books, is an aspect of the conformist society often mentioned by other writers, but with Bradbury, it is a specialty." 6

Ray Bradbury also has his own feelings about television. He recently stated "...I don't like television. There is no way of controlling the quality...look what happened to NIGHT GALLERY and TWILIGHT ZONE. ...The problem is in TV you always need the one day more shooting that you can't have. ...Not that I have anything against the medium-- it has great potential-- but I must have the TIME (to write for it). Give it to me or buy it for me, but one way or the other guarantee me the time to perfect what it is that I am trying to do." 7

"I am not so much a science fiction writer as a fantasist, moralist, visionary. I am a preventor of futures, not a predictor of them. I wrote FAHRENHEIT 451 to prevent book-burnings, not to induce that future into happening, or even to say it was inevitable," Bradbury said. 8

In Bradbury's future world, TV and its viewing screen descendants have assumed an almost God-like dominance. The streets of the city in which Leonard Mead lives may be busy during the day, but in the evening they are totally deserted, devoid of life as the city's masses huddle inside their homes buffeted by air conditioned winds, watching television-- detective shows, variety shows, quiz shows, westerns, comedies, etc. Bradbury has also shown us the ill effects of television-- of children receiving everything technology has to offer, reared and pampered by a television screen-playmate-- as in "The Veldt."

"The Pedestrian" by Ray Bradbury is indeed an interesting story. It tells us many things about man, technology, and probably most of all, Ray Bradbury. "Sometimes he would walk for hours and miles and return only at midnight to his house. And on his way he would see the cottages and homes with their dark windows, and it was not unequal to walking through a graveyard where only the fainest glimmers of firefly light appeared in flickers behind the windows.

"The street was silent and long and empty..."

Analysis-- "The Murderer"

"A thing has grown up over the years where people would say, 'Well, he's against all machines and all technology (my italics-DM),'" Ray Bradbury explained. "That's really severely misinterpreting what I've said in my books. I pick out very carefully those machines which afflict one, and attack them. For instance, if you're in a restaurant trying to eat dinner, and music by Musak is on too loud, the temtation is to squeeze a cat into the system. Right? That's what we'd all love to do. So I thought one day, why not squeeze a cat into the system? So I wrote the story 'The Murderer', about a guy who goes around scooping ice cream into radio sets, or into phonographs. It's a wonderful way of releasing tensions. We've all wanted to do this. The rest of the time that same machine is doing good work. If you can turn it on for yourself if you can put on the symphonies you want to hear, and control the volume in locations where you want to hear it... You can't have that trapped audience thing; you can't have George Orwell time...What you do is pick the machines that you like and you encourage them, and you pick those you hate and try to have them destroyed, or put out of functioning." 9

Little really remains to be said about Ray Bradbury's "The Murderer." Bradbury himself has said it all.

Briefly, "The Murderer" details the story of Albert Brock. Brock is being interviewed by a psychiatrist in a security chamber. After destroying the room's radio and the doctor's wrist radio, Brock tells him of Brock's "murders" of various appliances-- how Brock shoved his telephone into his kitchen Insinkerator, shot his

television set, poured water into his office's intercommunication system, stomped his own wrist radio to pieces, spooned ice cream into his car radio transmitter, and "killed his house."

Brock also explains that since his story received so much publicity in the media after his arrest, he is only the vanguard of a legion of people who will likewise do away with offending machines. The story ends with Brock being given six months of peace and quiet in a padded room while the psychiatrist returns to his office and the noises of radios and telephones and other modern conveniences.

Before going into other aspects of the tale, it is enjoyable to point out some of Bradbury's humor concerning the subject of murdering machines in two rather short excerpts from the story:

> "...I shot the television set!"
> The psychiatrist said, "Mmm."
> "Fired six shots right through the cathode. Made a beautiful tinkling crash, like a dropped chandelier."
> "Nice imagery."
> "Thanks, I always dreamt of being a writer."

Ray Bradbury, of course, is a writer and not overly fond of machines as he stated. A little bit of autobiography creeping into his fiction?

And later on in the story:

> "I bought a quart of French chocolate ice cream and spooned it into the car radio transmitter."
> "Was there any <u>special</u> reason for selecting French chocolate ice cream to spoon into the broadcasting unit?"
> Brock thought about it and smiled. "It's my favorite flavor."
> "Oh," said the doctor.
> "I figured, hell, what's good enough for me is good enough for the radio transmitter."
> "What made you think of spooning <u>ice cream</u> into the radio?"
> "It was a hot day."

Man's consideration of machines in this instance goes a bit beyond humor. There's a cold (no pun intended) rationality involved in Brock's action. It's something some coldly logical computer might even approve of.

There are good machines and there are bad machines. Bradbury reiterates that theme in "The Murderer". Brock regrets, after the act, shoving the telephone down the Insinkerator (i.e. garbage disposal) -- it never makes any more or creates any trouble. Indeed, it is only an innocent bystander during the "murder" of Brock's house. Brock tells the psychiatrist that he plans to have the Insinkerator restored upon his release. It is a "good" machine.

Brock's character is contrsted against the nameless psychiatrist. The psychiatrist probably realizes that Brock is right in his actions although those actions are somewhat misdirected. The psychiatrist, too, is irritated by his own wrist radio when, at the story's beginning, his son calls him to remind him about allowances while the doctor is "busy". Yet, he, like his fellow citizens, have become accustomed to the mechanical routine. They are lost without the sounds of Muzak and radios in the background, without being "in touch". They cannot adequately handle "freedom" (In fact, when Brock uses a portable diathermy machine to disrupt radio

communication on a bus, pandemonium results among the passengers. They are "out of touch". Yet, it is Brock who is supposedly "out of touch" with reality-- not the average citizen.

The psychiatrist's face is only "cool and serene" when he is being assaulted by the sounds of intercom, wrist radio, and telephone on all sides. In this vision of the future, silence is not golden.

"The Murderer" details a dilemma of modern humanity. We, as a nation, have become so ingrained by technology's trespasses, that we accept them with little or no questions. How much easier it is to conform and to endure air and water pollution, the deafeing noise of construction and transportaion, burdensom commercials clogging every television and radio airwave, rampant inflation, and inferior postal service.

With those very rare exceptions (boycotts, strikes, investigations), we put up with such trespasses-- even as the society in "The Murderer" puts up with over-communication and overbearing "conveniences". Maybe that society even enjoys it.

We get used to technology's trespasses. After a time, they cease to bother us. Inflation may bring most paperback prices up from 75¢ tp 95¢ and $1.25, but we soon capitulate and purchase those paperbacks anyhow.

All that indeed is a sad fact of American life.

Yet when someone speaks out against such trespasses or does something dramatic to emphasize his point that the looming offenses of technology should be stopped, we, more often than not, laugh at him, ignore him, or as in the case of Albert Brock, punish him.

The question haunts us, the question Ray Bradbury brings us in "The Murderer"-- how much of something is a good thing? When do muzak and telephones stop being useful and become torturous inconveniences?

Synthesis

Both of the stories examined in this installment of "Bradbury In Depth" are cut from the same cloth. They examine the rights of the individual in relation to a horrifying conformist society. Both delve into what technology can do to us. Both are two character stories stories and feature machinery in major roles. Both deal with strong loners threatened by a shallow, nameless establishment enemy as personified by the robot police car, the offending machines, and the psychiatrist. (Although an argument can be made for seeing Brock and the psychiatrist as the same type of person with Brock as the one with the courage to carry out his convictions).

Both are short masterworks by Ray Bradbury.

"The Pedestrian" is available in both S IS FOR SPACE and THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN and has been anthologized. "The Murderer" can only be found in THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN.

---

1. FAHRENHEIT 451, Ballantine, 1966 paperback edition, page 9.

2. Literary Cavalcade, Volume 26, Number 1, October 1973, page 45.

3. The Monster Times, Volume 1, Number 31, March 1974, page 11.

4. Vertex, Volume 1, Number 1, April 1973, page 93.

5. Apparently, in the year 2053, books haven't been actually, legally outlawed, The fire departments of FAHRENHEIT 451 have yet to appear (that is, assuming the two worlds in the two stories are the same future world).

6. NEW MAPS TO HELL, Kingsley Amis.

7. The Monster Times, Volume 1, Number 31, March 1974, page 11.

8. Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction, Volume 1, Number 1, January 1975, page 78.

9. Vertex, Volume 1, Number 1, April 1973, page 93.

--David McDonnell

STILL AVAILABLE:

KNIGHTS OF THE PAPER SPACE SHIP #2 -- 25¢
KNIGHTS OF THE PAPER SPACE SHIP #3 -- 25¢
KNIGHTS OF THE PAPER SPACE SHIP #4 -- 25¢
KNIGHTS OF THE PAPER SPACE SHIP #5 -- 25¢
KNIGHTS OF THE PAPER SPACE SHIP #6 -- 25¢
KNIGHTS OF THE PAPER SPACE SHIP #8 -- 25¢
KNIGHTS OF THE PAPER SPACE SHIP #9 -- 25¢
KNIGHTS OF THE PAPER SPACE SHIP #11-- 75¢

Make checks payable and mail to Mike Bracken at the address listed on the content page. Be sure to indicate which issue you want.

BEN INDICK:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

If I am not one of the "elder statesmen" of Fandom, I most certainly am one of the "middle-aged statesmen." At 51, I think I have earned such a dubious soubriquet. When a person gets older, he feels it is his duty to dispense wisdom, or whatever passes for it with him. I'd like to say a few words about FIAWOL.

For those who are unhappily unaware of this arcane term, it simply means "Fandom Is A Way Of Life", one more acronym in a world already overburdened with them. If a youngster decides Fiawol has relevance to him, what can this mean to a parent who is totally out of it, so far as Fandom is concerned? Well, here is what I would suggest:

First: if a youngster reads science fiction and fantasy, he is already in the company of many of the leading persons of the world, in every conceivable field, people who never even heard heard of fandom, in many cases (poor benighted souls.) SF is an in thing.

Second: Nearly any kind of reading is to be encouraged in young people. I do not even except comic books, so long as they are supplemental to other reading. Reading is the original mind-bender, more expanding and less harmful than drugs, and is the greatest stimulus to creative activity.

Third: Fandom itself is the active expression deriving from Reading. It is, for many young people, the first self-inspired creative work; in the past, many fine professional writers have begun in the mimeographed, dittoed, carbon-papered or what-have-you pages of Fandom. It is a remarkably active and productive field, one which bears all types of folks without rancour and with growing tolerance of each other's ways. No less an authority than the noted psychiatrist Dr. Fredric Wertham has analyzed Fandom (in his book THE WORLD OF FANZINES, published by a University Press) and has praised the field without qualification. He has found it free of sneering hangups, drug culture or such, and one in which individuals are provoked into producing their best efforts, in fiction, in poetry, art and articles. Where else can young minds find an open market which demands (and usually gives) nothing? Fandom is perhaps the least selfish public arena I can think of. Anyone can publish

a fanzine or submit articles, the latter with excellent opportunities of acceptance. Youngsters in Junior High School hobnob on equal terms with old-timers, with big-name-fans and neofans, and there is no hauter or snobbishness. It is a field of free exchange of minds. Conventions are frequently held, at which the same equality persists, at which friends are made, and new experiences gained. I personally recieve fanzines not only from every corner of the USA, but from Canada, Argentina, Britain, Australia, and even Turkey (in Turkish! No, I regret to admit that I do not understand a single word -- but the impulse to communicate is what matters.)

Fourth: In view of the foregoing, I would actively encourage my children to participate in Fandom; alas, my own kids are not SFans, although they are Oz fans, and participate in Oz-zines and even Oz conventions. Indeed, two years ago, in High School still, they produced a show of songs from early 1900 Oz plays, which was immensely popular and has resulted in a positive demand for a repeat performance. I might add that their act was staged beautifully and intelligently, and was entirely the work of their own minds. SFandom can produce work of equal interest and calibre. Can anyone deny that this was a genuinely creative experience for my kids and their associates, most of whom were not even Oz fans at all, but merely interested in the musical and stage expression!

For my youngsters, Fandom will be a stepping-stone to other fields of interest; they may "gafiate" (leave) Fandom, but the experience will have been fruitful. Others will retain it as a portion of their lives, a hobby, a relaxation.

FIAWOL LIVES! MAY IT GROW STRONGER! I personally salute the neofans, and urge them, as they stumble into finding their individual oeuvre of expression, to keep trying. They will make it, and their lives will be richer thereby.

-- Ben Indick

ALL WRIT DOWN

by Darroll Pardoe

It's funny how I attract derelicts when I'm out walking on the city streets. I seem to hear a reader's voice saying I look like one myself, but no, I might be a long-haired scruff but I don't appear quite like the kind of people I'm thinking of. They have about two days' beard, a smell of alcohol on the breath, and maybe their old overcoat is tied up at the waist with a bit of rope. I well remember the first time I encountered one. I'd just moved to London and was waiting for a train in the South Kensington subway station, when this old sot with an Irish accent came wandering up. "Excuse me, sir" he said, "I've just arrived in London from Dublin, sir, I haven't got no money, sir, can you five me a shilling for a cup of tea, sir". Funnily enough, that's what they always say. They've always arrived in London from elsewhere, and it's always a cup of tea they want (though the smell of their breath indicates that their usual beverage is something different). I was taken aback. Nobody had ever made such a request to me before. Fortunately, a train came into the platform just then and I made my escape on it.

I soon got used to being waylaid by such characters, though. I seemed to attract them like a light attracts moths, and worked out an 'impoverished student' spiel to put them off with. Come to think of it, I was an impoverished student in those days. One of them was so taken with my story that he gave me a shilling! After spending two years in Ohio, I returned to London. The derelicts were still there, and now I had Rosemary to share my experience of them. She didn't believe me when I told her how I attracted them: it wasn't until she saw the process in operation for herself that she was convinced I wasn't just making it all up.

The most recent one we ran into was in Cambridge. We'd been doing some shopping, buying carragheenin and posters, and wandered into St Mary's churchyard for a bit of a rest. They've moved all the grave stones against the church was and provided seats and flowers, so it's a pleasant place to sit down and watch the world go by. After we'd been there a few minutes, this character came along and sat down on the bench right next to us. He started in on what was obviously his usual spiel. I just let him talk on, grunting now and then to keep him going. After a bit his talk became more and more abusive, and finally it must have dawned on him that he wasn't getting anywhere. Suddenly he stopped, and remained silent for a while. Next time he spoke, surprisingly, he was really communicative. He told us how he lived on his unemployment pay from the Social Security people, and while he didn't really need the odd cash he picked up from begging, but just liked to see people's annoyance when he accosted them. The worst 'customers' were the locals, many of whom knew him by sight and got tired of being touched every week or so. His best were some of the tourists in summer (Cambridge, being an old university city, gets more than its share of tourism, especially in September when the university is closed down).

He told us one dodge that he sometimes used. This was to get a number of leaflets advertising some local event, a concert perhaps. Usually the advertising matter for such things can be picked up for nothing. Then he stood on a street corner and handed them out to likely-looking passers-by. If someone took one, he'd ask them for a small sum for it: and it was amazing (he said) how often they'd fork out the 2p or whatever that he demanded. Another dodge was to go up to someone on the street and

ask them directions to somewhere in the direction that they were heading, and to hang on to them like glue as they walked in that direction, pretending to misunderstand the instructions so that the victim would have to repeat them over and over. After a little of this softening-up the victim would be glad to pay out a shilling or so to get rid of the derelict.

After telling us all these interesting things, he got tired of the unaccustomed intellectual exercise of taking sense, and turned over on the bench and went to sleep. We left him there. I still don't know why characters of this sort pick on me: perhaps I have a kindly face. Not that much of my face is visible these days, under the hair and beard. It is odd, though, how they take to me.

— Darroll Pardoe

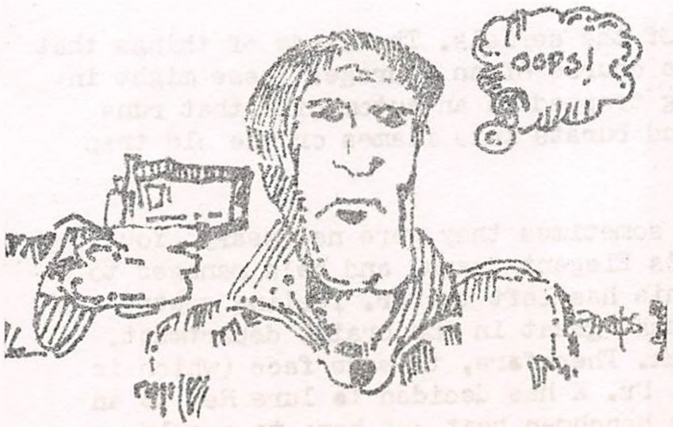
GARY HUBBARD

Old movie serials! Damn, I haven't see one of those things in years! When I was a kid, serials were a main staple of Saturday morning programming. Saturday was a magic day; no school, a leisurely bowl of Cherrios, and the latest episode of "Flash Gordon".

Providing, of course, that a number of things didn't go wrong. Everything was cool if my Old Man slept late. He didn't approve of what his sons did to amuse themselves. He felt that they should be outside in the sunshine--mowing the lawn, weeding the garden, painting the garage. There were also my other brothers to contend with; they preferred cartoons over serials. So sometimes the Saturday morning television set became the scene of violent struggles that would usually wake up the Old Man. As a result, of course, we'd find ourselves out enjoying the sunshine and fresh air.

Ah..but if I could live my life over again, I'd live it in a serial. It would be called, "The Return of Dr. X", and it would go something like this:

OUR STORY THUS FAR: Professor Jennings, a scientist, has just invented a Death Ray. He calls a press conference to announce that he intends to use his invention only for the good of Mankind. However, before the press conference can take place, Professor Jennings' body is found floating in a vat of cottage cheese, and his Death Ray is missing. The police dismiss the Professor's death as accidental, but the late scientist's daughter, Alice Jennings, disagrees. She knows that her father hated cottage cheese. So she decides to confide in Rex Sterling, a reporter for the Daily Herald Gazette. He soon finds out that the Death Ray has been stolen by a mysterious figure known only as Dr. X and that Alice's guardian, Rance Sleazy, is in the employ of the fiend.



THE RETURN OF DR X

CHAPTER 32:FLAMES OF DEATH

At this point, I think a little background information would be useful. Serials had very ridgedly structured plots, so that, just like a Japanese tea ceremony, only certain things were supposed to happen at certain times. Like right now, the hero, Rex Sterling, is going to be ambushed by some of Dr. X's henchmen, but before he is, let's backtrack a little.

Two things that you will always find in any movie serial are Professors named Jennings and Death Rays.

The name "Jennings", in movie serial parlance, meant "scientist". Sometimes he was a good scientist, but then sometimes he was an evil scientist. There was only one way of telling them apart: the good scientists had beautiful daughters named Alice, and the evil scientists wore mustaches.

Death Rays played a major part in every movie serial. Sometimes they were inventions of the good scientist, or sometimes of the evil scientist. Either way, the Death Ray would become the property of the bad guys soon after the serial got started, so that the hero would have to spend most of his time trying to get it back.

Death Rays were the major technological advance of the 1930's. Although it was hushed up, a Death Ray was displayed at the 1939 World's Fair, and it wiped out a whole pavilion. The Death Ray could have considerably shortened World War II, if it hadn't been for a tragic occurance. In 1941, the federal government, feared that the indiscriminate use of the Death Rays would have a bad effect on the stability of the country, so all the Death Rays were collected together and sent to the Navel Base at Pearl Harbor for safekeeping.

Now, we left our hero about to walk into a trap. The bad guys were always setting traps for the good guys. Really, it would have been simpler for the villian to just shoot the hero in the head and have done with it, but for men like Dr. X death was an Art.

There were three types of traps: Elegant, Commonplace, Crude.

The Elegant traps were things like locked rooms with walls that slowly closed in on the hero or canopy beds with spikes hidden in the conopy. The hero would be sleeping in one of these beds blissfully unaware of the danger he was in. Then Dr. X would tiptoe in and pull a hidden lever that would send the spikes crashing down upon poor Rex. My favorite Elegant trap, however, was a phone booth that locked itself and filled up with gas as soon as the hero stepped into it.

Commomplace traps were the old standbys of the serials. The kinds of things that you would expect the hero to encounter in the course of an average. These might include: being pushed out of an airplane, being trapped in an automobile that runs off a cliff plunges down a fifty foot drop and bursts into flames or the old trap door that leads to a pit full of crocodiles.

Crude traps were completely artless, but sometimes they were necessary. You see, Ex has managed to outsmart all of Dr. X's Elegant traps, and he's managed to outsmart all of Dr. X's Commonplace traps. This has left the Dr. feeling pretty frustrated, because, really, Rex is not all that great in the brains department. Being a hero, he is mostly brawn and dumb luck. Therefore, to save face (which is funny, because we haven't yet seen his face), Dr. X has decided to lure Rex to an abandonded warehouse and have a couple of his henchmen beat out hero to a pulp.

To accomplish this Dr. X has kidnapped the heroine, Alice, and she is presently lying, bound and gagged, behind some packing crates. She is taking this all pretty calmly, because this is not the first time she's been bound and gagged. In fact, this is the tweltfh time in this serial alone that this sort of thing has happened to her, and she is beginning to like it.

Rex comes crashing in thru a window. Really, the front door was unlocked, and he could have come in that way, but he figures that Dr. X will be expecting him to come in that way and have a trap laid for him. True enough, but for once Dr. X has outsmarted Rex. Because he knew that Rex would be expecting the front door to be a trap and decide to come in by window. So, instead of setting up a trap by the door, the Dr. sets one up by the window. As Rex comes crashing thru it, he is greeted by two thugs who proceed to pummel him with wooden clubs the size of telephone poles. Naturally, this treatment renders our hero unconscious (at least!), and he is bound up and tossed behind the paking crates next to the girl.

Dr. X is pondering on some soul-satisfying method of doing away with them both when in comes Rance Sleazy. The appearence of Sleazy is significant, because it obscures the identity of Dr. X. You see, up to this point, Dr. X has always appeared dressed in a long black robe with a hood over his face, so we don't really know who he is. Usually, in these things, the villian is some character to whom we have been previously introduced. Tfruout this serial it has been pretty much implied that Rance Sleazy is Dr. X. Now we see that he isn't, and we will have to do some re-thinking.

Sleazy has come to inform Dr. X that the police really knew that Professor Jennings had been murdered all the time, but they had decided to let Rex do all the hard work of tracking down the killer (apparently, there had been some major lay-offs in the police force, and their detective staff was undermanned).

Sleazy also informs Dr. X that the cops are, at this very moment, closing in on the warehouse, so Dr. X orders Sleazy and the henchmen to bundle everything up--including their two captives, and they escape thru a convenient trap door that leads down a passage to an equally convenient nearby cave where Dr. X's personal aircraft -- a gigantic flying wing is parked.

Now we come to the point where they start to pull all the strings together and the internal logic of the plot starts to fall apart. We find Dr. X, Sleaxy and all inside the flying wing which is on its way to Washington. Rex and Alice, surprisingly, are still alive, and the Dr. is explaining to them that he intends to turn the Death Ray loose on Washington and burn it to the ground. Rex and Alice are horrified, because--while the destruction of Washington may not seem like such a bad thing to you or me--in those days they took that kind of thing seriously. Why Dr. X intends to destroy Washington is hard to say. Earlier in the serial, we were given to understand that Dr. X only wanted the Death Ray in order to ransom it off for the nation's supply of Radium-X (a substance that has no known use, but maybe he wanted it because its name rhymed with his).

And now the Dr. is about to unmask himself. Thisis also a logical problem, because there is no reason why, at this point, that he should. But, of course, the reason why he is going to unmask is because we are dying to find out what he looks like. So..he slowly lifts off his hood and stands revealed as...
DON'T MISS OUR NEXT EXCITING EPISODE: "YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK I WAS GOING TO TELL, DID YOU?" COMMING SOON TO A FANZINE NEAR YOU.

-- Gary Hubbard

C L GRANT

FROM THE FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

One of the panels at Lunacon '75 was the old stand-by gathering of New Writers. What was interesting about this particular group was that it did NOT have Gardner Dozois or George Alec Effinger or George R.R. Martin as participants. What it did have was Gene Snyder, Bill Watkins, P.J. Plauger, Neal Shapiro and myself, writers who were in fact really NEW. However, though I cannot speak for the others, I would like to qualify NEW in terms of mine own self.

New.

In terms of con, fan and editor recognition, I suppose that's a reasonably accurate appelation.

In terms of the time it took me to get to be NEW, though, it loses a great deal in translation.

Unlike an apparent large number of pros, I was not an sf fan by any definition in my earlier years (formative years, maturing cycles, whatever they're calling it now), nor was I even a reader of the stuff. To tell the truth, I was a mystery fan and gathered to my overcrowded room the heros of what passed for dreams in the fifties: Ellery Queen, Sir Henry Merrivale, The Saint (the real Saint, by the way, not the bastardized version television spawned), Gideon Fell, and Gideon of Scotland Yard. Science Fiction was that stuff I went to see on Saturday afternoons along with hundreds of other popcorn marksmen (for 25¢, can you believe it?): "The House of Frankenstein", "The House of Dracula", "Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein", "The Attack of the Crab Monsters", and other memorable interruptions between cartoons. Science Fiction on television (what there was of it) was restricted to Captain Vidoe and his Video Ranger (who is now a soap opera staple).

Nothing to get me thrilled, believe me.

Then there was this guy at college (Trinity, Connecticut) who was the kind of friend you had who, if there was no one else around, you hung around with even though he corrected your English every time you opened your yap. His hangup was adverbs. He also read this guy called Heinlein. Said it was interesting stuff. I said I didn't much care for plastic monsters. He said I was old-fashioned and didn't know what I was talking about. He handed me a book. Memory, being as selective as it usually is at times like this, tells me it was either FARMER IN THE SKY, or REVOLUTION 2100. Whichever it was, it intrigued me. But still, I didn't leap off the deep end, proclaiming to whoever listened that I had at last Found The Truth. In fact, I was still trying to find first printings (paper, who could afford hardbacks in college?) of THE ROMAN HAT MYSTERY and THE DUTCH SHOE MYSTERY. I did, however, pick up a few other Heinleins every so often, to lighten my reading--at the time, I was changing over from pre-seminary to history major heavy on the Tacitus, et al.

