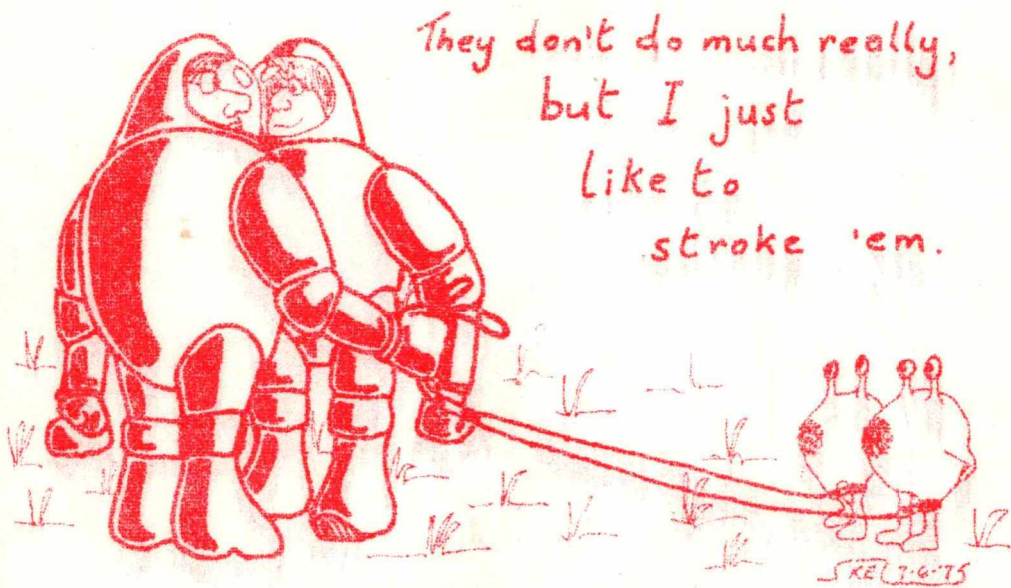


3

KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE



GOSHWOW, SENSEOFCHUNDER!

Your amazing free gift this time appears to be a set of wine and spirits labels. We're not sure about this, since the only thing we know about the originals is that they were found in a Klein bottle in the dustbin of a well-known London hotel. Authorship has been assigned tentatively to Skel, the well-known Denebian artist and fan-publisher.

THE HISTORY OF THE

INDIAN NATIONS

OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

FROM THE FIRST DISCOVERY TO THE PRESENT

BY JOHN R. SWANWICK

OF THE BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1878

THE HISTORY OF THE INDIAN NATIONS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT FROM THE FIRST DISCOVERY TO THE PRESENT BY JOHN R. SWANWICK OF THE BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY WASHINGTON, D. C. 1878

Oh, it's you again, is it? Well, you may wish to know that this is not in fact KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE 3. Due to pogroms beyond our control, we give you instead CONFESSIONS OF A PAPER-CLIP DESIGNER ("Twists and turns - grips right to the bend" - PAPER-CLIP DESIGN REVIEW; "Terrible - no penetration whatsoever" - STAPLERS' GAZETTE), by G. G. Bollard, as told to Mike and Pat Meara, 61 Borrowash Road, Spondon, Derby, DE2 7QH, England. Copies of this specially limited edition are available for letters (unused ones only, please), most other such publications in trade (including vintage ones), and dollar bills (\$1 per copy). It is Polecat Publication number.....aaagghh, no!!!.....13, and the print run this issue is 150 copies ~~ppp~~ ~~ppp~~.

And now, an important message for would-be reviewers of this and all subsequent issues: please don't. A suitably insane paraphrasing of the details of availability shown above, mentioning the fact that KFN is a quarterly person-zine, is fine, but no opinions please, good or bad. I'd prefer those in a letter. Those who thwart my whim in this instance may not get the chance to do it again. Filthy whim-thwarters oughta be shot anyway, muttermuttermumble.

Interlineations thish come from Art Wesley's & Norm Brown's FILLER again, and also from a remarkable collection of jokes, puns, aphorisms, essays and ghod-knows-what that I picked up in a second-hand bookshop recently. It's called THOUGHTS THUNK ON A CROSSTOWN BUS, by one John Haft, and published by Ambient Press (New York, 1971), which I assume to be some sort of little-magazine publisher. Anybody heard of this? More from it next time, anyway.

WHY YOU'VE BEEN SPONNED ON THIS TIME:

Alyson ABRAMOWITZ (ALVEGA 1); John ALDERSON (CHAO 17); Jan APPELBAUM (X); Bruce D. ARTHURS (GODLESS 11); Mike BAILEY (X); Frank BALAZS (T); John BANGSUND (T); Doug BARBOUR; Rich BARTUCCI (X); Steve BEATTY (X); Harry & Irene BELL (GRIMLING BOSCH 4); Eric BENTCLIFFE (L*); John BERRY (X); Sheryl BIRKHEAD (L*); Gray BOAK (L*); Pamela BOAL (L); Bill BOWERS (OUTWORLDS 24); Richard BRANDT (X); Donn BRAZIER (TITLE 43); Bill BREWIDING; Ned BROOKS (ICITM 17); John BROSINAN (SCABBY TALES 1); Linda BUSHYAGER (KARASS 16 17 18); Ian BUTTERTH; Ed CAGLE (L*); Larry CARMODY (ETERNITY ROAD 3); Terry CARR; Graham CHARNOCK (VIBRATOR 2 3); Ken CHEBLIN; Stuart & Rosie CLARK (EGLADIL 3); Sue CLARKE (FORERUNNER QUARTERLY 1); Dave COCKFIELD (T); Eli COHEN; Ed CONNOR (T); Don D'AMMASSA (L); Bill DANMER (X); Frank DENTON (T); Stephen DORNEMAN (WELTANSCAUUNG 2); Andrew & Ruth DUNLOP (T); Martin EASTERBROOK (OUR FAIR CITY 3); Gary FARBER (DRIFT 1); Bryn FORTEY (T); Jackie FRANKE (DILEMMA 9); Keith FREEMAN (L*); Gil GALER (L/GUYING GYRE 4/VERT 1); Mike GIBBERT (X); Barry GILLAM (X); Mike GLICKSCHN (L*/XENIUM 2.5); Mike GLYER (X); David GORMAN (X); Roberta GRAY (T); Kevin HALL; Fred HASKELL (T); Patrick HAYDEN (THANGORODRIM 25); Paul HUDSON (T); Terry HUGHES (MOTA 12); Ben INDICK (IBID 12); Rob JACKSON (MAYA 9); Terry JEEVES (ERG 52 53); Dave & Mardee JENRETTE (TABEBUIAN 23 24 25); Keith JUSTICE (UNIVERSE 8.75); Jerry KAUFMAN (SPANISH INQUISITION 6); Leroy KETTLE (TRUE RAT 6); Mike KRING (X); Jenny LANEY (X); Eric LARSEN (X); Gerald LAWRENCE (L); Denny LIEN (L*); Eric LINDSAY (L/GEGENSCHEIN 23 24 25); Ethel LINDSAY (SCOTTISHE 70); Jim LINWOOD; Dave LOCKE (AWRY 9); Sam LONG (L); Frank LUNNEY (TR); Hank & Lesleigh LUTTRELL (T); Shayne McCORMACK (X); Wayne MacDONALD (L); Christine McGOWAN (X); Loren MacGREGOR (X); Barry Kent MacKAY (C); Ian MAULE (L*); Jeff MAY (X); Eric MAYER (L*); Jim MEADOWS III (STAR TREK TODAY 6); Don MILLER (T); Tom MORLEY (MARTIAN CORFLU); Joseph NICHOLAS(I);

Will NORRIS (L*/HEADS WILL ROLL 1); Jodie OFFUTT (X); Pauline PALMER (WILD FENNEL 11); Darroll PARDOE (STULTICIAE LAUS 2 3 4); Brian PARKER (PARKER'S PATCH 2); Dick PATTEN (T); Roy PEACOCK (L); Bruce PELZ (L*); Dave PIPER (E*); Graham POOLE (SPI 4); Pete PRESFORD (MALFUNCTION 8); Denis QUANE (NftCD 13); Mary REED (L*); Sandra RICHARDSON (X); Keith RICHMOND (UGLY DUCKLING 1); G. D. RIPPINGTON (TITAN 1); Peter ROBERTS (T); Tom ROBERTS; Dave ROWE (L*/news-NATIONAL 26); Jessica Amanda SALMONSON (L*); Daniel SAY (X); Jeff SCHALLIES (X); Paul & Cas SKELTON (L*/C/INFERNO 9/THE ZINE WITH NO NAME 1); Jeff & Ann SMITH (KYBEN 12); Rick SNEARY (X); Norbert SPEHNER (REQUIEM 6); Andrew STEPHENSON; Philip STEVENSON-PAYNE (L); Alan & Elke STEWART; Mac STRELKOV (? 5.75); Sydney USFA (X); Roy TACKETT (L*/DYNATRON 63); Don THOMPSON (X); Victoria VAYNE (T); Roger WADDINGTON (X); Keith WALKER (FANZINE FANATIQUE 12 14); Harry WARNER Jr. (L*); Elst WEINSTEIN (X); Robert WHITAKER (THE HUNTING OF THE SMARK 3); Janet WILD (X); Janice WILES; Ian WILLIAMS (GOBLIN'S GROTTO 2); Susan WOOD (X); Peter WRIGHT (L*/C).

KEY: C = you contributed usable artwork.

L = you wrote a letter or postcard, possibly held over for nextish.

L* = you wrote a letter, part of which appears herein.

T = we trade, but I haven't had anything from you this quarter.

X = your last issue unless you a) respond (males)

b) make me an indecent suggestion (females)

c) jump off a cliff (Jim Whim-Thwarted)

Names of zines in brackets are self-explanatory; nothing after your name means you've laced in the past but not this time.....or that I've gone and got the whole thing round me neck, as usual.

BOOKS: Mark ADLARD - MINTFACE (N) 45; Brian ALDISS - THE EIGHTY-MINUTE HOUR (N) 44; Greg BENFORD - DEEPER THAN THE DARKNESS (N) 53; Bertam CHANDLER - THE COILS OF TIME (N) 23; Louis CHARBONNEAU - DOWN TO EARTH (N) 36; Edmund COOPER - VOICES IN THE DARK (C) 54; L. Sprague DE CAMP & Fletcher PRATT - THE CASTLE OF IRON (N) 46; Lester DEL REY - MAROONED ON MARS (N) 36; Philip K. DECK - DOCTOR FUTURITY (N) 54; Thomas M. DISCH - 102 H-BOMBS (C) 37 and ECHO ROUND HIS BONES (N) 44; Harlan ELLISON - DOOMSMAN (N) 38; Philip Jose FARMER - FLESH (N) 85; Ron GOULART - GHOST BREAKER (C) 57; Harry HARRISON - THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT (N) 55; Philip E. HIGH - THE TIME MERCENARIES (N) 34; Lee HOFFMAN - TELEPOWER (N) 32; Laurence M. JANIFER - SLAVE PLANET (N) 42; John KIPPAX & Dan MORGAN - 'VENTURER 12' series (N): A THUNDER OF STARS 76; SEED OF STARS 76; THE NEUTRAL STARS 62; WHERE NO STARS GUIDE 78; Sterling E. LANIER - HERO'S JOURNEY (N) 78; Marghanita LASKI - THE VICTORIAN CHAISE-LONGUE (N) 36; J. T. McINTOSH - WORLD OUT OF MIND (N) 58; Alexei PANSHIN - MASQUE WORLD (N) 35; Kit PEDLER & Gerry DAVIS - THE DYNOSTAR MENACE (N) 85; R. C. SHERRIFF - THE CATAclysm (N) 74; Robert SILVERBERG - THORNS (N) 85; Jack WILLIAMSON - SEETEE SHIP (N) 44.

N.B.: The two-digit numbers refer to Gil Gaier's PPTN evaluation system.

ART: Front cover & p102 Skel
Back cover Peter Wright

P.S.: This marks a slow, painful step nearer my ideal fanzine. Nextish will be one more step as it won't have book reviews (apart from publishers' review copies) or fanzine reviews. Say 20pp maximum from now on.

.....I had the feeling something was missing, y'know? Some indefinable thing that I just couldn't put my defining finger on. Worried me a lot, it did. Couldn't sleep at night. Couldn't sleep during the day either, which is worse. Then, when all seemed lost (as they used to say in those romantic novels of yesteryear) an oblong of white cardboard fell through the letter-box, and everything into place along with it:

Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ont., M6P 2S3, Canada.....

