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NO FLU FOR THE WEARY: Dave Van Arnam has been feverishly working to finish the first draft of When In Rome (due in final-draft form last month), and has been minacing it for the last several weeks. Last week I suggested we skip MALAISE this week. "FIRST DRAFT is enough, Dave," is the way I put it. "If I want to put in something, I'll do another L."

"Well, Ted..." Dave mumbled. "I dunno...I'd kinda like to do MALAISE through the 52nd mailing, just so I can say I put it out every week for a year, you know?"

"But you haven't," I reminded him with crushing finality. "You've missed mailings already. Save up your energies for the 53rd, and get cracking on that book, now."

"*Sigh*," Dave sighed. "Yes, Ted." His shoulders slumped, defeated, over his typer.

BOOK WEAK: I've been reading stf lately, as my comments on Lord Kalvan and Three Against The Witchworld may've suggested, last week. This week I read Year of the Unicorn, and Time Out of Joint.

Unicorn, is, as I mentioned last week, the fourth of Miss Norton's Witchworld books. But, unlike the earlier three, it does not concern itself with the events in Estcarp, and none of the protagonists overlap with those of the first three books.

Miss Norton seems finally to have realized that she has an entire world here to write about, and at last she is treating us to some of the other lands and peoples of this world.

She's also stopped offering super-science explanations for her fantasies, despite the blurb-writer's reluctance to admit it ("...a lost land, a forgotten world, and a super-science challenge" ... "...swordsmanship and scientific sorcery."). This book is an out and out fantasy, literally a fairy-tale.

As such, it is the most effective of the four in this series. It lacks most of the faults of the earlier books (it does end a bit weakly, but not anticlimactically; she seems to have trouble with endings), and while the writing betrays the usual Norton weaknesses (lousy dialogue, unmotivated action; etc.) the inventiveness is unusually rich, the moods strike much deeper, and the magic strikes deep chords in the psyche. I felt in places as I haven't since, as a small child, I read Baum's Oz.

Time Out of Joint was published in hardcover in 1959, and had to wait the Phil Dick revival to make its way into pb (Belmont) earlier this year. As a result, it forms a sort of bridge between the Phil Dick novels of the earlier fifties, and those which have followed Man in the High Castle. Here we find the preoccupation with several deceptively 'ordinary' protagonists who, on the surface, inhabit the ordinary world of the late 1950's. The homeostatic machines and the conapts have not yet made their appearance, but names, like Ragel Gumm, have -- and the plot, in which Gumm learns the whole world has been built around him -- is splendidly paranoid.

The opening sections, as grim surreality creep through the fabric of mundanity, are lovely. But the final portions of the book, when Gumm

finds what everything is all about, seem less carefully limned, and have the cold pessimism about them which seems to characterize Phil's forebodings of the future as reflected in most of his recent books.

THE WONDERFUL NEUROSES OF RAY BRADBURY: Mike McInerney got up a theater party of over twenty NYC fen to attend a preview performance of "The Wonderful World of Ray Bradbury". When asked my opinion of it the next day, at an ESFA meeting, I replied that I thought the special effects (electronic sounds, projected backdrops --the latter a bit faint) excellent, the acting adequate to good, and the writing bad.

It's a shame Bradbury has so little sense of theater, so little ability to cope with stage drama. So many of his scenes are static and lack movement, and never has his ear for dialogue been so readily exposed as wooden as here upon the stage.

Bob Bloch once pointed out that actual speech is usually banal, and that when writing dialogue for an acted-out production one had to give some of the feel of this banality. The mark of a good playwright is his ability to suggest real speech without succumbing to the banal. Ray Bradbury skirts the entire issue: his people simply do not speak as people: every one of them speaks as a Bradbury Idea, a sermon. Nowhere was this more obvious than in "To The Chicago Abyss," which degenerated into a monologue, a Bradbury harrangue.

Of the other two playlets, "The Pedestrian" was pedestrian. It got off to a terribly slow start, and gained impact only when the robot cop car made its entrance. Why Bradbury scrapped the original framework of the story I can only guess at: I suspect he felt that he needed two protagonists so they'd have something to say to each other. It was a mistake.

"The Veldt" is similarly overdrawn out, and has an anticlimax added to the end. In both cases, Bradbury took short, punchy stories of real emotional impact and emasculated them fore and aft.