Then, only because the cover of the early Ballantine version caught my eye, I picked up DANDELION WINE. Who is this guy Bradbury? A bloody poet, that's who. One thing to another, and Ellery Queen went begging, Harry Merrivale and Gideon Fell thumped their bulks off stage (couldn't John Dickson Carr ever write about a skinny detective?), and I was hooked.

Sort of.

I am convinced, you see, that sf is an acquired taste, like scotch or Southern Comfort. Slowly, cautiously, into the racks in the drug stores. One here, another there, until you've bought all the Bradbury and Heinlein there is. Timidly, then, you look around-- and lo and behold!-- PAINGOD.

Meanwhile, I am out of college, into teaching English (history major, right?) and trying to keep myself occupied at nights when there were no essays to grade. SF? Nope. Steinbeck, Faulkner, Hemingway, De Vries (YES!!), and all the O'Conners and, rest his aristocratic soul, John O'Hara.

PAINGOD. Damn, now that was a book. Ellison grabbed me by the throat like no one else ever had. Shook the hell out of me and set me up for ELLISON WONDERLAND. It was like waiting for the next issue of the "Post" so you could finish the serial before you went nuts; that's the way I felt about looking for the new Ellison.

Discovery. There is a page in the front of books which actually lists where these stories appeared in the first place.

Damn, I thought to myself, there are sf and fantasy magazines someplace in the universe.

GALAXY, then, and FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION.

Hooked. For sure, now. I was a fan, and I didn't even know it.

But still not new, much less NEW.

There was, however, this writers' club in my small New Jersey shore town attended by a few folk who wanted to write. The assistant manager of the local bookstore, who took my salary every two weeks with an bloody Irish cackle, invited me over one or two nights. What I heard was an elderly woman reading poetry generally published in the local newspaper, a young woman reading some book about blacks (I think, and before it was fashionable to do so, I might add), a mother who spent most of her time laughing about her children and writing a delightful little piece about her grandmother, and Joseph Castellano. Who? Joseph Castellano. More than Ellison, more than Heinlein, more than Bradbury, I owe what sales I have now to Joe.

Joe was a writer. A REAL writer. Stories appearing with fair regularity in [illegible]'s girls' teen magazines. Only I never read any of them. One evening, he brought me a couple of copies of his work and I took it home and read it and with the arrogance every English teacher has, said: "My God, I can write better than this!"

1966, folks. I wrote. And wrote. I tried slice-of-life (very big with the "New Yorker"), cute little set pieces (fitting nicely in with the "Post"), and then decided that my THING would be Science Fiction. Why? Because while all the mainstream fiction magazines were dying or accepting manuscripts only from agents, only the sf/fantasy market seemed a viable home for short stories.

It would take little imagination to see that me earlier (and decidedly unlamented) pieces were direct rip-offs of Ray Bradbury. Later combined with the pyrotechnics of Ellison.

They stunk.

My God, did they stink!

1968. Still new.

I was reading, for the first time, TARZAN, and I'm sorry, out there, but I laughed my head off, literally slid off my chair onto the floor. I mean, Tarzan swinging through the forests of West Virginia to save Jane from a forest fire? With that prose? I stumbled into my study, took out my typewriter and in one afternoon, wrote a parody of old-time horror stories called THE HOUSE OF EVIL. I sent it in to Ed Ferman who sent it back and suggested I redo the first paragraph. I took a day off from school and redid it. Sold it. The same month I was drafted into the Army, four months before my 26th birthday (and thank you, too, President Johnson).

Until that time, I had collected a grand total of 116 rejection slips from every magazine there ever was. And as I look back on it, no wonder. Check out some of these early titles:

STRAWBERRY FLARE (old woman waits for husband to decide to return);
ELEPHANT'S GRAVEYARD (man goes to mysterious theatre to die);
THREE TO GET READY (man makes deal with female devil);
SILVER (man gets murdered by ghost boy).

So now I am a writer--of sorts. Of sorts because I soon found myself MPing my way through Vietnam for two years, scribbling on my one day in fourteen off, doing

very little otherwise but trying, via transPacific mail, to sell a story to Damon Knight and ORBIT. I defy anybody to match that kind of linkup with the world.

1970. Back in the States. new. Depressing as hell because I now discovered (actually, it had been creeping up on me for years, only I never knew it) that this typewriter thing, this putting words down on paper so that someone else could put them on different paper was what I wanted to do more than anything, except maybe eat.

Dave Hartwell and his great LITTLE MAGAZINE bought my first sf story.

Then came Damon Knight, Ed Ferman, Ted White, and now here I am.

NEW, by God. After seven years, NEW.

In a way, then, not being a fan was a definite gap in my career (such as it is) because I was not baptized into sf until I was well over what TIME MAGAZINE calls the Point of No Return. I missed out on cons, fandom, locs, and most importantly, reading all that sf/fantasy that came and went while I was trying to meet the Challenge to the Reader Ellery Queen stuck near the end of his earlier novels (none of which I was able to meet, damnit).

On the other hand, not being an early fan kept me home weekends so I could write. It has also, I think, lent me a different perspective on sf which, if my observations are correct, are not necessarily given to longtime fans. It is this latter bit which I intend to mess around with in this column, Mike and the mails permitting. Fandom, see, is still a new and alien territory for me. My first con was TORCON II, and if that isn't a beaut of an example of mind-blowing confusion, I have yet to hear it. My first zine was LOCUS, or at least I thought it was a zine until I came across a few others lying about The Science Fiction Shop in New York, and that haven of peace, quiet and a damned comfortable chair- A Change of Hobbit, in Los Angeles. And on, and on.

I will not pretend to be objective. Dull stuff. I do have my prejudices and when I get angry, you'll hear about it if I think it has some relevence to the field. I'll let the reviewers do the pronouncing and the codifying and the scholarly work. I'm going to stick to the writing and the sweating and those damned rejection slips that keep coming in even after you've convinced yourself that you are now a PRO, by George, and how dare they send back such magnificent material.

I am still paying my dues.

Which reminds me that your editor hereabouts has questioned the efficacy of SFWA (questioned in the sense of good, bad, indifferent). Values of writers groups. How to get published. Stuff like that.

I'm game if you are.

Meanwhile, I hope the kid who was wandering around DISCON with a sectioned notebook checking to see if my name was in it (it wasn't) so he could ask for my autograph (he didn't) realizes how depressed he made me feel. I mean, it was almost as bad as when Roger Elwood once thought I was a little old lady, for crying out loud.

-- C. L. Grant

D'AMMASSA — STEPPING OFF THE BOARD

WAYNE W. MARTIN

((Responding to Don D'Ammassa's article in KPSS 12, "Too Brief A Glance")).

I can't let Don D'Ammassa's comments go unchallenged, in spite of his obvious ineptness when taken in context with my actual statements.

In his first sentence, Don makes a statement in direct opposition to what I said and attributes it to me. At no time did I ever say Brunner was a super-left liberal, as Don claims I did. The claim is a silly one. Anyone can see for themselves on pg. 18, last paragraph, first sentence, KPSS 12: "I should also point out that this term "super left liberalism" refers to what is found in his writing and I do not necessarily ascribe these characteristics to him." And in my second sentence of that paragraph, I said, "I do not consider John Brunner a liberal."

How then does Don come up with an opening statement claiming I said he was such? It is particularly surprising that he attempts this within the same pages as the article itself. I can only conclude that Don has problems understanding plain English (it must come from reading too much science fiction). I can't believe he would intentionally make such a fuggheaded cotention.

Considering the aforementioned, there is no reason on Earth that I should support a statement claiming Brunner is a liberal, as you can clearly see, I stated I don't believe he is one.

The lack of perception, Don cites, in my assuming the terms "left" and "liberal" mean the same thing in Europe as they do in America can only be a figment of his own imagination. I clearly stated "...of standars of American concepts of what a left winger is...". It isn't that I don't perceive the difference, as I stated, I was merely employing the American. The difference in the European concept is irrelevent in the context I was using, as I explained in the article. Don chooses to ignore this, however. I guess no one ever told him one must stick to what the other person said, and not rewrite him to fit what one wants him to have said. As for my so-called assumption that "communist governments are universally atheistic as a matter of policy." (Quote is Don's allegation of my stand), he appears ignorant of what atheism is. My remarks were solely in regards to Christianity. I hate to break the news to Don, but not being Christian does not make one an atheist. It is a fact, though, that communist governments do take officially atheistic positions

even in cases where they don't actively suppress the exercise of religion.

In his second paragraph, Don throws what I said out the window and begins making up my definitions for me. He accurately gives my definition of 'super' as "greater than the typical" (Don says "Than a typical", but the way Don's going, what do you expect?), but then claims I define 'left' as "such as the Soviet Union loyal communists". While these words are in my article, they appeared in my first paragraph where I clarified the fact that the terms "leftist" and "liberal" are often in conflict in application in the political domain most Americans generally think of when they think of a leftest nation - the Soviet Union. Thus I pointed out (in context with my second paragraph) that I was NOT using such a definition. In that second paragraph I gave Heinlein as the perspective to judge a "right winger" by: on that basis, I classified Brunner (in regards to his fiction, not as a person) as leftist.

Taking all those inaccuracies, misstatements, and representations of my position, he comes up with what he calls my working definition of "super left liberal". As he clearly was unable to represent any more of my individual items than "super" as I actually put it, his concept of my total position can hardly hold any water and is just one more bit of his inept rendering.

Okay, he is unable to comprehend the simple statements made in the explanatory section of my article, on to the specific points he comments on:

1. He says I said Kruschev said, "We shall destroy you", which clearly shows he paid little attention to what I said. Kruschev did not say - and I didn't say he did - "destroy", the word is "bury", Don. Can you comprehend a difference between the words "destroy" and "bury"? They are hardly interchangeable. This shows he did not read my article very carefully and merely blurted off a response with little concern for my actual remarks.

2. Indeed, many liberals are for integration while conservatives oppose it - however, many liberals oppose it and many conservatives support it. The question of black seperatism rests with the fact that conservative biggots (like Archie Bunker) feel blacks are incapable of taking care of themselves. Conservatives who feel antagonistic against blacks want them segregated because they feel it will "keep them in their place". Those who aren't antagonistic are willing to let them mix to an extent "for the blacks' own good". It's their feeling of having to take care of them. Liberals feel blacks can take care of themselves if given a chance, but differ on whether they should or if keeping them together with white America is "their country as much as ours". Other liberals feel they should be allowed to govern themselves it that's the way they want it.

It is also basically a conservative view that America must be kept whole - the conservative serperationalist would be for shipping them to Africa while the liberal would allow the sort "within the current structure" self government. Also, considering the diverse conditions which black and white have come from in America (the black having to fight their way out of slavery - even after the Emancipation Proclomation) would hardly fit the same definitions of conservative and liberal. As I am white, my statements in this section are in regards to the white view. A typical black conservative is likely to have more in common with a white liberal than a white conservative. How would a black conservative get along with Wallace (the pre-go for the black vote Wallace at any rate).

3. Fine, many conservatives aren't oppossed to pre-marital sex - but how many of them openly practice it? When they do take part in pre-marital (and extra-marital,

for that matter), they would rarely openly acknowledge it to the public by living together as do the characters in Brunner's books - such as STONE. Such is overly blatent and not at all common of the conservative nature. A conservative would keep it to himself. Again, this is in refernce to his writing. I don't know, or care, how Brunner participates in this himself.

4. So homosexuality is legal in England? Just because something is legal doesn't mean conservatives are wholeheartedly thrilled about it. How many conservative heterosexuals are openly friendly with gays? Sure conservatives may by willing to grant them the right to do their own thing, but they aren't likely to be their close friends as is the main character in STONE with a gay Jewish fellow.

5. Again the stupidity arises in Don's acertion that I call Brunner himself a liberal. I've already commented on that, but may I point out that my comment on Brunner's anti-Christianism was in the very context of the fact that I don't consider him a liberal as a person. It was NOT in connection with liberalism as expressed in his writing. Also, perchance, how does Don manage to equate Brunner's anti-Christianiam with "all non-Christians"? Again I must point out a simple definition difference: "anti" and "non" hardly mean the same thing. I and non-female, that hardly makes me anti-female. The prefix "anti" means against, strongly opposed to. "Non" indicates that something isn't what ever the root word is. Not being Christian doesn't make one strongly opposed to Christians. This is strange in itself as Don is the first one to use the term "anti-Christian" anyway. I said he showed himself intolerant of Christians which Don then equates with both "anti-Christian" AND "non-Christian".

6. Again Don ignores parts of what I say. In Brunner's YAN, the "extra-terrestrial" (Don's term) isn't physically human either. As I pointed out then, the girl Brunner's lead character lived with wasn't anatomically the same as a terrain woman - as the girl in RAH's GLORY ROAD definitely was. In YAN, even the girl's sexual organ is structured differently. In GLORY, the girl is the typical red-blooded-American-boy's dream. Her extra-terrestrial origin is as insignificant as an English muffin ina an international bakery. The girl's anatomical structure indeed would make a difference. It would drive the alienness home on a pyschological level, giving a conservative the basic, sub-conscious, feeling of having relations with an animal. Don may assert this makes Brunner's character a pervert rather than a liberal, but that wasn't the point he was making.

In his concluding remarks he really blows it. He says I remarked about Brunner's auto-biographical comment about his "sympathy with intolerance" and later his "outrage with intolerance" claiming I'm counterdicting myself. One problem, the first is only a partial quote of what I put down - as anyone can plainly read in the last two lines on Pg. 18, the quote reads, "Out of sympathy with: intolerance of all kinds..." That hardly conflicts with the "outrage with intolerance". This is such an obvious error, I can't understand Don allowing himself to do so. Anyone reading my article before Don's comments could hardly miss it, so he couldn't be trying to score a point with an unintentional goof of this nature. I must only conclude more carelessness on his part...

Then he finishes with a remark on the dangers of labeling a man. I agree, but must again repeat, I at no time labeled Brunner. I only commented on elements of "super left liberalism" in his writing. On the contrary, to Don's assumption, I do not believe definite statements of political - or any other kind - belief can be necessarily drawn from a man's fiction. I never said it could. Don's ignorance thus concludes with the blaze of glory. At no time did I call Brunner anything on the basis of what I cited in his fiction.

I can understand Don's rearing against the labeling of a man by someone who doesn't understand the terms he's labeling with, but when Don himself doesn't even understand anything because of his own carelessness in reading my article - he isn't in the position to do so: particularly when the first thing he doesn't understand is that the man wasn't being labeled at all.

— Wayne W. Martin

GOING OVERBOARD — DON D'AMMASSA

Wayne Martin and I could probably go around and around on this issue forever, because the argument is primarily semantic, and we don't agree on definitions. That's why I specified before agreeing to write "Too Brief A Glance" that he include a definition of his terms. If he didn't provide a clear enough definition of what he meant, that's hardly my fault. I don't plan to waste a tremendous amount of time on this, but I am going to attempt to demonstrate to Wayne why his position, as stated, is nonsensical, even though his basic assertion may be right.

1. In Article #2, Wayne says: "At no time did I ever say Brunner was a super left liberal." In his review of TOTAL ECLIPSE in KPSS #11, which started the entire discussion, he referred to "people who seem to be turned off by his (Brunner's) super left liberalism." If I have "problems understanding plain English" because I see a contradiction here, I should be in good company. If Wayne can't take the time to go back and read his own review before defending it, why should I take the time to write a thoroughly rigorous response?

2. In Article #2, Wayne says that the European concept of "liberal" and "leftist" is irrelevant and that he emphasized that point in Article #1. But in that first article, Wayne points out himself that Brunner does not conform to the American image of a liberal (apparently because of his intolerance) but that "he may consider himself one" presumably by British standards. He goes on to refer to the similarities between "American and British leftists" at some length. If the differing concepts are irrelevent, why does he spend so much time talking about them. Note that I do not accept Wayne's definitions here either, except within the framework of his own rather convoluted logic.

3. Wayne says in Article #2 that he never said communist governments were universally atheistic as a matter of policy. But in Article #1 he said atheism is "the official position of communist governments" and in Article #2 itself, no less, he says that "Communist governments do take officially atheistic positions." Does Wayne mean what he says? Does he say what he means? When? And how can a government be atheistic "solely in regards to Chrisianity"?

4. In Article#2, Wayne says I misrepresented his definition. Since he never defined

anything, this is probably true; my telepathy remains, alas, dormant. He takes me to task for defining "super" as "greater than a typical" rather than "greater than the typical" and for quoting Khruschev as saying "We will destroy you" rather than "We will bury you". I plead guilty to lax phraseology, but the two differences have absolutely no relevance to the points made. If I wanted to nitpick about Wayne's mispelled words and grammatical vagaries, this article would be three times as long, but I'm trying to grapple with Wayne's ideas, not his ability to write.

5. By pointing out that the liberal and conservative positions on Black separatism are muddied, Wayne only strengthens my contention that this issue is not a valid criterion to apply in this context. He then renders such a confusing version of American political conservation (as Wayne sees it) that I confess I am totally incapable of deciphering what he is talking about. Must be more of this "plain English" I hear so much about. He states that "A typical black conservative is likely to have more in common with a white liberal than a white conservative." Assuming Wayne to be correct, this statement implies quite clearly that there are no across the board liberal or conservative philosophies or stands, that everything is relative. If this is true, and it may well be, then the entire basis of Wayne's two articles is completely undermined.

6. Political conservatives, says Wayne, "rarely openly acknowedge" pre-marital or extra-marital sex. Evidence, please. I know many liberals who are unwilling to openly acknowledge facts about their sexual life, and conservatives who don't have any compunctions about it.

7. I agree with Wayne that it is unfair to ascribe political views to a writer on the basis of his work (to a certain point, at least). However, we are talking about John Brunner the Writer, not John Brunner the Person, as Wayne himself insists. JB the Writer varies from book to book, as do most superior authors. This is particularly evident in 1st person stories where the Writer and the central character coincide. In WEB OF EVERYWHERE, Brunner the Writer is a callous, psychotic, opportunist. Neither Wayne nor I know enough about JB the Person to discuss his philosophy, so we are discussing JB the Writer exclusively, and it is fair to judge the latter by the books because the Writer aspect of Brunner cannot by definition misrepresent himself in print except through ineptness. The Writer cannot lie or assume a false position. If JB the Person assumes a false position as JB the Writer, JB the Writer really subscribes to that position. Consider Swift's "A Modest Proposal". The person Jonathan Swift never advocated eating Irish babies; the writer Jonathan Swift did. This is a distinction nonetheless valid for its subtlety.

8. There are no conservative homosexuals so there is no validity to Wayne's references thereto.

9. Wayne claims that he never called Brunner anti-Christian. True, he never used that specific word, but he says that Brunner "opens both barrels against Christianity" and that he is "portraying the Christians as an active, potential menace." That sounds pretty "anti" to me. Must be more "plain English" that I just can't follow. If Wayne contends that criticism of Christianity is evidence of super left liberalism, then he has to accept that it is just as applicable to Caesar, Stalin, etc. as to Brunner. He can reject this evidence as superficial when compared to the other attributes of these other people, of course, but the same standards must apply in his characterization of this as evidence of Brunner's position.

The fact is that opposition to Christianity may be shared by liberals, conservatives,

or anarchists, for that matter; it does not indicate any particular political stance.

10. Wayne objects to my calling an alien an "extra-terrestrial". I haven't the vaguest idea why.

11. Conservatives, according to Wayne, react against sex with real non-human aliens because it would give them the "feeling of having relations with an animal". Pretty low opinion of conservatives, I'd say. Wayne is stating unsubstantiated opinion as though it were fact.

12. I'm going to concede this final point to Wayne. I had not noticed the ambiguity in Brunner's statement about intolerance, and since Wanye is just as entitled to his interpretation as I am to mine, I won't make an issue of it.

I don't think this debate deserves a third round (it didn't really deserve a second), so if Wayne wants to get the last word in, he's welcome to it. Wayne's problem isn't that he is wrong so much as it is that he doesn't know precisely what he wants to say, and then says it badly. I think I know what Wanye meant through much of this debate, but he didn't ever really say it. Brunner is highly critical of modern society, the US and Christianity in particular, but he is hardly the easily classifiable stereotype referred to as a "super left liberal" or similar nonsense phrases. Brunner's anti-establishment activities in Britain initially gained him invitations to the Soviet embassy, for example, until his anti-Soviet activities relegated him to benightedness and banishment. Like all of us, Brunner (both the writer and the person) is a highly complex, often seemingly self-contradictory individual. Neither Wayne nor I is qualified to label him.

As far as this debate itself goes, I suspect we both learned something from it. Wayne's second article was so much more carefully wrought than the first that I am frankly amazed. What I had originally thought was the result of sloppy thinking and knee jerk reactions now seems the result of a casual approach to a complicated problem. Wayne isn't dumb or narrow minded, but I suspect he's rarely been called upon to defend his statements before, and it took him a while to get started. I suspect that the next time he and I cross verbal swords, I'll have to be considerably quicker if I expect to outfence him.

-- Don D'Ammassa

CONFESSIONS OF A HACK READER

MIKE KRING

It all started with a copy of Edgar Rice Burrough's THE ETERNAL LOVER my father gave me for my birthday. I then graduated from that to Tarzan and John Carter. And Pellucidar. And Doc Savage. (Being young does have it's advantages. I was young enough to get hooked on Doc Savage when Bantam brought him out. Gee, I must have been around 14 or 15 then.)

Now, it's completely and utterly beyond my control. I fight for copies of the Avenger when they first hit the stands (and yes, I know they're being done by a modern day Kenneth Robeson, but I don't care. The pulpish flavor is still there.) I had to give up on Doc Savage around number 35 or so. I just couldn't seem to catch up, and after I had missed about 40 or so books, I thought I had best just let it be.

I'm a sucker for a series, though I insist on a certain ability in the author to write coherent sentences. Atar the Merman is a classic example of the author writing down to illiterate 6-year-olds. The best thing I can say about that series is that it's incredibly bad.

I'm one of the new breed of hack readers. Many older fen read the originals, and go after the old pulps with a collector's fervor. I don't really care about the old, dried up books or magazines. Give me a nice, glossy covered paperback and I'm happy. And they're a lot cheaper than the old pulps, that's for sure. Even with the Avenger up to 95¢ now, it beats paying $5 to $10 for an original Doc Savage, with most of the cover missing.

It's amazing how many people look on with wonder when I say I read the hack novels, and then argue with them about the latest stf epic that has hit the stands. Maybe it's just the ability to ralax while reading the old hack novels (and the new ones,too). I don't know. But I do know that I enjoy it, it's fun, and I'm not quitting for anything or anyone.

Admittedly, it's a nasty vice, reading the so-called dregs of a genre, or so people think. I don't happen to belive so. If you permit me to get a wee bit serious now, I'll give you my theory on why I read these novels.

I let the child in me come to fore. It's easy enough for me to do. The novels were and are written for the 11 to 15 year old age group. And I can just relax and take the novel on that level. Laughing at the same things and for the same reasons I would've laughed at if I had read the novels when I was 13 or so. It's also very relaxing.

It's also fun, and fun's what it's all about anyway, isn't it?

I've read and still read some serious and complex novels (at least I thought/think they were). OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON by Mark S. Geston is one of my all time favorite books. And it is anything but hack. It is complex, realistic in its own setting, and definately has things to say. I love it, though I doubt if I really understand it as yet. I also love THE PURPLE ZOMBIES by Kenneth Robeson, one of the new Avenger books.

Being a hack reader takes some doing. You have to read twice as much as the normal stf fan, since he doesn't waste his time reading all that other trash. Plus, if you're like me, you tend to read all sorts of other books. Ranging from purely technical stuff (the theory of operations of several radios I have to maintain for the Air Farce), to history (THE GAME OF THE FOXES by Ladislas Farago, concerning the Nazi spy network), to poetry (SELECTED POEMS by Leonard Cohen), plus all the stf and fantasy that hits the stands, if you can afford it.

Top that all off with trying to write, and you have one pretty busy dude. And I'm not half as busy as some people I know and they read more than I do. I'm not complaining, nor bragging, merely pointing out something about hack readers: they'll read anything, if it's literate.