Sorry Mike, I know you were just about to get going there, but I really must interrupt to correct a possible misunderstanding which may have arisen as a result of what I just wrote. I didn't for one moment mean to suggest that Mike Glicksohn was an oblong of white cardboard. Not at all. That would have been ridiculous. Cardboard he certainly is, but distinctly humanoid in general shape. Not oblong at all. And he's three-dimensional! How about that? In fact, it's only if you look very carefully that you can see the 'FOLD H.....H' at all. And the 'PASTE HERE' is almost invisible under all that hair.

Just my little joke, Mike, hahaha. I know you're as real as the next man, really. I think.

Anyway, you were saying.....?

Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ont., M6P 2S3, Canada.....

Oh. Ah. Sorry again, Mike, but there's just one other little thing I ought really to set right before you really get into your stride, as it were. Another thing I also didn't mean to suggest was that you yourself, in person, were the 'something missing' from KfN 2. An interesting idea, that, but rather impractical. Even with a circulation as low as 150, each reader would still only get about a pound of you, and under the new postal rates, best frying steak would be nearly as cheap, in the long run. Besides, I'd have to buy a cleaver. Or maybe the butcher would lend me one? Laser beams? (It worked for Goldfinger.) No no no, the whole idea's ridiculous. And think of all the blood..... On second thoughts, don't think of all the blood. Don't even think of any of it. Ugh.

This time for real, Mike; no more interruptions, I promise:

Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ont., M6P 2S3, Canada:

"Dear Pike & Mat: The drawback of going away for an entire summer is that you get ten weeks behind in reading and answering fanzines and have to settle for mere postcards instead of brilliant letters filled with insightful penetrating critical comment. But what the fuck, a trip to Australia is worth such a sacrifice any year. Do want to tell you that I got your new zine, though, and I'd love to give a hand to your Knockers, which clearly deserve all the support they can get. Careful perusal of this epochal first issue has revealed to me that

while your D-cup is not as yet running over, many of the pages are exactly the same size except for those that aren't and they are somewhat different. A masterful stroke, I'm Shaw. As to your Reality Tester, I missed its point but I've always been a believer in the old adage that "The pin is the lowest form of tit" which is only to be expected I guess in a fanzine struggling to keep abreast of its times. Which were 2:12 am and 7:35 pm, by the way, and you mist them both. Still, if at any time I can be of service to you, forget it, because I don't play tennis anyway. I did read your fanzine, buy the whey despite the abcess of golden locs, but I can't imagine that being of interest to your readers, not at the current interest rates anyway. Hmmm. I wonder if these prolonged twelve hour periods of abstinence from alcohol are affecting me atoll?"

Very probably. No man is an island, after all. Neither is a whisky bottle, come to that, and a good thing too, because I can't swim, and that would be about the only thing that would make me want to learn.

So now you know what that 'something missing' was. It only just missed, too, by a couple of days or so, which was damned inconsiderate of you Mr. Glicksohn if I may say so and I shall expect better next time with none of these feeble excuses about trips to Australia. Hah! Australia indeed! Everybody knows that it's cardboard as well.

Anyway, Cas, at least this issue is now a proper fanzine, okay?

There is nothing worse than standing in the draught of an open mind.

- - - - - CHARLES BURBEE

THE TOWERING INFERNO I SAW.....

7.10

.....is probably not the one you're thinking of. You remember, the one about the Stockport faneds who pile up all the copies of their latest issue into a big stack, then set fire to them in a fit of gafia. No, the one I saw was only the one about the burning skyscraper. But it was still pretty good, with Paul Newman below par but still adequate as the architect, Steve McQueen as good as ever as the fire chief, and Richard Chamberlain giving a good performance as the son-in-law whose cost-cutting started the whole business. The special effects were really excellent, but what really gripped me (and the majority of the audience) was the tremendous tension generated by the action sequences. I've always been scared of heights, and the scenes with the breeches buoy slung across from a neighbouring building, and the scenic elevator being lowered by helicopter, had me quite literally shaking in my shoes. I don't think any other film has ever induced such a powerful reaction in me. They made a mistake by having an intermission, though: though the cinema was unusually full, they had to make a bit extra by selling ices etc. I've never heard such an "Aaaa:!!" of disappointment as the lights went up, and it took a while to rebuild the tension afterwards. The ending (which I won't reveal in case you haven't seen the film yet) strained my credulity a bit, and the moralising in which the main characters indulge, just to make

sure that all the dimboes in the audience had really got the message, made rather a sour note to end on. On the whole, though, it was a memorable and enjoyable entertainment.

THIS LOOKS LIKE A GOOD PLACE FOR IT.....

.....a grovelling apology, that is. But why should I apologise all on my own when I can drag you lot into it? Let's see how you make out in this little test:

Q: What is Frank Denton's wife's first name?

A: i) Anna Jo

ii) Mary Jo

Okay then. Those of you who answered ii), as I did on KFN 2, p50, are WRONG, and are just as cretinous as me. Those who answered i) are right (cleverclogs) and are therefore probably less cretinous than me. Those who yawned and ignored the whole thing are certainly very much less cretinous than any of us. But watch it, that's all. I have a rotten memory for names (and most other things except titles of dirty books and single malts), nevertheless it pisses me off when someone gets my name wrong, so whether or not you feel the same way, I apologise.

Mind you, if I had a quid for each different mis-spelling of 'Meara' I'd seen, I could afford the down-payment on an IBM Selectric.

Gentlemen prefer blondes and the feeling is mutual

CLOSE TO CRITICAL - 4

9.10

The books have been allowed to pile up a bit, so fairly brief comments are in order, I think. VOICES IN THE DARK is a collection of Edmund Cooper's short stories; early stuff, of course, because he sticks to novels these days. I remember reading a comment of Cooper's somewhere, the gist of which was that he wrote short stories in order to practise and prepare to write novels. Fair enough then that this collection isn't very good, and curious that the sf stories (only six out of fourteen) read like excerpts from novels, like episodes in a story rather than complete stories in their own right. The non-sf items are much better; really well written in some cases.

THE CASTLE OF IRON by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt is another in their Mathematics of Magic series, following on from the two stories in THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER. Briefly, I enjoyed the present book much less, because the idea and the characters didn't seem strong enough to support another book, and I'm not at all familiar with ORLANDO FURIOSO, on which it seems to be based. Boring, I found it. Maybe I wasn't in the mood, or something.

THE COILS OF TIME is the first Bertram Chandler I've read. I suppose it's possible that in a year or two I'll have recovered sufficiently to try something else. Tedious plot, paper characters with incomprehensible motivation,

.....aw hell, why go on? Maybe he needed the money.

It's rather sad that by writing SEPTEE SHIP (and SEETEE SHOCK, which I haven't read yet) Jack Williamson has effectively ruined the subject of contraterrene matter for future writers. There's a lot of interesting 'fact' and speculation here, especially in regard to the idea of time-flow reversal, but the story-line and characterisation are pretty cruddy, even by 1943 standards. As far as I know, these remain the definitive works on CT matter, and it's a damn shame.

Paul Skelton was rather surprised when I panned Louis Charbonneau's CORPUS EARTHLING a couple of issues back, because he'd remembered it as being quite good. So he lent me the same author's DOWN TO EARTH, to see what I thought of that. And what I think is that it's better, but only just. There's this family, see (father, mother, daughter, adopted son) looking after Emergency Landing Station 17 all on their ownsomes. But they don't mind, because back on Earth the rat-race is too tough, what wit' all the overcrowding. Their job is too keep a watch for spaceships in distress in their area, and a crucial part of the plot requires that someone is watching the 'screens' at all times. Baloney! Automatic sensing and recording devices and alarms would be far more efficient than any bored, half-asleep human being. Also, the dome under which they live really contains a wilderness of life-support machinery etc., but to make it seem more homely, computer-controlled projections of Earth scenes are made onto a complex system of screens masking the equipment. Charbonneau goes to great lengths to make this realistic and workable, and fails dismally. This wouldn't matter too much, except it too is an integral part of the plot. (Earth has been destroyed, you see, and the boy's real father arrives to take his son away.) Ye Ghods, the plot has enough holes to drive a Ringworld through! The writing's improved a bit, though; at least there aren't any thrusting breasts in this one. (Though the daughter is, of course, a good-looking bit of stuff.) Why not follow my example and avoid this author like the plague in future?

"All the world's a stage: don't worry, it'll pass."

John Haft: THOUGHTS THUNK ON A CROSSTOWN BUS (Ambient Press, 1971)

A MILLSTONE IN FAN-PUBBING HISTORY

10.1:

What notable thing can I talk about to celebrate the hundredth page of KFN? I know, how about DAS STARKSTE BIER DER WELT, meaning 'one bottle of this and we scrape you off the ceiling'. I refer of course to the amazing EKU KULMINATOR URTYP HELL, brought to you, or anyone who can afford it, by Erste Kulmbacher Actienbrauerei, somewhere in darkest Germany I presume. Yes, that's right, it says so on the back label, where it also says '28% original gravity'. Now this is a bit ambiguous, but if it means 28 degrees proof, then it's half as strong again as your average wine. Feels like it, too. The flavour is.....indescribable. Certainly like no beer I've tasted before. But I could develop a taste for it, I think. What I could never develop a taste for is the price, being 55p per 11.6 fl. oz. bottle. But if you're a beer freak and fancy trying a bottle, your local Woolworth's should have it, if they have a wines & spirits dept. Wooly's selling booze sounds weird to me, but our local branch have just moved into bigger premises, including a

w & s dept. Their plonk is good value, and even more so when you read the small print on the labels and discover that the big bottles actually hold $1\frac{3}{4}$ litres instead of the usual $1\frac{1}{2}$. I would have thought that this was worth pointing out to the public, in letters rather larger than one sixteenth of an inch. This nation of shopkeepers ain't what it used to be.

Mary Reed, 55 Kings Road, Fleet, Hants.:

15.10

"Southern TV have not yet shown us SPACE: 1999. However, did you see the recent TV programme on special effects, going way back to SAN FRANCISCO, with the younger Clark Gable discovering faith, and including an interview with Harryhausen? They showed quite a bit of his work, including how they did the 'live' god bit from SINBAD, was it? I forget. Also a good chunk of 2001 (tho' very little on how they produced the effects for the latter - I recall they said the 'dashboard' sequences alone took a year to do, but no details were given.) And (the point of mentioning this) a little on SPACE: 1999. I thought it seemed rather unexciting after all the snippets in the papers. What news of the proposed Anglo-Russian sf series later this year? Still, they're running an updated INVISIBLE MAN....."

Yes they are, aren't they, and isn't it bloody awful? I couldn't even sit through the first episode, which was a bit long at 70 minutes. I wonder if the Beeb bought it in the more normal 25-minute chunks, realised they'd been conned and how terrible it was, and edited the shows together in groups of three in order to get rid of it quicker. Mind you, I've never thought much of David McCallum as an actor, ever since THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.; I get the impression he's only just resisting the temptation to play everything for laughs, and in the case of THE INVISIBLE MAN this would have been a big improvement. It's just typical of American TV companies that they get hold of a book, use the gimmick, and leave all the meat behind. I wonder if the 1933 film with Claude Rains is any better? It would make a good con film, if it could be got.

I missed that TV programme - unfortunately, because I'm interested, in a non-technical sort of way, in the creation of special effects. There's quite a good book, 'The Making of Kubrick's 2001', edited by Jerome Agel, which has some information about the effects used in the film. According to this, the visual display sequences were done by animation (not computer graphics) filmed on 35mm, reduced to 16mm and back-projected. Sounds easy when you say it quick.

Old special-effects men never die.....they just fade out.

This stencil looks more like a patchwork quilt than anything else, due to the fact that I had second thoughts about some nasty things I'd written about a couple of fanzines. Rather than do a whole lot of retyping, I just chopped out the bits to be junked, and glued the rest back together. Lazy,

I am. But looking back calmly at what I'd written in anger, I saw that it was a load of trivial rubbish, a storm in a teacup, and not worth printing. I think it's a pity that I can't write a criticism of a person's point of view without it turning into practically a personal tirade, but until I can, maybe I'd better shut up and say nowt.

So no fanzine reviews this time.