It's a shame the Newspaper Strike is on; I'd like to have read the critics' reviews. But I think Bradbury is better off without them; I doubt they would be kind. This was amateur theater at its most pretentious, and I can't see it lasting long,

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THRICE-TOSSED OAKEN ASHES: Fitch - Come now, Don. Surely you cannot mean that you've not observed the differences between the Real World and Fandom. Every so often they come into violent collision, with spectacular results. Look at the way fans react to a law suit brought into fandom. The dichotomy is sundered. And, observe the way some fans confuse fannish values and goals with real life -- spending, say, their money on fanzines instead of food and rent, or taking the ultimate cop-out, like Ted Pauls, quitting school at sixteen, and devoting his life to KIPPLE, leaving to his parents all mundane thoughts of food and support. The examples are many and varied, and Los Angeles fandom has furnished a rich variety of them. You needn't look far.

EXTRAPOLATOR #3: Pearson - Re: your comments on Romantic Love, I suggest you read Maslow's Toward a Psychology of Being. What you are calling Romantic Love, he defines far better as Deficiency-Love.

"If we aid the guilty instead of punishing them, it is an open invitation for other people to pillage" is one of the oldest arguments around. It is also the least proven. Punishment has had very little proven benefit for either the "guilty" or the rest of society. Your desire for revenge upon those who pillaged is perhaps human enough, but does not take into account the conditions which inspired the action. Man, as long as Whitey keeps on punishing the Negroes, it's gonna be war. Watts was a declaration of war. You want more? You know how to get it.

But you might try reading Summerhill for Neill's way of dealing with delinquent children. His way worked.

You have the quaint intellectual's concept of reality which is amusing when it's not pathetic: "It is not hard for the lowerlevel whity /sic/ to make it in our society. Look at the ads in a paper sometime. Typists and (practically the same thing) keypunch operators are quite well paid. A person does not require even an average intelligence to learn to type." Come on, now!

In a society where a man's self-respect is obtained by doing useful, productive work, what do you do with a man who has become obsolete? Remember, a man is not a machine, to be easily junked when worn out. And -- it might be you.

"LSD tends to randomize psychic structures..." Stop quoting. Ever taken any? Speak of your own knowledge for a change. LSD also creates an artificial condition of schizophrenia. Alpert and Leary are a long way from being the most sane men I've ever met.

NIDDHOGGR #33: Hulan - Art Rapp and Lee Hoffman about about equally active today in fandom. Lee is an immeasurably better writer. And, Rapp has revealed himself to be at heart an N3F-type personality. The spark of trufannishness seems to have trickled away in the darkness of the long SAPS night...

OPO #61: Lupoff - I'm glad I'm not the only one who has a few grotches at the Discon Proceedings; I was afraid it was just my natural enmity with Eney coming to the fore again. In my talk on that silly mimco-stencilling pannel, Terry Carr is given as "Jerry" despite my reference in the same context to LIGHTHOUSE, and various other things I said were similarly garbled. And, strangely, my portion was not paragraphed, while the other pannelists' were.

DEGLER #88: Porter - It's amusing that Lupoff should've lectured you on Creating An Editorial Image; it always seemed to me that he never did a very good job of it in XERO. To me the important distinction is: is your zine admired for the quality of its contents alone, or rather for the personality it projects? XERO always seemed more an anthology of interesting and diverse material than a personality-zine. I've put out both kinds myself: STELLAR conveyed little personality, while VOID was almost wholly of that stripe. Also, MINAC and GAMBIT, of course -- but the small, personal zine is always a personality zine. The best such zine appearing today is undoubtedly Norm Clarke's HONQUE.

Would I care to analyse you, Andy? I'm not sure I could. However...

My first, umm, brushes with Andy, when he was Andy Silverberg, I set down in print in such zines as CINDER and DAFOE. They were telephone contacts, and the Silverberg I spoke to seemed earnest and ill-informed, with a naivete that was both touching and pathetic. He came on a little like a country-bumpkin, and as such became the butt of a few jokes.

I met Andy for the first time (as I recall) when he invited me to an informal ESFA meeting in Manhattan, and told me quite a roster of others

would be there. On the strength of those names, I went. None of them were there, though; they were simply others Andy had phoned and invited. I found Andy to be young, but tall and heavily built; big for his age. He was clean-cut, and well-mannered, but seemed at times a bit simple. I didn't know what to make of him, but he seemed a nice enough sort. It was just that I had nothing in particular to say to him.