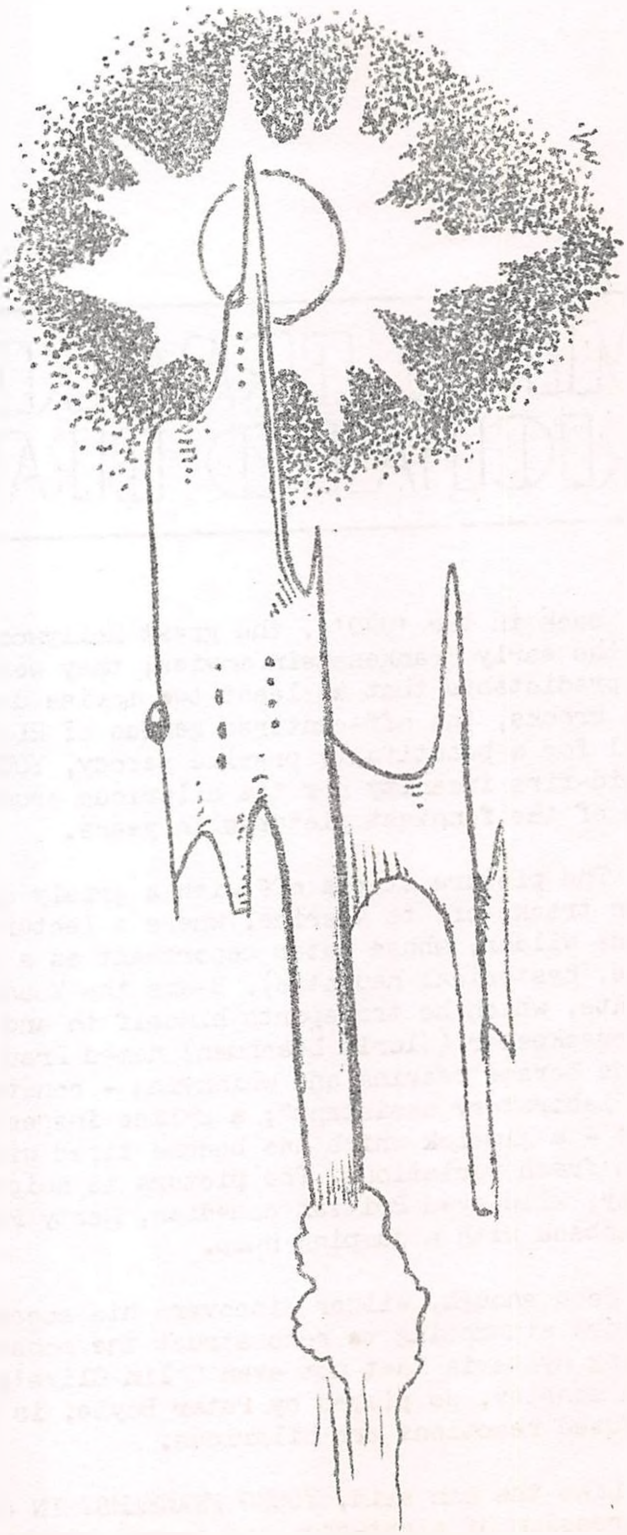
Put a cereal box in front of them when they're eating breakfast, and they'll read it. Put them in an airplane on a long flight, and they'll read the In Flight magazine if they're finished with the book they brought along. Voracious readers, and not too discriminatory, either. In some people, it's almost a compulsion.

So the next time you happen to see some bozo sitting at a bus station, or at an airport, reading a copy of one of the Avenger books, and he is over 20, don't think too badly about him. After all, he could be a hack reader, too.

Then again, he could be a mundane who bought the book because he thought it just another Executioner-type series.

Boy, is he in for a surprize!!!

-- Mike Kring



MIKE BRACKEN
RICHARD BRANDT

Back in the 1940's, the great Hollywood studios spewed forth a string of sequels to the early Frankenstein movies; they were melodramatic, stuffily dressed - and so predictable that at least two movies used the same footage for an ending. Now Mel Brooks, the off-centered genius of BLAZING SADDLES, has tilled this fertile soil for a beautifully precise parody, YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, which has neither the rapid-fire insanity nor the hilarious crudity of the previous film, but is still one of the funniest pictures in years.

The picture starts off with a grisly opening - literally - in the Old Country, then tracks off to America, where a lecture is being given by the Doctor's grandson (Gene Wilder, whose outer deportment as a Man of Reason barely conceals an insecure, hysterical neurotic). Seems the Young Doctor has just inherited the ancestral estate, which he transports himself to and finds full of odd creatures: a crone of a housekeeper (Cloris Leachman) named Frau Bleucher, the very mention of whose name sends horses rearing and whinnying - constantly; Helga (Teri Carr), a charming buxom "laboratory assistant"; a police inspector (Kenneth Mars) with a genuine iron fist - a gimmick which has become tired with overuse, but which Brooks keeps milking with fresh variations. The picture is swiped from under their feet, though, by the crazy, wild-eyed British comedian, Marty Feldman, as Igor (pronounced eye-gore), a hunchback with a jumping hump.

Soon enough, Wilder discovers his ancestor's secrets and begins arduous hours of work attempting to reconstruct the monster - climaxing with a performance of raging hysteria that not even Colin Clive's original could match. The huge brute of a monster, as played by Peter Boyle, is the most human Creature to date, and his confused reactions are hilarious.

Like the man said, YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN doesn't start off with the rapid-fire progression of sight-gags and insane anachronisms that BLAZING SADDLES did, but has

VIEW YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN

instead a progression of hilarious and deadly accurate parodies of old monster-movie conventions. A technically precise replica of the little-girl scene from the original picture has one of the most screamingly funny punchlines since the Marx Brothers hung up their boots, and the Monster's visit to the Blind Old Man (a clever disguise for Gene Hackman) becomes a perfectly logical and also side-splitting sequence. When Wilder decides to unveil his creation, Mel transforms the audience from a distinguished scientific gathering to a rowdy music hall crowd without your realizing it; and when the Monster absconds with the Doctor's overstarched fiancee (Madeline Kahn, brilliant but not quite outshining her Lily von Shtupp), the scence has one of the most powerfully ridiculous climaxes ever, a great satire of film romance conventions.

The picture easily represents Mel Brooks' best technical effort since Dick Shawn went goose-stepping onstage in THE PRODUCERS. The Castle Franenstein is an expensive and elaborate cobwebbed set; the village locations, stuffed with angry villagers waving pitchforks and various utensils, are dead ringers for the genuine thing. John Morris' music score is perfect horror show music, and Gerald (FAILSAFE) Hirschfeld's black-and-white photography brings back perfectly the mood of those old chiller pictures. Mel's careful attention to technical detail, such as the brilliant sound track, come through with flying colors, so that the picture is lovely just to look at, as well as to be rolled over in the aisles. Even though, like BLAZING SADDLES, it's getting laughs off of a serious theme.

-- Richard Brandt

I hate to say it, but Mel Brooks' YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN just isn't the "super-fantastic" movie some critics have made it out to be. From the thirteen chimes of a clock at the beginning of the movie to a woman's soprano notes of sexual ecstasy at the end, the cast of YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN barely manages to muddle their way

through a never-ending barrage of gutter-level humor.

While I must admit that not all of the humor in YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN was sexually oriented, the majority of the film left the audience, myself included, groaning. Few scenes were genuinely funny, but the two or three that were, including the meeting between the blind man and the monster, should be recorded in humor's Hall of Fame. They almost made the film worthwhile.

The film, co-scripted by Mel Brooks and Gene Wilder, is best viewed by thirteen-year-old, sexually immature adolescents; they seemed to be the only viewers in the crowded theatre who were laughing at the film's multitude of "below-the-belt" puns and punchlines. The rest of us were groaning at such things as references to a seven-foot-tall male monster's sexual equipment, and such absurd oral exchanges as this:

"What's that sound?" askes Dr. Franenstein.

"A werewolf," replies his shapely assistant.

"Werewolf?" questions the Dr.

"There wolf," comments Igor (pronounced eye-gore) pointing.

"Huh?"

"There wolf. There castle."

And so on.

To go into the plot of YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN would be an abomination. Let me just say that string of Junior-high restroom jokes is <u>not</u> a plot, and the film leaves me wondering just what was so spectacular about BLAZING SADDLES that gave Mel Brooks the poetic license to waste his time making puns on the word "do-do".

When I want adolescent humor, I visit a Junior High restroom. When I want to see a good, entertaining film, I go to an expensive theatre. I think I just pain $2.50 to sit on the throne...

-- Mike Bracken

THE DECLINE OF THE BEES

STEVE BEATTY

(I recently ran across this manuscript in a mundane publication. It apparently dates back to the Good Old Days, having been copied and preserved across the months by journalism students. --SAB)

by J. DeMandeville, Learned Historian and
Keeper of the Bees Archives, PhD

Once upon a time there lived a flourishing colony of bees. They could trace their ancestry back nearly a half century, a long time for such trivia. This colony was formally called the Beehive of Fandom. It was organized on well-developed principles of division of labor. At the top was the Secret Master Bee, with his court of Big Name Bees, surrounded with zines, apas, cons, and other flotsam and jetsam.

Below the Big Name Bees were the fan-bees, or worker bees. Their task was to produce honey, which traditionall required voyaging out to clover fields to bring sweet nectars to the hive.

These clover fields were tended by prozine-bees and publisher-bees, who were responsible only to a spectrelike giant called the Reader Bee. Though the theoretical organization of this hive sounds complicated, it actually ran quite smoothly, largely because it was totally ignored by the great masses of mundane bees.

But a controversy divided the hive when the Big Name Bees began to claim that the forms that had traditionally held the honey (usually called wax) was actually real honey itself.

This edict was very upsetting to the worker bees. Since the wax (or what the Big Name Bees were calling honey) could be produced within the hive, there was no longer any need for them to voyage into the clover fields. They settled into a routine of dreary lassitude. Yet whenever a few mundane bees entered the ranks of the worker bees, there was great dissention and confusion.

This dissension did not last long, however. Since the worker bees recieved every month or so slips of paper stapled together in exchange for the wax they produced, it became more and more difficult to prove that there ever was any substance other than wax. Honey itself was regarded with continually decreasing importance.

Traditionally, the worker-bees had come to the hive to better appreciate honey and to learn to produce the wax forms that held it. But because of the philosophy declaring honey to be wax, the worker bees became listless, static, and dormant. Many of them dropped out of the hive, and a few came to replace them.

The Big Name Bees held a con and decided that this stagnation was calm and stability. They said it was the response to a New Breed of clover. It was not surprising that they should say something non-committal, because the then-ruling Secret Master Bee was preparing to bring his reign to a close and depart in shrouds and mists of glory to the dwelling of the gods on Mount Fapolympus.

For a while, the Big Name Bees lived in tranquility, until one day a manifesto appeared from the publisher-bees. It stated that the Spectre-Reader-Bee had decided that beehives were not necessary for the production of honey. The Beehive of Fandom was therefore converted into the Fannish Waxworks. It is rumored that conflicts still exist there, but the organization and issues have changed. There are now collator-bees and letterhack-bees, and there are no more disputes over the product.

Wax is wax, and that is no beeswax. Most of the differences arise over minac, deadlines, and copy counts. It has now been several years since they have seen any honey. Indeed, as the past slips into mists of legend, it cannot be positively asserted that honey ever existed, or if so, if it was ever produced in a beehive.

— Steve Beatty

TURNTABLE

JON INOUYE

It was an unusual afternoon.

Lloyd Aaron awoke to hear air-raid sirens blasting louder than they ever did since the war ended. Of course air-raid drills were frequent, but never one of this intensity.

Lloyd chuckled to himself. Perhaps this one wasn't an air-raid. Perhaps it was real. But...no matter.

Lloyd stretched in his bed. His bedroom window lay open, the afternoon sunlight dripping, scattering across the cramped quarters. Damned country, he though. Cant't do anything right...

Los Angeles was a dangerous place. Everyone from the East Coast was telling him to move back East. LA was a sitting duck for any Jap bomber. Well, well, Lloyd thought to himself. He squinted in the sunlight for an instant, throwing open the opaque drapes. Next, he went to the medicine cabinet, began to brush his teeth. He yawned.

Flipping the dial, he put on the old radio:

"...several warships of medium size have been spotted in what official sources say to be routine manuevers..."

Lloyd switched on his electric shaver, looked at the calender. Yawning again, he tried to remember what day it was. Not, of course, that it mattered. Nothing mattered any more. That he wasn't dead...that he was still alive...that the Japs stopped when they did, the Germans when they did...that was enough! The war had been a bitter, defeating experience. The country was a fortress, anyway. And it was still intact. Roosevelt had said that the country was, in fact, in a better position than it was in 1945, because now "all we had to do was defend our own home territory, while the Japanese had to extend their lines, and the Germans had to cross the entire Atlantic.

But Lloyd had grown uncaring over the years. Tiny whiskers dropped into the sink, and he looked at them for an instant, before turning the faucet to wash them down.

"...but the Pentagon claims that the big armada off the Alasken coast is a practice drill among the Japanese Imperial Navy..."

He turned the station to some music. Jazz. That's all there ever is on these stations, he thought. Jazz. Jazz. Jazz. I'm sick.

He turned the radio off.

The sirens had, for the most part, stopped. Only the faint screaming of the distant sirens in another part of the city could be heard.

Now, now. What day is it? Today is...Tuesday. Tuesday the...23. 1974.

He hummed a little tune. The Beatles. They just got in style a few years ago. And from England, of all places. The Germans let them through--large income for the puppet-state economy.

Lloyd pulled out a chair, Sitting down on the hard seat, he began to work. A writer's lot is a lonely one. Aaron chuckled a little, and then he began pounding on the typewriter.

It was a war novel. "My Life in Alaska." Or something like that. A love story of an Alaskan trader and a girl from California. Wow, Lloyd thought. And they meet right before the war startes, and the Japs take Alaska. It snows a lot, and the chilly-cold, barren landscape looms everywhere. So when the war starts this guy serves the US Navy by broadcasting intelligence reports of the Jap ship manuevers. And then, one day, he and the girl hear on the radio that Hawii had fallen, the Panama Canal overrun, Alaska capitulated...well, the, what happens?

Lloyd began to type the synopsis.Now, he thought, who'll take it? Probably some big publisher down in New York. And it'll be read by a few. But not much. Only by our tiny country. And as for the rest of the world...we're cut off. Read not even by Canadians. Unless...we could work out a deal with the Japs and let a supply ship through to Vancouver. Aaron burst into laughter. A ship-load of my books, he imagined, being convoyed to Vancouver, Canada! It was all very, very mad.

And what about England? Yeah! Der Englanders! If we could get past all the Kraut subs which have been there for the past thirty years, maybe one of my books would get across. Not only was it a lonely existence, it was purposeless.

Thirst surged through Lloyd's lips. He stood up and sipped from a bottle of Coke.

No, I don't like this idea. He shoved the synopsis into a drawer.

Another idea--another brainstorm. What the Germans are really doing on the moon. There were rumors. The Japs were building vast, underwater cities, the Germans had, after landing on the moon in 1954, begun to build hidden bases, for the conquest of ...God knows what! Other planets. Those guys are truly crazy...

Lloyd had written a book in this vein at one time or another. Pure hack jobs. Secret Jap or German moon bases, ready for the conquest of USA! Always the same formula. And they sold, too. But now, that was beaten to the ground. And nonfiction books weren't especially popular. HOW WE LOST THE WAR AND WERE FORCED INTO CONDITIONS Yeah. The Battle of Hawaii, and glorious defeat. No...those things didn't sell...

There might be hope for us yet. Color television should be coming in a few years. There're rumors that the Krauts already have commercial television, I'd believe it, too.

Some day, Lloyd wanted to visit Europe. Since his wife died in '59, why go to Europe? You had to have a bundle to go there these days. All the red tape--and cash--involved. Knowing the right people on both sides, knowing whose hand to shake, whose pocket to slip the bills in...that sort of thing.

Each afternoon these thoughts stormed his head like demons from the past.

The room grew stuffy. He hadn't left it for two days, busy working at his next novel. But he needed fresh air. The writer stood up, and walked to the door. Mrs. Jiminez, the landlady, was passing by the hall. "Good afternoon, Mrs. Jiminez," he said. She nodded quietly, flashing by.

He went down the stairs to ground floor. There were no elevators on the large

apartment complex, because electricity had to be spared. It was sickening. The power switch was cut off at nights because of the curfew.

Cars swooshed by, and the neighborhood was quiet. He smelled the stuffy city air, but his mind was bothered by the curfew. Why? he thought. The war ended some thirty years ago. The Japs got their atom bomb in 49, and have rockets to blow up the earth as well. They don't need bombers. They don't even have to see the city. Yet we natter like children about keeping lights on at night! No wonder we lost the war. Damned politicians. Glad Roosevelt died.

He walked down the streets, went to a liquor store, drank another soda, and went back home.

He turned on the television. When will they have color? he thought. There wasn't much choice. Three commercial stations, the rest reserved for the military. One of them was the Dodgers-Giants game, broadcast from back east. Another gave the news 24 hours a day, as they boasted, prepared for "any upcoming emergency". The third station played old Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers flicks, variety shows with Bob Hope (and Bob Hope and Bob Hope and Bob Hope), action-cowboy serials and, if lucky, The Lone Ranger.

By chance, he passed the news. Something about the Japanese. Excitement. What was it! That dumb thing about their silly practice manuevers near Vancouver? No...

By God!

They had landed on the moon!

So the world is going to the monkeys after all. This time, Lloyd went almost hyterical in laughter. Japs on the moon! On the moon! And we haven't even gotten a man in space yet! And the Germans with their big moon bases! And their landings on Mars and Jovian satellites. It was madness again, that old frustrating feeling. It was so terrible in its outright ridiculousness. What was wrong! Something was wrong...

The pictures showed the spherical, bulkily-built craft, with Japanese voices over the flickering image for the world to hear. Toy-like men garbled by the static, bouncing like monkeys. The spider-ship, its legs dug into the glass-like lunar soils, casting a big shadow over the two Japanese. A flag with a red meatball was planted down. Banzai! screamed radio vocies.

Some day we'll go into space, too, he thought. The day they'll let us, without threatening to wipe us out. Every day the Japs inch deeper and deeper into Alaska, already hundreds of miles past agreed boundaries. There's always excuses. "No, we didn't," or "So sorry...". or, "Well, these boundaries are hard to define..."

Some day we'll all be wiped out if we aren't careful. German, Jap, American.

But somehow Lloyd was content. Men had landed on the moon. Not Japs or Germen. Men.

His body sweated because it was unusually hot. And unpleasant. On his desk lay letters from relatives, saying how dangerous it was on the west coast. "The Japanese might come at any minute!"

"But don't be silly, Aunt Garret," he would write back. "After all, the war ended thirty years ago, and if the Japs wanted to take the coast, they would already have done so..."

But everything seemed hallow, without meaning. What can I do? Why live on? A Post-War Generation was lost...always lost. All the writers screamed--the country had deteriorated beyond hope.

Well, typed Lloyd in a letter to his aunt. "What's left? You're always scared all the time and you can't enjoy things..."

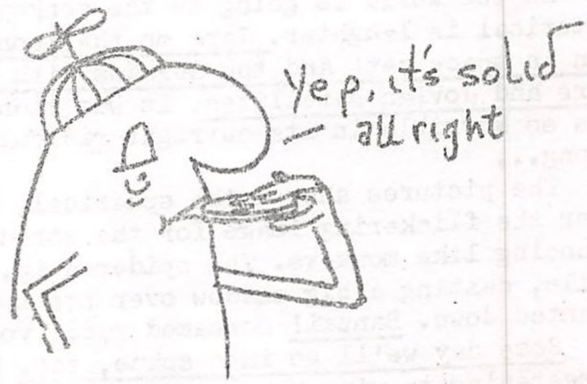
He finished the novel, mailed it out to the publisher before the afternoon ended. Another hack job. But it'll pay me. Pay my rent, my food. He began to think of another novel.

I'll start that one tomorrow, he thought.

-- Jon Inouye

SAM LONG

IF I WERE A RICH MAN



Not long ago, when I was getting "demobbed" from the Air Force, I went by the base finance office to pick up my final pay. I was somewhat dismayed to find that they intended to pay me in cash, seeing as how the banks were closed and such. What with payment for leave not taken and miscellaneous other debits and credits, I found myself holding over $1800 in twenty-dollar bills.

This was not the largest sum I've ever handled. Once, when buying a car, I had over $3000 in cash in my pocket for a little while. But it was the longest I'd ever had such a large sum in my posession. Having so much money in my hand--though a pitifully small pile it made--kept my mind on money, and before I finally deposited my treasure in the bank the next day, I found out a great deal about money in its various forms.

It appears that money as we know it was first minted in Asia Minor about the 8th century BCE, though standardized weights had been in use for centuries. What is a coin, after all, but a piece of (semi-)precious metal whose weight/value is guaranteed by Authority and marked with that Authority's stamp? The Biblical shekel, mina, and talent were all measures of weight, not of denomination. The Greeks quickly took to coins and produced some of the most beautiful coins in the Ancient World. The Athenian drachma ("handful") bore Athene's sacred Owl on one face; the

owl was supposed to lay small change in it's bearer's purse.

The Romans were a rougher people than the Greeks, and they kept the old customs of barter and weighing out later than the Greeks did. In almost all the Mediterranean world, wealth was counted (originally) in cattle, and indeed the first "coins" were ingots of bronze worth an ox. The Latin word for cattle comes down to us as "pecuniary"; and another financial word, the native English "fee", cognate with pecu, reminds us that the early Germanic peoples, like the modern Masai in Africa, also counted wealth in head of cattle.

The Romans first counted with lumps of bronze (aes) known as asses; but in the course of time, the as was devalued, and a new coin, the denarius ("ten-spot"), worth ten asses, was introduced. The dinar of the Mediterranean (Yugoslavia, Tunisia) and the Middle East (Iraq, Jordan) is a descendant of the denarius; and the abbreviation d. for penny in the old £sd system (and the present nail-size system) comes from it also.

The denarius was often of silver, but the aureus was of gold: indeed, the name means merely "gold piece". English never really developed a single word to represent a gold coin, but other languages did; hence the modern guilder of the Netherlands and the zloty of Poland. I'm not quite sure why, but in German, money is gold, Gelt, but in French, it's silver, argent, as it is in India: Both the Indian rupee and the Russian ruble go back to a root meaning (cut or wrought. cf. Russian rubit, cut) silver.

The Roman Empire lasted until the 15th Century, and continued to mint coins all this time--though no longer in the precint of the temple of Juno Moneta, the Warner (cf. admonish), in Rome, whence our words "money" and "mint". The late Roman solidus ("solid, good money") gave us the abbreviation for shilling, s or /; and, as it was a convenient size and value, gave rise (after a thousand years) to all those European currencies (franc, mark, guilder, etc) worth between 20 and 40 cents back before World War I. These coins were often works of art, a far cry from the early Roman stamped wedges (cunea) that gave us our word "coin". For nearly a thousand years, the Roman gold solidus was proverbially good money, of full weight and finess, and since it was minted in Constantinople, formerly Byzanium, it was often called a bezant. The word survives as the heraldic term for a gold or yellow disc.

The bezant was not the only coin named after its place of origin. The Italian republic of Florence put out beautiful and excellent coins during the Middle Ages, which became known as florins. It was these florins, which were solidii like the bezant, that set the coinage fashion I mentioned above. The florin is still in use in Britain, where it is the name for the 10p (2-shilling) piece; in the Netherlands, where it is an alternate name for the guilder; and in Hungary, where the unit is the forint.

Back in the 17th Century, some very fine guilders were minted in the Joachimsthal, a valley in Bohemia, These gold coins gained immediate popularity, and quickly became known as Joachimsthalers, thalers, dalers, and finally dollars. The thaler, worth 3 marks, was in use in Prussia until 1870 or thereabouts. The name "daler" or "dollar" was applied to the Spanish peso, or piece of eight (Spain and Austria were ruled by the same dynasty at the time), and because these Spanish coins circulated in the American colonies more than British coins did, it was natural that the dollar be adopted by the new republic as the chief unit of its new decimal system of money, the first in the world. The connection between the dollar and the piece of eight explains why the US 25¢ piece is called "two bits".

The Roman Empire in the West crumbled away, and the power of minting money passed to local kings. This was one of the most jealously guarded of the king's powers. Coins were royal (Spanish real) things, bearing the king's image. Spanish reales, for example, circulated all over the Mediterranean, and gave their name to the Saudi Arabian riyal and the Iranian rial. (Reales were also the eight bits that a peso was divided into.) The king's image on the front of the coin gave the name "sovereign" to the £1 gold piece of the last century. The royal coat-of-arms depicted ona shield on the reverse might cause the coin to be called a "shield" (Latin scutum), which is what happened with the French ecu and the modern Portuguese escudo. The Brazilian cruzeiro recalls the fact that the Cross was a common device on coins too. The depiction of crowns on coins naturally gave rise to coins of that name. Crowns are no longer used as money in Britain, and have not been for quit some time, though they are occasionally minted commemoratively, as for example the Winston Churchill crown. A crown is 5 shillings (25p); the half-crown, 2s6d or 12.5p, was a popular coin before it went out of circulation a few years ago, before Britain decimalized its currency. The crown is the unit of money in all three Scandinavian monarchies and the republica of Iceland and Czechoslovakia. If a coin had no outstanding distinguishing marks, it might be called a platelet (of silver), hence the piastre, from Italian, which is in use in such divers places as Egypt and the former South Viet Nam. The sequin of the Middle East, famous in the Arabian Nights, comes from the Arabic word for minting. Ducats were originally put out by the doge, or duke, of Venice, who was a prince of great power thruout the Middle Ages.

The idea of weighing has never been far from the minds of the users of money, for (until recently in the US) coins are made of a certain weight of precious metal. British silver coins are such that a florin (2s) is twice as heavy as a shilling (1s), so a mixed bag of them (and formerly, silver threepences, sixpences, and half-crowns) could be determined by weighing rather than counting. Along with their coins, the Romans left us their weights too, and the libra pondo (pound weight) that hung (pend-, pond-) from the balance scales (libra) is with us today both as a unit of weight and a unit of money. The pound sterling (£) was originally a pound of silver, divided into twelve (troy) ounces, each of which was made into twenty silver pennies; hence 240 pence to the £. The pound is still in good use in Rome today, disguised as the lira. The word peso, the basis of so many Hispanic currencies, comes from the same root as pound, but it implies measure rather than weight. The shilling and the penny are both, as the lexicographer says, "of obscure origin", but shilling may come from the same root as "shell", recalling the cowrie money and wampum used as money among primitive peoples.

The mark means, well, mark as on a tally. It never was a coin in England (though it was in Scotland), but rather a unit of accounting worth 2/3rds of a £. The mark is remembered in England as the unit that King Richard I Coeur de Lion's ransom was quoted in. (You will remember that, while on his way home from the Crusades, Richard was taken prisoner by the Duke of Austria.) Lions, by the way, often appeared on coins, and gave rise to the lev, leu, of Bulgaria and Rumania; and in modern times, countries sometimes name their currency after a local animal, such as the Guatemalan quetzal. Marks are presently in use in both Germanies and Finland.

The Chinese yuan and the Japanese yen both derive from a Chinese word meaning "round".