Until I change my mind again.

short interlineatio

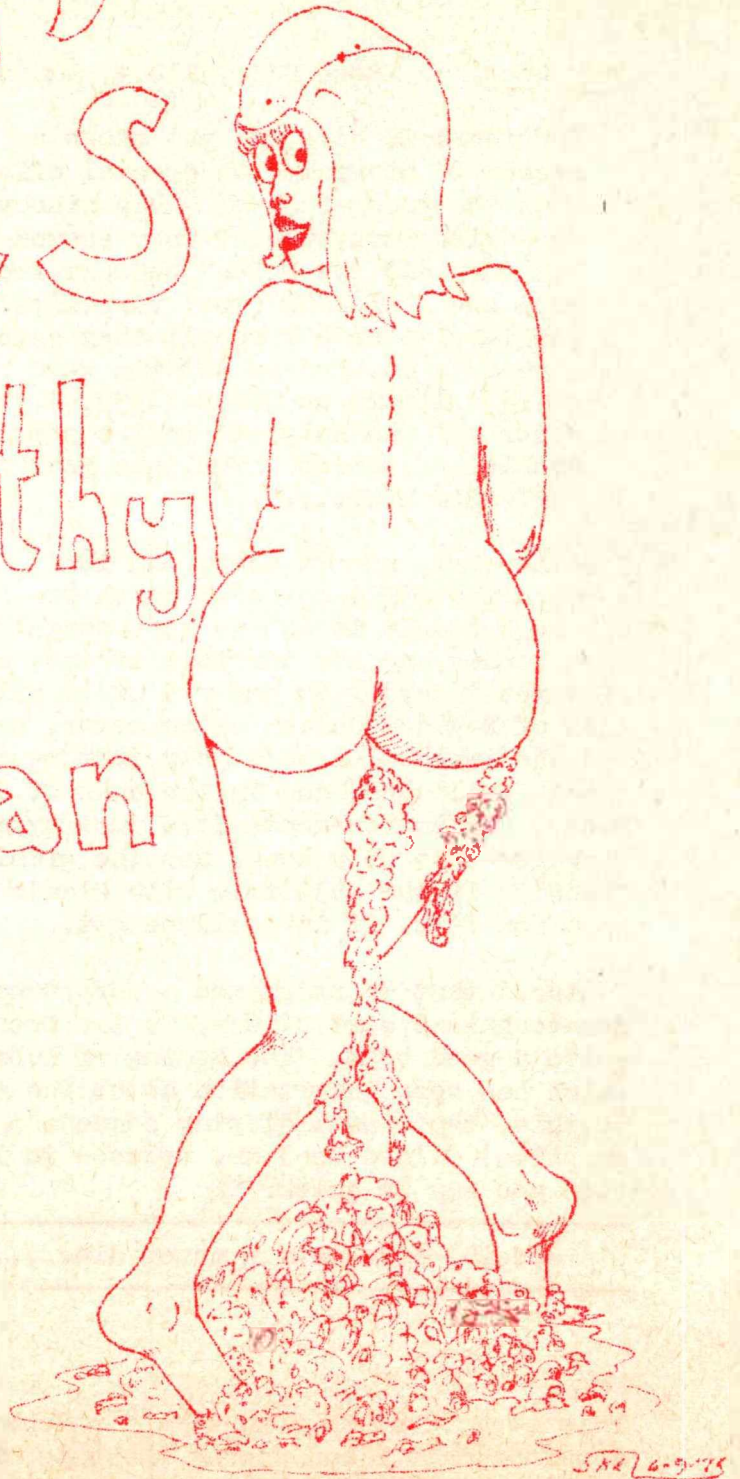
Remember that illo in SIMULACRUM 1?

'Does this provoke nausea in you?' it asked. Well, on the right is number two in the series. What is your interpretation of the scene? Is the young lady finding carnal delight in the arms (or whatever) of the Green Slime? (The green came out red for some reason, like not having any green ink.) Or is she being ravished by a mysteriously animated bottle of Cresta Strawberry-ade? Or what? Answers on an eight-page letter of comment only, please.

And if it does make your stomach boggle as well as your mind, send it, in a leakproof parcel, not to me but to the artist at 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport SK2 5NW.

Artists welcome any appreciation of their talents, however bizarre.

it's
frothy
Man



The local branch of the Workers' Educational Association (but to you my boy, the WEA) is running a course on sf for the first time this year -- 24 weeks of 2-hourly sessions on Wednesday evenings, for which they charge £3.40. Not bad really, when you consider it works out at less than 15p a session. So we decided to go along and see what we would see. The course hasn't proved all that popular in comparison with old favourites like English Industrial Architecture (seriously!) and Gardening, but by the second week we had just acquired the necessary ten members for the course to go ahead. There's me and Pat, two of her computer-programming workmates from Rolls-Royce called Jed and Phil, a civil servant called Eric, a vicar called Martin, a travelling salesman called Gordon, another Gordon who doesn't say much, and a bloke who says nothing at all, not even his name. Hmm, that's only nine - either we have the Invisible (and Inaudible) Man with us, or somebody has registered and not turned up for some reason. Oh, and of course there's the tutor, Mike Murphy, B.A., M. Phil.

It became obvious quite early in the first session that he, the tutor, was into sf as Literature, whereas we, the students, were into it as Entertainment. This caused a little disappointment and disillusion on both sides, I think. Anyway, we spent the session introducing ourselves and planning the course in general terms; we would read and discuss certain novels and short stories, get some films and videotape material, both fictional and biographical, and so on.

At the beginning of the second session Mr. Murphy (I'll call him Mike from now on) distributed copies of the Gollancz sf competition's prizewinning short story, entitled GOLGOTHA or LET'S GO TO GOLGOTHA or some such, which we read and then discussed. What did we think of it, he asked. We thought it was pretty awful, most of us, and during a somewhat heated discussion we explained why we thought so. Mike quite enjoyed it, said he thought it was saying something about the mutability of history - I forget the exact term he used. None of us had spotted this at all; we just thought it was a badly-written, ill-thought-out piece with a corny theme and perhaps one good idea (that the time-travelling holidaymakers from the future had actually caused the death of Christ by shouting for Barabbas to be freed, as they had been instructed to do in order to avoid appearing conspicuous among the crowd.....except that the crowd were all fellow time-travellers.) From this and other things it became obvious that Mike thinks that sf as entertainment is okay, he supposes, but in order for it to be great and lasting Literature it has to Mean Something. With any luck a running battle will develop, with each side trying to convince the other by increasingly unsubtle means. We're still at the foray and skirmish stage at the moment. Another stage we're still at is the wrangling over the selection of films and books; Mike doesn't seem to have much organising ability. We did manage to arrange a series of critiques of short stories chosen by the tutor, to be tackled by each of the group in turn. Somehow I got to be first on the list, and the story he picked for me was THE RUUM by Arthur Porges. One of my favourites, as it turned out; it made a great impression on me when I read it in one of Edmund Crispin's 'Best SF' series, many years ago, though I'd not re-read it since. I'd hardly call it a great or notable example of the sf short story, though.

During the week I re-read THE RUUM a couple of times, wrote my searing analysis and presented it to the group at the third session, which was last night. A simple, true sf adventure, rather slick and 'American' in style, with a few fairly minor faults on which most of the others disagreed; very good for a single reading but no more, and without the substance to make it really worth analysing in the first place. All this seemed to go down okay, and in places was remarkably similar to Edmund Crispin's own introduction to the story (which I hadn't read), which only shows that we both used Amis' NEW MAPS OF HELL as a reference book.

Ye gods, though, we're still largely undecided about the choice of films and books, though '2001' looks a likely bet, and Martin the vicar is going to look at Asimov's THE END OF ETERNITY in a week or two - again, hardly a great example of sf as Literature. It seems to me as though Mike is basically a Literary type who's somehow come across sf, and is currently investigating its possibilities for social comment in various ways. I wouldn't go so far as to call it a fad with him, but his knowledge of sf is certainly small and patchy, as his responses to some of my suggestions for discussion books show: THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE ("Philip K. who?") and CRASH ("J. G.Billiard, was that?"). More on this later.

'If the world were my oyster, only a loser would go pearl-diving for a living.'

John Haft: THOUGHTS THUNK ON A CROSSTOWN BUS

Dave Piper, 7 Cranley Drive, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 6BZ:

21.10

"Well, y'see, (*sigh*) at-the-end-of-Stranger In a Strange Land (as far as I can remember, that is, s'been ages since I read the ~~book~~ novel) The Martian named Smith dies and goes Up There. Dunne? Yes. Dead. Right. So when I pricked (you'll pardon that expression I trust) Cath wid de pin she dun hit me wid de book and I expired. And went Up There and grokked the fullness of paradise with the aforementioned Mr. Smith. Wid de H₂O. Y'see.

"Keerist! ! !

"Thanks for the Free Gift. Wish I could speak/read Hebreww.

"Or even Hebrew.

"Lessee.... The Mearas and Skeltons,
were prone to screw,
with the lights out, they resolved to do.
The resultant confusion,
was a thing to see,
and now the Meltons and Skearas
are coming to tea."

Yes, I see.....sort of like a menu a quatre, eh? Very good, yes. I'm glad you responded to my request for an explanation of your letter lastish, and I'm sure you'll be pleased to know that the whole thing is at least 3% clearer in my mind than it was.

Now then.....how's about explaining the Hebrew reference in this letter?
(It may be tedious reading for you other folks out there, but it does keep ol' Dave on his toes.)

I WENT TO NOVACON FOR A REST.....

17.11

It all started about three weeks ago, when we called in on the Skeltons on that fateful Sunday afternoon, on the way back from visiting Pat's Mum in Burnley. We'd do a this before, and in the past we'd just stayed a few hours, departing for Derby around nine in the evening. On this occasion, though, the booze flowed more copiously than usual, and we got into a really deep, significant and meaningful discussion (don't ask me what about, because I can't remember) and all of a sudden it was half past two on Monday morning. Rather than flake out then and there, with the risk of oversleeping, we decided to head straight back, which we did, arriving in Spondon about 4am. After a quick cup of coffee, whilst the electric blanket melted at least some of the icicles off the bed, we managed to grab about three hours' sleep. Not the best of starts to a working week.

Ever since then I seem to have been trying to catch up with a mass of odd jobs around the house, so that by the time Novacon came around I was a shambling wreck (i.e. just like normal, except the circles under my eyes were playing at Olympic Games symbols, and I kept bumping into things), not having gotten to bed before 2am on more than one day out of ten. (I almost never go to bed before midnight anyway; even so, one can have too little of a good thing.) Such was my state of mind, then, that I was actually contemplating using Novacon for rest and recuperation; you know.....early nights, breakfast in bed, that sort of thing. You can see how bad I was. As it turned out, I was up till 3am on the Saturday morning and till 5.30am on the Sunday morning, and never once felt tired. In fact I felt a good deal better than I had done during the previous ten days. Weird.....but then, I'm one of those people who brighten visibly when interesting things are going on around me. (In fact, in the middle of an orgy you could use me to light the room.....if you wanted the room lighting, which is doubtful I admit.) Pat, on the other hand, is just the opposite. Her brain is obviously unionised, and at 11pm or thereabouts it begins to clock off, come what may.

I admit that the events of the con itself are a little hazy. One thing I do remember, though, is taking part in a great new fantasy game called Dungeons and Dragons, which some of you may have heard about. I may say a little more about it when I've got to know the rules better, but I will say that it's a great game to play in the bar at a con, because the only limit to the number of players is the size of the largest table; you can join in even after a game has started; you don't need to know anything about the game except the basic principles; and all the equipment you need is pencil and paper, diceand of course a good supply of beer. In other words, it's a good way of meeting people.

I have few other distinct memories. One of them concerns a singularly (maybe that should be 'doubly') well-endowed young lady who bazoomed around the place in a brightly-coloured tee-shirt with 'Andromeda' ranted across the front. At least, I think it was 'Andromeda' - the letters were a bit distorted. One could feel the draught, not so much from her passing as from the

large numbers of male heads, turning in unison.

I'd rather not dwell too much on the following week. I can't remember much about it anyway. No one said anything at work, so I can only assume that my impression of someone being awake was good enough to fool them.

I'm okay now though.....got a few early nights in, finished off the odd jobs.....so a-fanacing I will go. Pity I'm so far behind with these locs.

Peter J. Wright, 233 Cinderhill Road, Bulwell, Nottingham: 18.11

"Heard this one? 'Knock, knock'

Okay, I'll play along. 'Who's there?'

"'Neptune'

As if I didn't know. 'Neptune who?'

"'Neptune to shop an' get me a packet o' fags'.

"(Yes folks, they don't write culture like that anymore.)"

So something has changed for the better, then. I can see you've been reading too much S.F. MONTHLY. What you need is an antidote of a few good fanzines. So folks, send your latest fanzine to Pete, and help cure him of bad jokes and S.F. MONTHLY. You won't regret it. And neither will I.