That was three or four years ago. In the meantime, he began publishing ALGOL, which began as a dittoed neozine of only a few pages, and he began coming to FISTFA meetings when that group was formed. I suspect it was then that the processes of assimilation truly began, but too it should be remembered that Andy was Growing Up, and this didn't hurt either. He filtered from FISTFA to the Fanoclasts almost effortlessly, and there was no point at which one could suddenly turn and exclaim, startled, "Why, you've completely changed!" But he has changed. He still indulges himself sometimes in his penchant for what we dubbed "Andy Porter Surrealism" -- non sequitur statements which are impossible to answer -- but these I think were more a sign of the shell he used to hide behind than anything else, and the Real Andy Porter has been venturing out of that shell increasingly in recent times.

If asked for a pocket analysis, I would say that Andy was an extreme introvert who is only now beginning to develop self-confidence in himself and to abandon the defenses he has long crouched behind. I think those evidences of "surrealism" were indications of a mind which made immediate leaps from one thought-train to another by interior logic, without bothèning to share the transitional thoughts (probably because of shyness) with those he addressed.

I've never been over-impressed by Andy's ability as an artist -- his subject matter seems too limited -- but I would say that he has a good eye for design (his drawings are actually designs). His writing ability, even as happened to Steve Stiles three years ago in APA X, is just beginning to come to fruition, as he learns to create a more natural flow of thoughts from his typer, and finds thoughts worthy of expression.

Andy is probably one of the purest examples to be found in fandom today of the evolution of the unlettered and all-but-unwashed neofan into an articulate and worthwhile fan who may some day be considered a BNF.

That suit you, Andy?

ALL DIGRESSION WEEKLY: Stevens - It's all pretty subjective, I guess: what makes you care about a character or not. I know of no magic formulas; I can only create a character in whom I am interested -- with whom I identify -- and take it from there. "...there is no particular reason to care what happens to Bob Tanner..." you say, and if you find this true, I grant you that the action is not significant action. Where you are concerned, I have failed, because you should care, and that should make the action significant.

I was asked about that laser before. The answer is that Gilbert Nash put it there. Remember that even as the story opens, Tanner is experiencing strange dreams about Nash, the fat man.

The scientists built the computer-complex because it was their job. Actually, each of the scientists did "rule the world" inasmuch as he cared to. But remember, this had to be sub-rosa; ostensibly there was no longer any power-elite.

The so-called Bliv Dits seemed to be a product of spontaneous generation. I first saw it on the back of a submission to F&SF from an Australian reader. I used it on an issue of MINAC as "The Key to the Boondoggle." About the same time John Campbell published it in ANALOG and subsiquently readers identified it as coming from various sources. MAD

did not use it until somewhat later. MAD is strictly a Johnny Come Lately.

RABANOS RADIATIVOS #50: Patton - Thanks for the concession. I appreciate it.

Syracuse has been silent since the Loncon; last I heard was that the committee would have to discuss its next move. Since then the Heaps have split up, and I don't know whether much remaining drive exists in or about Syracuse. Boston is strictly a dark horse. And Philly has shown absolutely no interest in bidding. The only active fan in that area now (and I mean "active" in any sense) seems to be Harriet Kolchak. The much-rumored Philly Bid is largely the product of wishful thinking on the part of the King Makers of the convention world, who are torn between their disgust for New York and their aversion towards Baltimore. But it remains: NYC and Baltimore are the only two cities bidding.

Personally, I think Jack Chalker is an Ass. And a boastful ass, at that, who has no right to nine-tenths of the credit he claims for himself. (His work on the Discon and Disclave was minimal, and he contributed nothing, except hot air, to the recent Philly Noncon.) On the other hand, I like Ron Bounds and the other Balto fan, and I imagine that if they kept Jack muzzled and out of the way I'd enjoy a con in Balto.

The Ivie bubble-gum cards are for the Topps people -- the same ones who produce the Topps Fan Magazines, including the recent MAN FROM UNCLE one. (Larry wrote the Uncle story in that, by the way. And at the time he'd not seen any Uncle tv shows...) There are, I believe, two Superman card sets, but my memory is hazy. Write Topps for details.