The guinea was originally a £ gold piece minted from metal brought from Guinea in Africa. It was worth more than face value, and sold at a premium. Its value was

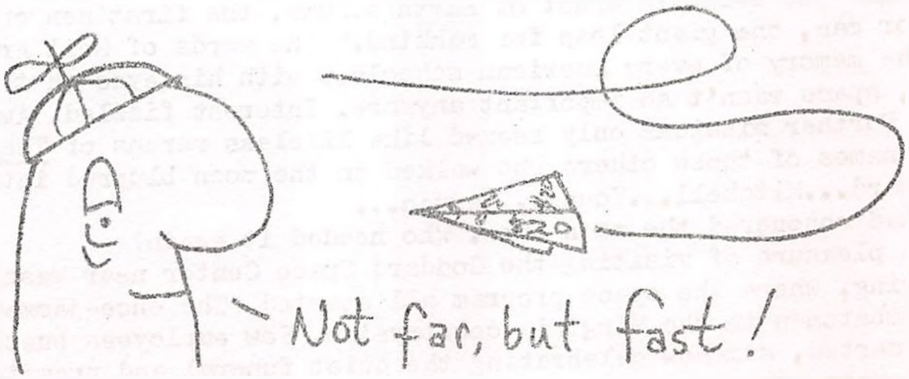
eventually stabilized at 21s or £1.05, which is its value today. The guinea found favor in the more exclusive shops as being more "posh"; and such upper-class things as racing purses are still quoted in guineas. The guinea was not just a complication, though; it was evenly divisable by seven, so rents and other prices per week were often quoted in guineas so that the price per day could be easily calculated. Guineas were last minted in 1813.

Most countries make their paper money of different sizes for different denominations. The US does not, to the dismay of blind people. American dollars used to be larger in more ways than one. The IBM card was invented back in the '20s, and was made the same size as the then-current dollar bill so that it would fit into a wallet. The dollar has shrunk. The IBM card has not. The Owl and the Pussycat, you will remember from Edward Lear's nonsense verse,

> ...took some honey, and plenty of money,
> Wrapped up in a five-pound note.

A £5 note today is a little wider and slightly shorter than a dollar bill, but in Lear's day a fiver was a least as big as a page of this fanzine, if not larger--quite large enough to wrap something up in.

Ah well, paper money is just paper, after all, and one can fold it around something or around itself. I just took one of my ninety $20 bills and made a paper airplane out of it and tried to fly it. It didn't go very far, my friends, but it sure went fast!



David McDonnell:

COMMENTARY

"A Requiem...Forgotten Glory...Men on the Moon"

Remember?? Back when we were children. There were men on the moon.

It took some time for America to get into gear after those dastardly Russians launched Sputnik in October 1957 and started the "Space Race". America had been caught with its pants down, so to speak. It seemed that Russia was destined for space supremacy.

Many American fanatics predicted that Commies on the moon would mean the end of western civilization...that the KGB would be prowling every suburb in New Jersey two weeks after those Reds put their first Cosmonaut on the moon...that Kruschev would finally get into Disneyland.

America buckled down and sent man after man up into the darkness of space-- experimenting, readying for the great adventure, preparing for a rocket to the moon. The United States had to be first. For man and for the free world. No cost was too great. Not even human lives-- those of astronauts Grissom, White, and Chaffee, killed in a launching pad fire.

Then, a humid day in mid-summer, July 21, 1969. Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped out onto the delicate crust of Earth's Luna, the first men on the moon. "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." The words of Neil Armstrong branded forever in the memory of every American schoolboy with his eyes on the clouds.

Suddenly, space wasn't so important anymore. Interest fizzled. America had reached its goal. Further missions only seemed like lifeless reruns of The Beverly Hillbillies. The names of those others who walked on the moon blurred into each other... Conrad...Shepard...Mitchell...Young...Cernan...

America had conquered the moon once. Who needed it again?

I had the pleasure of visiting the Goddard Space Center near Washington, D.C. this past spring, where the space program all started. The once-jammed buildings stand like tombstones in the Virginia countryside. Few employees bustle around. The complex is deserted, somehow celebrating the quiet funeral and premature burial of the American space program.

Three men died. And it doesn't make any difference now.

The glory that had once been space exploration is gone forever.

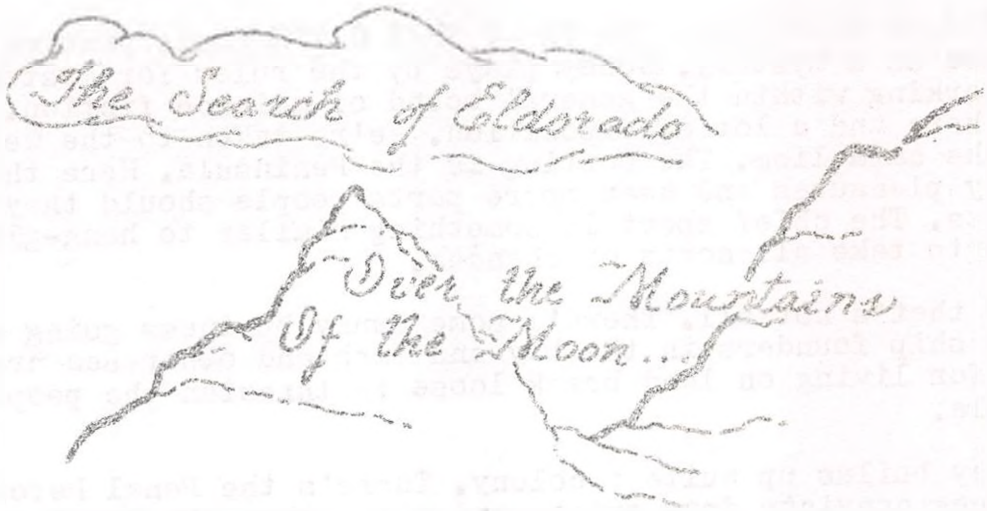
The National Aeronautics and Space Administration-- NASA-- mere initials now for an organization whose main function presently is to launch and track weather and communications satellites.

But, out there, out there in the deep darkness that is space, there are so many sights to see, so many discoveries to be made, and so many worlds to conquer.

And we'll never see any of those sights.

Or conquer those worlds.

-- David McDonnell



---

book reviews by John Robinson

FARTHEST STAR by Pohl & Williamson, Ballantine, 1975, 246 pp., $1.50
THE JAWS THAT BITE, THE CLAWS THAT CATCH by Michael G. Coney, DAW, 1975, 191pp., $1.50
OTHER WORLDS by Carl Sagan, Bantam, 1975, 160 pp., $1.95
WILD CARD by Raymond Hawkey and Roger Bingham, Ballantine, 1974, 244pp., $1.50
THE ALUMINUM MAN by G. C. Edmondson, Berkley, 1975, 172 pp., 95¢

FARTHEST STAR is made up of a novella, "Doomship" and a novel, THE ORG'S EGG, the first of which appeared in IF and the second of which appeared in GALAXY. "Doomship", I believe, was nominated for a Nebula and should have been nominated for a Hugo. THE ORG'S EGG is lesser fare but still good reading.

The hero of this book appears in several incorporations as the result of being sent to extragalactic points by means of a tachyon transmitter. Each time he is sent off, a new copy appears at the other end. So he has the pain/pleasure of seeing himself living and dying, living and dying.

Ben Pertin is transmitted again and again to a probe located near Object Lambda. He succeeds, after a few incorporations, in achieving success for the mission and penetrating the cloud cover of the object, a self-contained world without a sun, encountering its people and returning with valuable information -- but not the girl.

This is just part of a series that Pohl & Williamson are writing that promises some good reading and a few memorable scenes and doings. Be looking for the Purchased People stories to complete this saga.

+

THE JAWS THAT BITE, THE CLAWS THAT CATCH could just as easily been published as a mystery. Coney plays by the rules for mystery writing while working within the general bound of science fiction. No unfair tricks here and a lot of exposition. We're taken to the West Coast after the cataclism. The setting is the Peninsula. Here the rich enjoy many pleasures and keep spare parts people should they have any accidents. The chief sport is something similar to hang-gliding and the sports take all sorts of chances.

But that's not all. There's some funny business going on; a mysterious ship founders in the bay and fish and other sea creatures adapted for living on land break loose to threaten the people of the Peninsula.

Coney builds up quite a colony. There's the Penal Reform Act that both frees convicts from prison and makes them the bound servants of the rich, the sports of the rich (sling-gliding, etc.), some unusual pets, smuggling, mayhem and murder. Coney is getting better with each book. If you can't find this one on the shelves of your local bookstore, then pick up another book by Coney. He's good!

+

Popular books are sold at a popular price -- what the market will bear -- and OTHER WORLDS is a mass market book with photos and drawings on more than half the pages. There's still some meat to the text. Sagan does not believe in UFOs, to say nothing of flying saucers, but he does think that there's a good chance for life among the stars. This is about the most professional handling of the topic of extraterrestrial life you can find except for Sagan's other best seller, THE COSMIC CONNECTION. Recommended.

+

Two young Englishmen have teamed up to create a rousing thriller. There's one minor fault in WILD CARD regarding the on-the-spot creation of a memory molecule to tip off the authorities that I could not believe, but the rest of the book is great.

It starts with the President's Science Advisor putting a bee in his bosses ear. The US is in terrible shape. There may be a revolution or mass anarchy, so the advisor says an invasion from outer space must be produced.

Pretty good stuff, you say. Well, there are several problems to get over. How do you convince scientific experts that the invasion is for real?

A team of experts create all the elements: saucer vehicle, the aliens (cerebroids), a poison gas to blanket part of Los Angeles, and all the minor details to make it seem real.

But then the President is caught in a bind. The gas does not injure, but kills 10,000 people and the team may rat on him when they

find out. So he has to fall back on his Science Advisor for one final twist that will leave you close to falling out of your chair. A great effort for a new team. It reads American and is supported with many small but important scientific details that create plausibility. I suspect it will do better in fan circles when it is reprinted. Check your bookstore because it almost certainly is no longer available off the rack in supermarkets or variety stores and newsstands.

+

I caught THE ALUMINUM MAN after first deciding not to buy it. My friend Monocle Magan said: This looks interesting and funny. He was right.

An Indian named Rudolf and a drunken Irishman named Flaherty try to befriend an alien named Tuchi -- that's right, TUCHI! The result is that they suddenly posses a strain of bacteria that produces aluminum from bauxite. No more electrical plants. Just the microscopic critters and a device to cook off the sludge.

Well, you know that the aluminum producers will be interested. Rudolf and Flaherty are off on a chase, they being the prey, while the aluminum king and the alien are in hot pursuit.

The blurb for this book says Rudolf is out to destroy the world. Well, that's sort of an afterthought that comes at the end of the book. In the meantime, Rudolf and

company are making some great comedy over some serious business. So if you've got a couple of hours to kill and want something light and fun, try this.

---

book reviews by Mike Bracken

THE EIGHTY MINUTE HOUR by Brian Aldiss, Leisure Books, 1975, 249pp. $1.25
SWAN SONG by Brian M. Stableford, DAW, 1975, 158pp., $1.25
BLOODSTONE by Karl Edward Wagner, Warner Paperback Library, 1975, 303pp., $1.50
THE STORK FACTOR by Zach Hughes, Berkley Medallion, 1975, 156pp., 95¢

Brian Aldiss tries, in THE EIGHTY MINUTE HOUR, something I've never seen before in a piece of fiction; the use of an omnipotent first person narrator. Understandably, this could be the basis of a fantastic experimental sf story. Unfortunately, I couldn't get past page 55.

+

Since I read my first Stableford story less than a year ago, he has rapidly become one of my favorite authors. His latest addition to the Star-Pilot Grainger series, SWAN SONG, is no exception to the over-all quality of his work.

In 158 pages Stableford yanks from the reader a variety of emotions, from pure joy to fear, hatred, and, most especially, loneliness and dread. However, without reading a few of the previous works in this series, some of these emotions would be lost as it takes more involvement with the characters than can be found in any one book.

I heartily recommend the entire series, from THE HALCYON DRIFT to SWAN SONG, and wonder where Stableford will go after the gut-gripping, emotion-tearing climax of his latest Grainger story.

+

An excellent Frazetta cover attracted me to BLOODSTONE, and the contents were not a disappointment.

BLOODSTONE is a rip-roaring sword-and-sorcery epic that involves not only an immortal, but the decendants of an alien culture, powerful sorceresses and the future of a world and possibly the universe.

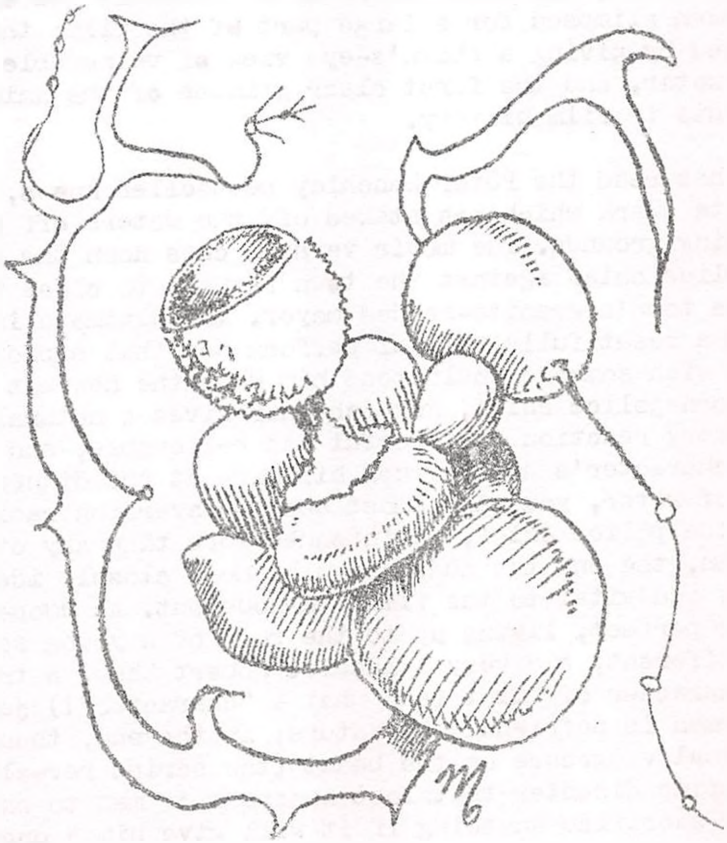
This is absolutely the most exciting and well-written tale I've read in the past six monthes, and it's the only piece of fiction I've read recently that I'd be willing to nominate for a Hugo.

+

THE STORK FACTOR is a readable novel about a future where a repressive religious dictatorship rules an uninterested America. Into this comes a young priest with true healing powers and an alien drug

addict.

Worth picking up, but don't expect an award winning adventure tale. Instead, expect a well-written, well-executed science fiction story.



JAWS A BITING ADVENTURE

Can a motion picture that is really nothing more than a glorified fish story, draw screams of terror and send the blood pounding through your veins? Oh, yes.

JAWS is one of the most terrifying pictures ever made, surely, and has one of the scariest scenes ever - an unbearably suspensful buildup with a totally unexpected clincher; and yet, it really isn't a horror movie. What it is , is one of the greatest adventure stories ever filmed, and it will surely be called the best by someone sooner or later. The action pits Man against an antagonist that is neither mythical, nor supernatural, nor hallucinated, but a very real and very deadly danger: the man-eating shark. The moviemakers do a fantastic job of creating the menace, which isn't even glimpsed for a large part of the film; the shark's presence is first established by giving a shark's-eye view of vulnerable limbs thrashing perilously in the water, and the first clear glimpse of the animal is one of the most shocking moments in film history.

As anyone who has read the Peter Benchley bestseller knows, the story is of an enormous Great White Shark which has staked off the waters off a New England resort island as its feeding grounds. The movie version cuts down the story of the battle of the island's police chief against the town fathers to close the beaches, but Murray Hamilton as the town's granite-headed mayor, the ultimate in venal, imageserving politicians, gives a beautifully hateful performance that exploits the scenes to their fullest. You wish someone would toss him down the nearest gullet. In the lead role as the city-born police chief, Roy Scheider gives a natural and finely tuned performance. His every reaction is forceful and believable, and his extra touches build much of his character's depth; when his wife at the dinner table explains to a friend his fear of water, you can almost see the aversion radiating in waves from his skin. Brodie, the police chief, is intended more than any other lead character to be an Average Man, the one the audience will most closely identify with; this is an important point, and vital to the film's denouement. As Hooper the shark expert, Richard Dreyfuss is perfect, living up to the role of a young scientist who is just a little...well, different, and very likeable. Robert Shaw, a truely fine character actor, makes the character of Quint (and what a "character"!) just a little likeable, although the fisherman is unfriendly by nature; in the end, though, his obsession with wreaking personal vengeance on the beast (the script reveals him as a survivor of a true-life shipping disaster that lost hundreds of men to shark attacks) causes him to endanger and sacrifice anything if it will give him a one-man victory over the shark.

The entire picture is a first-rate technical job, not just in the creation of a huge mechanical shark (which, in the crucial scene, is indistinguishable from a real Great White), but in every aspect: the music, photography, cutting, and sound all work together in creating the overall terrifying experience. On top of all the technical stuff is the craftsmanship of a master director, Steven Spielberg, who's bound to be the new boy genius of the movies; he knows exactly what to use and just where to put it. And when people start talking about the allegorical aspects of the picture - the struggle of Man against a savage Nature he knows little about, and can never understand - just consider what import that adds to the subtle last line.

-- Richard Brandt

ACUMEN

JON INOUYE

The caverns were empty, and acuman scanned the tunnel. There was nothing.

His sharp, multivision didn't stop at mere walls, but shined through them. Within his sharp, piercing eyes glistened tears. Searching. Searching for heat, warmth and...the body of a man...

Movement.

Deep in the cavern--movement.

He stopped his scarred, aged and multi-limbed body.

Movement. Somewhere in the cavern, across the tunnel.

He had spent days, weeks, searching endlessly for life. It seemed hopeless. The last acumen had perished. Their highly developed sensors were useless, now...as useless as the shattered, decaying bones of Man, scattered among the deserts.

Again, his desperate sensors scanned the room.

Somewhere, there were footsteps. Man-like footsteps.

It was too far. His acute hearing could faintly discern, but nothing more.

Where?

Eye penetrated the stone, the cavern stalagtites, seaching.

The rusted, old machinery of the ancient shelter offered no relief. Light was absent. Only the infrasights offered any hope.

He followed it.

Acuman screamed.

From beneath a pillar of metal jumped a furry thing, faintly a semblance of Man, but wild. It tore at his arm, at his sensors.

Acuman swung his cybed arms, half-metallic, half-skin and flesh. His limbs were aching at the sudden assault. After centuries of disuse...

Acuman screamed.

The room was dark. His power, multi-visions were shattered. Eyes smacked, clear out of existence.

He awoke to find himself on the dark, solid ground. The ape-thing had left, ob-

viously claiming another victim.

On the ground, he heard the tiny scuttling of feet. His hearing was in operation. Rats. Hundreds of tiny, little rats.

Acuman laughed. They were gnawing at his human half.

There was the sound of dying meat.

-- Jon Inouye

RETURN OF THE DEATHMEN

JON INOUYE

"Come to take you," said the black deathman.

"Don't try to fight back," said the green deathman.

"Hah. Hah. Don't," urged the grey deathman.

Plastcoid hoods tight over tired heads, breaking through the room and deathmen breaking into his home.

"Do you realize," said black,"that it's three months overdue?"

He ignored them. Did not answer. End was near. Hopeless to fight back...

His mind was elsewhere. Five years ago. The beach. Perceiving the waves, the wind. Fresh, clear air of the West Coast. Mountains, winged birds. The wind, again.

"...come on, or do we have to drag you...incinerate you..."

Laughter. Sadistic:

It was very strange, he thought. A woman loving him. Didn't she know? Didn't she realize? Perhaps she did. And yet...

Soft. Long, blonde hair, fluttering in the wind. He cried without tears, screaming deep inside.

A strong, protoplasmic arm clutched his wrists, another his body. "All right. You didn't hear us. Do you know what we do when...you don't hear us?"

"Hey. You're time's expired, rustman. Gone To the incinerator..."

Her face, again. Smiling. Warm. Her laughter, realizing how cold he was. On the sand. "No," he had told her. "I don't want to swim. Really. I don't."

"Well," she answered.

The music. The afternoon was setting, the beach tired. She had a radio. A quiet, sad song. "Sleep it off, forever and ever...ever..." Is it a hymn? A prayer? Soul music?

She laughed, and they returned. To the city. He was confused, and yet estatic. A woman, soft and flesh, had loved him.

He awoke briefly from reverie, seeing Metalgrounds through the window of the framcar. Black, green, grey deathmen stood beneath their death helmets, staring at him.

"Robots," they said. "You'd think they'd scream, belting them in the balls..."

"Treat it like flesh? Screw the law." Hard-gritted teeth in anger. A swift stick struck his body.

"How much for scraping this one?" said the black deathman.

"Can't say. Depends." The framcar arrived at Incinerator 13.

His eyes were closed. Brutal, yet soft, hands appeared. He expected it, yet it all surprised him. He wasn't curing, like he expected. His skin tore off, revealing chrome-shiny mechanisms. He had nothing against them, their time limits, their mortal laws.

Redness. A deep carven. The incinerator. He laughed.

He'd be melted. He'd come back again.

-- Jon Inouye

JOHN M ROBINSON

TWIN ORBITS

Achtung, Readers!

The not so humble author of the following film reviews wishes to clarify himself first (Let me maketh this perfectly clear): I've chosen to review old, established films along with new ones for a reason; several, really. First, part of the fun of reading film reviews is Monday morning quarterbacking, ie., seeing whether you agree with the reviewer's opinions. Many of the older movies reviewed here (the oldest is Capra's IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT, around '31) are "classics" and as such, well known and frequently viewable to a large public via television. In short, most real movie buffs will have already seen and enjoyed/hated these films already.

Then, there is no reason why the old can't be subjected to criticism from the new, for the past is always subject to a constant shift in vision, a continual reworking according to modern opinion. So, hopefully the old films will be seen at least a little bit differently in these reviews than they were originally. (And, as much as possible, I've attempted to write these essays without prior knowledge from other critic's work. Often this has been difficult, sometimes impossible. At least once I have found, after writing the review, that my views differed radically from someone else, in this case Boorman's DELIVERANCE. James Dickey's interview in PLAYBOY counters almost every one of my suppositions. However, I don't think that necessarily invalidates my critique, so I've let it stand).

Finally, I've written about old films simply from a personal like for them and a discovery that they invariably call up a host of historical ideas. The further a film recedes into the dim past, the more perceptible are its root origins. For instance, with IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT one is capable of seeing just where that film fits in according to Capra's movies, because we know what has come before and, more importantly, we know what comes after.

As for the more recent movies, hopefully some relevant guide has been provided here, but keep in mind that no critic

is equal to your own taste. People tell me all the time that Cher is a talented comedienne. What can I say?

I would appreciate hearing what you have to say about these movies (or film theory in general) and their reviews. Write to KPSS and let me know.

+

THE CONVERSATION -- "Hear No Evil"

As well as Francis Ford Coppola handles epics like the two "Godfather" films, this venture, THE CONVERSATION, would seem to indicate that his real metier is the smaller, more personalized film. With boundless energy and invention he translates a rather simple Hitchcockian vehicle into a variety of superb stories.

Firstly, it is a mystery story that begins in the middle of the mystery and then deftly works backward to fill us in on what the situation is. There is even a mysterious, shadowy "Executive" who is seen only momentarily (consumately portrayed by Robert Duvall).

Then it is an unusual suspense story in which shocks are, at random intervals almost always produced by sound (an appropriate technique for a film about wire-tapping) and suspense is created ingeniously by a stream-of-consciousness vision of what the protagonist, Harry Caul, expects to find. Within this framework there is a thoroughly enjoyable horror perpetrated upon the audience by Coppola in a ghastly scene in a hotel room's lavatory which is an obvious allusion to Hitchcock's PSYCHO, similar to Polanski's witty allusion to John Huston's THE MALTESE FALCON by using that latter director in Polanski's CHINATOWN.

It is also a character study, par excellence. This is Gene Hackman's finest performance; his portrait of wire-tapper Harry Caul (a name almost too suitable) is lighted with an exactly proper degree of bland colorlessness. This incredible paranoid, who can never keep his secrets quite as secret as he would like, is a tour-de-force under Hackman's guiding hands.

The opening movement is involved with Harry on the job. He is undertaking the difficult task of bugging a conversation between two young lovers who walk around Union Square in San Francisco in the hopes of privacy amongst the crowd. Harry's technical wizzardry however is more than a match for them. By about midway through the film we realize that the girl is married and the man is her lover. Her husband has anonymously assigned Harry to this task and Harry begins to have mental visions of paranoia concerning his job. Once before his work was the direct cause of two deaths and now Caul is desperately afraid that history is rewinding on him and giving him a playback.

The tension of the drama is generated not exclusively by what may or may not happen to the couple. Because Caul is such a weakling the real dramatic emphasis lies in the question, "What will Harry Caul do? Will he try to prevent an incipient catastrophe or will he stand by and allow himself to follow Santayana's dictum: 'Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it?'" In this case it involves existential choice since Caul would have to "choose" to "forget the past", giving the story whole new dimensions.

And indeed Harry does try, in his own small, ineffectual way to intervene in the murderous affair but it is his misfortune to have misheard one crucial line of

dialogue between the lovers (the entire movie abounds with more ironies than Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar"): "He'll kill us if he gets the chance." The entire film actually hinges on this one, frequently repeated line of dialogue and when one word's stress is altered, the entire story swings in an entirely different line.

I can think of no facet of the film more revealing of its written intricacy than this. But more outstanding than this, is Coppola's ability to be clecer without being flashy. There is nothing here that has been placed in the movie without careful thought: the movie is constructed like a delicately woven web which initially seems rather senseless until distance and familiarity allows us to see the patterns inherent.