Paul Skelton, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, SK2 5NW, Cheshire:

"Well, here I am, fresh with the tang of citrus, four refreshing fruit flavours. I've just re-read KNOCKERS and put several asterisks in the margins which must mean something, if only that I have this thing about asterisks and margins. As is usually the case however I found that I tend to get caught up in your life and carried along with the narrative. That's the trouble with personal zines of the diary type. Fucking things should be banned and their editors hung. Well, I would not mind being a bit better hung. I try to get Cas' opinion but she just laughs, uncontrollably, for half an hour.

"What's all this about the title having sexist connotations? I understand the term 'sexist' to apply to someone who thinks and acts in terms of pre-assigned sex-roles for people, rather than seeing them simply as 'people'. Woman as 'sex-object' is simply one specific sex-role aspect of sexism. Nor is it the most important aspect, perhaps. Every time I ogle a bird in the street I'm being sexist in this way. I am certainly not seeing her as a person. What's wrong with being sexist anyway? What a much more boring life it would be if I wasn't partly sexist in my outlook. (Wow look at all those boring persons.) You can relate to people as sex-objects from a distance (!) but you can't relate to them as people until you get up close and communicate. You can't communicate with everybody. Doug is overdoing things. Sexism that matters is when communication is possible but the person is still viewed as a sex-object.

"Anyway, the title isn't in any way sexist. It is merely real-world.

"Not entirely changing the subject: the interlineation on p77:- 'The only trouble with a typewriter is that you can't chew the end of it' caused an incorrect reaction on my part. My immediate thought was, "True, true, but you can't type stencils on your prick." It took a second thought before I realised that it was a pencil that the typewriter was being compared with. And no, I'm not an India-rubber Man nor a contortionist. I was thinking of 'me' as an 'us'."

A dangerous thing to do, if I may say so. You'll not know which way to turn. Anyway I see your point. And the teethmarks.

I too think Doug was overdoing things, just as some of the more extreme Women's Libbers overdo things. However, I can understand their feelings and reactions to some extent, but it's odd to find the same sort of oversensitivity in a man.

He got ten years for statutory rape....it happened in a sculptor's studio.

CLOSE TO CRITICAL - 5

It's so long since I read J. T. McIntosh's WORLD OUT OF MIND that I'm having trouble remembering what it was about. A quick skim through the blurb.....ah yes. An alien comes to Earth in human form to set things up for the invasion, part of the plan being that he won't know he's an alien until the crucial part of the scheme is reached. He takes advantage of Earth's system of class distinction strictly according to ability (there's a set of foolproof tests) to become a White Star, one of the Top People. When he realises the truth about himself, he's already become so humanised that he changes sides and masterminds the defence of Earth against his own people. A difficult subject, handled competently, but no more.

MAROONED ON MARS is one of the endless series of Lester Del Rey juveniles. Very tedious.....makes me realise just how good Heinlein was at this type of book. The cover's rotten too.

Most of the people on this sf course I'm involved in encountered 'Doc' Smith for the first time in one or another of the reprints from Panther. Their opinions were remarkably similar, and can be summarised as "yeuch!" Fortunately they were already hardened sf readers, but it makes me wonder just how many potential converts chose the ubiquitous Dr. Smith as their first taste of sf at 'thought a similar "yeuch!", with the addition of "never again!" Nevertheless, good serial space opera does have an important place in modern sf, and the VENTURER TWELVE series by Dan Morgan and John Kippax is shaping up very nicely indeed. Four books have appeared from Pan so far: the first, A THUNDER OF STARS, details the commissioning of the Space Corps' newest ship, outlines most of the main characters who reappear and develop throughout the series, and reveals the first hint of the Kilroys, the strange aliens who seem to regard human beings as little better than laboratory animals. In SEED OF STARS, Venturer Twelve is on its first tour of duty, and Commander Tom Bruce encounters the second alien 'experi-

ment' on the colony planet Kepler III. In view of the fact that we haven't yet met or even seen one of the aliens, the third book, THE NEUTRAL STARS, is really just padding, which is just what the series doesn't need at this point. It's just as well written as the others, but the plot doesn't really thicken any - you could easily skip this one. It's not until the fourth book, WHERE NO STARS GUIDE (written by Kippax alone) that things really get moving, when an alien is actually captured.....or is he? Taking the series as a whole, then, the characters, plots and sub-plots are well crafted, the hardware and dialogue are convincing; I'd recommend these highly as intelligent space-opera. My only fear is that the series will be excessively padded for financial reasons. This would gain nothing in the long run, because some followers of the series will obviously give it up if they feel that not enough is happening.

From the sublime to the..... I have here a Belmont Double, comprising DOOMSMAN by Harlan Ellison and Lee Hoffman's TELEPOWER. I suspect that both authors would rather forget all about this one. Here and there in DOOMSMAN there are glimpses of the talent that would develop later, but TELEPOWER has no redeeming features at all.

The difference between amnesia and magnesia is that the fellow with amnesia doesn't know where he's going and doesn't have to run.

Will Norris, 1073 Shave Road, Schenectady, NY 12303, U.S.A.:

20.11

"About the issue of language . . . I think you said it all. Sure there are words I find unnecessary, but like you said, it's your zine. You pub as you please. Personally I'd rather get something that I know a little love went into -- something that is honestly a result of the person producing it -- than to get all the big league newspapers and any prizes they got. That's why I'm in love with fandom. I am meeting so many fascinating people, learning to know them, what they write, how they think &c. If I cannot meet with them, talk face-to-face, then let me correspond. If that is very difficult for some reason, then I want to see their zine. I've raised my own acronyms in challenge to Fiawol and Fijagh. To me the true descriptions of fandom are: Fiafog and Fiaf -- standing respectively for Fandom is a way of growing and Fandom is a Fellowship. I think the reason is obvious."

How about a couple of modified cliches? FIATTAF (Fandom Is All Things To All Fen) and FIWYMI (Fandom Is What You Make It). Or of course there's always Sam Long's FIALOW (Fandom Is A Lay Of Wife).

I wonder what's the term for a person who collects typos? ~~Typo collector~~ There was a lovely one in your letter: you actually wrote "...I want to see their zine". Sounds erogenous to me.

D&v Rowe, 8 Park Drive, Wickford, Essex, SS12 9DH:

"To keep the record straight, the only reason Jhim Linworm can't come up with 'obvious remarks' about Knockers is that his main source (and probably only source) of 'humorous' remarks is The Pinnocio Book of

Jokes, and if you don't believe me just check his bookcase if you ever have the misfortune to visit him. It's a children's paperback (Marion has to read all the 'grown-up' stuff to him - or else little Elenor or Lizzy sometimes read him goodnight stories. Anyway.....), filled with such 'gems' of humour as: First Pigeon to Second Pigeon: "Look at that pigeon, he's got human feet." This goes a long way to explain what ~~every~~ Jhim passes for humour. Being a children's book it has nothing about female breasts in it, so Jhim for once was stuck for words (thank heavens).

"I'm tempted to ask if he really wants hairy puns about Knockers, after all the only women with hairy breasts are vampires (something the nudie horror film has up to now avoided). Mind you, after the number of times he's raided Elenor's and Lizzy's piggybank, he should feel at home amongst bloodsuckers."

Now Dave, if I didn't know you to be a big buddy and mate of Jhim's, and a really nice harmless fellow to boot (they're the only sort of fellows I'd take a chance on booting), I'd think you really meant all that. Then we could have a real good feud. Er.....you are big buddies and mates, aren't you?

So now I know something else about vampires. Mind you, it's pretty obvious why the film industry has steered clear of the idea. I mean, if they were all hairy, you wouldn't be able to see.....well, you wouldn't be able to see.

There ought to be the makings of a limerick in there, somewhere.

Who put curare in my heroin?

DOC BEASTLY, MAN OF BRONZE LEATHER UNDERWEAR...

...oh.....that was the banned version, wasn't it? DOC SAVAGE, MAN OF BRONZE is the version you've all seen..... You mean you haven't? Well we have, so nyaah! Bloody good it was too. George Pal (remember THE TIME MACHINE and DESTINATION MOON? Hmmm. WAR OF THE WORLDS?) steers a careful and crafty course between two extremely bad extremes: he doesn't go all out for a gripping, realistic all-action adventure; nor does he take the piss so much that it degenerates into farce, as the Bond films soon did. So it's a successful middle-of-the-road type of thing. Ron Ely is absolutely superb as the Doc himself, and a load of anonymous bumbling cretins are nearly as good, as his anonymous bumbling cretinous assistants. The plot is something about a lost tribe of Indians, and a lake of liquid gold which rightfully belongs to Doc via his father, and which the nasty rotten villain and his equally bumbling etc etc try to do him out of. No chance!

I liked all the bronze gear - bronze car, bronze aeroplane, bronze suit. I wouldn't be at all surprised if he really did have bronze leather underwear.

Showing with it was WHEN DIANA DORS RULED THE EARTH No, that's not right. What's like Diana Dors, but different? Ermm.....um.....DINOSAURS, that's it. WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH. Terrible film. The first one would probably have been better. Probably. They didn't speak any English, you see.

No, not the dinosaurs, the cavemen. Yes, I know dinosaurs and cavemen were separated by several distinct geological periods, not to mention millions of years. I was right - Diana Dors would have been better. At least she speaks English. Of course, millions of years ago she probably didn't - or at least, not as well - but still... Where was I? Ah yes...they didn't speak English, obviously, so the next best thing was Early Caveman, the oldest and dearest of dead languages. I suppose the director was lucky enough to find a third form primer lying around somewhere. Probably stubbed his toe on it. Unfortunately, neither we nor the rest of the audience had had comparable good fortune, so we had to rely on the gestures. The film seemed a bit slow-moving, so after a while I gave up on the gestures and concentrated on the tits and bums instead. Much more fun. Best thing in the film, apart from that, was a sequence with a baby dinosaur. Cute, it was.

Funny thing though.....I couldn't spot Diana Dors anywhere.

"A mountain is just a plateau with a hard-on." - - - - John Haft.

Gray Boak, 2 Cecil Court, Cecil St., Lytham, Lancs., FY8 5NN:

"You doubt the existence of Dainis Bisenicks? I know him well...

"Well, not actually well, but he did visit the UK back in 1968 (or early 69). It was after I'd left Bristol, and had a small maisonette in St. Albans. Brian Hampton then lived in Hatfield, just up the road, and possessed a raucous vehicle commonly referred to as The Bond. (Yes, that vehicle. I can still show you the scars.....) One evening Brian arrived, complete with aforementioned Lithuanian/American fan. (There's something fannish about Lithuania - Algis Budrys to you. Or is it Latvia?) We took this poor unsuspecting fellow to Hawker Siddeley's club room in order to partake of the Holy Beverage i.e. Newcastle Brown. (Accept nothing less). Whether it was the Brown or The Bond I don't know, but I never heard from him again, except for brief appearances in other people's WorldConReps."

Well, that explains it then. Obviously the combination of Brown and Bond had a delayed action effect, such that soon after he left you he phased into a different reality. Lithuanians are very susceptible to this, so I believe.

(Or is it Latvians?) All those other mentions were engineered by Roy Tackett (whom for TAFF) who took over and maintained the identity as a contributor to DYNATRON, a sort of Jekyll to Roytac's Hyde. Simple, when you think about it.

Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Crescent, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7NR:

"If the abbreviation of your zine title is to be evocative of anything, it is that of a Stateside radio station. 'This is KFN bringing you the very latest on the fan-zine scene, the real low-down on why Red (Paul) Skelton won't publish his autobiography; the latest reaction to Keith Walker's statement that he is going legible; and your friendly old station-editor's opinion on the Third Herman Herd. All this, and much, much more in just a moment.....but first a word from our sponsor.

"Have you tried the latest Playtex bra...the one with the cross-over network, and feedback circuit? This latest fine product is guaranteed to amplify even the most modest bust-line....."

"Fade in station identification...first ten bars of 'Thanks for the Mammary!'

"And might I be interested in your appreciation of the latest Woody Herman platter? Well, if we were sat listening to it together, I might. Music is too immediate a thing to be overly discussed in print - it's impossible to transfer (adequately) a sequence of extrapolated notes into cold hard print and give them real meaning....I'm not talking about 'printing music'....but neither you nor anyone else can convey in words a high-flying trumpet solo. You can say you liked it, or you didn't, but your 'ear' is different from mine and even if you possessed perfect pitch you couldn't convey to me, other than by playing the disc and telling me your thoughts as we listened to it, any real meaning.