#50: Gold - I don't think creative people are creative because they are neurotic -- and there is considerable psychological evidence to bear me out there -- but I suspect that fans are fans (or at least first become fans) because they are neurotic. The appeal of fandom's cloistered world to the typical introverted, bookish, paranoid male teenager is almost a cliché now. Many of us remain in fandom for neurotic reasons (it offers a haven from the pressures of the mundane world), but there are also many of us who have developed too many friendships to easily abandon them, or find the forum fandom offers a worthwhile outlet for our need to express ourselves.

DER HOLLANDER #28: Hollander - Like it or not, the Real World is where we live and die; fandom is the makebelieve. Oftimes makebelieve is more fun than reality, but this does not make it More Real. Beware the Trap of Coventry...

"Enjoyability is a poor judge of good or bad..." Depends on whether you're speaking subjectively or objectively. And since, in the end, it all boils down to the subjective, enjoyability is the most important judge. Fiction which survives is that which remains enjoyed. All criteria relating to entertainments (such as literature, the arts) boil down to ways of creating enjoyment in the audience. Some of us have more sophisticated tastes than others, and thus must be appealed to on subtler levels, but this does not make the cruder entertainments less good in their own right. Shakespeare wrote for the unwashed; today it is possible to enjoy good rock & roll, good classical music, good contemporary "serious" music, good jazz, good younameit. None of these are intrinsically More Good than others outside their categories except on the personal, subjective level. I.e., I enjoy good contemporary music more than good classical music; while he prefers good rock & roll to either...

IPZIK: Bailes - Yes, but the "subconscious mind" (usually referred to as "the unconscious mind") has the whole of our memories to draw upon, and is thus less likely to be caught short on data than our conscious mind is. But real communication between the sundered portions of our minds is not easy and should be encouraged. Dreams are the usual route, because the conscious is relaxed, quiescent. But "intuition" in another, more valid route, and should not be ignored. The goal, of course, is a more ready integration so that the whole mind can function in unison. The reverse is the sort of civil war of the mind which results in "hang ups" or mental blocks, which stymie us and block our effectiveness as coping individuals.

GALLSTONE #50: Harness - I first "met" the I-Ching at Phil Dick's, in 1964. My initial experience with it was favorable, and I have made some use of it since. I have a copy (it's available in the Legge translation from Dover), but I don't care to treat it as a plaything, as some westcoast fans have.

My experience has been that the advice offered by the I-Ching can be interpreted superstitiously, in Jungian terms, or as simply an elaborate Rorschach into which one reads one's own answers. Any way you care to look at it, I've seen it startle a person with its appropriateness, and in one case of my own it was absolutely correct in its interpretation of a relationship then just budding. So I treat it with respect.

Shirley McClain "Clean Fun for the Family"? You been watching the same Shirley McClain movies I have?

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SPACE FILLER, NARRATIVE HOOK Dept.: Lightning flashed, and thunder followed immediately upon it, crashing inward upon the blackness. Thin blue flames lept up upon the silent hooded figures, dancing upon them, over them, striving upwards, ever upwards, until --

The air was ionized, and the space about the unmoving figures shone as brightly as the brightest day. More brightly -- Aharred's eyes were dazzled, blinded by the brilliance.

Then the thunderclap smote him, and the concussion threw him to the ground, tumbling him and rolling him down the steep sides of the butte.

The splash of large drops of rain on his face revived him, and he staggered to his feet almost blindly, for a moment no purpose existing behind the goal of standing upright. He lifted his face to the heavens, and soft rain fell in heavy drops against him, mudding and then washing away the dirt which had mingled with his hair and the blood of abrasions on his bare skin.

He shook his head to clear it, and then looked back, up at the low butte.

The night was dark, but as if in answer to his call lightning flashed, now somewhere behind him, and the butte was revealed for the long second of the flash, remaining in his eyes an afterimage for moments more.

The butte was empty. Its top was bare.

The strange ones were gone, gone as though they had never existed. Consumed by fire -- yes, the licking blue flames which presaged the heavenly scourge of the lightning. Aharred remembered the benediction -- the curse -- his father had called down upon the strangers. It had come. He did not want to believe, but it had come.

The butte would be halloed ground, now. But nonetheless he made his way purposefully to its top.

And there he stood when lightning again struck.

/The above, first-draft, was composed spontaneously on stencil by -- tw/