Take Harry Caul: I cannot remember the last time I saw a film with a character so utterly fascinating. Here is a paranoid so vibrant he takes his apartment apart, board by board, during the harrowing climax, in a frenzied search for a device he knows is listening to his every word. If Harry's work has taught him anything, it is that there is no longer any such thing as privacy. We've reached Big Brother's age, in some ways, at least ten years early. Yet paradoxically, Harry is the one who jealously guards his privacy. His multi-locked, alarm-ridden apartment is susceptible to an upstairs neighbor with birthday gifts. Harry immediately calls to find out how the neighbor got in, how he avoided triggering the alarm, how he even knew it was Harry's birthday.

His girlfriend (Terri Garr) and a variety of other people are told, untruthfully, that Harry has no home phone so he can't be reached. He refuses to share professional secrets, even with his partner.

But the real irony of the film is when we gradually realize, after Harry's repeated and frantic attemps to shut the world out of his life, that we are the ultimate voyeurs here. As an audience we are privy to Harry's very thoughts, dreams, and nightmares. Harry, if he had been created by Pirandello, would have been utterly horrified at this thought. For us it is darkly amusing. Coppola is indeed playing with us now, as a master.

The cinematography is reminiscent of GODFATHER II: darkly suggestive of lurking horror -- perfect for a paranoid's point of view. Even daylight exteriors have this sense and Coppola does it by avoiding long shots in the open. Instead we get close-ups and twoshots and usually on the person or object in question; everything else is racked out.

Coppola has also done something very inventive here with synchronous sound. He pairs sight and sound brilliantly so that when Harry listens to the taped playback of the young couple's conversation and we watch the conversation taking place via Harry's mind the visual subjects will go out of focus when the sound is suddenly disturbed by mechanical interference or the couple will walk behind a blurred foreground figure when the tape has lost the couple's conversation, picking up another instead.

The musical selection is fine: an eerie, haunting jazz number the predominate strain. The cast is first-rate with a particularly memorable performance from Allen Garfield as Harry's East Coast professional rival: a combination of roly-poly funny man, crude fool, proud craftsman, and unpleasant, incessant competitor.

This is one of this year's masterpieces and Coppola's best effort so far.

+

GODFATHER II -- "Remembrance of Things Past"

Although I haven't seen the first part of this "notorious" film pair, I suspect that GODFATHER I could hardly equal Coppola's sequel which is appealing primarily because it is an epic without the conscious trappings with which epics are usually burdened (ala GONE WITH THE WIND with its bright, parade-color lighting and a grandiose sweep of time).

Two factors seem to contribute to this, not the least of which is a creative use of lighting and color. Figures come and go in shadows and murky half-lights; people speak quietly or ominously or nervously from the enclosing dark and it gives the film a trapped, claustrophobic quality that is excellent for tension and contrasts well with the two sequences in Italy which occur in broad daylight in surroundings that seem sterile and barren, thus accentuating the graphic bloodletting in each case.

The second factor is Coppola's handling of time, a facet of the film which seems to me to be major: for the Corleones, the relationship between the past and the present is close; death and vengeance close the gap and just as Vito (Robert DeNiro) returns to Italy to avenge his mother's and father's deaths, so the film ends as Michael has his tratorous brother Fredo and the swindler Hyman Roth executed.

Coppola has done something very special in handling the relationship between past and present and the wide geographical distribution of the movie (ranging from Las Vegas to Italy to Cuba to New York's Little Italy). By giving the film a "before your eyes" documentary style he manages to avoid that cliched historical sweep which seems part and parcel of so called epics; there is a close feeling of actuality in all of GODFATHER II's attendant parts.

The cast is almost entirely and uniformly excellent with a tight, frightening performance of Michael by Mr. Pacino, now doubtlessly one of our best, and perfect support from Robert DeNiro, Michael V. Gazzo, Lee Strasberg, the always worthy Robert Duvall and Coppola's sister Talia Shire.

Diane Keaton was a disappointing exception. Her histrionics as Michael's wife do not seem to be of the same caliber as her obvious comedic gifts, displayed in two previous movies with Woody Allen.

GODFATHER II, contrary to the literay gymnastics of Andrew Sarris, was entirely worthy of its respendent honors though one must agree with Sarris that CHINATOWN was the picture that most deserved veneration with its complex and highly allusive script, powerhouse performance of Jack Nicholson, and direction which proved to be Polanski's most impeccable performance.

+

IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT -- Capra's Opus Minor

There is currently a prevalent tendency to totally disparage the films of the Thirties that is, to say the least, unfortunate; however there is the natural inclination to watch them with a grain of salt, a chemical substance unnecessary when digesting Frank Capra's early comedy IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT, one of the first of the screwball comedies, and still funny from the word go.

Capra and screenwriting collaborator Robert Riskin always had a solid story to work with and IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT is not only no exception but one of Capra's films that relies even heavier than usual on story, characterization, and performance.

Which makes for real audience involvement. Capra's hallmark was the astounding ability to catch an audience up in the story so responsively he could keep himself, as director, firmly in the realm of unobstrusive invisibility. This is probably not suitable for the modern film-maker who wishes to engage us both emotionally and intellectually, but for Capra who urged his audience to think with its heart, it was the perfect way to convince us. (And Capra could convince: witness his propaganda film series "Why We Fight" for the Armed Services in WWII.)

IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT is a breezy, gentle "Taming of the Shrew," the shrew in the person of spoiled rich girl Claudette Colbert and her reformer, Clark Gable. On this simple frame Riskin and Capra make their usual humanistic points, the essence of which is the glorying of the Average Being. Granted that Gable's vaunted braggadacio and Colbert's ritzy upbringing seem to run directly counter to typical Capra heroes like Longfellow Deeds, John Doe, or George Bailey. Also the oddity of a rich man being a regular guy as opposed to the usual depiction of corrupted wealth, ala Edward Arnold or Lionel Barrymore is admittedly un-Capraesque.

Nevertheless these differences are either superficial or reverse themselves by the conclusion (and the differences of IHON probably make it Capra's funniest picture) so that the moral seems to be the same: the average, the honest, the unpretentious will inevitably win while the "Phony" King Westley, who makes dramatic entrances in aerocopters is left waiting at the alter. What Capra has done here and in almost every other film is re-written the verse "The meek shall inherit the earth" to fit his own secular, American mythology so that it comes out "The real and the worthy shall inherit everything worth inheriting: the rest will be left with nothing."

For over four decades this would be Capra's theme, stating it and re-stating it over and over, but always entertainingly, ingeniously. IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT was probably its weakest statement; IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE its most fulfilling.

Which is not to say IHON is faultless: what it gains in a constantly moving story it loses in a coherent pacing. Things remain leisurely when they ought to pick up the tempo. Lighting is soft, fuzzy in all shots though this may be the effect of age. Of course the exteriors don't look very much more than what they are: props.

But on the whole IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT is worthwhile and has held up remarkably well over the years, much better than some of its more serious-minded peers like I AM A FUGITIVE FROM A CHAIN GANG. The editing and camera motion are active so it has none of the static quality characterized by period films, especially the early comedies W. C. Fields made. Pieces like the famous "How to Hitchike" scene are pure cinema; they wouldn't elicit a guffaw in any other medium, without the rapid cuts to the squealing brake at the sight of Colbert's limb. That scene is worth the price of admission.

+

Bergman's WILD STRAWBERRIES and WINTER LIGHT -- Life Without Categorical Imperatives

I've paired these two films critically because they are the only two of Berg-

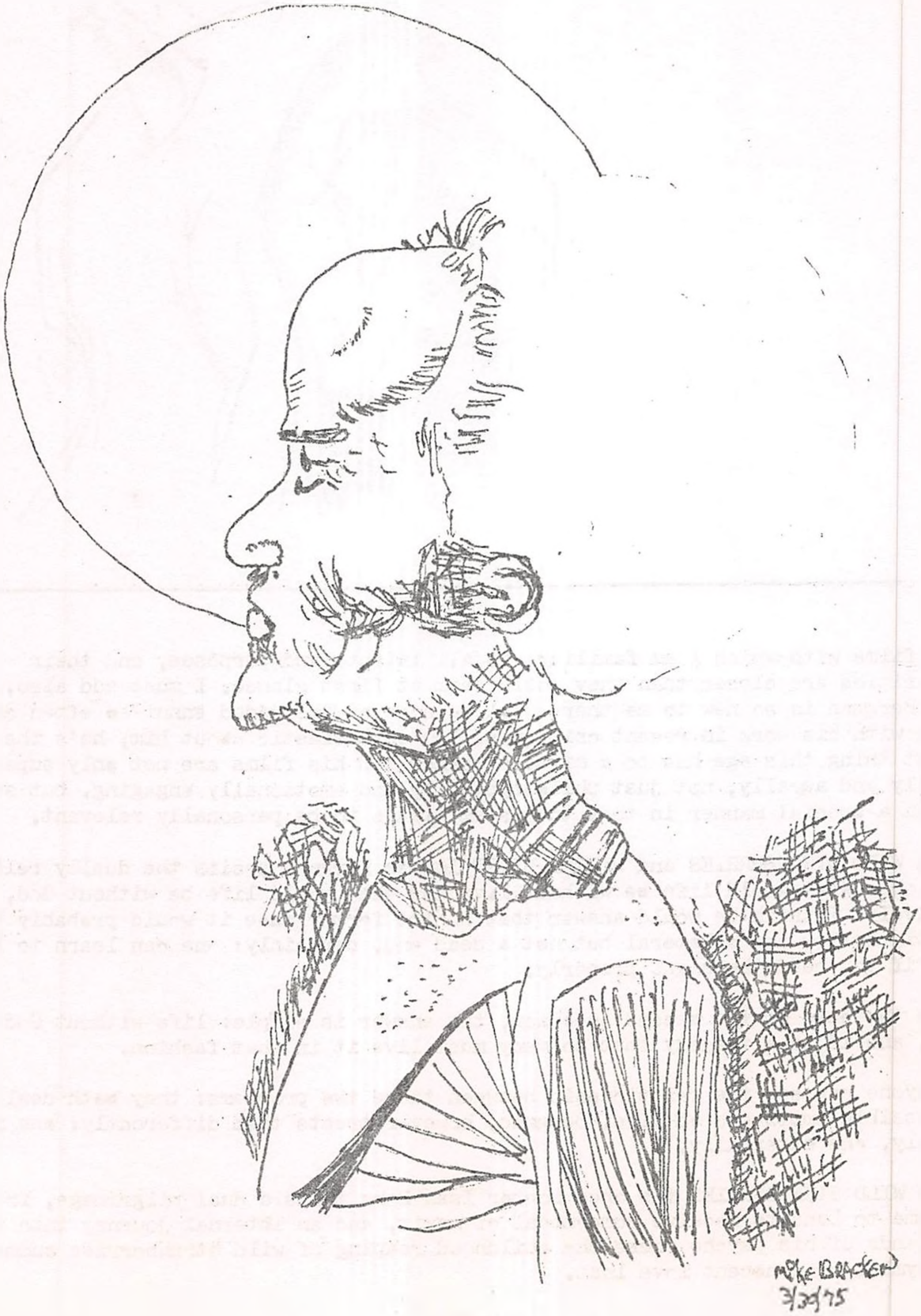
man's films with which I am familiar, to all intents and purposes, and their similarities are closer than they would seem at first glance. I must add also, since Bergman is so new to me there will be none of the jaded ennui so often connected with his work in recent critiques. I'm enthusiastic about him, he's the closest thing this age has to a miracle worker and his films are not only superb visually and aurally, not just philosophically and emotionally engaging, but superb in a special manner in that they seem always to be personally relevant.

In WILD STRAWBERRIES and WINTER LIGHT Ingmar Bergman posits the dually related questions: What would life be without love and what would life be without God, respectively? I think he would answer that in the former case it would probably be terribly hollow and ephemeral but not a dead end, certainly: one can learn to love again if you read the signs properly.

In the case of the second question, the answer is simple: life without God is bleak, and it is a tragedy that so many must live it in that fashion.

Anyone can see the relationship between these two problems: they both deal with the possible emptiness of life. Bergman, however treats them differently: one internally, one externally.

In WILD STRAWBERRIES the aged Doctor Isak Borg makes a dual pilgrimage, from his home to Lund to receive some medal of merit, and an internal journey into the wastelands of his psyche where the childhood reaping of wild strawberries summons up a symbol of innocent love lost.


MIKE BRACKEN
3/30/75

WILD STRAWBERRIES is apparently more in line with typical Bergman: the hero is involved with his internal life on an external level, that is the film slips liquidly between illusion and reality, and the dreamer often takes part in these mental dramas actively.

The film opens with a pre-titles prologue with a voice over narration from Isak Borg (materfully played by Victor Sjöström) and his life seems elderly, donnish and perhaps a bit deceptively lyrical.

The film is actually fired off by an ominous dream Isak has the night before his scheduled departure (reminiscent of Mann's DEATH IN VENICE whose vision of death also sends Gustav von Aschenbach off on an equally revelatory journey); a frightening, surreal grotesquerie, a vision of impossible timelessness in which the dead pull the living towards it, by the sleeve, until they are face to face, as must inevitably happen.

Small wonder that this warning slap of the impermanence of mortality should trigger off a stream of memories and dreams. They come into focus and center around the house he spent his youthful summers in, where Isak and his daughter-in-law stop momentarily on their travel.

Isak sees (imaginatively) how his passionate brother Siegfried wins the love of his betrothed (a secret betrothal, interestingly) while she picks wild strawberries for her uncle's birthday. She at first attempts to rebuff him with repeated assertions of her fidelity to Isak, continuously emphasizing how "Good" he is to her. This motif continues to echo throughout the film: Isak is good to everybody and he manages to keep his distance that way, barring himself from any lasting relationship by his goodness. This is why his pleasantly cantankerous housekeeper rejects his later suggestion that she and Isak begin to call each other by their first names: it would close the gap between employer and employee.

Bergman opens up his story by providing a daul situation in his son, a dilemma explained by his daughter-in-law (Ingrid Thulin) and Isak's separation and self-enforced isolation begets similar solitude.

Despite many grim moments in WILD STRAWBERRIES (vividly rendered by Gunnar Fischer's moody, often mordant photography. Compositionally, my favorite scenes are those of Isak's psychic trail. The image of dark birds whirling and cawing across a wintery tree-framed sky, like the Eumenides who anxiously await the chance of carrying away another soul, is memorable and evocative.) it is a lyrically optimistic picture, brought on by the introduction of the trio of young lovers: a girl and her two suitors who are using a theological debate as an excuse to bicker between themselves. (There is an amusing fight in which one boy shoves the other, saying, "There is a God," and the other shoves back, saying "No there isn't." It almost seems Bergman is making fun of his own work, specifically THE SEVENTH SEAL). Disjointed as their mutual love for one another is, they unite on a common ground in their love for Isak, who by and large, ignores them (but in a kindly, or more aptly, "goodly" fashion).

Optimism is generated by their hopeful outlook and by the growing love between Isak and his daughter-in-law, the only love which Isak at last reciprocates in some manner. Though he has lived a life of desolation and separated himself from his early love, then later his wife, Isak learns something about life, albeit a bit late perhaps.

WINTER LIGHT, as just the title suggests, is more barren and sterile than WILD STRAWBERRIES and Bergman and cast translate this sterility.

We are subjected to a long church service sequence, tended by Pastor Tomas Ericsson (Gunnar Björnstrand) who seems somehow bored, his issuance of the communion stilted and unconvinced. From the opening words we are subtly given character clues to Ericsson; he has lost his faith in God and the religious ritual is meaningless, divorced from the reality the Pastor subscribed to before the death of his wife (and again, the theme of the loss of love enters into the drama: in the case of WILD STRAWBERRIES, it is wholly the fault of the protagonist; the love lost by Tomas is caused by fate, or in the Pastor's mind, God). Björnstrand delivers his lines in a pathetic monotone.

The opening scenes are broken up with a panorama of the little Swedish coastal village courtesy of Sven Nykvist's photography. About a half-dozen scenes of cold, gray landscape, barren, winter-frosted trees, frozen water, all in stasis, and all inundated by the cold, bitter, remorseless winter light, which seems to be the visual and titular equivalent of what Ericsson refers to as God's silence.

The story is sparse and realistic in the sense that there is little playing with time here, real time and reel time are roughly equivalent. The opening scenes, in which communion is given are followed by an encounter with a local fisherman who has grown despondent over the news that the Chinese, who he believes to be ruthless, will soon have an atom bomb. Max Von Sydow is the fisherman who subsequently commits suicide and his performance here in truely harrowing. Typically visual, it is difficult to convey, here in print, the multitude of meanings Von Sydow can produce by looks, gestures or voice intonation, but the scene in which the fisherman's wife explains her husband's problem while he sits beside her, his eyes averted and hand up alongside his face like a shield suggest the character's brooding introspective qualities perfectly.

Von Sydow is matched by equally diverse and subtle performances from Björnstrand and Ingrid Thulin as Marta, the spurned mistress of the Pastor. The scene between these latter two in which Ericsson scorns the love of Marta are among the most excruciatingly painful ever captured on film: Bergman keeps the camera on Marta only, while the Pastor's harangue continues off-screen. When we hear the words separately and see their effect simultaneously (and a wretched, pitiable effect it is) we are brought into the picture much more closely than if Bergman had simply cut back and forth between the two lovers.

The hallmark of this picture is its static quality; there is even less camera movement in this film than is apparently customary for Bergman, whose pacing is anything but frenetic. The static quality lends itself well, formatively, to Bergman's message which would seem to be that not only is life without God bleak, it is paralytic because there are no categorical imperatives, no "I think therefore I am"'s to hold onto affirmatively. It is the existential problem of there being no answers, as we so aptly see in the scene in which Von Sydow asks the Pastor point blank "Why must we go on living?" Tomas obviously feels the same was as the fisherman since all he can do is mumble some jargon about responsibility as his hand trails limply across the desktop in a revealing close-up.

With WINTER LIGHT there are many of these epiphanic verbal and visual clues. When added up they seem to have demolished film theories expounded by Siegfried Kracauer by working from the inside. Kracauer affirms that "street crowds, involuntary gestures, fleeting impressions...life at its most ephemeral" are the cinema's

"very meat". While WILD STRAWBERRIES may not fall under these qualifications, WINTER LIGHT certainly does; the little things like the way the communicants receive the wafer and wine in highly individual ways or the way in which light comes in through cross-shaped window interstices, throwing shadows across the sill-like prison bars, are the ephemeraldetails which convey the story.

However, Kracauer also says "films cling to the surface of things. They seem to be the more cinematic, the less they focus directly on inward life, ideology, and spiritual concerns." 1 With WINTER LIGHT, Bergman has obviously used Kracauer's own rules to refute the theorist's statements (not intentionally, I'm sure). Bergman takes all the "ephemera of life" and builds a complex theologic and philosophic web of deeply personal concern out of it. We understand the characters on a very internal level, yet only by external phenomena.

And despite its static quality, WINTER LIGHT is unquestionably cinematic. Those oddly rhythmic dissolves from landscape to landscape at the film's beginning, the penetrating use of the close-up, indeed just the fact that cinema is the only medium of representational art which can produce a staic work successfully, point to its essential filmic qualities.

So it seems apparent that Bergman can handle these two films, which are related in theme but differ in style and treatment radically, with equal facility. The lyrical fantasy of WILD STRAWBERRIES in which the protagonist's inner life is actually visualized on-screen and the stark external nature of WINTER LIGHT espouse their meanings clearly in each case and the fact that Bergman can reverse the wide gap separating the two styles seems remarkable. It is like being able to write like Joyce in the former and then like Hemingway in the latter.

+

Akira Kurosawa's RASHOMON -- The World of Existential Doubt

It would seem, at this juncture, to be redundant to write of a film which has long been recognized as a masterpiece the world over. What critic does not refer to it a half-dozen times a year? Yet it remains a work of fascination, something one is eager to write about.

It is somehow typical of Kurosawa to pose a question long associated with Western thought: What is Truth? and come up with the same answer: There either is none or it is beyond our knowing. But then, rather than wring his hands in Western dismay and conciliation he offers an answer that is brave, if sentimental.

RASHOMON is really a very simple story: a man and wife are traveling near Kyoto in medieval Japan when they are waylaid by a famous bandit (Toshiro Mifune, of course), The wife is raped and the husband is either murdered or commits suicide. Big deal, hmmm?

So immediately we percive that it is not the story told which takes precedence here but the manner in which that story is unfolded. The basic events of the film, outlined above, are never seen from an omniscient camera. Instead the film opens during a rainstorm three weeks after these events have occurred. Three men seek shelter under a broken ruin, a Rashomon gate (if anyone knows what a Rashomon gate

---

1 Kracauer, Siegfried. THEORY OF FILM. pp. ix & xi

is and just what its significance here is, I'd sincerely like to hear from them). One man is a Buddhist priest, another a woodcutter, and a third man: a brutal cynic who listens to the other two relate their post facto versions of the story of the wife, husband, and bandit. The woodcutter relates two versions of the story himself as well as a recounting of the testimony of the bandit. The priest (who is overcome with horror at the whole story not because of its savagery we realize, but because the shifting, myriad versions of the story has eroded his version of the absolute qualities of truth) recites the wife's version of the incident and then the dead husband's side of the tale, the latter represented by a spiritual medium in an eerie sequence which is the most fascinating portion of the movie.

RASHOMON, like almost all of Kurosawa's work, summons up unconscious parallels in my mind with various Western literary ventures. His SEVEN SAMURAI owes much to the Wild West genre of John Ford, et. al. DODES'KA-DEN reminds me irresistably of CANNERY ROW in its poetry of the poor. RED BEARD is like a Hospital soap opera. It is therefore fitting that RASHOMON, a work which is in almost all ways superior to any of these, calls to mind a slightly higher parallel, recalling vividly Faulkner's ABSALOM! ABSALOM!

As in RASHOMON, it is not the plot of ABSALOM! ABSALOM! which is arresting but rather the fact that it is told and retold by a continually shifting viewpoint. Just as the fate of the man, the wife, and the bandit is ambiguous, so too is the character of Thomas Sutpen: tyrant? proud martyr? demon?

Almost any mention of the editing, composition and pace of this great film would be tautogous but it is interesting to note the style with which the piece is executed: though made around 1950 it employs all the techniques of late 1920's/ early 1930's editing: wipes, iris-in for the opening credits, and astounding number of close-ups, etc. Except that it makes the film seem a great deal older than it actually is, I'm not sure why Kurosawa chose this method and the odd penchant here for cutting from the passive to the active (often with results which are absolutely jarring) is equally mysterious though here it is possible he is slyly undercutting the distance which lies between the way a tale is told and the actual story itself, i.e., one seems to belie the other.

Masayuki Mori's eyes, which seem to have the ripping insight of two, powerful, high-speed drills and the thrilling rhythmic music are musts here and aid considerably in heightening dramatic effect.

The movie's only fault, if it is one, is the rather arbitrarily "tacked on" ending. The sudden emergence of an infant on the scene seems contrived and so partly upsets the rhythm of the film, but Kurosawa's belief in the necessity of trust and faith in one's fellows in a world without truth is, nevertheless, on the beam.

+

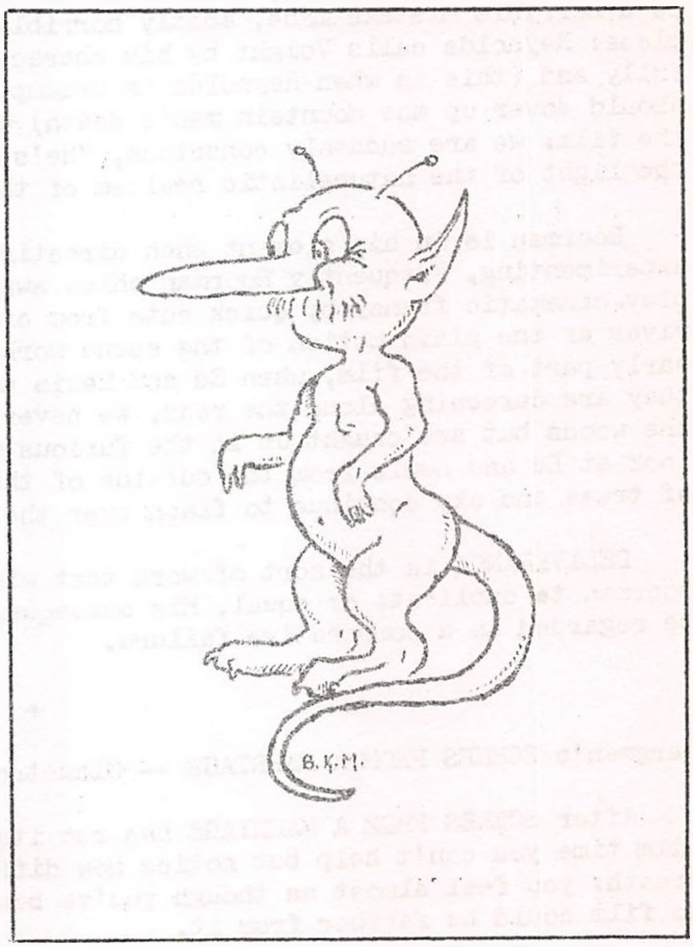
DELIVERANCE -- "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever."

About a quarter of the way into DELIVERANCE there is a particularly interesting scene that seems to point towards the remainder of the film's meaning: Burt Reynolds hails John Voight to come up to his vantage point for a look at the river. Voight mounts the little hillock beside him. The camera cuts to a shimmering, evanescent, watery Eden then cuts back to a close-up of Voight and Reynolds in the dark, thick brake of trees and foliage, faces unnaturally wet with perspiration, peering out at

something one vaguely feels they should not see. The beauty, size or force of their surroundings, throughout, constantly overpowers or dwarfs the four journeyers; shots are often framed so that either the open spaces of the four men's experience from an obscene vantage point within the forest.