"Talking of music, I very much want to get hold of a transcription of Lionel Hampton's fantastic version of 'Thus Spake Zarathustra'. If anyone has it on tape or disc...I'll even consider rewarding them with a genuine Tommy Steele Ashtray (made from a Tommy Steele record. What? You never heard of the Tommy Steele Record Boiling Society?)"

Nope. Probably it was wound up (wound up, hah! Geddit?) years ago when they ran out of records to boil. I agree with what you say about music, though, and this difficulty of getting it down on paper may explain why I've not yet written much about music, despite what I said to Doug Barbour last issue. I find that the most interesting books in the jazz field are of the biographical/reminiscence type; those which attempt to analyse the music itself are usually dead & dull. For instance, Charles Delaunay's straightforward biography of Django Reinhardt is very much more interesting than Max Abrams' recent 'The Book Of Django', wherein he attempts to tie in discographical information and descriptions of performances.

CLOSE TO CRITICAL - 6

21.11

DOCTOR FUTURITY is Philip K. Dick's first real novel-length work. (It first appeared as 'Time Pawn' in Thrilling Wonder Stories in 1954). It's about a doctor who is dragged into the future to help resurrect a dead man. I dislike time-travel stories more with every one I read, so I didn't care for this much. It seems competently written in a cold, emotionless sort of way. At this early stage in his career he was definitely better as a writer of short stories, which had a terse, powerful quality which this novel at least lacks.

Thomas M. Disch insists that the stories collected in 102 H-BOMBS are funny. Well, humour is a very subjective thing; most of these couldn't even raise a smile from me. Moreover, some of them were tedious non-events, whereas others were inferior treatments of themes used better by other writers. 'The Return of the Medusae' and 'The Princess' Carillon', two very short pieces in the middle of the book, were rather better, the latter only because of its surprise ending. Still...you may find the book one huge belly-laugh.

Philip Jose Farmer.....arguably the finest storyteller in sf today. The early novel FLESH is the seventh of his books I've read, and the seventh I've enjoyed hugely. A starship returns to Earth after 800 years, and the crew find that society has changed somewhat in their absence; in fact, America has regressed to semi-barbarism, and Captain Peter Stagg, unwittingly and unwillingly, becomes involved in a strange fertility rite. Antlers are grafted to his skull, which give him an inexhaustible sexual ability. The unlimited opportunity is provided too. You can see why Beacon Books snapped this one up in 1960.....but cheap pornography it isn't. A well-handled and entertaining story it definitely is.

MASQUE WORLD is the second of Alexei Panshin's Anthony Villiers novels I've read. I'm still no wiser as to what all the fuss is about. Again, it's a supposedly funny book which I found tedious, pointless, pedantic and even smug in places. I'd describe the plot to you, if I could find one. I know I'm outnumbered here, though, because everyone else I know who's read the series thinks it's great.

THORNS is a lovely novel, sensitive, powerful and deep. It concerns two people - Minner Burris, a spaceman captured by aliens who rearranged his body a bit, and Bona Kelvin, a 17 year old orphan conned into allowing a hundred of her ova to be used in a fertilisation experiment - who are brought together by a third, Duncan Chalk, who arranges real live soap-opera dramas for the benefit of millions of viewers but especially himself, because of his need to 'feed' on other people's emotions. This is the story of how two discarded people take their revenge on a society which suddenly needs them again, and of how they feel themselves become human again, through each other. The best Silverberg novel I've read to date.

I've heard that the FLESH GORDON team are doing a follow-up movie, to be called THEY CAME IN OUTER SPACE.

THE LURKER IN THE HAWTHORN BUSH AT THE EDGE OF THE CANAL

24.11

Relax folks - I've not taken to writing Ellison-style fan-fiction (number 382 in my forthcoming book '1,001 Fates Worse Than Death'). No, this is True Life Drama at its creepiest. It all began one day this summer, when Pat and I accompanied Skel and the kids on a berry-picking expedition, down by the canal. Little did I know of the horror that was soon to engulf me. However, I rapidly got to know about the mud that was soon to engulf my shoes. Not to worry though, because hawthorn berries make great wine.....so the book says. What it doesn't say is that in the all-time most unpickable berry poll, organised by the Ft. Worthless Bootleggers' and Moonshiners' Gazette in 1956, the hawthorn berry was voted second only to the bilberry. There is an easy and foolproof method, though, in which you sneak off back to the car when nobody's looking, leaving the other suckers to do all the work.

Despite the difficulties of the picking operation itself, such expeditions are usually enjoyable for other reasons: fresh air, birdsong, general comm-uning-with-Nature type reasons. However, the presence of the Skelkids (the original White Noise) in the vicinity (i.e. anywhere closer than Yugoslavia) tends to negate these advantages, and then some. But, hawthorn berries do

make great wine. So I am assured, not only by the book but also by Skel's father, who has made some before with success (and hawthorn berries, I presume.)

Having eventually lugged the spoils of victory back to Spondon with us, we couldn't immediately face the thought of actually doing anything constructive with the berries, not while the memories were still painfully fresh. So they sat in their polythene bag in a corner of the living room for several days, until I happened to notice, on the back of a nearby armchair, a small, waving whiteness that didn't ought to have been there.

Do any of you remember a little-known and strangely unsuccessful sf film called *INVASION OF THE FEROCIOUS GIANT MAGGOTS FROM PLANET X*? Well, this creature I'd found was just like those in the film, only very much smaller of course. In fact it was more like the creatures in the equally little-known and unsuccessful follow-up, *INVASION OF THE SMALL HARMLESS INSIGNIFICANT FRIENDLY MIDGET MAGGOTS FROM PLANET Y*, come to think of it. Immediately I put two and two together. (I wonder why I have this compulsion to do mental arithmetic in times of stress?) Careful scrutiny of the stretch of carpet between berry-bag and armchair revealed literally dozens of the things, all determinedly humping their way through the pile. And the strange thing was that, apart from a splinter group making a determined bid for the sf bookshelves - I suppose one would expect a prototype film-bem to have good taste in reading matter - they were all heading in more or less the same direction, armchairwards. Who could divine their unfathomable purpose, as Lovecraft might have put it? Perhaps to their myopic maggot eyes the back of the reddish-brown armchair resembled the Great Hawthorn Berry In The Sky. Perhaps they thought they were going to Heaven.

A liberal dosing with bug-spray soon disillusioned them; they wriggled, and rapidly expired. The sluggards (maggotards?) who hadn't yet left the bag didn't escape either, since we hastily dumped all the berries into warm salted water.

The wine has now been fermenting for several weeks, and still smells exactly like squashed hawthorn berries - that is to say, foul. However, hawthorn berries do make great wine, so I am assured, not only by the book and Skel's dad, but also by Skel himself, who gets a bottle or two of the finished wine in return for providing the berries. Funny thing though.....Skel never mentioned anything about maggot trouble with his share of the berries, picked mostly at the same time and place. This leads inevitably to certain unpleasant speculations on the precise nature of the essential flavour ingredient in Skel's dad's hawthorn wine.

Full-bodiedness is a desirable quality in a wine; fullness of bodies is not. Even if they did once have a liking for sf.

+ + + + +

Ian Maule, 8 Hillcroft Crescent, Ealing, London W.5:

"The ideal fan would be a person living in total isolation in the middle of a desert, whose only contact with the outside world would be the daily arrival of the postman. I've come to this conclusion after living in the

big city of London for about eight months. The whole idea of fandom is communication by letter and fanzine and when one is living in a city such as London, or indeed anywhere where there are fans, this communication is diluted to the extent that fanzines aren't published and letters remain unanswered. This has happened to me this year simply because living in and around fans overcomes the desire to produce these efforts of communication, it has to. When you live miles from the nearest fan and want to exchange ideas on the B.S.F.A. or the latest issue of KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE you write. When you wish to do these same things when fans are close at hand you get the bus, or walk around to where they're living and ask them. I fail to see how slan shacks ever became popular in fandom: the people involved must out of necessity have locked themselves in their room and avoided all social and fannish contact within the house.

"Now that I've moved away from the slan shack of Lothair Rd., I find more interest in this communication side of fandom, although still not to the same extent as when I was living at home in Newcastle. The problem still being one of people living close at hand, but now I can decide whether I want fans to come over or for myself to visit them; in a slan shack you're almost obliged to participate in the social activities that are going on around you, you can't escape unless you want to cut out the contact completely and concentrate on the fannish written communication.

"Many people complain of Ratfandom's lack of locs: the reason is above, too much ingroupish crosschange that exhausts all possible ins and outs of a given subject that therefore makes loc-writing all the more tedious. It's like writing a novel, losing the manuscript and then starting over again."

Leaving aside the problem of how one lives in a fan, or why one should want to, you make some valid points. The only reason I can suggest for the existence of slan shacks involves the aims and attitudes of the occupants. That is to say, if the primary aim of the group is to have a good time and to create material suitable for publishing, and an atmosphere congenial to publishing, then fanzines will be published, and regularly. If, as I suspect is the case with Ratfandom, the primary aim of the group is just to have a good time, then fanzines will appear rarely if at all. So I see the main difference as being the Urge To Publish. Doubtless there are many more ramifications to this particular argument, which I hope my readers will take up, because this is an interesting and somewhat puzzling subject.

Eric Mayer, RD 1, Box 147, Falls, PA18615, U.S.A.:

"I enjoy this style of personalzine. The only trouble is that it rather compels one to read the whole damn thing straight through. "Oh well," says the reader, "Just this next section. It's short. Then I'll get back to FINNEGAN'S WAKE." But all the sections are short. Is this why I've never read FINNEGAN'S WAKE?

"What modern music appeals to you and why?" Now that's a good question and a damn tough one. I think I have a fairly broad range of taste. I have a pile of classical records from all periods. But my favorite music, the music that most affects me, is rock. My favorite group is the Kinks.

I like the Beatles, the Stones, the Doors. As far as newer groups are concerned I like Roxy Music, Sparks, Cockney Rebel.

"I like simple, basic, rock 'n' roll, untainted, as it were, by jazz, folk, country and western or any other styles. And I prefer groups to solo artists. I also lean towards English bands.

"I think I developed my taste for groups as opposed to solo artists back when most solo artists were folkies. I never cared for the pseudo poetry of most folk music, nor for the whining, self-pitying tone of a lot of it. (Maybe it hit too close to home.) But most of all I found the sound rather boring, much too thin and uninteresting. And for the most part the musical content of the songs seemed to be downright poor - just trimmings for the words. A guitar is a fairly versatile instrument but, in the hands of most pop or semi-pop (to coin a lousy term) musicians it simply doesn't have the expressive range of, for instance, a violin. It just won't stand up alone, album after album, accompanied only by a single, mediocre voice.

"I also find a certain amount of intellectual stimulation in the music of the aforementioned groups. You won't discover much of anything by quoting their lyrics out of context. They are, after all, writing song lyrics, not poetry to be set to music. There's a big difference. All of these groups - especially the Kinks - manage to match music to words with extreme effectiveness. You have a hard time separating the two. The music comments on the words and vice versa. Often a rather banal lyric is brought to life by the music it accompanies. The listener might wonder if a more sophisticated lyric might have been better. Perhaps. But more likely than not the more sophisticated lyric would have overshadowed the music, weighted the music down. The lyric was only carrying information, the music was infusing that information with emotion.

"I think Ray Nelson has an interesting point. He seems to treat rock music as a social phenomenon, and I think he's correct in doing so. Music is not just interesting from an intellectual viewpoint any more than writing is.

"Rock is my music. The world portrayed by rock music is the world that I see every day, in the same sense that the world portrayed by sf is.

"Rock, at its best, has at its basic premise: 'I just want to be myself - not a company man, not a number on a computer card, not any component of society, not even a saint - just myself.' Well, okay, I'm getting carried away. There's a lot of corruption in rock.

"There is also, in the best of rock, a sort of innocence and naivete, very similar to sf. And that attracts me too. I can still get overly excited about both genres. I like people and artists who seem to remain perpetually fascinated and excited by life. My favorite rock stars, sf writers and faneds seem to meet this description."

Thanks for a great letter, Eric. I apologise for brutally editing your 4pp down to just over 1p, but I was trying to distil your most interesting ideas into the space available.

Your and Eric Bentcliffe's letters have brought home to me the difficulties of really talking about music with words. (Damn you, E.B. ! I can put up with agreeing with most of the people most of the time, but agreeing with one of the people all of the time, as in your case I have done, albeit reluctantly, just makes me feel inferior.) So many things to say. So many things to disagree with. Where to begin? How to begin?

First, an opinion: the expressive range of an instrument depends, not on the capacities of the instrument itself (and no-one has yet exhausted those, in any case) but on those of the performer.

Your argument that rock lyrics and music complement each other is very persuasive. Nevertheless, I cannot help but feel some objection to lyrics or music which cannot stand on their own. Maybe that's why I like jazz so much. The lyrics are good, or at least clever (on the rare occasions on which they are heard nowadays), and the melody is also good, and therefore affords ample scope for improvisation. (I'm talking here about jazz 'standards' of the thirties and forties, of course.) However, if pushed, in modern music I would go for the lyrics over the melody, in the case of folk music, or for the overall effect in 'progressive' music. (I dislike the term 'rock', since it implies rock 'n' roll, which to me means early Elvis, Chuck Berry, Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis.) None of the groups you mention play 'simple, basic, rock 'n' roll', except in the early days of the Beatles and the Stones. Maybe there's a semantic problem here; I sense EB chuckling in the wings.

I'm puzzled by your rock/sf parallel with regard to the world you see every day. Where's the parallel, for you?

I liked your last paragraph; it more or less sums up my definition of Art, or at least an Artist, with a capital A: someone who is perpetually fascinated and excited by life, and who can interpret this successfully to the masses. (I've a feeling that sounds sounds both stupid and pretentious.)

I'm dissatisfied with the above arguments. I'm sure we could resolve our differences much better if only we could get together over a few jars (English slang = a few pints of beer) and a few dozen LPs.

Girls with shapely legs often proclaim the fact from the hose-tops.

CLOSE TO CRITICAL - 7

27.11

I didn't read the original novelette version of DEEPER THAN THE DARKNESS, which was nominated for a Nebula. However, Greg Benford succumbed to the temptation to expand it into a novel, and I suspect it's not the first story to be spoilt by such treatment. At 190pp, it is at least 50pp too long. The basic idea - an alien race encroaching on the human sector of the galaxy, and only the hero, an outcast, suspects how - is sound, and well-handled for an early work; but there are too many times when nothing much seems to be happening, due to excessive 'padding'. A shame.

When I bought Marghanita Laski's THE VICTORIAN CHAISE LONGUE, I must have had

it confused mentally with Olga Hasky's THE PURPLE ARMCHAIR, otherwise I wouldn't have bothered. It's a tedious little fantasy about a convalescent girl who falls asleep on the VCL and wakes to find herself in the past, in another girl's body. The other girl also has TB, and soon dies from it. Not my sort of thing at all.

GHOST BREAKER is the adequately descriptive title of a collection of Ron Goulart's Max Kearny stories from F & SF. It's interesting to see Goulart's oddball sense of humour applied in this way: we get stories about a bloke who turns into an elephant on national holidays, and a tv set haunted by a guitar-playing uncle, to name but two. Fun to read individually, I imagine, but a collection of nine gets a bit samey after a while.

A submarine lost during wartime, complete with commander and crew, is eventually rediscovered and put on display as a working museum exhibit. Eventually an Alien Menace threatens, and the crew is brought back to life to help a human race conditioned against violence. Thus begins Philip E. High's THE TIME MERCENARIES. Implausible, maybe, but this early part, including the first brush with the enemy, is helped along by a touch of humour. From there on in it's all downhill, and even the lowest of mental gears won't save it for you. It degenerates into a very poor space-warfare story, with a dash of cheap philosophising about the need for human conflict. Yuk!

I'd been looking forward literally for years to reading Harry Harrison's THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT. I finally got around to it the other week, settled down for a good read with a glass of Scotch in one hand and the book in the other.....and was disappointed. I'd expected something much funnier. Sure, there's the odd bit here and there that raised a smile, but basically it struck me as a comic with all words and no pictures.....as though he turned from illustrating comics to writing them instead, in book form.

**
** "Actually, I'm rather in favour of porn as an antidote to Women's Lib.
** It's the best thing in the world for keeping sex objects in their
** place." DICK ENEY (from PHENOTYPE)
**

That's another of those quot'le quotes that I slip in now and then just to infuriate you. You shouldn't take it as read that I agree with the opinion expressed therein, merely that it strikes some sort of chord, deep in my being. I suspect that my subconscious may be tone-deaf.

IT'S A CAPITALIST PLOT, I TELL YOU.....

29.11

Those of you who received the holiday one-shot will (I trust) remember the saga of the Welsh craft souvenirs made in the Philippines. Carved from coconuts. Right? Of course. Pat went Christmas shopping today (I had to stay in, since it's my 'on duty' weekend for the pilot plant, and they're liable to call me up at any time to take urgent action to prevent the whole of Spondon being blown universe-high (a more stefnal concept than 'sky-high')). Fuck knows what I'd do if they did, since it's my first weekend on duty and I know

less about the operation of the plant than the average aardvark. However...) and on her return reported seeing, in one shop, a whole group of these strange carved thingywhats, made in Taiwan, resembling a clenched fist with two fingers upraised. (Guess which two.) Some thoughtful shop assistant had carefully arranged them so they were all facing palm outwards, Winston Churchill style, and hence of no possible offence to the customers. (Though by mid-afternoon I suspect most of the assistants were feeling pretty paranoid about the whole deal.) So Pat, having this innate sympathy for shop assistants, turned them all round the other way. I wonder how many they sold after that? Come to think of it, who would be tasteless enough to buy one in the first place?

Oh, I don't know though. Imagine a managing director having one on his desk; his subordinates would be able to tell instantly, when he called them in, what the tone of the interview would be. Yep, if I were a managing director I'd definitely have one. Apart from the money and the secretary, that's the only perk I can see in the job.

Here's one for the Sam Longs among you. What's a good collective noun for a grouping of such objects? (Carved fingers I mean, not Sam Longs.)

"The press conference had proved to be an ordeal, but Caldor had given the performance of his life. Sue Annenberg had been beside him throughout, ready with appropriate data. For the first time, he had felt the warmth of her support."

I'd thought of doing an Ed Sagle-type talking-back-to-the-book on that one, but there are so many possibilities I didn't know where to start. Since that came from pl53, I suspect he didn't either.

Harry Warner, 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740, U.S.A.:

2.12

"I did enjoy very much the October KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE. It has enough resemblance to my dearly beloved APORRHETA to get several gold stars at the outset, just as any fanzine does whose day-by-day format resembles the Inchmery Fan Diary. You did a very good job of picking pithy paragraphs out of what were undoubtedly much longer letters, and in alternating these quotes with other matters.

I rarely include egoboo in my letter-quotes. I included that para because a) it's from Harry Warner, so all you cretins who didn't like KFN2 must be wrong. Nyaaah! b) it summarises very well the way in which I try to use locs. I see I've interrupted a letter, something which I used to hate in other fanzines, and which I swore I'd never do in a Polecat Publication. Promises, promises. It does seem more suitable to KFN's style, though.

"Gray Boak seems to be on the verge of inventing apas, with his suggestion of joint mailing of fanzines for postage-saving purposes. That was one of the original purposes of FAPA, when it was proposed as a way to distribute existing fanzines in clumps. Only after it was started did it become apparent that people were publishing special fanzines for the organisation and continuing to send out their existing fanzines in the old way. I doubt if much economy would result under the present postage structure, except

where the fanzines came from duplicators so closely clustered that there would be no need for bulk mailing to the fan who would collate them or whatever it is you do when you have a lot of issues of several fanzines and separate them so one of each goes into every envelope. I still think that fandom should exhibit one mighty burst of co-operation, creativity, and ambition by converting all its publications to microfiche, thereby leading the way for the changeover that professional publications must make soon if they're to survive in this frightening universe of soaring paper costs, escalating printing bills, and the old game of keep-raising-postal-rates.

Now that is a damn good idea. Seriously. I'm not too sure what microfiche is exactly, but I gather it's something to do with micro-printing on cards, right? If this was combined with the joint mailing idea, several fanzines could be sent out for the price of a letter, fanzine production costs would be halved (or more).....and the GPO would go bust. It's going that way now, let's face it, and the lack of revenue from fandom would be the last straw. Faneds could sell their dupers to pay for the special equipment. The great fannish duper-orientated mythology would die, and Sam Long would have a field day inventing a new one. A new challenge for fandom! When do we start?

"I suspect that the Tom-Jerry relationship derives from Krazy Kat. KK was a newspaper comic strip which flourished in the 1920s and a bit later. It wasn't as simple in the Harriman comic strip as in the movie cartoon, because people found all sorts of deep significance and there was a strong tendency for Krazy and the mouse, Ignatz, to have miscegenatory impulses.

I had to look up that penultimate word in the dictionary. I thought it sounded rude, and I was right. Tut! And I thought now was the permissive society? There's a Bix Beiderbecke-Frankie Trumbauer piece from 1927 called 'Krazy Kat'. I often wondered why. Now I know.

"Silent movies showed less dragging tendency than today's films. I suspect that the Germans might have been as methodical and thorough when they made movies as when they wrote symphonies or learned books, so METROPOIS might not have been a fair example of the form.

"Ken Cheslin's bit of fannish folklore on setting fannish stuff to song was entirely new to me. It's time someone wrote a book-length dissertation on the entire topic of fannish legendry and lore, so much of which gets forgotten as the years pass except for mentions in hard-to-find old fanzines. This is the sad thing about fandom today. I think fanzines are better than ever, on the average, there are more good fans active today than in most past eras, there's a plenitude to choose from no matter whether the individual fan prefers cons or subfandoms or collecting or whatever, but fans are no longer thinking up new bits of what Speer used to call fanationalism, the sort of distinctive notions and conceits that thrived so mightily during the great years of Irish Fandom in the late 1950s. Some of this lore should be made permanently available to anyone who wants to read about it.

Of course it should, and who's the man for the job? Yourself, naturally. Who else has the knowledge, determination and proven ability? If I had any

of those three qualities in sufficient measure I wouldn't mind having a go myself, since the minutiae of fandom fascinate me. Though since fandom itself is a minutia, maybe that should read 'secondiae'?

"Something else that should be done is; invent a new kind of typewriter keyboard for one-finger typists like you. Imagine a typewriter keyboard which is cut in half from front to back, then one half is suspended upside down above the remaining half. Then the one-finger typist could double his speed, by striking keys with that finger not only when he depresses a key but also with the nail or upper part of the knuckle when he raises the finger.

Yeah. And if a keyboard was arranged like five interior faces of a cube, with one face left open for access, I could probably quintuple my speed. Think of the typos, though. Oooch. Maybe I should just take typing lessons.

"I have an old 78 rpm Mikado recording which uses that 'nigger', as I remember it. I've heard performances of Verdi's 'Un Ballo in Maschera' that censor a description of Ulrica as possessing 'immondo sangue dei negri'. The most famous example of this type involves a famous song in the American musical, 'Show Boat', but there's also a problem with another famous piece of American music which uses a different term. One of Stephen Foster's songs, sung incessantly for a full century, has a famous line to the effect that 'the darkies are gay'. I recently heard a black, however, claim that he didn't mind being called a darky, but he didn't like the slur on his orthodox sexual orientation."

"I returned unexpectedly to the lab. one lunch-break and discovered my assistant with his glans penis resting on the pan of a chemical balance. Naturally I asked him what he thought he was doing, whereupon he told me that he was getting his end a weigh."

- - - - John Haft.

Ed Cagle, Star Route South, Locust Grove, OK74352, U.S.A.:

4.12

"I prefer personalzines to any other kind of fanzines, but yet I agree with Eric Bentcliffe that they have a tendency to convert one segment of fandom into a super-apa. Fortunately the life of most personalzines is blessedly short. Rebirth is the saving element of personalzines. A new title will turn the most desultory personalzine into a totally different zine. All is Right. Next Topic.

"Me old podnuh Dave Piper suggests he is bloody boring middle-class etcetera, and to that I say bullshit. I've always found him one of the most candid, amusing, inventive-minded and thoroughly decadent fans in my acquaintance. It was Dave who decided that due to our respective positions on this planet, and the time difference, while one of us was having our morning crap the other was consuming a sumptuous evening repast. Of such stuff is lasting fannish friendships made.

"You mentioned fuck movies. While I agree that plot and acting are secondary to the thrust of the thing (or things), and that if one wants to see an engrossing film there are other types available, porno flicks don't

have to be bad. The problem is: who the hell would notice a good porno film? What's a porno film for?

"I was amuse^d at your observation that Bruce Arthurs writes entertainingly about trivialities. It is a simple skill to acquire. I don't know how Bruce does it, but I'd suggest you try lying occasionally to embellish the normal flow of everyday matters. As long as you entertain the readers, what the difference if what you say doesn't conform with what you do? It is better to have lived and lied than to have told the truth and wallowed in the crudzine category."