These are the chief elements, coupled with a nerve-wracking intentional ambiguity, which serve to warn the viewer of impending disaster and set him on edge. The disaster is more than the physical or moral anguish experienced by Voight, Reynolds and crew but the actual disaster of despair; the realization that there is no "deliverance," from this horribly human-embroiled drama. The hand of the dead mountain man who first points to some unseen heavenly phenomenon when dying, and then reaches up to heaven in rigor mortis may be the film's grimmest irong, namely that we see the most capably only when we are delivered from this world in death.

This is doubtlessly why Drew (Ronnie Cox), who is unable to play "the game" by the rules that Lewis (Burt Reynolds) conjures up so freely, is the one who suffers the only physical death. Ed (John Voight), accurately pronounces Drew as the best of the group and he seems to be the wisest and most elemental of the crew, engendering the only natural connection with the environment when he plays music with the backwoods idiot. Drew sees more clearly than the others and so his only natural fate is death and the ambiguity surrounding his death (did he fall in, jump in or was he shot?) probably insinuates that it doesn't matter how Drew died: his fate was inescapable.



Which is the case with all of the crew: Bobby, the party cut-up whose sexual innuendos keep "the boys" in stitches, is sodomised by a pair of mountain men. Burt Reynolds, or Lewis, is the machismo, he-man leader (whose talk of games and rules, his infantile whimpers and embryo-curled sleeping posture point out the essential fakery behind him) who Drew correctly pegs as "wanting to get back to nature, but he just can't hack it." A fitting irony that the river he so romanticizes should cause the possible loss of a leg or his certain crippling. And Ed, who wishes to emulate Lewis and indeed has some measure of success in supplanting him as group leader, when he attempts to duplicate Lewis' heroics, instead kills a probably innocent man (another disturbing ambiguity).

Dickey's script, adapted from his own work, and John Boorman's skilled, supple direction (certainly his best effort by far at this date) combine smoothly to make a fine action-cum-thriller piece with weighty philosophical thought and both action

and thought are intrinsic to the story.

The film's keystone to success is a superb use of visual imagery and symbolism while dialogue is tightly woven into the film itself and is sparse and grittily natural in conversations. Dickey could have opted for literary symbolism as he must be more familiar with it, but instead takes the leap into real cinematic writing. Few movies have such a storehouse of visual impressions to leave on the brain: the scene described at the beginning of this essay, the dead but grasping hand which floats heavenward (and always will) from Voight's watery nightmare, the idiot banjo-player staring in wonder as the voyagers pass under the bridge he stands on, and last, but hardly least, the Church of Christ which is the first thing to greet the eyes when they leave the water and, of course, that obstacle which they must wait upon before proceeding in their direction.

The acting is perfect, especially in the case of Bobby (Ned Beatty). Only once is a horrible mistake made, mostly horrible because of its occurrence in a crucial place: Reynolds calls Voight by his character's name, Ed, but does it too forcefully and (this is when Reynolds is attempting to convince the others that they should cover up the mountain man's death) we are instantly pushed light-years from the film: we are suddenly conscious, "He's acting," and the thought is obtrusive in the light of the naturalistic realism of the rest of the film.

Boorman is in his element when directing the action scenes and is constantly experimenting. Frequently Boorman shies away from the natural disposition to display cinematic frenzy by quick cuts from crisis to crisis. Instead Boorman lets the river or the plain motion of the scene work its effect. For instance, during the early part of the film, when Ed and Lewis are driving the jeep down to the river they are careening along the road. We never see a shot of the Jeep dashing through the woods but are caught up in the furious motion from one camera position. We look at Ed and Lewis from the outside of the windshield and so see a frantic blur of trees and sky continue to flash over the window's reflection.

DELIVERANCE is the sort of work that will take some performance on the part of Boorman to duplicate or equal. His subsequent film, ZARDOZ, though ambitious must be regarded as a comparative failure.

+

Bergman's SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE -- Claustrophobia in Pairs

After SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE has run its marathon one-hundred sixty minute film time you can't help but notice how difficult it is to finally be allowed to breath: you feel almost as though you've been through a Hitchcock thriller, though no film could be farther from it.

Basically because, first of all, MARRIAGE isn't a film; it's a television drama which has been re-shaped and edited from it's original six hour length for movie viewing facility. The result is a movie which consists almost entirely of interiors, close-ups (lots of these, enough to push D.W. Griffith over a cliff with a herd of horses), middle-shots which, for the most part, consists generally of two-shots. I don't think there's any part of the movie which has more than four people on screen at once, and that is only in the first segment.

MARRIAGE is divided into six portions: "Innocence and Panic" which opens the movie sets the beginning of a full portrait of a man and a woman's marital relationship. Johann (Erland Josephson), a scientist and his lawyer-wife Marianne (Liv

Ullmann) are being interviewed by a woman reporter. Johann has a lengthy, immodest answer to the question, "Can you describe yourself briefly?" Marianne, on the other hand, struggles for an answer and can only come up with a tentative definition which is entirely dependent on her relationship to her husband; it as though she only existed in the fact that Johann does and were he to vanish, she probably would too.

The film then is the eventual dissolution, over ten years, of a marriage which is already ten years old at the film's inception, and also a gradual "exchange of hands in the dance of life", as Mann would say: both the protagonists begin to really understand themselves: as Johann ultimately learns of an odd, unexpected dependent attachement to Marianne, so, conversely, Marianne learns that she is a self-sufficient individual.

Though their marriage does fall into ruin and subsequent divorce, Johann and Marianne continue to learn more and more about themselves and one another. The last segment: "In a dark house, in the middle of the night", occurs ten years after the film's opening, many years after Joseph's and Marianne's divorce and respective re-marriages, and one year after they have become lovers, which is MARRIAGE's ultimate irony.

Between these two bookends the audience has been privy to "The Art of Sweeping Under the Carpet": a look at Johan and Marianne's life outside of the home (and a foreshadowing of <u>what might be</u> for the protagonists in the scene in which a woman tells Marianne she wants a divorce because she can no longer continue a relationship without love. At one point here Bergman gives a close-up of this woman's agitated hands which is just too reminiscent of Mae Marsh in INTOLERANCE and the man who twists his cap in his hands at the funeral of Vakoulintchouk in Eisenstein's POTEMKIN. Something a bit more original is desired of Bergman by now); "Paula" which details the initial break-up of the marriage when Johan informs his wife of his intention to leave for Paris the following day with another woman. This is doubtlessly the emotional peak of the film and representative of some of its best acting. It is marred, however, by a poor transition from the previous episode to it. We are suddenly pushed into a new environment which is only explained as the couple's vacation house half-way through the sequence. There is also a sudden shift in Liv Ullman's characterization of Marianne which suggests some rather jumpy editing. In the previous sections Marianne is rather shy, mature, quiet and in this she is suddenly girlish in her expectation of her husband, her talk of a diet, figure, losing weight and in her anxiety over the loss of Johan. There is no interconnection between these two characterizations and this weakens the effect of the film considerably.

"Behind the Veil of Tears" illuminates the return of Johan after six months in Paris, the first intimations of his inability to cope as an individual and Marianne's glimmering realization of herself as a seperate entity.

The penultimate sequence, "The illiterates" occurs on the night the divorce papers are signed. It is the flare-up of a relationship that is seemingly all but dead. After impulsively making love, a realization of just what the other detests most in his/her mate off a violent fight in which Johan bloodies Marianne's nose and sobbingly signs the divorce papers.

But this episode is like an emetic and after the purge, Johan and Marianne find their way back to one another. As Marianne says in the film's final sequence, "It is not the first anniversary of their re-acquaintance at a theater but the twentieth anniversary of their marriage," a marriage which by its very definition must entail

growth and which, despite petty legalities, still continues.

As one might expect from Bergman, SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE is very heavy food for thought and its writing is its strongest point, coupled with virtuous performances from the players. It is probably best that Bergman has treated his subject with such purity of style; it is almost refreshing to watch the film and pay total attention to the characters (who in this instance are the film) without visual nuances, compositionsl intricacy, and suggestive lighting.

Sven Nykvist is the photographer here and though his work is not as brilliant as in previous work, it is certainly very distinguished. His colors and images are much sharper and brighter than what passes for excellence on American television. In terms of composition, the finest work are the shots in Johan's laboratory. Though the movement in the dark, metallic room adds nothing thematically to the film, it is visually arresting.

Both Erland Josephson and Liv Ullmannproduce superlative performances far too much has been made of the latter's. By this I do not mean that Liv Ullman's work is not worthy of every individual piece of praise it has garnered, only that the cumulative effect of this commendation is to focus so much attention on Ms. Ullmann's technique that it becomes difficult to watch her performance as anything but a performance, which is a great shame. When we are watching the brilliant and amusing bit with Ms. Ullmann conversing with Marianne's mother we are constantly thinking, "How brilliant this is." We hadn't ought to be thinking of the quality of the performance on anything but the most subliminal level.

As I was going to explain originally, the reason that one comes away from SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE so asthmatically is that we are brought into such claustrophobic contact with what is going on on-screen, both visually and emotionally, that a natural tension arises from the slightest movement.

This tension, the writing, and the acting are what provide the motor force in this film.

+

LENNY -- In Pace Requiescat

I admire and enjoy Dustin Hoffman's varied roles: the adolescent identification with that blank confusion so aptly conveyed in THE GRADUATE or the pathos generated in his characterization of tough, daydreaming hustler Ratso Rizzo, or even the wonderful ability to shrink an epic hero like Jack Crabbe of LITTLE BIG MAN down to bitesize.

However, he cannot carry off the role of Lenny Bruce in Bob Fosse's filmic biography LENNY and his trouble seems to be that while he is able to impersonate Bruce with great facility, he does not interpret him as an actor should. Now this is surely only partly Hoffman's fault; to a certain degree it is the script and Fosse's direction, both centering on the public Lenny Bruce, which allows us to leave the film asking, "Just who the hell was this schmuck, Lenny Bruce?"

Futher, the reason that Valerie Perrine so outshines Hoffman is not so much a matter of who's the better actor/actress as the fact that when we see her reminiscing with the tape recorder we receive many little visual or verbal clues, like her Pekinese dog or the way she aimlessly looks for an old letter from Lenny, all of which build up to a real character.

But we never learn very much about Lenny, at least not much more than we would from listening to his records or reading the bits that have been collected and printed. This is really all Fosse goes on.

And, unfortunately, all that is all Hoffman relies on. There's no doubt that Hoffman has Bruce down to the letter "T"; the gestures, the voice (not the timbre so much as the right stress and overall method of speech), etc. They're all present and accounted for and I don't mean Hoffman has them down mechanically; they're natural enough so that, when on stage, Hoffman essentially is Lenny Bruce.

But is this enough, is this great acting? I don't think so (and again, at the risk of equivocating, it is not entirely Dustin Hoffman's fault, and there are many roles which he has and can handle superbly). Probably the actor has just gotten too close to his source, both temporally (Bruce seems, to me, very much recent history, despite the changes resultant after his demise) but studiosly. So intent is he on conveying what Lenny Bruce was like, Hoffman fails to tell us what he was. Again, he impersonates but does not interpret.

Compare this with the recent portrayals of Lincoln by Hal Holbrook on NBC. Holbrook manages to transform this mythic folkhero into an ordinary man, while retaining the essential poetry of his image, emerging with a complete look at the President. After watching Holbrook one feels he knows Lincoln in a way he never could with Henry Fonda or Raymond Massey at the helm.

LENNY has other serious drawbacks. Contrary to critical opinion, LENNY is not too subjective. There were few, if any moments which improperly emphasized Bruce's mertyrdom. Certainly he comes off as a Christ (and it must be noted that Bruce was a Christ before his death: the seemingly endless persecutions which Bruce allowed himself to suffer were his crucifixion. His death was not the death of a martyr really) but no more so than he must have been in actuality.

LENNY in fact seems marvelously objective at first, but gradually the objectivity turns to ice, and the ice to yawns. Only once in the film are we really drawn into the drama, and that is the trial near the end in which Lenny tries to convey his message to a court and judge that will not and probably cannot hear. It is a marvelous study in frustration, worthy of Kafka; poignant, pathetic and desperately important.

Fosse seems to be in desperation at how to keep the film rolling and tries in different ways to engage us, the most successful of which is the use of black and white film which is generally a good conveyor of reality, though I think it might have been interesting if he had used stock with a higher grain content to film the nightclub scenes. A gritty, real taste of the Borscht Belt might have resulted.

Fosse tries to keep things rolling by using a pace that makes lightening seem like it's standing still. Cuts come quickly, shots are almost always short. Sometimes this technique works, more often than not it doesn't.

It is most effective when Fosse juxtaposes time situations: intercutting suitable Bruce monologues as commentary on earlier actual personal occurrences. In this area the film approaches brilliance and this often witty way of conveying Bruce's messages and where they came from is what pushes LENNY out of the heap of so many well-meaning Hollywood biographies that are really only glorified tributes.

However, this rapid intercutting has its side effects: it serves to harshly illuminate those moments when Fosse would really like to let the camera linger, or

worse, should let it linger. When Lenny comes out on a Chicago nightclub floor totally wasted, the result is devastating: embarrassed silence, embarrassed laughter. The camera holds on Hoffman and part of the audience in a long shot and never moves. The result is effective on the one hand in that the desired result of fogged up tedium is vividly displayed. On the other hand, to paraphrase a famous literary dictum, "You should not portray tedium tediously," which this scene does.

The nightclubs have a starring role in this movie; they are real, possessed of a seamy, grim fatality all their own, almost foreshadowing Bruce's doom in a subtle fashion and whoever is responsible for the compositions in the these scenes deserves commendation.

Lenny Bruce had quite a message to preach: hipocrisy: societies' and his own. However, those unfamilial with his work and who only think of him as a comic may be surprised or disappointed because Bruce isn't howlingly funny, either really or as portrayed by Hoffman.

Not funny in the boffo sense of the word at least, but funny in the sense of the grand concept of what is comedy: a natural inversion of things, which was Bruce's speciality.

I seriously doubt if Bruce (very good as he was) ever really convulsed an audience. What his ability was, was the gift of being able to preach without sermonizing. Lenny Bruce in fact is entertaining and he has things to say, directly, not masked by parables, jokes or punchlines.

I think the best example of this is that the funniest line in the film occurs when the District Attorney objects to Bruce's counsellor reeling off a list of names like Jonathan Swift, Mark Twain and Aristophanes as comparable to Bruce, by exclaiming, "Aristophanes isn't here to testify, your Honor."

The judge quickly, and aptly replies, "I don't see how he very well could!"

+

Akira Kurosawa's DODES' KA-DEN -- Life's Wheels Keep Rolling On

In the strict sense of filmic perfection this is probably not Kurosawa's greatest film but it is his most poignantly overwhelming poem to man. Like a great Rabelasian comedy or Joyce's ULYSSES, DODES' KA-DEN's combined flaw and fine point is its shaggy, unedited bulk. Yet its one-hundred and forty minute length slips by quickly and its huge gallery of characters is suprisingly easy to keep track of, largely because the acting is overstated, almost to the point of grotesque caricature (like the characters of The Book of the Grotesque in Sherwood Anderson's WINESBURG, OHIO).

First, and foremost there is the "Trolley-Crazy" a local idiot boy who firmly believes that each day he out on a trolley run as a driver. Daily he goes out and checks over his invisible, make-believe trolley, starts up the engine and takes off on the make-believe trolley tracks. That magic moment, so charged with pathos and irony, when the boy sails up and over the first hill, which we see from the vantage point of Kurosawa's beautiful, evocative camera motion, as he chants rhythmically, "Dodes'ka-den, dodes'ka-den, dodes'ka-den," the sound of the trolley, must be considered one of film's most exhilerating and poetic moments, equal to the final words of HIROSHIMA, MON AMOUR, the dream sequences in WILD STRAWBERRIES, or the sailor's funeral in POTEMKIN.

This character, who really has the least screen time of anyone in the film, is the keynote to the film as well as the basis of the title: like Quixote, the Trolley-Crazy is "spurred on by the conviction that the world needed his immediate presence," and also like the aged Don, he never doubts for a moment in his dream, and thus creates a fulfilling life for himself. This then is the secret to the film, how these slum dwellers not only manage to survive in the world, but how they are able to create beauty in their own gray, ashen lives. Variety is established in two ways: how well (or poorly) do the people live in their environment and the individual drama/comedy each set of characters plays out.

The slum patriarch, a Mr. Tamba is a central figure whose patience, wisdom, kindness are, at least subliminally a guiding force to the slum. Only this old man becomes an active bridge between the various sets of characters.

And the characters are unforgettable, like those in Steinbeck's CANNERY ROW: the comic adventure of a pair of husbands and wives who switch mates after every night of drunken confusion; the sordid fate of a young girl, her lazy, debauched, lecherous uncle, and a rather overly-naive sakè-delivery boy; the gossiping washing women at the local faucet; a friendly businessman and his wife: a shrew that makes Indira Gandhi look like a pussycat; a "dead" man who collects rags and is faithfully attended by the woman who wronged him; a worker who goes on a brief, but exciting rampage with a samurai sword one drunken, rainy day; a small boy and his romantically inclined father, the latter reminiscent of Goethe's words about Hamlet in WILHELM MEISTER, a "beautiful, ineffectual dreamer" whose "pride" (which Tamba accurately discloses is really shyness) relies on his son to feed them by begging while he dreams ever more expansively of their imaginary mansion and surrounding bailiwick.

This last is a case in which imagination does not work to enhance life; instead the son dies, while ill, because the father (in a pathetically brilliant performance from Noboru Mitsutahi) is unable to overcome his own retiring nature until it is too late. I suspect that what Kurosawa is trying to get at, in this instance, is that dreams must be accompanied by action. The trolley-crazy also lives almost entirely in an imaginary world but his world (again like Don Quixote) is one of dedicated service, a selfless participation in life (His prayers are always to "the dear Buddha" and concern his mother's welfare. Interestingly, though he has difficulty in reciting the Buddhist chant he never fumbles when imitating the noise of his beloved trolley). The beggar has retired entirely from life and allows his son to do his living for him.

With DODES'KA-DEN Kurosawa amply displays his talents as a master storyteller, talents which even supercede his technical virtuousity (he wrote the script with Hideo Oguni and Shinobu Hashimoto, the latter also co-writing RASHOMON). It is the sheer, panoramic scope of DODES'KA-DEN which is most arresting and the ability Kurosawa shows in keeping firm reins on his complex web of stories is wonderful.

Which is not to slight this director's other abilities. His camera is as expressive now as ever, his use of camera-motion inspired and uplifting. Pace and composition are lyrical, smooth; Kurosawa has never rushed himself in the telling of his tale and with one-hundred and forty minutes to play he's certainly in no hurry.

As in RASHOMON music is chosen to harmonize with visual, supplied in this case by Toru Takemitsu. DODES'KA-DEN is Kurosawa's first venture into color film (Takao Saito and Yasumichi Fukuzawa, color photographers) and he makes inventive use of it, especially in the latter portion of the film when he gradually begins to supplant

naturalistic background for an expressionistic backdrop that looks like a child's watercolors. The gorgeous reds and yellows remind us of the walls of the trolley-crazy's house: each square inch covered by childlike drawings of the trolley and its daily duties.

This is Kurosawa's most striking use of composition; for the most part he keeps it simple. There is a near-balance between long-shots, middle-shots, and close-ups so that one is never more noticeable than another (like the preponderance of close-ups in RASHOMON).

This is a film no one should miss; to make appropiate use of that old Hollywood cliche, it has something for everyone, in this case because it is universally <u>for</u> everyone.

+

LOVE AND DEATH -- "Did you say wheat?"

The wonderful thing about Woody Allen's newest movie, LOVE AND DEATH, in fact Woody's greatest talent is that he/it is ever better than you thought he was in the first place, and I personally love him in the first place. What I mean is that his comedy is considerably more "layered" than it seems at first. The first time one sees BANANAS or reads one of the New Yorker pieces like "Death Knocks" you laugh because they seem like the silliest thing you've ever heard. Initially, Allen's material seems akin to the looniness of the "Monty Python's Flying Circus" troupe which at least one critic has accurately labeled as "inspired zaniness". But, on closer inspection you discover that Woody Allen may be the wittiest writer of witlessness around these days.

For instance, if you will allow me to introduce, rather arbitrarily here, one of my favorite Allenisms from GETTING EVEN (his first collection of pieces from the New Yorker and other magazines. His second collection, WITHOUT FEATHERS, has debuted coincident with LOVE AND DEATH's premiere.) On the subject of epistemology he waxes eloquent: "If knowledge is knowable, how do we know this." We all laugh originally because of the absurd double talk, but like Bierce's classic distortion of the Cartesian dictum, "I think I think, therefore I think I am," (<u>Cogito cogito ergo cogito sum</u>) Woody's philosophizing deftly destroys an entire category of Western thought.

And such is the case in LOVE AND DEATH: it is appreciable without knowledge of Russian literature and society (though admittedly some jokes require a little prior knowledge to fully enjoy them.) Anyone can laugh at this upside-down version of WAR AND PEACE cum CRIME AND PUNISHMENT and at different levels. And yet, what makes LOVE AND DEATH Woody's greatest movie is the assuring way in which he treats the great thoughts of Russian literature, which are the great problems of the West. As never before Allen's wackiness has hit its target in a peculiarly optimistic manner.

After laughing for an hour and a half at Woody's attempts to find meaning in the universe ("If God would just speak to me just once. Just one sentence. Two words. If He'd just cough!") one leaves the theater somewhat relieved of the existential burden. Bluntly stating that Allen is saying all of our anxieties aren't so serious as we think would be subscribing more meaning to the work than Woody probably imbued it with consciously, but this, nevertheless, is the result. God may or may not exist; either way we may be worrying about the situation more than the situation warrents.

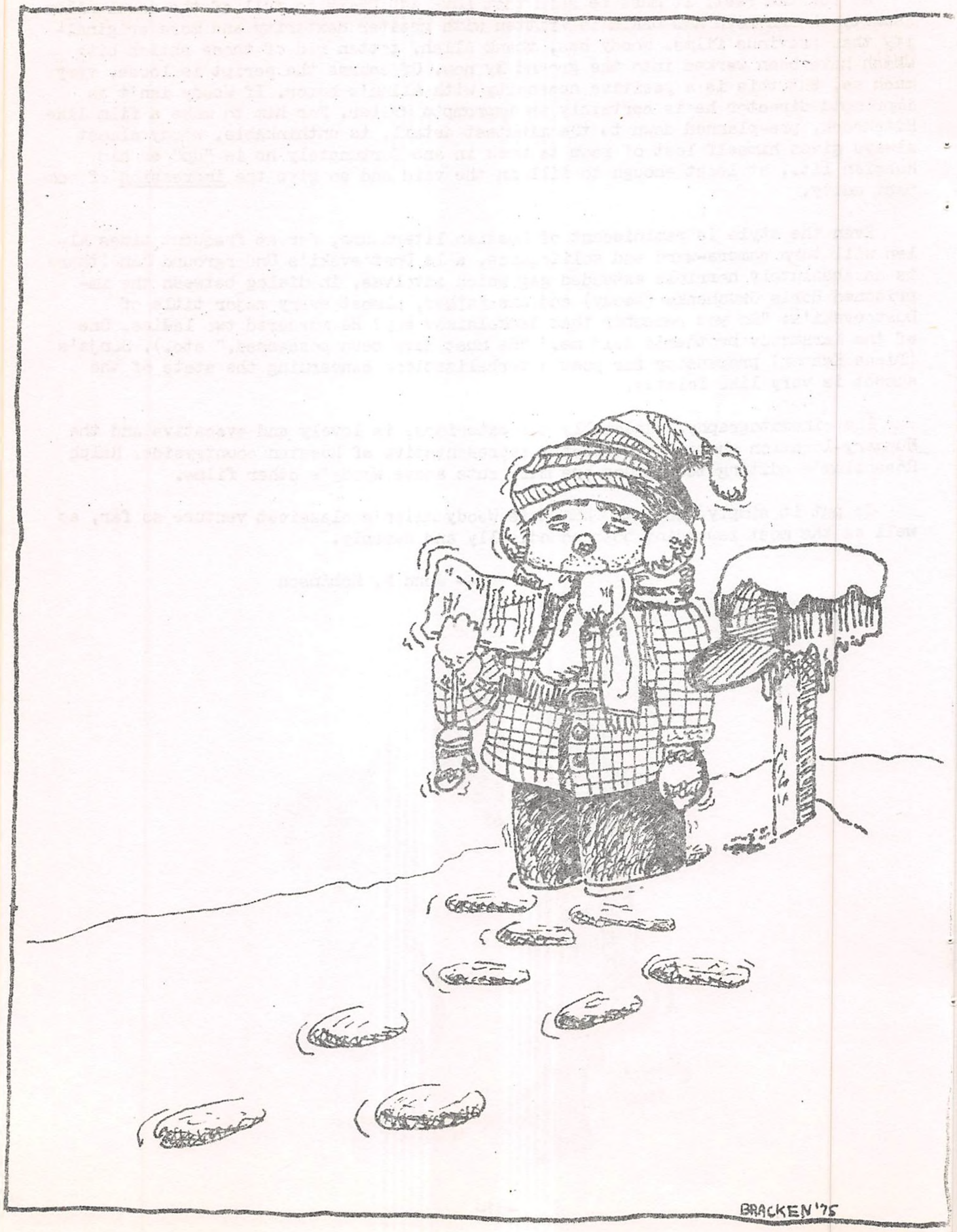
As for the rest, it must be said that LOVE AND DEATH is full of the usual Allen isanity though LOVE AND DEATH is written with greater dexterity and more originality than previous films. Woody has, thank Allah, gotten rid of those shtick bits which have been worked into the ground by now. Of course the script is loose, very much so, but this is a positive necessity with Allen's humor. If Woody isn't an impromptu director he is certainly an impromptu writer. For him to make a film like Hitchcock, pre-planned down to the minutest detail, is unthinkable. Woody almost always gives himself lost of room to work in and fortunately he is "up" on his Russian lit., at least enough to fill in the void and so give the impression of compact unity.