Me? Lie? Me? The soul of honesty? Me, the paragon of virtue and nobility?

Yeah, me.

Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills, CA 91344, U.S.A.:

"I don't know of any completist fanzine collectors who will consider it imperative that they have all three colors of binding on KfN 1; in fact, there seem to be so few completists at all these days that the term may well have been debased to include those collectors who have at least one copy of each title they can find, instead of being reserved for those few madmen who must have a copy of each issue."

"Completists are really becoming extinct, it seems. I don't know of any here in the U.S. who are actively collecting -- Ackerman, of course, will always be glad to add fanzines to his collection if anyone gives him any. I did run across a few completists in Australia: Ron Graham, Doug Nicholson, Kevin Dillon. Are there any in your area?"

Well, there are a few would-be completists, like myself and Ian Maule, and others like Darroll Pardoe who are always among the keen bidders at convention auctions. The trouble is that the fanzines that I would most like to have complete sets of - HYPHEN, GRUE, VOID, OOPSLA etc. etc. - are the ones that everybody would most like to have complete sets of....hence when these items do appear on the market, their prices are always a bit too high for my comfort. Then there's the sheer volume of the material, and the difficulty of keeping up with even the current output, especially over here, where some of the more obscure Stateside zines have been and gone almost before we get to hear of their existence.

I should have mentioned Peter Roberts. His collection must be about the biggest in the country, grumblemutterenvymuttermutterlustgreedmuttergrumble.....

Denny Lien, 2408 S. Dupont Ave., Apt. 1, Minneapolis, MN 55405, U.S.A.:

"Huh?"

"Or, to put it more simply, ha?"

"Which is to say thanks for Knockers from Neptune 2. I suspect I have Dave Piper to thank for this, and he'll get his."

"I note first the cover. Noted.

"I note next the binding. Black pseudo-leather. A black leather bondage fanzine. I knew Andy Porter's Play-Alien page and Tom Reamy's nude pix would lead to this. (Which is why I tended to step all over them.) I can't get used to sex in sf without pictures of green four-armed slaving alien monsters to relate to first. I'm sorry but I just can't. (Or real ones where pictures are not available.)

So, you guessed my secret, huh? That the binding was just to protect the staples until they were needed? At which time it would be ripped off and used to secure the victim's left little toe irremovably to the toilet flush? After which the zine is rolled, its wickedly sharp gleaming staples thrusting pertly outwards, and used to thrash the victim's right elbow to a veritable pulp? Huh?

"How does one list a one-shot with five different titles, one of which is 74 words long?' One doesn't; one throws it away so as not to have to do so. Getting many LOCs on yours?

Grrrrrrr.....

"Minneapa went through a spell of nude typing as a fad, with people detailing their strip tease from line to line as they typed. Your typing in underpants alone hence does not shock. (Nude typing fad died down after one male apa member typed part of a stencil while having seated -- I presume -- sex. There was some talk of trying to top his stunt by getting a male and female apa member to co-operate in the same and attempt thereby to conceive a child who could grow up to become OE, but nothing came of this.)

I'm surprised anything came at all. What a trufan he must be! Good typist too.

"Fly swatting fandom. Glaroon, what buttons you're pushing in my mind. Year of 1966-67 when I was a dormitory counselor at college and my mates and I came up with a fly swatting competition. Rules established themselves: you could only kill flies in the office; you had to use a rolled-up paper and had to use the same rolled-up paper day after day, storing it in your mailbox overnight. When you killed twenty flies you were awarded The Blue Max in a special evening ceremony. When you killed fifty you were awarded The Iron Cross and had to retire and give the rookies a chance. (Besides, by that time your paper had begun to smell fearsome.) We caught one guy leaving the doors open to outside one afternoon to attract the flies he needed to catch up with. . . . I hadn't thought of that in years.

"I can't put a book down once I've started it, though.' I presume you meant to add 'until I've finished it;' otherwise your hands must be getting a bit full by now."

Why d'you think I only type with one finger? Even then, the piles keep falling over. It's bad enough having piles, without them falling over. Ask anybody. Incidentally, I admired your attempt to justify the margins of your letter by trimming the right-hand edges of the pages to follow the shape of the print. Nearly as good as my method of trimming each page to the width of the short line.

Can't think of a thing to say about Tom Disch's ECHO ROUND HIS BONES. It wasn't bad, just boring - one of the boringest books I've read recently. Something about a matter transmitter that creates 'doubles' out of secondary matter, and how they get together to save the world from the cold war. Most of the book's short length seems to be taken up with tedious explanations and rationalisations of this concept. Dull.

Here's a nice one though, one of the rare gems in Sidgwick & Jackson's list: HIERO'S JOURNEY, by Sterling E. Lanier. It has the same elements - the Quest, and the Good vs. Evil struggle - which helped to make LORD OF THE RINGS and others such a success, but is different in that it is set in the far future, long after The Death which produced many stable mutations, and caused telepathy to become widespread. The forces of good are embodied in a quasi-religious set-up, and Hiero, a priest and telepath, is sent out to find the secret of the lost knowledge which can save civilisation from the forces of evil, the 'wizards' and their allies, who want to set up a technology-orientated society of the very type that led to The Death in the first place. (A neat, unforced ecology message there.) The writing is simple, the story always compelling, and though the dialogue is sometimes weak there are other things, such as the way in which the telepathic relationship between Hiero and his two animal companions develops, that more than make up for this. The book is complete in itself, but like LotR the complete story will be a trilogy.

Maybe the nicest thing I can say about Brian Aldiss' THE EIGHTY-MINUTE HOUR is that it must be the first real space-opera, with the characters joining together every so often to do Gilbert & Sullivan imitations. Other than that I haven't a clue what it's about, and to me it reflects Aldiss' annoying pre-occupation with style and words as opposed to actually telling a story. On this basis I doubt if I shall rush to read FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND, the companion volume from Pan, nor anything further of Aldiss' recent work.

SLAVE PLANET contains barely enough material for a novelette, yet Laurence M. Janifer has made a novel out of it. Bad writing. It's a fairly thin idea anyway - a company is using intelligent slave labour on a planet, then the Confederation finds out and..... - but a competent author could have made something at least passable out of it. Janifer, at this early stage in his writing career, wasn't up to it.

Souvenir Press sent me a circular asking would I like a review copy of Kit Pedler's and Gerry Davis' new novel THE DYNOSTAR MENACE. I was a bit dubious, since I thought the title of their first book, MUTANT 59: THE PLASTIC EATER, was enough to put anybody off. However, a Yorkshireman never refuses summat for nowt, so I wrote back saying 'yes please'. It proved a wise decision, since this is one of the most enjoyable books I've read this year, despite the fact that cover artist Mike Codd spoiled an otherwise good illo by not sticking strictly to the text. I presume that Pedler supplies the scientific bits and Davis the literary ones: ~~as~~ with all good partnerships, you can't see the join, and both men seem better than average at their particular crafts, at least in sf terms. It's a near-future story of an Earth whose resources are almost exhausted. The last hope seems to lie with Dynostar, an orbiting fusion reactor, which is nearing its first test when it becomes apparent that the

operation of the project might disrupt the ozone layer of the Earth's atmosphere, thus causing widespread surface damage by burning. Can the automatic countdown be stopped in time, especially as somebody on board Dynostar seems determined to go to any lengths to see it become operational? If you have a scientific mind and also enjoy the suspenseful situation, you'll love this one. As for me, I definitely intend to get hold of their other books, MUTANT 59 and BRAINRACK.

GIVE A GANNET A BAD NAME.....

16.12

I quote from an article in WINEMAKER for December 1975:

"One of the big difficulties about making your own wine or beer is that at first you can never reach an honest decision as to whether the stuff is any good or not. And you can't trust anybody else's opinion because you don't know if they're being polite or if, as you strongly suspect but daren't be sure about, they're just so uncultured and ignorant as not to have a palate worth paying any attention to anyway.

"(Then there's the third lot, the gannets, who'll drink anything as long as they're not paying for it themselves, but we can ignore them for the purposes of the present argument. Though they'll be back, never fear. They always are.,'

So who's spreading all this slanderous gossip about one of our best-known fan groups? First there was the notice at Bosworth Field (see KFN 1), and now this. Personally I suspect the Brummies. Could this be the second stage of a campaign to discredit other con-organising groups, in a bid to take over the whole British convention scene?

The rabbit
Makes high-speed paternity a habit;
But the squirrel
Isn't nearly as virrel.

Roy Tackett (whom for TAFF), 915 Green Valley Rd. N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87107:

"After I had gone through the contents of the latest envelope to arrive from across the Atlantic I was tempted to write you an LoC on INFERNO and Skel an LoC on KFN but decided, nah, that would be carrying it a bit far.

56 miles too far, to be precise. A wise decision, sirrah.

"Ah, a question. What types of modern music appeal to you, and why? And if not, why not? Yes, I think I can answer that. I can say that hardly any modern music appeals to me. Why not? Because hardly any music appeals to me at all. I am not music oriented. Or occidented either.

Is this my TAFF choice what I hear saying these words to me? Though I've been married for five-and-a-smidge years to someone who feels as you do about music,

I still can't understand it. I just can't grasp the feeling of how it must be not to like music. Nearly everybody I know has some appreciation of music, though it may be quite different from my own. Yet although I can discuss music within its own context, I would be hard put to say why I liked music per se.

"Skel mentions the Tom & Jerry cartoons. Item in the news recently that some new ones are being done for television. Not the originals...oh no! Those were offered to the networks but were rejected because they were 'too violent'. So we will have a new set in which both the cat and mouse have been castrated.

You bet. And they'll be totally lacking in originality, like 99% of the cartoons offered on TV these days. I recently found myself watching my first episode of a fairly recent import to this country, called 'Inch High Private Eye'; it was so bad I just can't find the words to describe it. Is this typical of the cartoons today's kids are growing up with? Poor kids, I say. And the idea of a cartoon being 'too violent' is typical of a society (I'm talking about western society in general here, not just America) which is so far off the track that it can say 'this is the cause of all the violence in our society' when it is really looking at a trigger, a focal point for frustrations caused by its own faults.

"Jir Meadows' letter: the lengths to which we go over here to try to convince ourselves that there ain't nobody here but us 'people' sometimes borders on the ridiculous. One of the best black protest songs ever written is 'Old Man River' and the contortions of the lyrics that have been done to take any racial connotation out of them is enough to make one laugh/cry. A recent program on PBS to celebrate the bicentennial in song presumably found that it couldn't ignore the period of the minstrel shows so rather than do the bit in blackface they did the whole thing in black with only white gloves visible.

"How, I wonder, does one wrinkle a bull?"

Very, very carefully?

Jessica Amanda Salmonson, P.O. Box 89517, Zenith, WA 98188, U.S.A.:

I'm glad you sent me your knockers. I found it useful for swatting flies, although I don't keep too many of them around. Speaking of which, I didn't totally like your quote about lesbians leaving a bad taste in your mouth. Bad joke. It is straight women, and bisexual women, who leave bad tastes in people's mouths, you just never know what they've had stuck up inside them. Lesbians taste clean, and I speak from practical and spiritual experience. I would especially urge Pat not to allow such statements to appear in knockers until she knows for sure what she's talking about.

"And Mike, I want you to remember something the next time you try cunnilingus: sperm and semen drips out of vaginas. If you put it in.

"Dykedom is cleandom. Nothing dripping out of us like that. Wholesome.

"Sorry to gross you out like that, but it was a tacky statement you put in

there and you deserve to get grossed out.

"There was a young lezzy from Laos
Who let a soldier in her house.
He raped her and then
He raped her again.
That leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

"Glad to hear the good news about Mary Legg.

"So. A beautiful fanzine. But it's dreadfully hard to comment on reviews. So you'll have to settle for the above tirade For The Cause. Lesbianism is the Ultimate Feminist Solution. (It's also wonderful.)

"(Someone will probably think I'm a silly young thing not realizing what she's admitting and who will regret having a big mouth later in life, because lesbians are sick and strange and who could be so proud to admit it but a foolish child? Well, I'm 66 years old, recently divorced from my third husband, and only now Coming Out. Believe that, you'll believe anything.)"

Okay, so I'll believe anything. In this instance there's no evidence to the contrary.

I'm not familiar with this term 'grossing out', but I gather from the context that to be grossed out is to be given a rocket, a tongue-lashing (oooh!), to be sent away with a flea in one's ear (or a nasty taste in one's mouth). Speaking of which, I'm sorry that you were upset by the joke. I agree it was in bad taste (and that pun wasn't much better), but then I enjoy that type of joke. Poking fun at minority groups is a character defect, I suppose. Oh well, nobody's perfect. I hope you realise that it was not a deliberate attempt to insult or offend you. Even I wouldn't sink that low. Hope not anyway. I typed that particular section before I added you to the mailing list, but even then my brain never made the connection between the two bits of information, never saw the possible consequences. Pat didn't know till later that I'd put the joke in, but she still approved, though for different reasons: she thought it typified the mood and style of the film, whereas I just thought it was funny.

I cannot dispute your statement about the downward movement of sperm and semen in vaginas. Something to do with the law of gravity, I believe. I can and do dispute its relevance to anything else you said, though. The fact that you obviously find such fluids repugnant doesn't mean that I also have to.

The good news about Mary Legg to which you refer is obviously the news that she's engaged to Sam Long, and that they'll be married over Easter. Isn't it?

I was fascinated by your last paragraph, and had originally intended to write back in the hope of learning a little more about you. Then I read your letter in GEGENSCHWEIN 23, part of which I'll quote here:

"Men are inferior alien animals, and so-called 'straight' women are sodomists to make love to such bestial (sic) creatures. Man's only valid purpose is to serve womankind, and even that he can't do very well."

That killed the idea stone dead, as I realised how extreme your viewpoint was. There was no way I could relate to it, and less chance that you'd tell me any- way. You must really have been through a lot of bad scenes with men to hate them so much, and I hope that the pain and bitterness in your soul will be eased, now that you've finally found yourself.

Sheryl Birkhead, 23629 Woodfield Road, Gaithersberg, MD 20760, U.S.A.: 21.12

"Umm, er... you use a lot of slang I don't understand (but I don't 'get' a lot of American slang either, so....) - but due to context, I figured it might be more diplomatic NOT to ask."

I'm very interested in slang and associated forms of word-play, but I wouldn't have thought I used anywhere near as much as some American fans. So what is it that puzzles you?

"The only thing worse than Institutional toilet paper is.....no Institutional toilet paper."
(Gil Gaier)

Keith Freeman, 128 Fairford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG3 6QP:

"I must have received KfN 2 a fair while ago. .. to be honest I glanced at it (page after page after page of WORDS) and put it down whilst I read some less demanding fanzine (e.g. it had lots of illos.....). Then, quite a while after, I came back to KfN 2 and ploughed through about half of it..... several weeks later I once more staggered back into the fray - and this time I finished it...."

"To be honest, you say (somewhere near the middle) that it should be read a few pages a day over a period of a week or ten days. I agree. It seems a great shame that someone with your undoubted talents should dissipate them in this way. Your style and method make KfN (just) readable - but you're fighting an uphill battle against the inevitable 'sameness' that pervades a personalzine of this (diary) nature. I noticed a review the other day which said it was boring..... I'm forced to agree. Yet, in the midst of the verbiage there's a lot of good stuff. Edited and rewritten the interesting stuff would make about a third of a good genzine... if you could get your past contributors to once more contribute."

"I think what I've been saying up there is BRING BACK LURK!"

No chance of that, at the moment anyway. I think what you're saying up there is that you dislike persondiaryzines unless they're very very good. Fair enough - other people, Ian Williams for instance (whose review in SPI is the one I presume you're referring to) seem to feel the same way. To you both, I can only offer my apologies, together with the hope that someday I'll be able to improve KfN enough to meet with your approval. I do feel, however, that KfN is a better personalzine than LURK was a genzine, which is why I don't intend to change back again. LURK had seven issues with a total of some 230pp; if I ever decided to do a reprint zine entitled THE BEST FROM 'LURK' it would be a slim thing indeed - three or four of Dave Rowe's covers, Jim White's Novacon

speech, a condensed version of Pete Weston's fan-publishing thing, the Tyne-con quote-cards.....and that's about it. Not much to show for three years' fan-publishing involvement.

I think I was trying to make some sort of point there, but I'm not sure now what it was. Anyway, if you've read the information pages at the beginning of this issue, you'll see I no longer want KfN reviewed by anybody, favourably or unfavourably. This is because I don't want people to have preconceived ideas about KfN, gleaned from reviewers with preconceived opinions about various types of fanzine. If such reviewers really want to express their opinions, one way or the other, then I'd be delighted to receive letters from them on the subject. This no-review policy should also help prevent the sort of erroneous impressions caused by reviews like your own of KfN 2 in VECTOR. Nearly 100 pages? And what the hell does '61 or trade' mean?

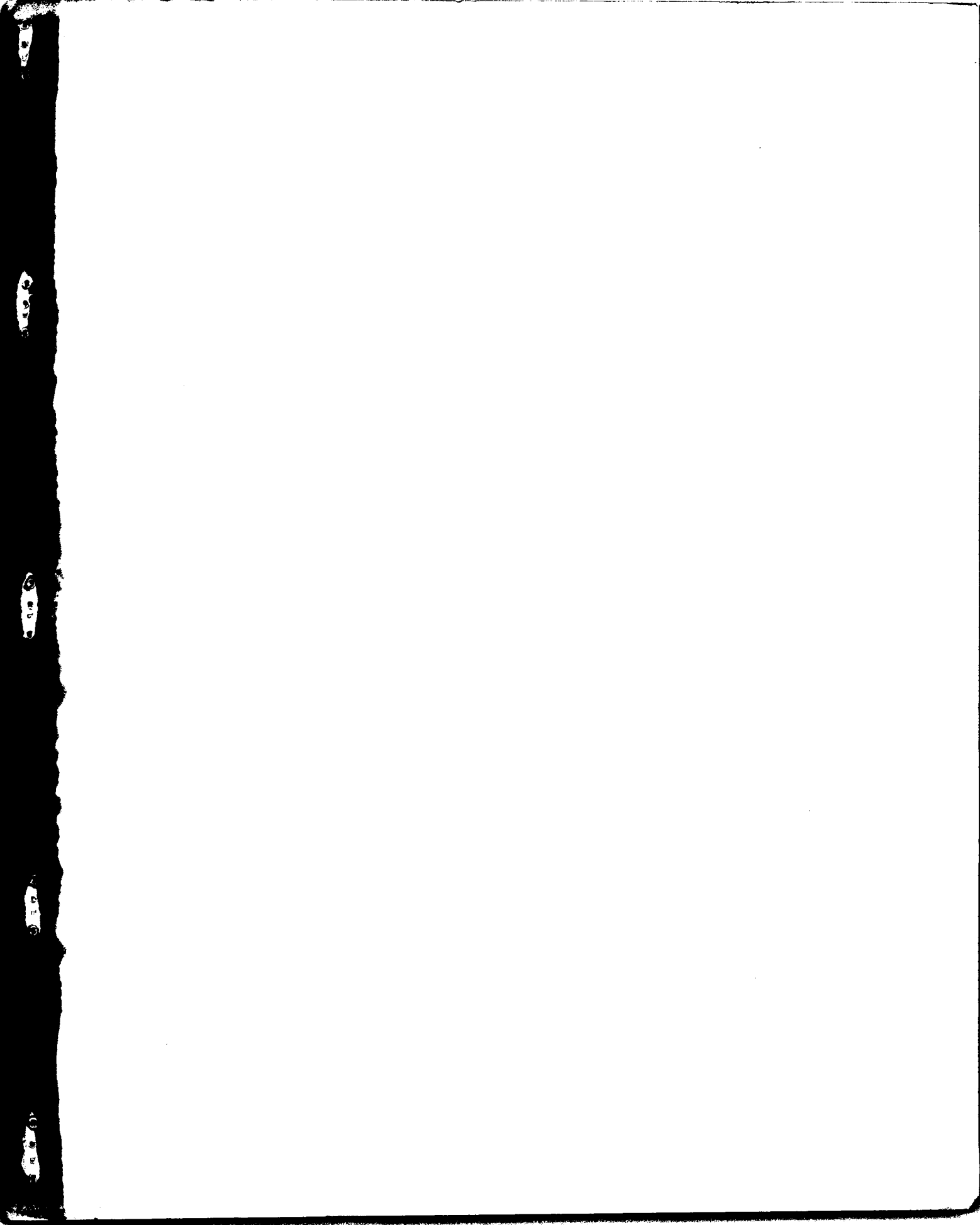
CLOSE TO CRITICAL - 9

R. C. Sherriff's THE CATAclysm is an 'entirely new version' of a novel which first appeared in 1939 as THE HOPKINS MANUSCRIPT. It tells of the events before and after the moon leaves its orbit and strikes the Earth. If the re-writing was really so extensive as the blurb would have us believe, I should have thought some attention would have been paid to the extreme weakness of the scientific elements of the story. As it is, I detected passing references to 'modern' things like atomic bombs and chain-stores, and little more. A pity, because if this side of the book could have been improved to match the high quality of the description and characterisation - especially the latter, with its insights into human nature - the whole would have been a classic. As it is, it's still well worth reading, if you can find a copy.

MULTIFACE is the final book in Mark Adlard's Teity trilogy. Adlard seems a rather restrained, cold writer, and the inherently interesting concepts of the huge cities and great industrial complexes of the Stahlex Corporation, of the Citizens and the genetically improved Executives, didn't really get to me as they could have done. The bits of philosophy about the nature and purpose of work, tagged on at the end, didn't go down too well either. I expect Aldiss will like it though - he is quoted on the back cover as having liked the previous one, VOLTEFACE.

There's been quite a spate of books on sf art recently, in addition to things like Franz Rottensteiner's THE SCIENCE FICTION BOOK, which included a lot of interesting illustrations to the text. Brian Aldiss has edited one (which I've deliberately steered clear of, because I know Pat's bought me it for Christmas) and Anthony Frewin deals mainly with the pre-Gernsback era in his 100 YEARS OF SF ILLUSTRATION. Of great interest to me, then, was Jacques Sadoul's 2000 A.D., since it concentrates exclusively on the 'golden age' of sf - 1926-53. There's a lot of b&w material, a few colour reproductions of covers, and very little writing. The art is beautifully reproduced, well chosen, and includes a fair proportion of material from the relatively inaccessible magazines of the war years. With 176 large format pages, this is definitely worth the cover price of £4.50.

And that's where the third lesson from KfN endeth, folks. I've still an unused letter or three in the file, which I may use to lead off KfN 4. Byeccccccccc!





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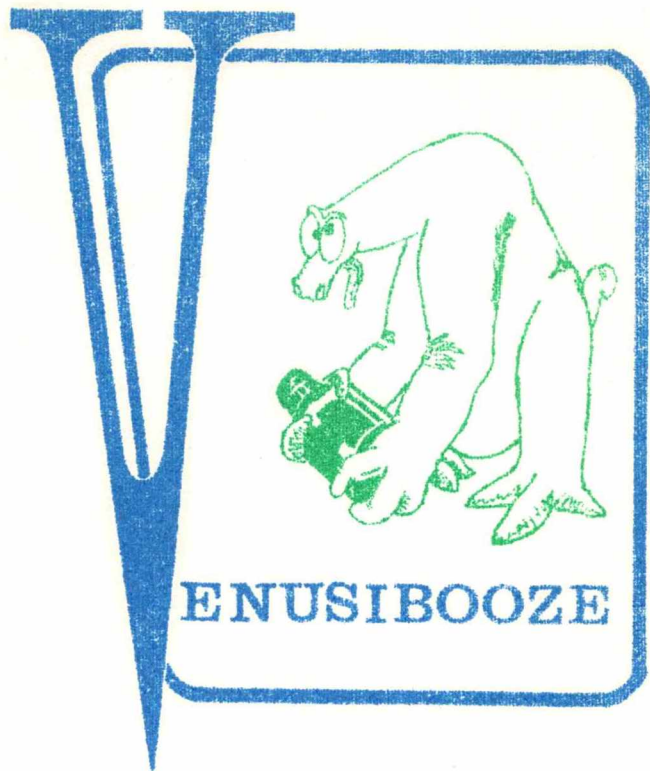
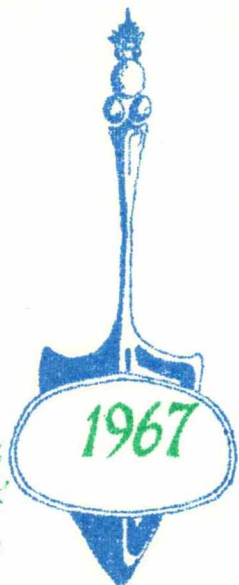
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APPELLATION ————— REFUSÉE