Even the style is reminiscent of Russian literature, for at frequent times Allen will turn camera-ward and soliloquize, a la Dostoevski's Underground Man (there is an absolutely horrible extended gag which involves, in dialog between the imprisoned Boris Grushenko (Woody) and his father, almost every major title of Dostoevski's: "Do you remember that Raskolnikov boy? He murdered two ladies. One of the Karamazov brother's told me." "He must have been possessed." etc.). Sonja's (Diane Keaton) propensity for poetic verbalizations concerning the state of the sunset is very like Tolstoy.

The cinematography, especially the exteriors, is lovely and evocative and the Hungary-location shots are perfectly representative of Russian countryside. Ralph Rosenblum's editing techniques are many cuts above Woody's other films.

To put it simply, LOVE AND DEATH is Woody Allen's classiest venture so far, as well as the most rewarding both comedically and humanly.

-- John M. Robinson


BRACKEN '75

Words from other Worlds

Don D'Ammassa, 19 Angell Dr, E. Prov., RI 02914 4/30/75

John Robinson's review are a bit short, though I agree with just about everything he does say; particularly enjoyed finding that he liked HEROVIT'S WORLD. Steve Beatty's fanzine reviews affected me rather similarly; he should have said more about individual issues.

I tend to agree retrospectively with Roger Sween and Mike Glicksohn that I should have done more analysis of Keller's work. The article was designed more as nostalga than as criticism, and it obviously didn't fit into my usual pattern. That's what happens when one becomes a hack writer; pieces not in the same formula are looked upon with suspicion.

I also agree with Roger that I probably should have listed where the stories were available, but I feared that would make the article less readable, as a sizable number of references would have been necessary. Perhaps a bibliography would have help. I disagree entirely with Roger's statement that I rely on "memory and personal awareness"; I have a substantial library, 7200 SF titles, cross-indexed, and access to most of the indices extent. I wasn't assuming that it was impossible for people to find Keller; I assumed that it was difficult - it is - and that most people wouldn't be bothered.

Wayne Martin makes sense in most of his letter this time, but the Flash Gordon books are nor "reprints", and they have not been selling out; in fact, I just read somewhere that they have been cancelled, along with the Phantom and the Avenger, and Doc Savage is to be cut back. Freeway Press, reprinter of the Operator 5 books, has gone out of business. So the large public Wayne sees seems not to exist.

Very good issue, particularly the letter column. Al Sirois is a man of remarkable taste and perceptiveness. If he scratches my back, I really ought to scratch his.

Roger Sween, 319 Elm St., Kalamazoo, MI 49007 5/19/75

I notice that both you and Larry Downes advocate skipping years in school as an antidote to putting up with the confining, somewhat boring and pointless requirements of high school. I am not categorically opposed to skipping grades; a

better system might be not to have grades at all. And I didn't mean to imply that there was anything disadvantageous in having to cope with UCLA or somesuch place. For me, I believe that a person has to cope wherever he might be. Perhaps "cope" is the wrong word to use, but by it I mean that a person has got to work to find the means of successfully winning through the situation in which he finds himself. Or come to some sort of compromise. I suppose that is what I did in high school. In most of my classes, I got minimal grades. Not bothering to concentrate too heavily on my science and math classes, I had time to read and write, and it was those activities that made my passage through school endurable. Fortunately, I could still get into the college of my choice. I doubt that would be true anymore.

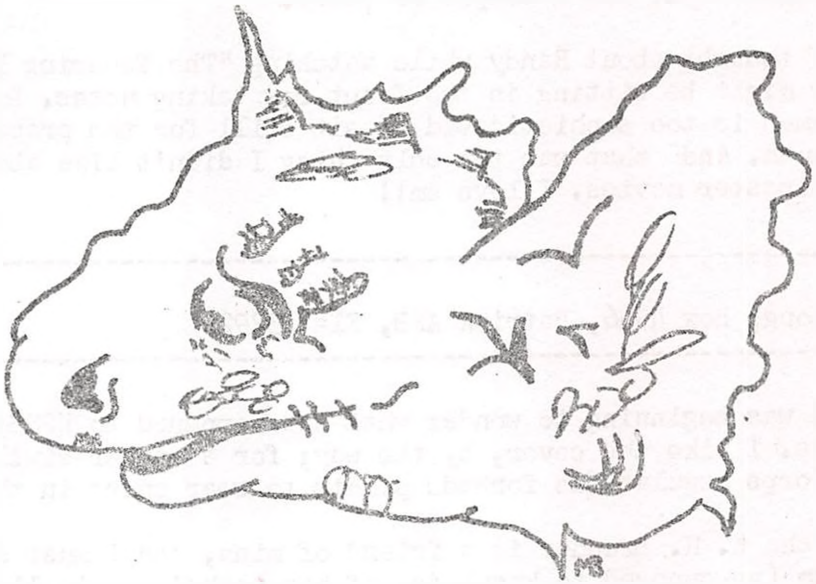
I don't really know your situation or Larr's either, but it seems to be the case in most schools that what a person needs to make the most of the situation is initiative. Nobody can force you to learn or enjoy; you have to do it yourself. The realization that education and life are up to each individual is what I am talking about. I don't think I got the best education I could have; I have come to regret my inability in math, and my music and art education was almost nonexistent, but I was never bored.

Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave, Teaneck, NJ 07666 5/10/75

The indefatigable critic, JMR, offers entertaining if not terribly apropos film reviews. Generally, I would agree with what he says, at least for the entries I have seen. Of course, my Faysie Dunaway is never lacklustre; we call it underplaying, and her performance was beautiful. She herself was willing (since she is First of all, an Actress) to be genuinely thirties-era in appearnce (compare to her often breathtaking beauty in Richard Lesteras amiable roundhouse-humor Musketeer films. Consider also her performance in Arthur Miller's lamentable play which he says is not a bio of his late wife; Faysie managed to give a reasonable replica of a kitten-sex-goddess without imitating her.

As usual, Don D'Ammassa offers an exhaustive study of a writer few of us must

---



know, and especially me, since I read so little SF. Don apparently likes Grant, and his summaries indicate the writer is one to watch. This is one of the virtues of Don's researching, and I would hope a copy of the article reaches the writer. He is rather hard on Wayne Martin, the result to a somewhat disinterested bystander being that each overreaches the points he is trying to establish.

The reviews and aricles were all pleasent reading. As always, I liked Jon Inouye's writing, and his last few paragraphs were a cute ploy indeed. The letters were entertaining as well. I should also congratulate Al Sirois for his fine artwork, his letter and his recent appearance in the pro-pages of FANTASTIC. A trufan can also be a pro, a point some people ignore, considering prodom a sort of graduation from fandom. Hopefully, Al will continue in both. Neither Bob Bloch nor Tucker find appearances in fan pages demeaning.

Jodie Offutt, Funny Farm, Haldeman, KY 40329 5/13/75

Enjoyed the hell out of John M. Robinson's movie reviews. He says what he thinks without a lot of pretensions and critical heaviness. I really appreciated reading them.

There's a young man in Morehead who I've known since we've been here -- about twelve years. Randy lived down the street when we first moved to town and he and Chris played together sometimes; Randy is a couple of years older than Chris. We moved to Haldeman and we'd see Randy every now and then. Riding his bike on Main St. and I remember when he got his license and he'd be in a car.

One afternoon last summer I saw Randy at the pool; he had a date. He told me he would graduate from high school this spring and I asked him what he was going

to do. Randy is going to go away to be a fireman. Going to firefighter's school and probably to a city (Louisville or Cincy) to work. Randy has been on our volunteer fire dept. for a couple of years.

I thought about Randy while watching "The Towering Inferno" -- and wondered if Randy might be sitting in the front row taking notes. But no, even a small-town fireman is too sophisticated to sit still for the propaganda in that movie. It was too much. And that was the only thing I didn't like about it because I'm a sucker for disaster movies. I love em!!

Sam Long, Box 4946, Patrick AFB, Fla 32925 5/19/75

I was beginning to wonder what had happened to KPSS; and behold! here it is. Thanks. I like the cover, by the way; for a rather similar reason back during WWI, Air Corps regulations forbade pilots to wear spurs in their aircraft...

John K. H. Brunner is a friend of mine, and I must say that, from my knowledge of him (as opposed to knowledge of his books), he is liberal in the old sense and is indeed somewhat left of center, tho he's become less radical in recent years; but he's not all that leftist. Wayne runs into problems regarding the connotations of liberal (usually good) and leftist (not so good). In this regard, I agree with Don D'A.

Bruce Arthur's fable was chuckleworthy, as was Jodie's fannish bankruptcy and Jon Inouye's yawn *yawn* bit. Jodie might like to declare fannish bankruptcy when the volume of replies and LoCs she has to write exceeds the time she has to write 'em in, but I'm sure some penalties would attach to such a course of action, just as they do in financial bankruptcy. She might not be able to vote for Hugos or TAFF or DUFF, or to be a member of a fannish con until she had discharged her fannish depts.

Letters: I read RINGS OF ICE not long ago, and didn't find it all that good, apart from the fact that (as a meteorologist) I couldn't "suspend belief" as regards the "S" in SF. It was by no means the worst SF I've read, but it was no means the best...gee, it's nice to get egoboo in someone else's zine: I'm glad my parody went over well...note to Wayne Martin: the "scientific" word for crackpot is schizoceramic...Mike Glicksohn's comment on TNBW is noted, and a change will be made before it's published in my "collected 'Parodies Lost & Parodies Regained'".

Tony Cvetko, 29415 Parkwood Dr., Wickliffe, Ohio 44092 5/29/75

Sirois' cover is simply great, marvelous, hilarious, fantastic, and just what I expect from the person whom I consider to be the best cartoonist/artist in fandom today. The back cover was good too, a nd I like the way Stefacek used the dark clouds and moonlight as an extra eerie effect to further enhance the sense of wonder about the cover. Where Sirois' was space operaish and humorous, Stefacek's was eerie and mysterious and had a sense of wonder about it. Very provocative and very good.

D'Ammassa's look at C.L. Grant was up to his uausl high quality. The only Grant stories I've read are "But the Other Old Man Stopped Playing" and "When Two

or Three Are Gathered", but I was very impressed with both of them, especially "Other Old Man." I think I'll keep KPSS 12 out of the"used fanzines" box so I can look up his other stories this summer when I have some spare time.

I really must agree with Don when he picks Wayne apart in "Two Glances". As Don says, Wayne's conclusions when applying Brunner's work to Wayne's definitions are ridiculous at best. Perhaps if Wayne had done a full-scale article instead of a brief glance he could have expanded his views more and explained his reasoning more, but as it stands Don says it all.

D Gary Grady, 3309 Spruilll Ave, #5, Charleston, SC 29405 6/3/75

I haven't seen the film DOVE, but it is indeed based on a true story. The book itself is full of romanticization. They really did get married with a cub scout ring! Last I hear Robin is living on a home-made farm in Oregon (?). Having spent some time at sea myself, I can appreciate his passion for dry land!

Bryan Jones has told me that they are doing a sequel to EARTHQUAKE and the TOWERING INFERNO. It's called Shake and Bake.

Oh, goody-goody. Here's where I get to disagree with Don! He must have been on the rag when he wrote "Too Brief a Glance". His attack on Wayne Martin is unjustified. I can't agree with Wayne's oversimplified analysis of Brunner, but Wayne certainly does not deserve being accused of "a total misunderstanding of liberalism and conservatism as systems of thought." I'll not engage in a deatailed rebutal of Don's remarks, but most of the views he cites as being conservative and NOT liberal (or leftist), including the decadence of the West, Blacl nationalism, etc, are characteristic of extremists on both sides. And some middle-of-the-rodents, too, come to think of it. In any event, you should have caught Don's misstatement of the Brunner quote (he is OUT of sympathy with intolerance, Don!) to save his the embarrasment of having it pointed out by the likes of me.

Mike Kring, PSC #1, Box 3147, Kirtland AFB, NM 87115 5/21/75

Speaking of movies, I've just recently seen two of the current crop of SF movies to creep around here. One was the infamous A BOY AND HIS DOG. And the other was a David "Kung Fu" Carridane epic entitled DEATH RACE 2000. Both were funny, one was inspired genius and the other was pure trashy fun. I don't think I have to tell you which was which.

A BOY AND HIS DOG is one of the best Science Fiction movies I've seen since A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, and in places, it trancends everything Kubrick was trying to say in ACO. For one thing, the movie follows the mood of the story with subtlety, letting the viewer take in this futuristic world with all of its terrible dirt and fear and pain. But it does it with humor, and the scenes with the dog are an absolute delight! The dog was perfect and the voice, ah, the voice, what can one say? It fits, by damn, that's what! A BOY AND HIS DOG is violent, sexist, filthy, and beautifuly, almost all at the same time. The relationship between Vic and Blood is brought sharper into focus in the film than the story, and that's what makes it work. All I can say is GO SEE IT!

DEATH RACE 2000 was a crock from the word go. It had cheesy effects and the cars were modified dune buggys, all except Carridane's, of course. His was a modified Corvette. Not too bad looking either. But the humor is definately low class, and I loved it. I get off on such bad jokes, and the race drivers were all played to the hilt, especially the guy who played Mean Joe Patrano. Lovely, and boy, is he ever mean! He scores his own pit crew. (See, scoring is done by running over people. Men and teenagers count as 40 points. Women 70. Anyone under five 90 points, and anyone over seventy is worth a wopping 100 points!) And the announcers to the race were great. They had the Howard Cosell imitator, and the top jock imitator, and Shelia Graham imitator. Loverly, indeed. But again, this isn't too high class, and all the scores are terrifically fakey. But that just adds to the fun. What got me about the movie was how many people tried to take it seriously. Makes me wonder at times.

About your idea for a one shot by Mike fans, count me one of the contributors if you ever go ahead with the idea. Not that I've got anything worthwhile to say (never do, you know), but the idea is intriguing. To say the least. All you would have to do is start it off for real, and make it with Glicksohn prominently displayed on the cover and all that. BNFs must be looked up to. Indeed. I imagine if you went ahead with a project like that, you'd have a hodge-podge of stuff, that's for sure. I tend to write wacky things off the top of my head, while you and Shoemaker tend to be a bit on the more serious side. And Glyer can be either one, just what strikes him at the moment. And Glicksohn, well, he's more of the tounge-in-cheek satire type. A bit of a mixture, you might say, ol' bean. And I'm sure there are other Mikes in fandom who'd be willing. All you've got to do is find 'em. (After all, it was your idea.)

And just what more can one say, eh? I mean, what with all those reviews of everything and all those nifty, super-keen-o letterhacks responding to your zine, what can a mere rank amateur in fandom do? Crawl away? Who knows?

Brett Cox, Box 542, Tabor City, NC 28463 6/3/75

It was one year ago today that I got my first copies of KPSS - issues 5&6 together in the same envelope. It was the last day of school then, which was a prelude to the most hideous, mixed-up summer of my life, ranging from the unbelievable low of summer school to the equally unbelievable high of Discon. Two days from now I'll be graduating from high school, which will be a prelude to God knows what. We've both come an incredibly long way in the past year - KPSS for the better, and me for - well, I haven't really decided yet.

On a purely physical level, KPSS 12 is far superior to all previous issues. The

interior illos are a bit faded, but not enough to spoil their effect.

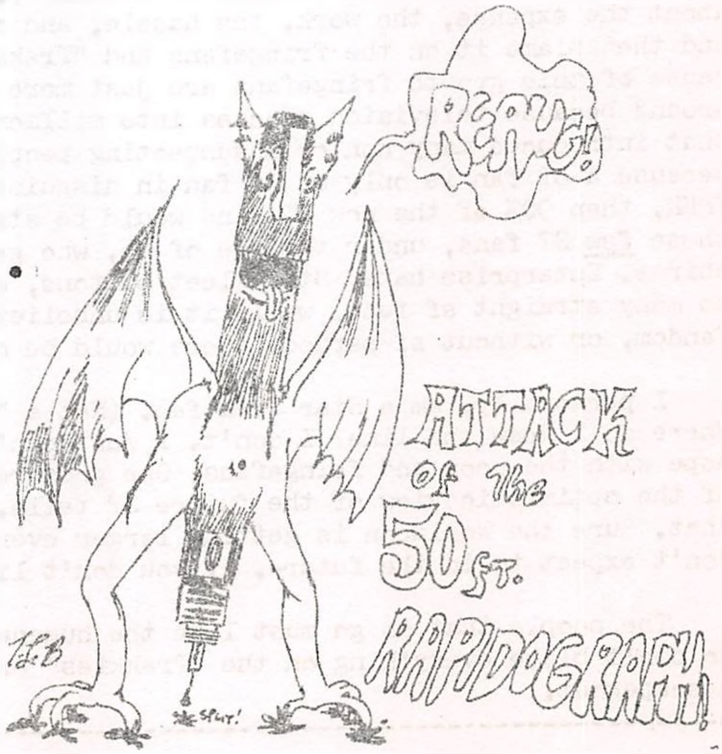
I suspect that many will object to your printing reviews of mundane movies, but I think it's a great idea. John M. Robinson does a good job -- keep him on. If nothing else, his column pointed out how behind I am in my moviegoing, since I've seen exactly none of the movies he reviewed. I just saw YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN this afternoon, as a matter of fact. I unreservedly recommend it as one of the funniest movies I've ever seen - maybe the funniest.

I always enjoy Don D'Ammassa's articles on the "minor" sf authors. I enjoyed this article on CL Grant even more than usual, since, for a change, I was familiar with the author in question.

No direct comment on Martin vs. D'Ammassa, since Don's done a pretty thorough job of demolishing Wayne's argument. Three asides, however: 1) From Joe deBolt's article on Brunner in OUTWORLDS 23, it seems that Brunner is in fact basically left-wing (or at least anti-military and pro-libertarian) in his personal views. 2) Being anti-Christian isn't anything new in literature - many of the sentiments Brunner expresses in his writings can be directly traced to the works of Mark Twain, for example. 3) Both Wayne and Don misinterpret Kruschev's statement "We will bury you." He was not saying "We will destroy you." Rather, he was using an old Russian proverb which, translated literally, means "We will be at your funeral" - ie., that the West will collapse of its own accord and Russia will be there at the funeral to bury it. (Therefore Kruschev was expressing a conservative position? You can draw almost any conclusion from an argument like this if you try hard enough.)

The Sirois cartoon on p. 30 should be preserved in clear lucite for future fannish generations.

Re your response to Roger Sween's loc: What's wrong with being in UCLA at 13 is that isn't a 13-year-old in the world who's emotionally prepared to face life as a college student. At least, I don't think there is. The hassles, jealousies, and general bad vibes (pardon the expression) that would arise from such a situation are croggling. On the other hand, a 13-year-old who's academically on a college level might grow equally nuts if held in a stifling "normal" course of study. Both scenarios are bad; it's just a question of which is worse. The whole question of advanced placement is a sticky one, anyway, I'm graduating



a year early from high school and the three of us (it's a small school) who're in the "accelerated program" (i.e., taking English III in summer school and then English IV plus whatever junior-level courses we need) have met with a definite resentment from the majority of the "regular" seniors. And we only skipped one year! Ghod knows what it would be like skipping high school altogether.

I'm afraid that I don't quite fit into Larry Downes' pattern. I don't come from a broken home, and although I've always been pretty much the smartest kid in my class (for what that's worth, which isn't a whole hell of a lot in my class) I've never really been considered a "prodigy". As for grades, well, I didn't go on a straight- A trip until this final year; past report cards always had at least one B (usually in whatever science course I happened to be stuck with at the time). His pattern doesn't fit everybody, but I'm glad he set it down on paper - maybe it did him some good.

I also disagreed with Larry's sf comments. I haven't read PROTECTOR, but I thought that RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA was excellent and that THE MAN WHO FOLDED HIMSELF wasn't that bad. Hmph - next thing you know, the tasteless bastard'll be saying bad things about Heinlein.

Terry Floyd: the main reason most "classic" literature is boring is because most of it was written when inflated style and general verbosity were the order of the day. Such stuff can't help but be boring to readers accustomed to the less dense styles of the late 20th century.

George Perkins, 1102 3rd St., Brookings, SD 57006 6/5/75

(I now refer to Bruce Arthur's "A Fable"). Why? How come sf fandom complains about the expense, the work, the hassle, and over-crowded cons (to name a few), and then blame it on the fringefans and "Trekkies"? Fandom itself is growing. Because of this growth fringefans are just more noticable. Sure, ST fandom is only around because television reaches into millions of homes with re-runs daily. And that introduces many non or unsuspecting people to the wonders of sf literature. Because a ST fan is only an sf fan in disguise. If there were no such show as STAR TREK, then 90% of the now ST fans would be straight sf fans. And then there are those few ST fans, under the age of 15, who go to an sf con, wearing... Spock shirts, Enterprise hats, Star Fleet buttons, and Vulcan ears. These few turn off so many straight sf fans, well, it is unbelievable! My point is, that without sf fandom, or without sf period, there would be no ST fandom.

I personally, am a Star Trek fan. (Not a "Trekkie") I am also a devoted sf fan. Where do I draw the line? I don't. I just can't see why an average sf fan can't cope with the neos and fringefans. One good reason I am a ST fan too, is because of the optimistic view of the future ST tells. Brotherhood, understanding and all that. Sure the Worldcon is getting larger every year. I don't go to them, and don't expect to in the future. If you don't like over-crowded cons, don't go.

The people that do go must like the hugeness, or can ignor it. Fandom is growing. So don't blame everything on the "Trekkies" or the other fringefans. That's just a scapegoat.

Did you hear about the guy who took his typewriter to the doctor because it missed a period?

Craig Hill, 220 Standish #1, Redwood, CA 94063 6/9/75

The Sween/Robinson movie reviews were somewhat disoriented from my natural thought process since I personally predict that SHAMPOO, FORTUNE, and SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES will most likely be the most thought provoking films this year (But, of course, there was hardly any reception under rated and hidden PARALAX VIEW in '74 - a unnoticed victim of underhype).

Even though "Two Glances" focused a glorious course of over generalization and pedanticism, both character substaniations when compared are worth thinking about, to say the least. A rarity to the bulk of his writing, Mr. Martin can hardly expect to triumphantly crusade over paper thin ice by using such inconsistencies as "Right-wing", "leftist", "super leftist", ad nausium. Even when random writing coincidentally discovers basic thoughts, specificity should maintain general viewpoints represented in paragraph to paragraph. But this is a matter of controversial paradox whereas Brunner sights unspecific poor writing (which "Taking A Breif Glance" inadvertantly encountered), "You also have to learn to pay attention to detail" (a quotation from Brunner about general writing style - Conesa's ZIMRI 7), Poul Anderson at the same time inanely conceeds, "I can't say my wish is for peace and freedom, because those once noble words have been too badly protituted by the Left". (Anderson response to DeBolt response of Brunner review in ALGOL #22,P 39). So in the adequate search of writing detail in dispair, a) One writer will generalize another writer as being a generalization (Mr. Martin), while b) another writer will substantiate a definite response in comparative detail (D'Ammassa), as c) another BNP writer abducts Mr. Brunner's theme of one of his books by using another generalization (Mr. Anderson in response to the theme in "The Sheep Look Up") as finally d) another writer asks for detail (That being John Brunner on detail in writing for writing- Gee, have you observed that Brunner and D'Ammassa are the only one's who don't use generalizationsto fill in the regular maintenance of consistency in writing?) Even Anderson may be sent to the purgatory!

Cy Chauvin, 17829 Peters, Roseville, Mich 48066 6/7/75

I'm puzzled by the Al Sirois drawing that takes my name in vain; have I called some zine a crudzine lately? But Al is a puzzling guy at best anyway, so...

There are a lot of Don's in fandom, too, you know - Don D'Ammassa, Don Keller, Don Ayres, Don Thompson, Donn Brazier...

There is some stuff in this issue that really isn't all that good, like Chris Hulse's article, those really shorty Robinson reviews (which Robinson, by the way?) - I disagree about HEROVIT'S WORLD, too. It isn't sf, but at best pyschological fantasy. Malzberg has also done much the same thing twice before in GATHER IN THE HALLS OF THE PLANETS and DWELLERS OF THE DEEP. These stories may seem sf because they are about sf fans and authors (and that's why I read them, and found them amusing), but I wouldn't vote them sf awards.

Really, a lot of the material in this issue seemed as though people wrote it because they felt obligated, rather than because they enjoyed doing it. The major exceptions were Ben Indick's affectionate review, and your own tribute at the be-

ginning of the zine. That was quite emotional, and true, and sincere...

Will Norris, 1073 Shave Road, Schenectady, NY, 12303 6/15/75

I don't think I could go see DEATHWISH and I hope it never comes on tv. I live near a drive-in and was out one night with a friend walking in the neighborhood. I made or had the misfortune of being in a good viewing place at the scene beginning with Bronson coming on three punks beating on someone. I watched as the punks apparently decided to beat Bronson up also. Then I watched in horror as Bronson gunned down the two white kids and chased the black kid. I presume he cut the black down also, but I tore myself away and rushed down the street to where I couldn't see. That tore at my guts and made me sick. I had the same reaction a week to two weeks (maybe more) before when I saw the tv movie about the FBI versus the KKK and saw the KKK shoot down the three civil rights workers. I hope to never see either movie again. As for Bronson...maybe it is an unfair reaction, but I don't want to see any film with Bronson in it--not even if someone will pay for it. What saddens me is that I understand NYC audiences rose from their seats and applauded the scenes where Bronson shoots down other people.

What is the solution? Will we have vigilantes roaming the streets, deciding law in the gun and the bullet? And doesn't Bronson's use of murder make him the same as the punks who beat a man to death? Also, what role should the movies play in crime and punishment? Should we not be repelled by violence and revenge and so on?

I would have rated DEATHWISH "X" just on the basis of that one scene. What was its rating? "R", "GP"? Maybe if I saw the whole thing, I would be caught up emotionally in the revenge aspect--but is that good? Should we allow our emotions to run us, producing perhaps another Adolf Hitler who vows to save the nation and our lives and property?

I don't advocate censorship. But if we are going to applaud this, then we, as a nation, need analysis. There's another side also. Is written literature any different from that portrayed on the screen? "The Executioner" is a series in which an ex-Green Beret goes gunning after the Mafia because his father is dragged into a loan shark deal, his sister protitutes herself to pay off the father's debt. When the father finds out what his daughter has done, he goes beserk and kills her, his wife, and seriously injures the Beret's younger brother, before committing suicide. Mack, the Beret comes back, finds out the truth, takes on the Mafia and begins wiping them out all over the world while the police make half-hearted attempts at stopping the man known as "the EXECUTIONER", while the Mafia frantically tries to stop him, and while the public generally cheers. Yet this is not as revolting as seeing the executions of the punks in living color. Not even the news of assassinations in print or death in print means as much as seeing in film or "live" on tv or cinematic screen. What is the solution and what can be done about criminals--that is the question posed. Also, how can we fulfill our responsibility to the victims--to prevent them from becoming victims--while honoring ideals?

I notice your advice to Terry re the high school paper. Maybe so, but there was a NY college instructor (two perhaps) who got canned because of a newspaper article (college) criticizing the administration over some family patronage caper--some contract went to the brother or some such of the college prez. Don't know what the latest scoop on that is. It really depends on where you're from and who you attack. In NY, you may attack whoever is not in power with almost impunity, providing you hone the edge of the blade you use. But beware the current administration. Tamanny

Hall lives in NY State.

C. L. Grant, 44 Center Grove Rd, Apt. 17T, Dover, NJ 07801 6/16/75

Other than the article on myself, a damn flattering thing which I will place honorably on my desk for all time (or until next Thursday, whichever comes first), I was pleased by the issue. Again, being a latecomer, I never know quite what anyone is talking about when they refer to issues past, but I really enjoyed the articles, reviews, etc. and wonder where the hell they've been all my life.

Writing is very much like working in a vacuum. Unless someone like you comes along and punctures a hole in my study wall, I never know whether my stories are well received, poorly received, received at all (the mail being what it is nowadays). For this alone, I would be eternally grateful. (that doesn't make sense. I don't think.) It is extremely nice to know that what drops into the published hopper does not vanish into the recycling machine.

One comment on the Brunner article by Mr. Martin. "Liberal", by definition, does not equal tolerance. Ask a liberal about a conservative. Also, Brunner is not just anti-Christian. At TORCON, Brunner made quite clear his belief that unless ALL organized religions (East and West) were abolished and replaced, man would get nowhere, nohow, and damned fast. When asked what kind of religion was needed, then, he said, "I'm working on it." Somebody better.

Terry Floyd, 506 Holman Lane, Canyon, TX 79015 7/16/75

Al Sirois' cover for KPSS 12 had me doubled over with laughter. I've always liked Al's art and witty ideas, but your cover is by far the best I've seen from him.

Behind the cover was plenty of good material, though it seemed somewhat pale in comparison to your annish. John M. Robinson's film reviews were adequate. Maybe I should say fine because for all their brevity, they summed up Robinson's attitude toward a film without going overboard in explaining all the "Deep philosophical meanings" included in, say, AIRPORT 1975. Also, I agreed with most of his opinions. But I must take exception with Robinson's views on THE TRIAL OF BILLY JACK. Perhaps I shouldn't comment on it at all because I didn't waste any money on it, but I was unfortunate enough to have to sit through its predecessor, BILLY JACK (Fourteen times to be exact. I was working at the theater at the time.) The original BJ is certainly the worst film I've seen that has achieved a popular 'hit' status. The acting (by mostly amateurs) was predominately bad. Even the four veteran actors I could recognize didn't perform very notably.

The photography was unforgivable. I'll never forget how obediently the boom microphone followed the villian all over the set in the drugstore sequence. The plot (and I use the term loosely) was about as believable and plausible as that of AIRPORT 1975.

The theater manager, my boss, was invited to a preview showing of TOBJ in Dallas where a rough cut (splice-edited; no music track or sound effects) was to be shown to a select audience of critics and theater managers last summer. He couldn't make

it and offered the invitation to me. With a little luck and a hell of a lot of money, I might have been able to make it, but I refused. I've never regretted that decision.

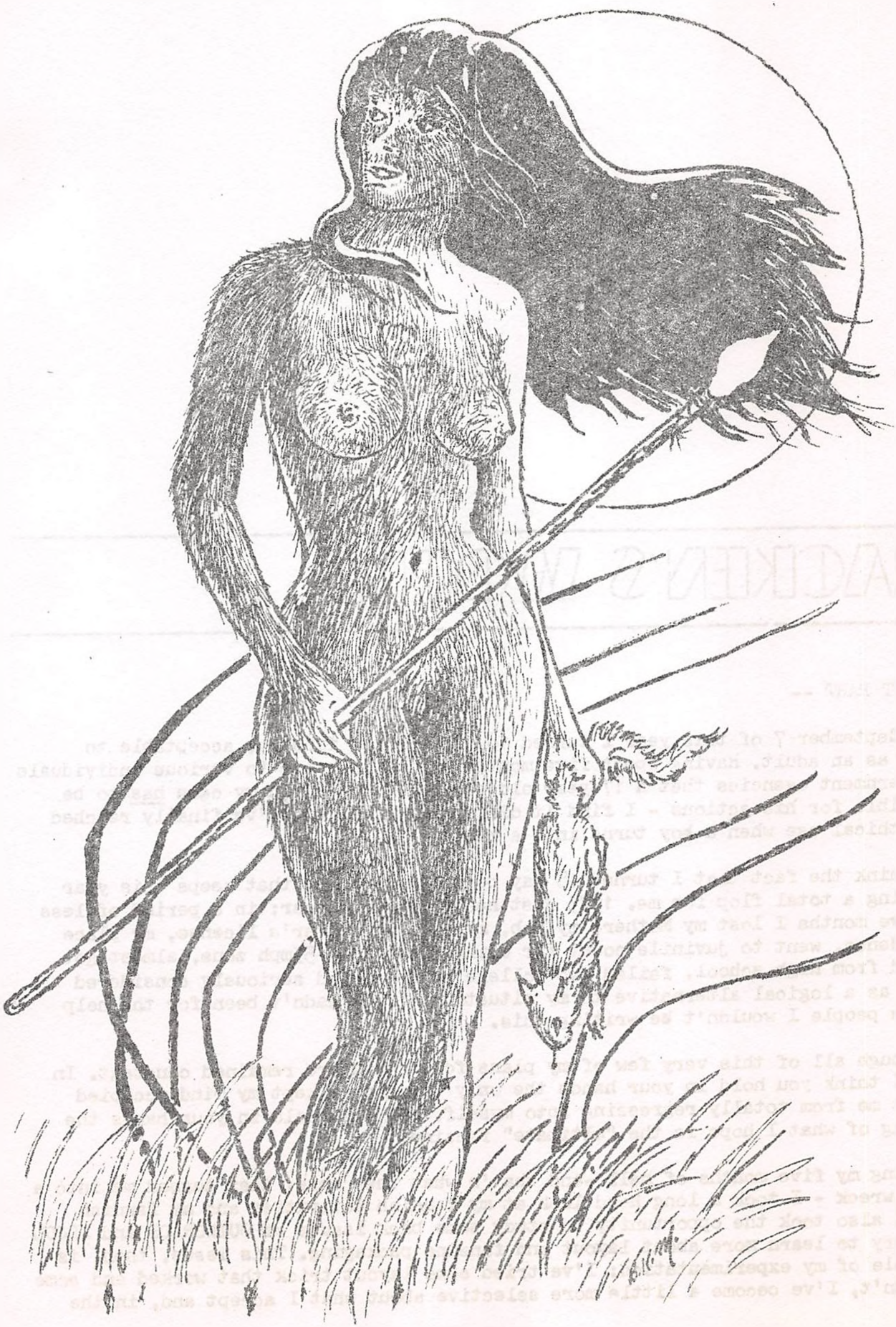
Roger Sween's views on current disaster movies reflect most of my own feelings about them. I have yet to see EARTHQUAKE, but I did catch TOWERING INFERNO some time ago. I didn't try to analyze it quite as deeply as Sween, but simply regarded it as entertainment. Slick, classy and expensive trash, but entertainment none the less. I mean, you're just asking for trouble when you build the world's tallest building in San Francisco near a major earthquake center and site of one of the world's most severe earthquakes.

I can find argument with your review of HELLSTROM'S HIVE. I didn't enjoy it as much as you seemed to. Herbert was having too much fun killing off his major characters rather than developing them. After the fifth or sixth government agent was snuffed out, I began to get bored. The ending served no purpose except to lead into an inevitable sequel. I couldn't believe that this came from the author of DUNE.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Also Heard From: Simon Agree, Sheryl Birkhead, Robert Bloch, Richard Brandt, Grant Canfield, Gil Gaier, Chris Hulse, Barry Kent Mackay, David McDonnell, Wayne W. Martin, Brad Parks, Jerry Pournelle, John Robinson, John M. Robinson, Bruce Townley, and probably others whose letters I lost in the move.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo



BRACKEN'S WORLD

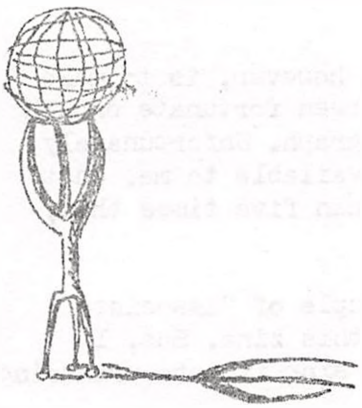
THE FIRST PART --

On September 7 of this year I turned 18 and am now, finally, acceptable to society as an adult. Having spent five months trying to prove to various individuals and government agencies that a 17-year old can be - in fact in my case has to be responsible for his actions - I find it difficult to believe I've finally reached that mythical age when a boy turns into a man.

I think the fact that I turned 18 may be the only thing that keeps this year from being a total flop for me. 1975 just hasn't been my year; in a period of less than five months I lost my Mother, my job, my car, my driver's license, my place of residence, went to juvinile court for doing 90mph in a 55mph zone, almost got expelled from high school, failed two college courses, and seriously considered suicide as a logical alternative to my situation. If it hadn't been for the help of a few people I wouldn't be writing this.

Through all of this very few of my plans for the future remained constant. In truth, I think you hold in your hands the only thing that kept my mind occupied and kept me from totally regressing into myself. You also hold in your hands the beginning of what I hope is the "ultimate" fanzine.

During my five months of hell -and that's what they were; they turned me into a nervous wreck - I took a long hard look at my fannish activities and my fannish goals. I also took the opportunity to study some back issues of OUTWORLDS and ALGOL and to try to learn more about layout and fanzine packaging. This issue, then, is an example of my experimentation; I've tried some layout trick that worked and some that didn't, I've become a little more selective about what I accept and, in the



MIKE BRACKEN

process, have cleaned out my backlog of written material, I've increased my print run and have decided to advertise and accept advertisement. In short, I've decided to try going the route of OUTWORLDS and others.

I may be able to do it, I may not.But either way I'll at least be able to say I tried. What I'd like from you, then, as my readers, my friends, and my subscribers, is your encouragement, your contributions and your money. If I ever find myself lacking in any of these categories the whole thing could fall to pieces.

I don't know what to say about this issue except that it's the biggest and best ever and that it's definately a step in the direction I want to go. I only hope that future issues will follow the general trend of improvement that has been going on for the last two or three, and that by the time I hit issue 18 or so KNIGHTS will be one of the fanzines you think of when someone askes you to name the "best".

THE SECOND PART --

Stated simply; I want to win a Hugo. But, more importantly than that, I want to produce the best fanzine I know how.

Those of you who've been with KNIGHTS since the beginning know that with every issue, the best fanzine I know how to produce is far superior to what has gone before. This issue, which has taken fibe months to produce, is another step forward, I think. Overall, it has the best layout, the best articles, and the best art of any I've used. In the overall view, I think this issue takes the number one spot hands down.

And since it is changing, even though the change is gradual, I think it is time

for the title to change too. Starting with this issue, the title of this fanzine will be shortened to, simply, KNIGHTS. KNIGHTS is a title I've thought about long and hard and I've come to the conclusion that it is the best of all possible choices; it retains the flavor of the old title while, at the same time, meeting the needs of my everchanging publication.

Of course, a simple title alteration isn't going to be a miraculous, award-winning feat in itself. If I'm ever going to win that Hugo, I'm not only going to have to improve the quality of this zine ten-fold, but I'm going to have to increase the mailing list at least five-fold. And for every person who joins the mailing list as a trader or a contributor, I'm going to need two subscribers. If I am to accomplish this, I'm going to have to begin using advertisements in other fan and semi-pro zines.

No, I'm not trying to "sell out". What I am trying to do, however, is to make this zine come closer to paying for itself. In the past I've been fortunate enough to have access to free stencils, paper, ink, and a good mimeograph. Unfortunately, I graduated from high school and these things are no longer available to me. What I used to produce for fifty dollars will now cost me better than five times that, a cost my unemployed posketbook cannot handle.

Of course, if I thought it feasible, I would take on a couple of "Associate Editors" who would contribute financially to the progress of this zine. But, I think anyone with the money to invest here, would much rather sink it into producing thei own fanzine, and I don't blame them.

I want to win a Hugo, and if I have to sell my soul to do it, all I ask is a good price...

THE THIRD PART --

As you can see by looking at the content page KNIGHTS seems to have picked up one columnist and lost another. Steve Beatty's fanzine review column isn't here and I haven't heard from Steve in more than five months. The column's still his if he wants it, otherwise I'll let fanzine reviews in this fanzine go the way of the dinosaurs: extinction.

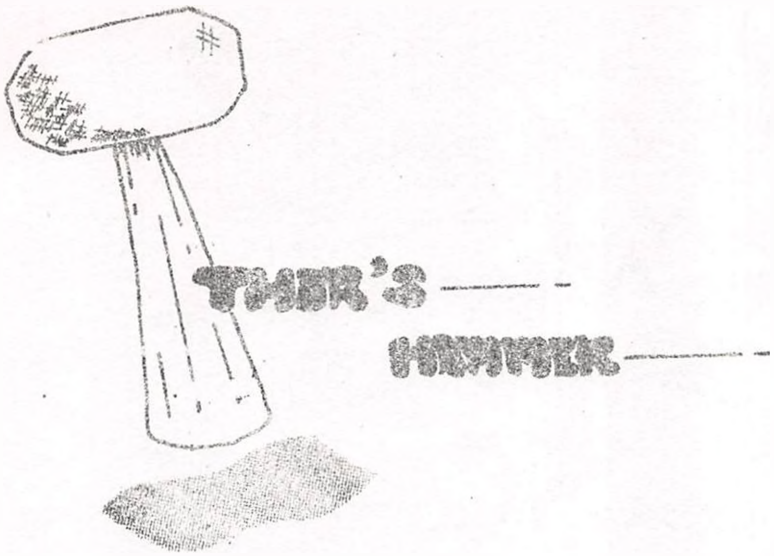
C.L. Grant makes his first appearance in these pages with the first installment of his column, "From The Fire On The Mountain". At this point he's just checking out the water before he plunges in all the way, and we can be prepared to expect almost anything from him in the future.

If you're interested in the title of C.L. Grant's column, he explains it thusly, "The title refers to the Grant clan crest which is a three-peaked mountain each flaming like mad. Probably the fire's to hide the evidence of horse-stealing the clan did 'way back when."

THE FOURTH PART --

Despite what it says in the third part, Steve's column did arrive and it follows this. However, you wont find it listed in the contents, nor will you find Sheryl Birkhead credited with the lovely logo. Tis truely my mistake and I hope it doesn't inconvenience Roger Sween when he goes to complie it in his Fan Publishing Record.

I'll be back after this pause...



by Steve Beatty

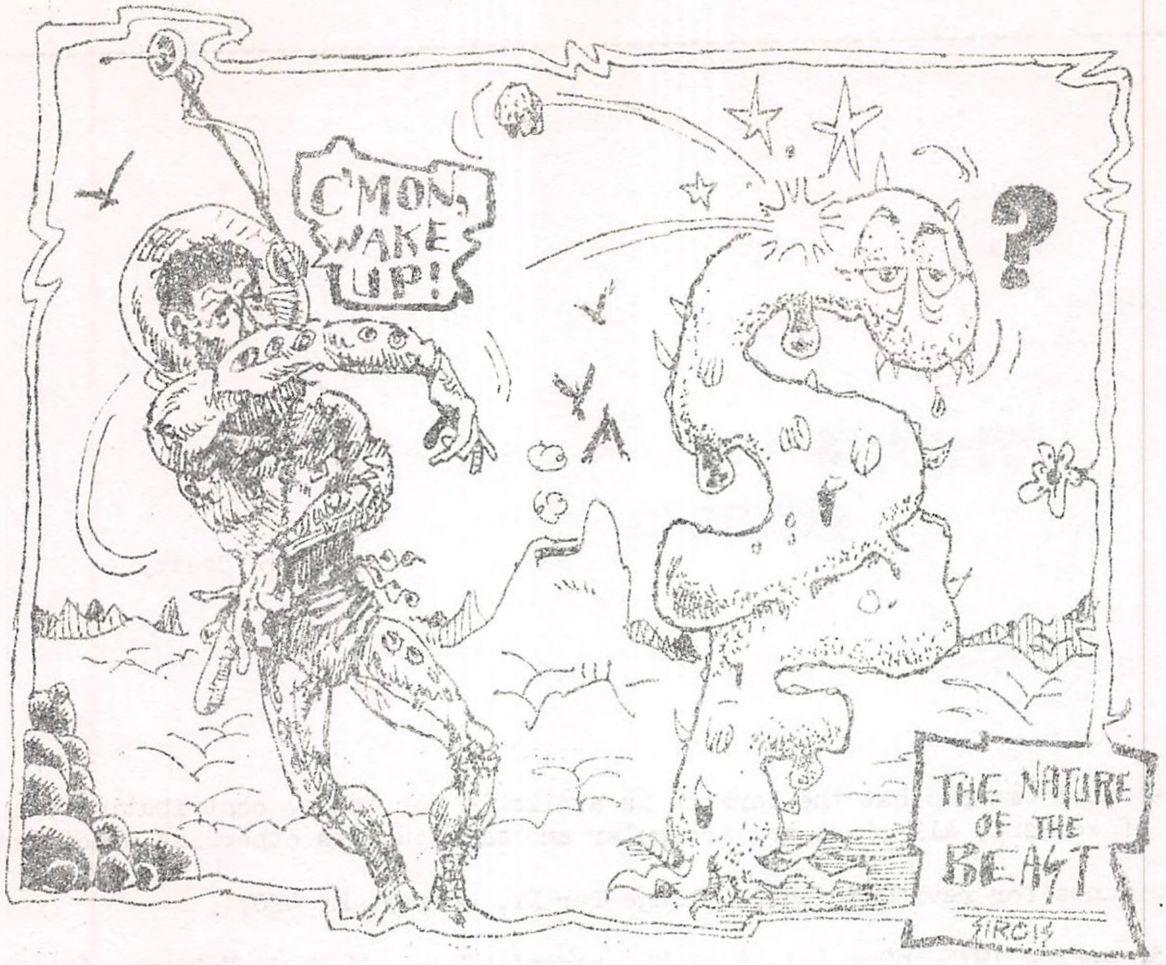
"The usual" means that the fanzine is available for trade, contributions, and letters of comment. All zines are irregular and mimeo unless otherwise specified.

Send zines for review to 1662 College Ter Dr, Murray, KY 42071.

EMPIRE 3, spring 1975, 80pp ($1, 4/#3.75, contributions; Mark J. McGarry, 631-E S Pearl St, Albany, NY 12202) McGarry's main aims for this magazine are to publish quality amateur fiction and to enable these writers to receive feedback on their stories. He achieves the first goal quite well. There are two stories in this issue; one is 30 pages long--much longer than most fanzine fiction--thus there is much more room for character developement, plot conflicts and entanglements, and so on. With a 14-page lettercol, there is plenty of criticism of the last issue's fiction. There are also a poem actually fit to read aloud, a sercon article, and book and fanzine "evaluations" that don't pretend to be anything more than they are. EMPIRE should be of interest to anyone who likes to read fan fiction.

GUARD THE NORTH, unnumbered, undated, 42pp (most of the usual; Daniel Say, Box 65583, Vancouver, B.C. V5N 5K5, CANADA) This magazine would be improved by some editorial presence. There is no editorial, lettercol, pagination, or informative colophon. Judging by appearances, it would seem that the editor mimeographed two long articles, stapled them together with a few reviews, and called it a fanzine. It doesn't hang together. However, the contents individually have merit. There is a bibliography of French SF and a report on V-con, a regional convention. This report consists mainly of summaries made from tapes of the speeches and panels.

KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE 1, July 1975, 46pp ($1, letters, trades; quarterly; Mike and Pat Meara, 61 Borrowash Rd, Spondon, Derby DE2 7QH, ENGLAND) After folding their genzine LURK, the Mearas have begun this well-done and enjoyable personalzine. It is in diary format--book and fanzine impressions (not really reviews) are intermingled with fannish and mundane adventures and letter excerpts. Quotes from old issues of HYPHEN are used as interlines -- "If there's no God, who pulls up the next Kleenex?" Mike is a fine humorous writer, and he tells some hilarious tales here. Better not read KFN behind a textbook during class--you'll look rather strange rolling on the



---

floor, weakened with laughter. There is no art to speak of, but the writing is so friendly and fun that one can read the zine straight through without feeling any need to relieve one's eyes from the text.

NICKELODEON 1, undated, 52pp offset ($2, 4/$7, or by arrangement; quarterly; Tom Reamy, 1131 White, Kansas City, MO 64126) This is without a doubt the most visually impressive fanzine ever published. From the magnificent front cover through the lavishly illustrated pages to the multicolor back cover, NICKELODEON has a more professional appearance than any prozine (except the former slick format VERTEX). Big name pros and fans contribute well-written serious articles. But everything is not sercon--these are counterbalanced by a group of tounge-in-cheek features (biography, poety, and fiction) on "M.M. Moamrath," an exaggerated Lovecraft. Reamy introduces fannish matters in his editorial, including Fanzine Editorial Topic Number One: what went wrong with his old fanzine and what is planned for future issues.

However, I can't help wondering how it would be if most of the photographs were replaced by more words. I'm not especially excited by superb graphics, and in particular I don't see the point of a centerfold in which a neo-pro bares everything and has staples in his wrists. If most of the art were discarded and the text mimeographed, the result would be a zine that you would expect to pay about 50¢ for. Nevertheless, from any standpoint, NICKELODEON is a monument in fanzine publishing, one that you can't miss.

PAN 21, July 1975, 43pp (35¢, trade; Steve and Binker Huges, 5831 Hillside Dr, Doraville, GA 30340) With this issue an apazine is turned into a genzine. Most of the contributions are by Atlanta area fans. They include serious SF and movie reviews and articles (one is on laser pistols--they aren't possible yet), a con report (which avoids the usual "I did this then I did that" style to give details of the panel discussions), and a short story (no comment--I haven't read it yet). The repro is excellent, with illos in color.

UNIVAX AND UNICORNS 1, undated, 10pp reduced offset (50¢ or the usual; Melanie J. Solt, 406 Third Ave NW, Pocahontas, IA 50574) The contents of U&U are along the same lines as those of PAN, but the zine seems to be a collage of short pieces rather than an integrated magazine. Of course this is a first issue; presumably an editorial slant will become apparent, and it will be easier to attempt a fair review of the zine.

--Steve Beatty

THE FIFTH PART --

Recently, while preparing this issue, I completely revised my mailing list. In doing so, I'm afraid I short-changed a few people who should actually be receiving more issues than my new mailing list shows. If you think you are one of those people (you can tell by checking your mailing label; the number after your name is that of your last issue) write me a note saying so, and while you're at it, you might as well turn it into a full-fledged LoC.

As you can tell, the price of this issue is twice that of last issue. The reason is obvious; this issue is twice as big as last issue. Future prices will operate on a sliding scale depending on the size of the issue, but no issue will costs less than $1.00. Any subscriptions purchased in advance will get every issue purchased, no matter what the cover price is.(hopefully this will encourage subscriptions).

As I said in an earlier paragraph, the number after your name is that of your last issue. If a ? is present it means we trade all-for-all, or have some similar aragement and as long as you're publishing, you'll be receiving this. If a ! is after your name it means that you will more than likely receive every issue I publish because you're someone special (relative, friend - fannish or otherwise - or a shoulder to lean on in hard times).

And thus endth the thirteenth issue of KNIGHTS...

-- Mike Bracken

WHAT'S THE BEST FANZINE BEING PUBLISHED TODAY?

More than likely you answered with OUTWORLDS, NICKELODEON, or any number of similar titles. The name KNIGHTS probably didn't enter your mind. Why? Because KNIGHTS is one of fandom's unpretentious fanzines; lost, until recently, intthe backwoods of fandom with a circulation barely pressing 120 - hardly enough to give Richard Geis the shakes.

KNIGHTS has never been able to call to mind the list of Pros that ALGOL does, but has, instead, remained content to use the best works of a steady number of contributors. KNIGHTS 13, the September 1975 issue, for example, contains articles by Don D'Ammassa, C.L. Grant, David McDonnell, Ben Indick, and many others probably unfamiliar to you.

Besides some short fiction and the usual book and movie reviews, the contents include: "Hal Clement: The Alien Engineer," "Bradbury In Depth: 'The Pedestrian' and 'The Murderer'," "Confessions Of A Hack Reader," and C.L. Grant's column, "From The Fire On The Mountain".

Subscribe to KNIGHTS and spend your days reading. Subscribe to four issues for only $4 or you may try a sample of issue 13 for only $1.50. Make checks payable and mail to Mike Bracken, 3918 North 30th, Tacoma, WA 98407.